

# AIGTA Workshop

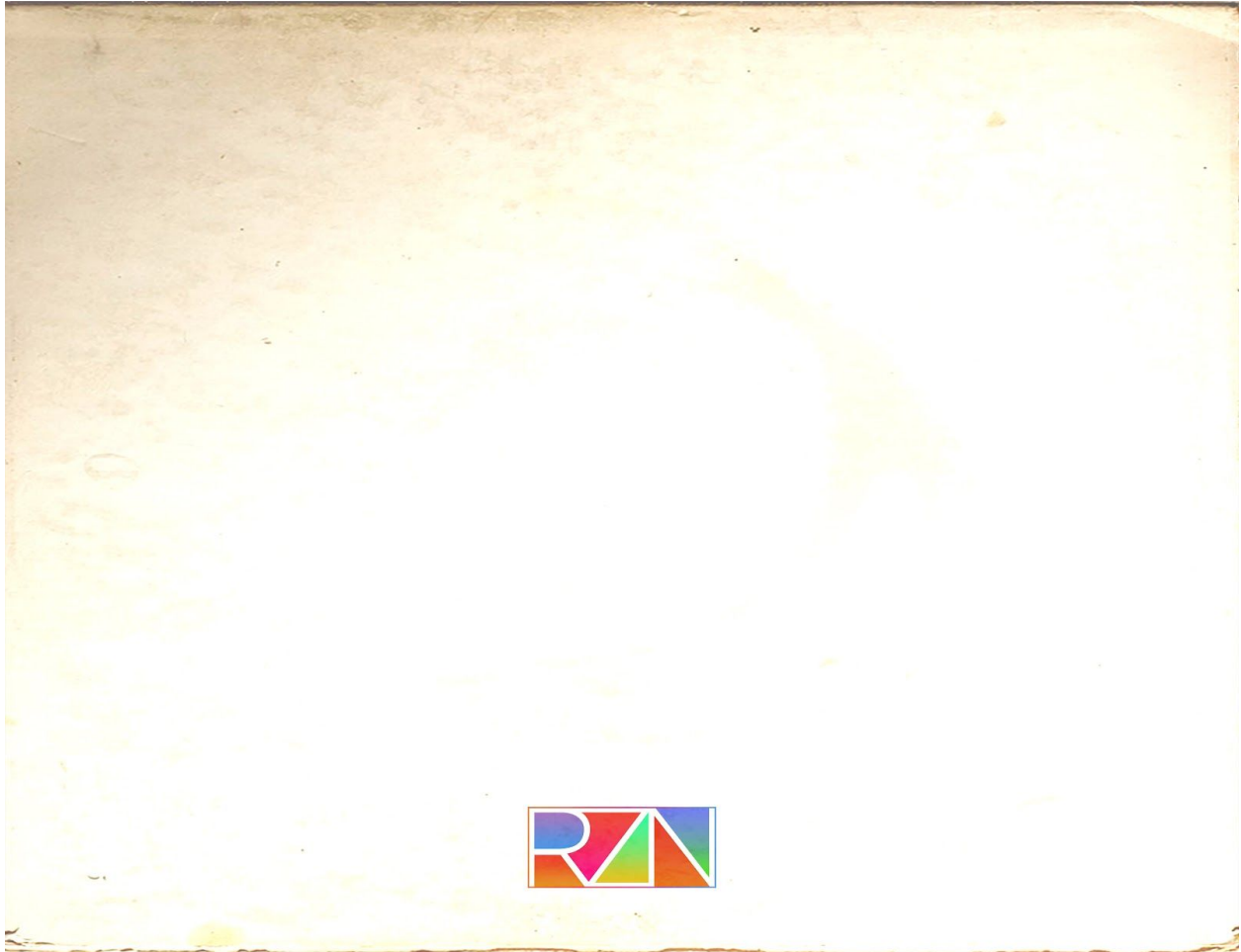
## “Building Multiple Revenue Streams With Your Music”

### BIO

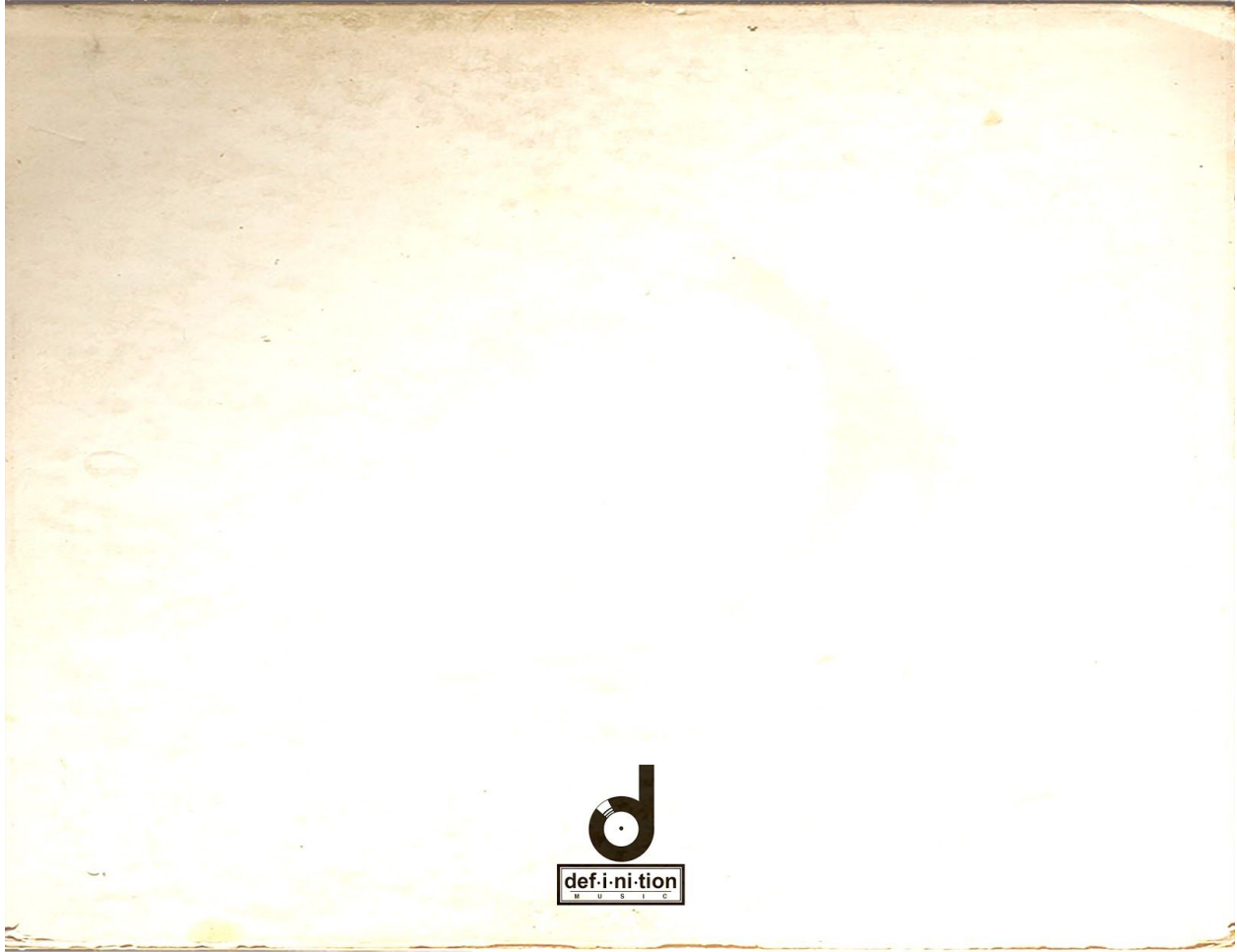


- My name is Timothy “Ill Poetic” Gmeiner.
- I am a music producer, artist, entrepreneur and student.

- As a music artist, I've toured internationally and have produced or performed alongside such acts as The Ohio Players, Nas, MGK, Girl Talk, Slum Village, Pharoahe Monch and Atmosphere.
- I've been covered by numerous national media outlets such as Pitchfork, XXL.com, Vibe Magazine, and RollingStone.com as well as publicly recognized by national acts such as The Ohio Players, Portishead and Joe Budden for my production. I've formally released 5 albums, various singles and videos and have amassed roughly 700,000 streams / downloads / sales. and worked to build a career rooted in hip-hop but unbound by genre as noted in my most recent album, ["An Idiot's Guide to Anarchy"](#)



- As an entrepreneur, with assistance from my partner & manager Micshon Harper, I launched my own production and design company, [SoundRzn Design](#). Through this company, I've produced, scored, licensed and engineered for a spectrum of critically acclaimed and award-winning projects. My company has also provided visual branding for an array of clients in the music, art, sports, education, and health industries.



- In 2014, my partners and I publicly launched the artist platform [Definition Music](#). Championing creativity not bound by industry or genre, Definition has evolved from the confines of a typical music label and worked to progress the careers of musicians, actors, spoken word artists, producers and filmmakers through self-financing and innovative resource allocation.





- Before COVID, my family and I were all full-time students: I graduated San Diego City College Commercial Music Program last year and I'm now at UCSD working toward a BA in Interdisciplinary Computing and the Arts & Music. My wife paused school to work for SD County as a team lead for COVID Case Managers and Contact Tracers.





- In 2019, I began guest lecturing at various San Diego, CA colleges on the subject of artist entrepreneurship. These lectures and workshops stand to act as my first steps toward a fully expansive curriculum geared to help give students both in the college community and under-resourced communities an overview of the tenants, resources and options that exist in creating a sustainable and tangible self-governed career in the anarchic industry of music.

**TRANSITION:** My story is unique in that I've had no magic investment or hugely successful album to live off of. I've worked in the trenches for the past 20 years to piece together various sub-careers and streams of income that are directly tied to me as an artist and the creation of my own projects and they've all been possible because of a fundamental understanding of ownership. Basically my financial career is still based on my creative output and ability to continue growing as an artist and craftsman because I or I and my partners own the machine that allows for the flow of my creativity.

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## STORY



- *I want to start by sharing a story that shows not just how tangible self-employment is, but how it's not always something you can plan perfectly for.*
  - I moved to San Diego 5 years ago with my family, landing in a Motel 6 armed only with what we could fit on the plane with us.





- After taking on a customer service job at a JCPenney call-center in Columbus, Ohio I parlayed that into a transfer to work part-time at a JCPenney outlet store in San Diego, folding jeans and cashiering. I hated it.
- At the time, I had built a semi-regular amount of client work for my production and graphic design services but nowhere near consistent or financially viable enough to survive off of.



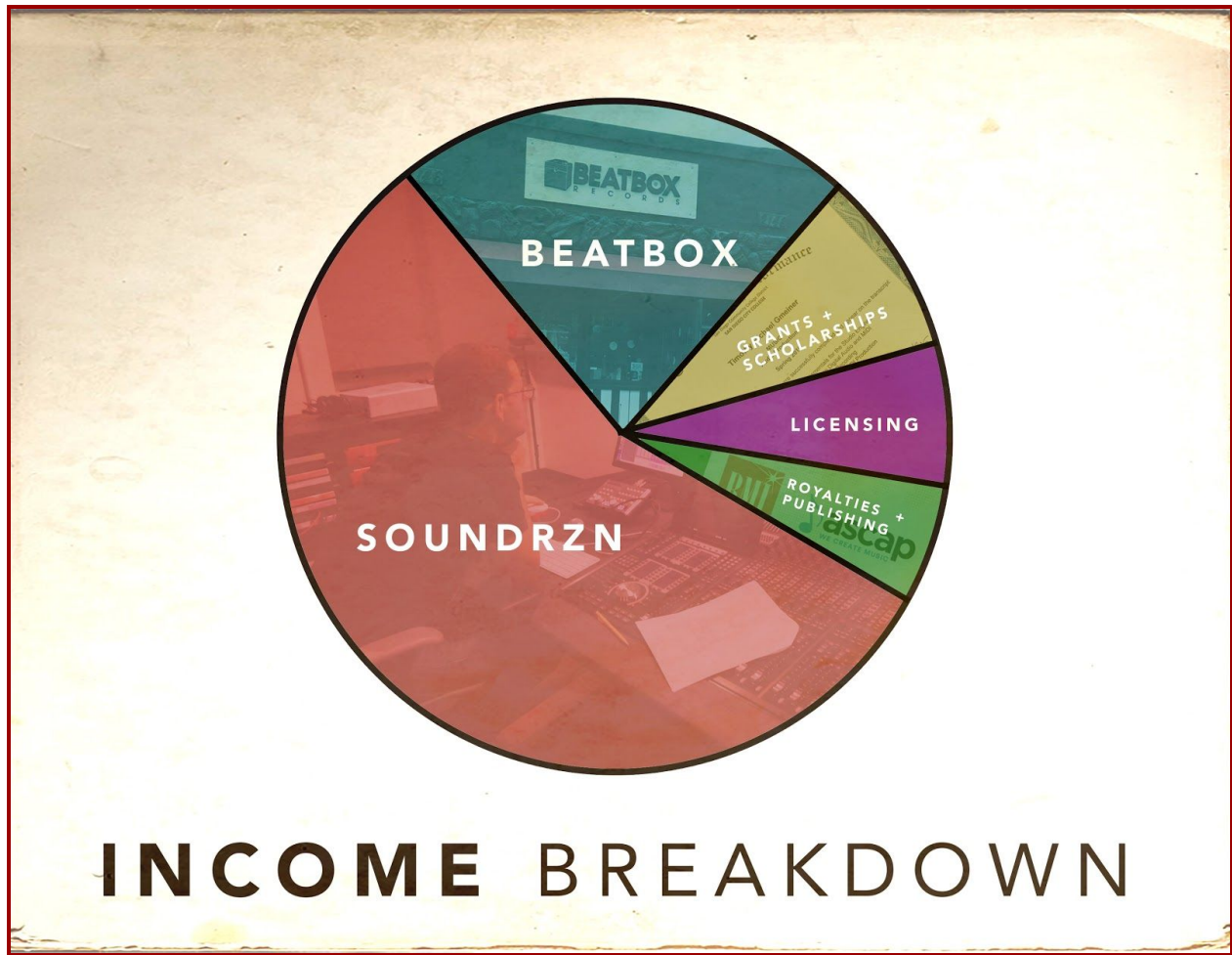


- As I settled into San Diego, my friend Bernie was offered an opportunity himself from selling records online to opening a small record shop in a multi-business building. Bernie reached out to me to assist in running the shop and it was at this point that I found myself now with 3 core streams of income: a budding record shop, JCPenney and my client work.



- Initially JCPenney made up the majority of my income, however neither revenue stream was enough to solely live on. I worked to help increase value and growth of the record shop while pursuing more clients and releasing projects as “ill poetic” to maintain and raise my artist stock. Eventually JCPenney, though still the most reliable form of income, was now bringing in the least amount per month.
- After a year at JCPenney, I broke my ankle and could no longer keep working that job. With a family to support, this put me in a very tight spot.
- With my back against the wall, I had no choice but to level up my other forms of income. I was limited in how much money I could make with the record shop, but by publicizing my production & graphic design company to my existing friends, family and fanbase, I saw the potential to create.





- Before COVID, Beat Box Records operated as my core guaranteed income, which, though limited in how much I make per hour, is key to allowing me to be choosy in my music output and choice of client work of which there is no ceiling to my salary.
- In addition, royalties, publishing checks, licensing, scholarships and grants make up my lump sum or windfall payments, which are used for debt repayment, re-investment or savings.
- I'll also add food delivery - **SAFETY NETS**

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## WORKSHOP THESIS





Why are we all here? *What do you guys do?*

I assume everyone here wants to live exclusively off their passion, whether in art or craft. Speaking for myself when I was in the workforce, it's not just that I hated losing 8 hours a day to a job I wasn't passionate about, it's that I was giving those 8 hours to someone else's vision, sometimes a vision I didn't really align with too heavy. As I get older, I learn that time is my most valuable commodity, more so than money. I want to share time with the people I care about because those memories are all I will have when I'm older. It's worth making less money now to be in ownership of my time.



One of my goals with this workshop is to dispel the myth that living off your art is some magical idea beyond reach. In looking at art-based self-employment as a real, practical goal with a series of steps you need to take, you'll lose the rose-colored glasses but instead begin to see it as a truly attainable goal. Self-Employment is way cooler as a dream than it is as a reality. That said, it's still leagues better than any other job I've had, enough to want to develop a workshop like this and share what I've figured out so far.

***TRANSITION:** So let's get into it. If we all want greater ownership of our time on this planet, there are some initial things we can own now for a miniscule investment of today's time, energy and a little money. Before we get into all these different revenue streams, you need to be prepared to receive them. You can't do this until you own these things:*

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## OWNERSHIP





When we're young, we want to own everything we can get our hands on just to say it's ours, hoping others might see some value in it. If they do, we can trade or sell what we own to own something else that we care more for. Say a kid trades his baseball cards for some records because he really loves records. Now he owns something in a currency that matters to him, and he can get better and better records if he keeps trading. We might call this kid a hustler; he or she continues to trade up until they own the things that are truly most important to them.

There are things we can own early on in this process that we don't even have to trade for, save the initial time and energy of setting up. To create a system of multiple revenue streams, you want to have certain things in place, primarily ownership in 3 key areas:





**OWNERSHIP OF MONEY**

**Legitimize your business and set up a business account to track incoming and outgoing funds; allows you to control your money.**

**Why?**

- *Psychological separation of business + personal money*
- *Tax Write-offs for business expenses*
- *Bank loan options for further expenses*

- **Ownership of Money**

- Legitimizing your business and setting up a business account to track incoming and outgoing funds allows you to control your money.
  - **Why?**
    - Psychological separation of business + personal money
    - Tax Write-offs for business expenses
    - Bank loan options for further expenses
  - **Personal Example:**
    - *I felt comfortable making the leap from JCPenney to investing fully in my design company because I had proof of income made in the years prior via bank statements and invoices. This knowledge gave me the confidence to take what appeared to be a huge risk to others but was, though still super risky, more practical to me.*



or royalty check. Though this income is typically split with the label for reinvestment purposes, these are great examples of passive income, of which I'll discuss momentarily, and show how planting seeds years prior really came to save my ass later.

- I used and continue to use my discography of work to build my own business and clientele. Because I have full ownership of my content, I not only have the right to develop typical artist income streams like licensing, I can also net client work beyond my typical music circles by using my work as a portfolio.



Owning your own domain address

## Why?

- Platforms expire; always have a home you've designed to bring fans and clients
- Pivot your artistic career into additional careers via a single website that you control
- Your domain can become a filter for serious clients to contact you, forcing them to view portfolios, testimonials and other signs of your professionalism

\*Hyperlinked picture of my website that I can quickly show as an example of home-base site sprawling into different partner apps. Include "Why's" and a hyperlinked example of Soundrzn.com via illpoetic.com that shows **route to a contact form**

- **Ownership of Presence**
  - Owning your own domain address (i.e. [www.illpoetic.com](http://www.illpoetic.com))
    - Why?

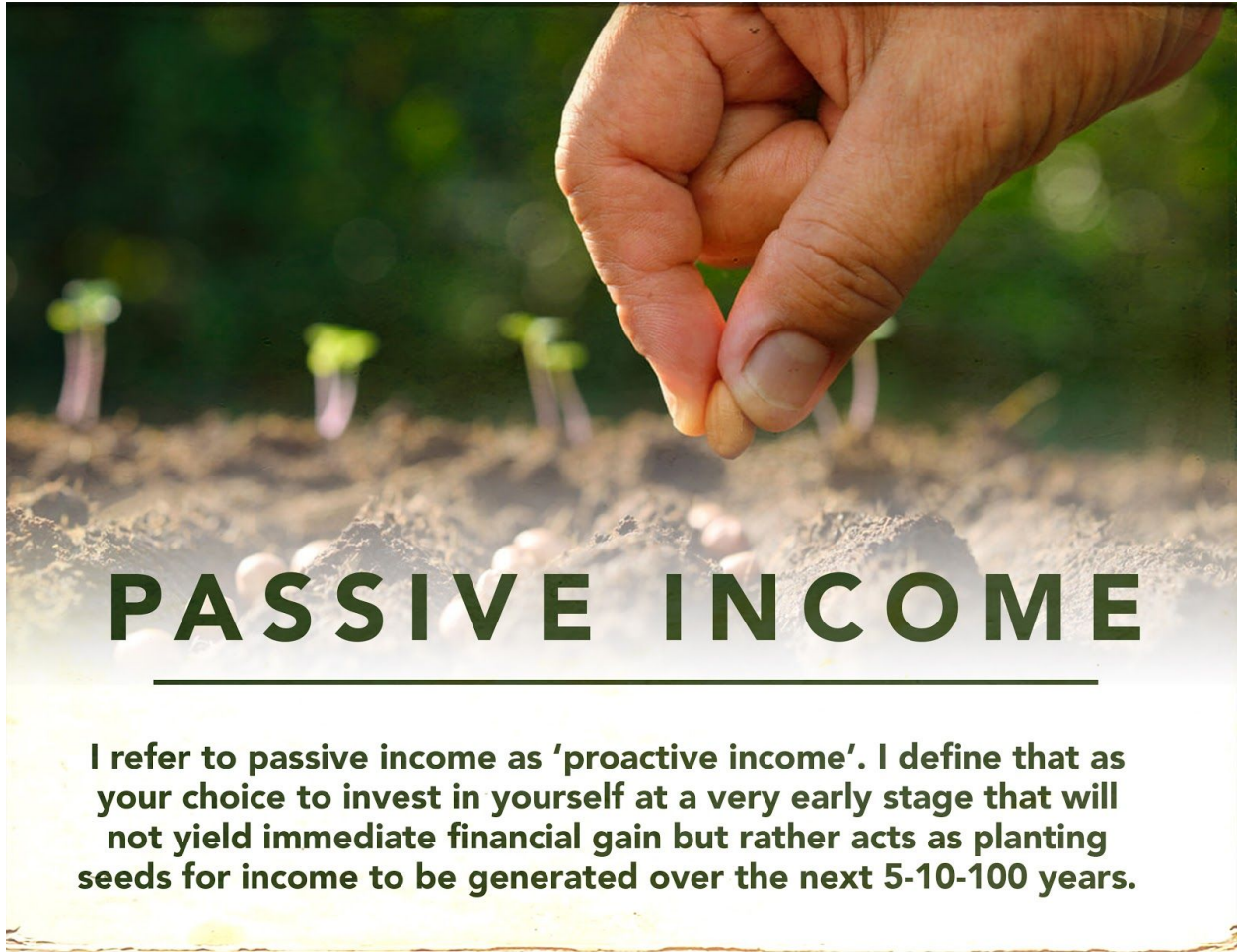


- Platforms expire, always have a home to bring fans and clients back to that you can design to enhance their experience.
- With correct branding, you can pivot your artistic career and harness additional careers and revenue streams into a single website that you can continually mold to your needs.
- Your domain can become a filter for serious clients to contact you, forcing them to view portfolios, testimonials and other signs of your professionalism before sending a formal message through an on-site contact form.
- Once you own your own domain, you can build out to your platforms of choice: whether that be an email list for fans, popular social media platforms or streaming services, whatever applies to you. The goal is to bring them back to your site.
- *Personal Example:*
  - *In launching my SoundRzn company, I invested early into a domain name and SquareSpace site-building platform. I felt I'd amassed a strong portfolio of work and if I was going to launch publicly, I needed to build as professional a house to validate my higher rates for new clients.*

**TRANSITION:** *So what is at your site? Ideally, your site acts as a hub for a growing list of items or services you offer. Therefore your site is the home base for your various streams of income. So first, let's talk about the difference between "Passive Income" and "Active Income".*

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## **PASSIVE (PROACTIVE) VS ACTIVE REVENUE STREAMS**



# PASSIVE INCOME

I refer to passive income as 'proactive income'. I define that as your choice to invest in yourself at a very early stage that will not yield immediate financial gain but rather acts as planting seeds for income to be generated over the next 5-10-100 years.

A quick definition of each:

- **Passive Income:** I refer to passive income as 'proactive income'. I define that as your choice to invest in yourself at a very early stage that will not yield immediate financial gain but rather acts as planting seeds for income to be generated over the next 5-10-100 years.
  - We'll dive deep into specific passive income streams shortly, but think licensing, royalty streams, merchandising, online production tutorials, etc.





# ACTIVE INCOME

**Active income involves earning money based on active use of your time, energy and/or skill-set. Ideally, you want to plant as many passive income seeds as you can before you dive too heavy into what you feel will act as your active income.**

*Examples of active income include freelance work, engineering, graphic design, and touring.*

- **Active Income:** Active income involves earning money based on active use of your time, energy and/or skill-set. Ideally, you want to plant as many passive income seeds as you can before you dive too heavy into what you feel will act as your active income.
  - Examples of active income include freelance work, engineering, graphic design, and touring.

Everything I mentioned in regards to ownership are examples of motions you can put in place while still actively working a day job. In building your structure, you are setting yourself up to take advantage of passive income while continuing to work diligently to earn active income.

**TRANSITION:** So Let's get into it. The various revenue streams you can research and seek out as a modern recording & performing artist or producer.

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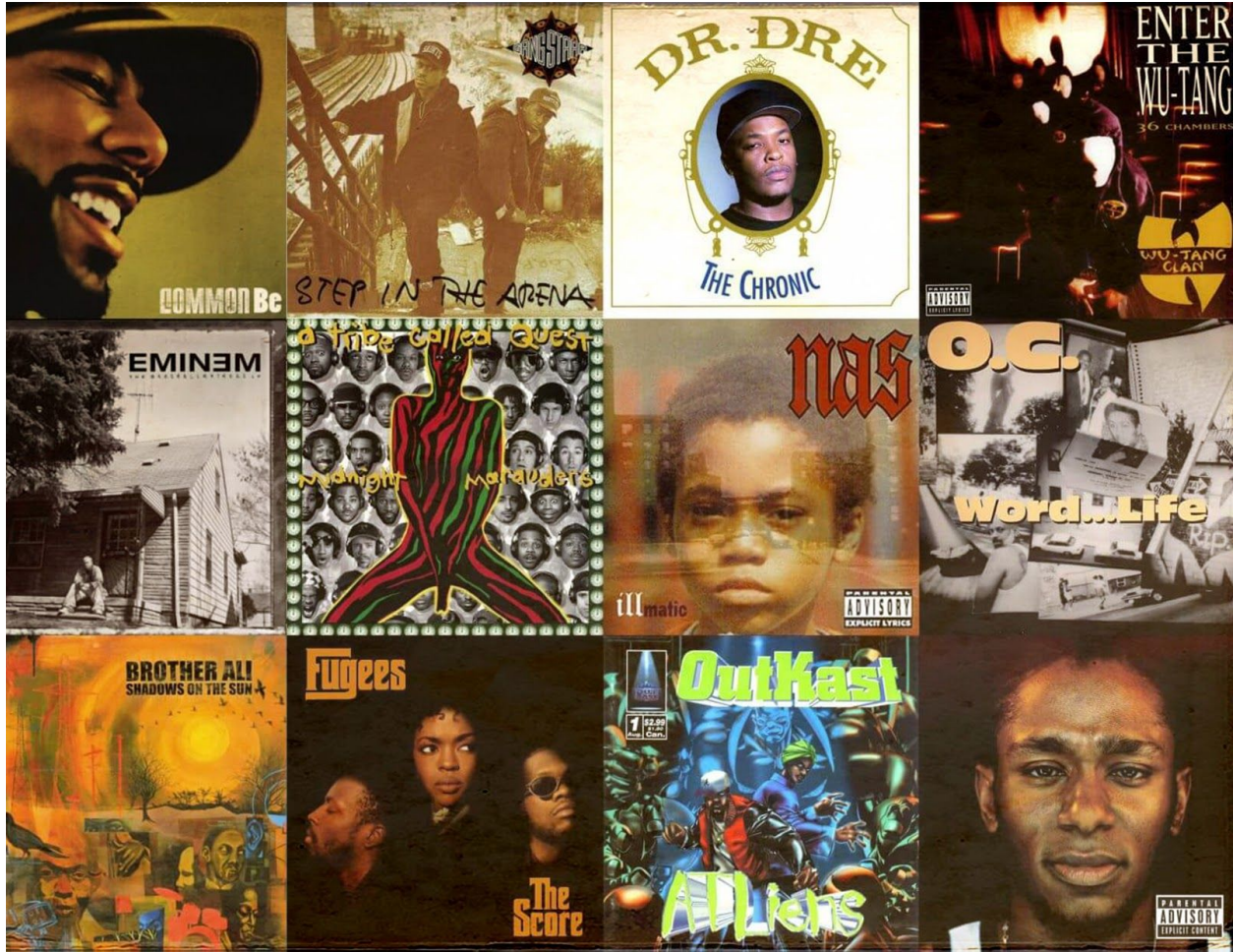
## ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM CAMPAIGN



**CENTER**  
YOUR INCOME  
ON THE ART  
YOU **LOVE** TO CREATE

If you're an artist, you're looking to make money from your art, not just from being a hired hand for other artists. You don't just want to produce records for anyone, you want to produce what you feel highly passionate about. The goal here is to center your income around the art you truly love to create.





So we're going to break this down into what I call the "Anatomy of an Album Campaign". Even if not as popular in the streaming era, albums are still the greatest representation of a music artist's collective work and provides the most thorough process to see it from creation to successful release. So let's break down the steps involved:

# ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM CAMPAIGN

<b>SONGWRITING</b>	<i>An album starts with the writing of the song, both in lyric and melody</i>
<b>PRODUCING</b>	<i>Creation and production of the music around these song ideas</i>
<b>ENGINEERING</b>	<i>Once the music is created, it needs to be recorded, mixed and mastered to be heard as a complete album</i>
<b>VISUALS</b>	<i>Videographers, photographers and graphic designers have become an integral step in the album process</i>
<b>RELEASE PREP</b>	<i>Budgeting money for expenses, building a release schedule and creating a marketing plan with additional assets that support the release</i>
<b>POST-RELEASE</b>	<i>This includes performances, tours, merchandising and other things built to extend the life of the release once out.</i>
<b>CAREER/LEGACY</b>	<i>After repeating this process, you amass a catalog of music which increases your passive and active income streams, opens up new streams as well.</i>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<i>Revenue streams in education and learning new skills and crafts.</i>

- **Songwriting**
  - Typically an album starts with the writing of the song, both in lyric and melody
- **Producing**
  - Next would be the creation and production of the music around these song ideas.
- **Engineering**
  - Once the music is created, it needs to be recorded, mixed and mastered to be heard as a complete album.
- **Visuals: Graphics, Video, Pics**
  - In 2020, an album with no visual component might as well not exist. Videographers, photographers and graphic designers have become an integral step in the process
- **Release Preparation**
  - This involves budgeting money for expenses, building a thorough release schedule and creating a marketing plan with additional assets that support the release
- **Post-Release**



- This includes performances, tours, merchandising and other things built to extend the life of the release once out.
- **Career / Legacy**
  - After repeating this process multiple times, you amass a catalog of music which A) Increases your passive and active income streams and B) Opens up new streams as well.
- **Education / New Skill learning**
  - There are other revenue streams hiding in places you'd least expect, especially as it relates to learning new skills and crafts. I'll share some of my personal experiences with this when we reach this segment.

In offering specific revenue streams that exist during the creation and release of a project, I'll be offering some tenants, stories and lessons I've picked up as it relates to self-employment and entrepreneurship. To set things off I'll start with this:

- **Lesson:** None of the following side-careers I'm going to offer will work without high quality work and effort. In offering these additional revenue streams, I'm assuming you've already dedicated yourself to your craft and put your 10,000 hours in. If you're not disciplined and focused enough to create and release your own work consistently at your maximum potential then the rest of this workshop will be a waste of your time. This is all predicated on high-quality output. But we'll assume everyone here is working at the highest level they know and looking to continue growing in their skill-set and creativity.

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## REVENUE STREAMS FOR EVERY STEP OF CREATION & RELEASE OF A PROJECT

I have not personally had experience in every revenue stream I'm about to mention, but I will be sharing which careers I've taken on and offer tips, not just on that particular career but also on some general principles I've learned as it relates to self-employment period and thread them all together.

If you know of a career or revenue stream that you feel fits in one of these steps, feel free to let me know and we can add it in if it fits. So here goes:

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So we're going to pull all of these potential revenue streams from the smallest steps of each part of the creative process, starting with Songwriting & Vocal Recording:

## Songwriting & Vocal Recording



### ***Income Streams:***

- **ACTIVE / PASSIVE:** *Write for other artists*
  - I don't have a ton of experience in this, but fantastic for the world of publishing. There are writing camps, workshops and a ton of ASCAP/BMI Expo workshops that get into all this.
- **ACTIVE:** *Charge for features and collaborations*
  - Specifically for rappers or vocalists who can sing a great hook. Your ability to negotiate your demand and worth for other artists is based on how you present and carry yourself as an artist.
- **ACTIVE:** *Create Songs to release, perform and sell*
  - The most standard income to be made from song-writing



# Songwriting & Vocal Recording



**4. ACTIVE:**  
Pivot writing to other platforms

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**5. ACTIVE:**  
Social Media Stories, Tweets, etc

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**6. ACTIVE:**  
Screenwriter

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- **ACTIVE:** *Pivot writing to other platforms:*
  - I'll offer a story below on this. If you're a songwriter, you may find you're good at writing articles, blogs or even books.
- **ACTIVE:** *Social Media Stories, Tweets, etc*
  - Again, if you can tell a story in song, you may be better than most who can't tell a story on social media to save their lives. Random picture with no captions, nothing engaging.
- **ACTIVE:** *Screenwriter*
  - Again, if you can write a story in song, you may find yourself writing out treatments and storyboards for accompanying videos. This may lead to you writing a full screenplay for TV or film.
    - Example: Blitz the Ambassador: from "Native Sun" to "Burial of Kojo"

# Songwriting & Vocal Recording

**7. ACTIVE:**  
Copywriter

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**8. ACTIVE:**  
Voice-Over work

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**9. PASSIVE:**  
Vocal library for sample-based producers

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**10. ACTIVE:**  
Writer Workshops

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- **ACTIVE:** *Copywriter*
  - If you're in a crew with other aspiring artists, you may find one of you is best at writing bios, social media announcements or press releases for your group. This is a skill you may be able to leverage for other local groups, bands, start-ups, or eventually companies completely unrelated to music if so inclined.
- **ACTIVE:** *Voice-Over work*
  - If you've recorded a lot, you'll find you're more comfortable with your voice than most. You may be able to find work in local professional studios as a voice-over talent (local radio, corporate commercials, etc)
- **PASSIVE:** *Vocal library for sample-based producers.*
  - Just as musicians may record their instruments or drums for sample kits, you can do the same as a vocalist and allow your voice to be sampled.
- **ACTIVE:** *Writer Workshops*
  - Nothing makes you a better learner than becoming a teacher. Offering writer workshops to younger aspiring writers may not bring in a ton of money, but you're building relationships and fantastic reputation



throughout your local art and small business community. You may see a unique potential in your workshop that pushes you to make it part of a school or community curriculum.



The image is a screenshot of a CityBeat magazine article. At the top, the CityBeat logo is in red, followed by navigation tabs for NEWS, VOICES, MUSIC, ARTS & CULTURE, and FOOD & DRINK. The article text begins with an Editor's Note: "Late last year, local MC/producer Ill Poetic followed up a Midwest tour with a three-and-a-half-week jaunt in Europe. The tour (also featuring artists like Pharoahe Monch, Necro and OC) took the local Hip Hop artist to Germany, Romania, Switzerland and other countries. Below are excerpts from his trip blogs/diaries." The article is titled "Day 1" and starts with "This trip had a crazy lead-up. I had to drive to Chicago to get my passport two days before I left, which wasn't fun." There are two photographs: one of Ill Poetic looking out a window at a city, and another of him with a group of friends in a city at night. The album cover for "ill poetic the world is ours" is also visible.

- **Personal Story**

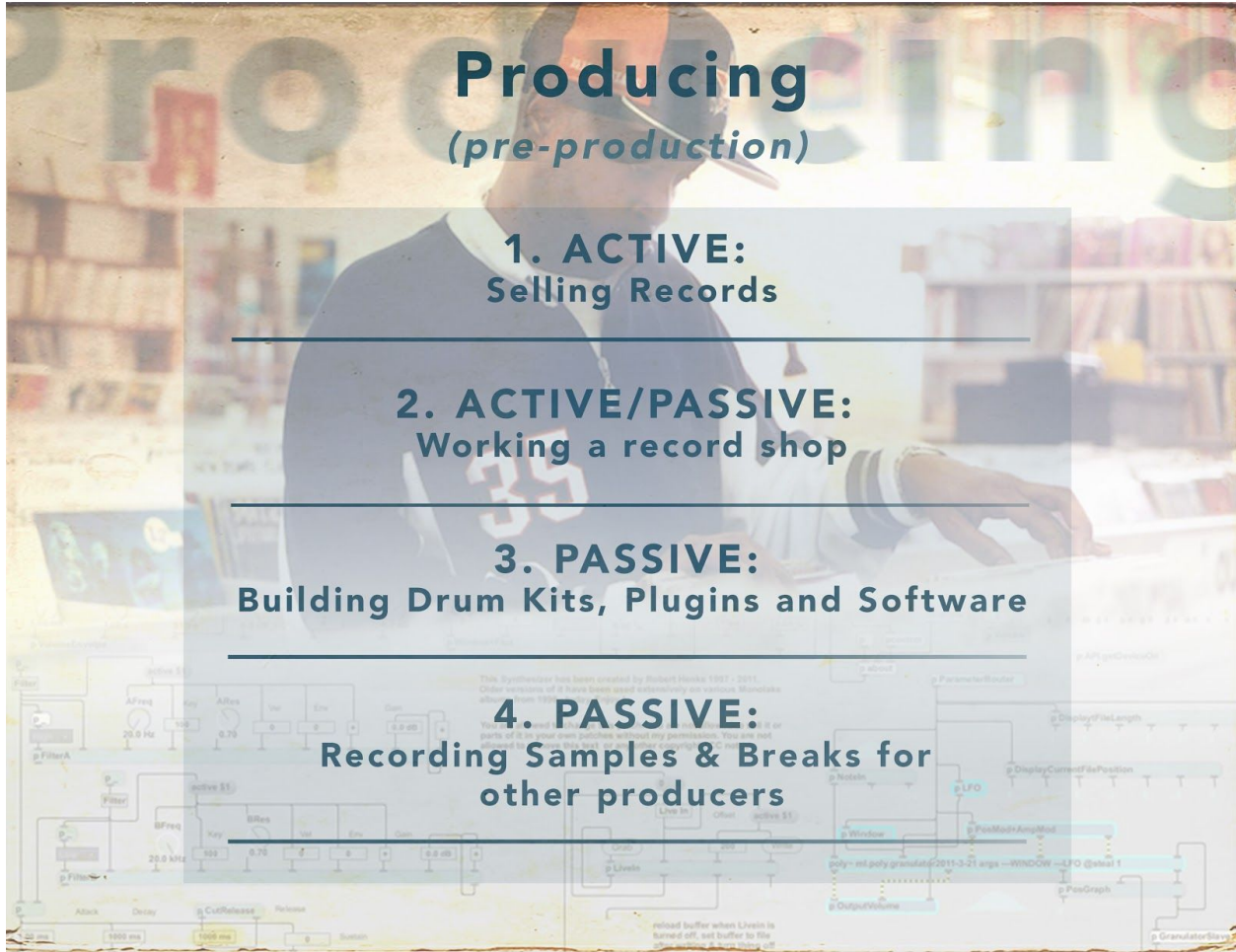
- In 2007, I released an album titled "The World is Ours" that would act as my break-out album on the underground hip-hop circuit. I toured heavily and was invited to tour Europe that year with some pretty big names. I reached out to CityBeat Magazine to inquire about writing an ongoing blog documenting my travels. I initially did this to keep my name relevant back home while I was on tour, however this blog led to a monthly writing column with Citybeat over the next 2 years. I now have my own self-published column that keeps me connected to my readers and affords me a portfolio of pieces should I ever choose to write for a larger website.
- I don't technically make money at this, however I'm building cache with supporters and other platforms as well as building my writing skill-set to eventually embark on writing a book or even these workshops.

- **Lesson:** The lesson here is to become aware of the various skills you're building beyond the one you may be solely focused on and then learn how to leverage them toward people who may be in need. It's your job to find out who those people are by communicating and empathizing to what they really need, as they don't always know they're the ones in need until you present what you offer. These are not always clients to be charged, but may act as capital toward building a strong relationship with someone in a position to help you as well.
    - **Story Breakdown:** I gained value as an artist by having my name and content placed monthly in a local paper (Citybeat) that tens of thousands of people read regularly. I gained a skill-set of more long-form editorial-based writing. The paper gained content from an outside voice with a reputable name in the city. This built an ongoing relationship with Citybeat, allowing me to reach out any time I feel I have something warranting coverage.
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I'm going to spend a lot of time focusing on production because as a producer it's where I've seen the most opportunity to open up revenue streams. So let's for a moment separate production into 3 portions: "Pre-Production, Production and Post-Production" and let's tackle some possible side-careers in each segment that might flow with your artist path.

## Producing





- **Income Streams - Pre-Production**

- **ACTIVE:** *Selling Records*

- There's a market to flipping and selling records online and vending at events, which is how Beat Box Records got started via Bernie.

- **ACTIVE/PASSIVE:** *Working a record shop*

- This one pertains to me, so I'd like to take a sec to offer some insight into how this revenue stream works for me in real life, as well as a general lesson I've learned when it comes to navigating various revenue streams:

- **Story:** I oversee Beat Box Records twice a week, While getting paid to be there, I work on client work, homework, my projects and even this workshop. Behind the scenes, my ears are digging for samples to produce future beats with and I have my entire catalog available for purchase. For two days every week, I have approximately 3-4 ways I'm making money in one sitting. This doesn't even count passive income of online streams or album sales.

- **Lesson:** I find it easier when all revenue streams move in the same direction. The moment a revenue stream begins pushing against the others, you have a real problem. This is why JCPenney was problematic, it pushed against the time I needed for other more rewarding revenue outlets. This may mean you've taken on a project that became larger than you'd expect for the price you quoted. Now this project is taking time away from your other revenue streams and projects, not to mention family and free time. At this point, you would either need to drop the project, eek it out until you finish, or renegotiate your prices. I'll get a bit into negotiation down the line.
- **PASSIVE:** *Building Drum Kits, Plugins and Software*
  - There are a million crafts to master in a career as broad-stroked as music production. Are you concerned with overseeing producing a fully arranged album or are you more interested in sculpting the sound of a kick drum or synth? You may find after producing for years that you're fascinated with how certain plugins work and decide you want to build one for yourself. There are careers for these opportunities that are still built to enhance your focus as an artist.
- **PASSIVE:** *Recording Samples & Breaks for other producers*
  - Much like the vocalist and the producer above offering sample packs and drum kits, if you're a producer who plays keys, guitar or drums, you may want to record yourself playing random riffs, licks and progressions and offer those as samples for other producers to purchase. Most producers will assume these are fair-use samples and will not owe you money beyond the initial upfront fee to use.

# Producing

(production)

**5. ACTIVE:**  
Selling Beats (local & placement)

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**6. ACTIVE:**  
Sound-Design and Scoring  
major film, small film

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**7. ACTIVE:**  
Live Sets / DJing

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**8. ACTIVE:**  
Creating albums

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- **Income Streams - Production**

- **ACTIVE: Selling Beats (local & placement)**

- I don't have much experience with large label placements to offer much advice. It's always been a game I didn't feel I fit as a producer so it wasn't worth my investment of time. I included this as a stream of revenue in production because I now focus on selling ideas and skeletons of beats to be built upon in a custom fashion for a more personally and financially rewarding experience. As far as selling beats locally, I'll share a story on how I learned to grow this service out to better fit me.



# OVER-DELIVERING



**Story:** *I've been producing and mixing or co-mixing the lion's share of my albums for the past 15 years. I did this selfishly for me, but I quickly learned other artists were interested in buying beats or getting a song mixed and so I reluctantly offered my services.*

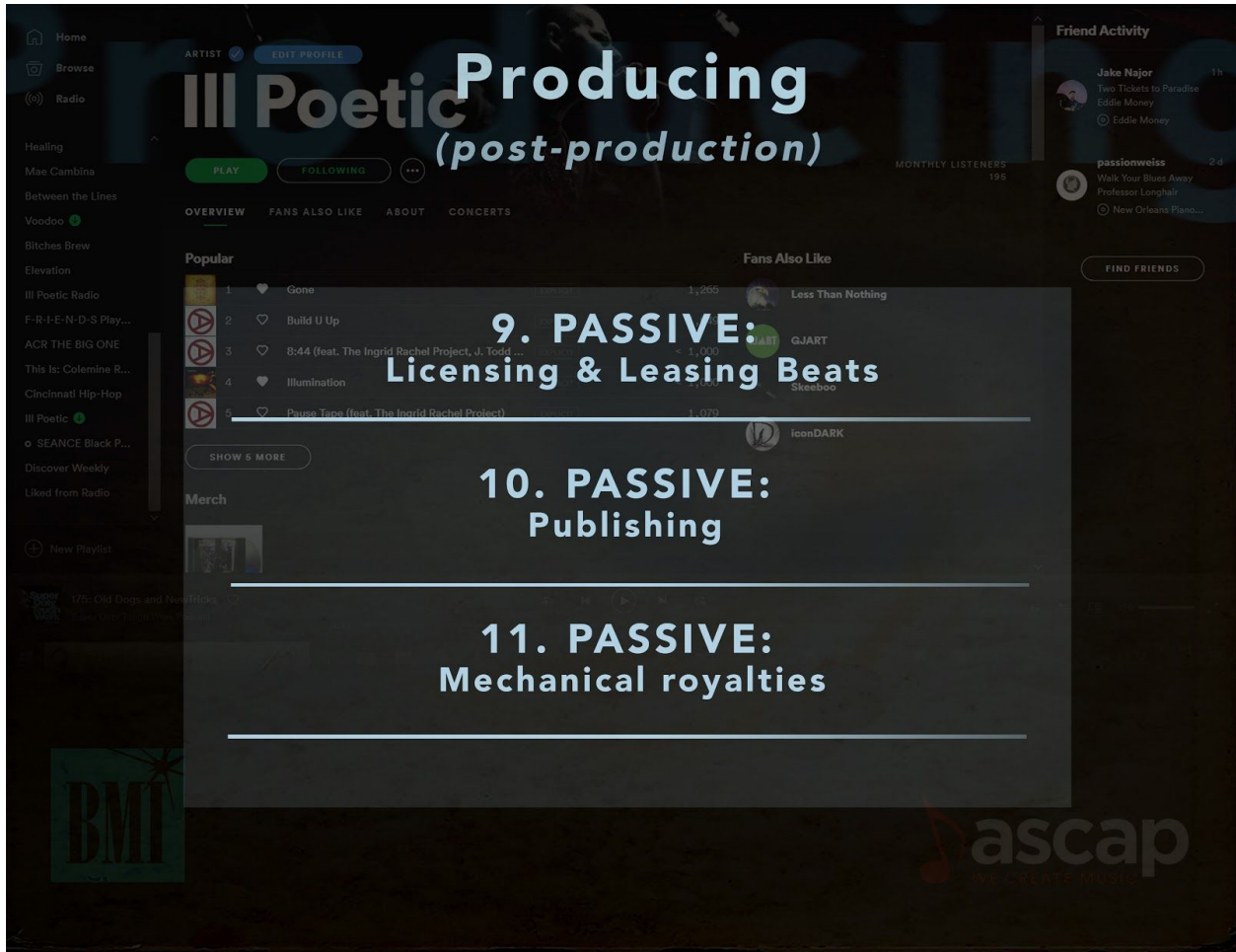
*I've sold a lot of beats to local artists in various scenes over the years but never found it to be a sustainable source of income. I may send out a batch of beats once a year if that any more. Rather I kept growing in my production for my own projects and that was noticed by other artists. While many artists still wanted a basic batch of beats to skim through, I began to attract artists looking for deeper levels of production that involved my entire skillset: production, post-production, writing for and recording with live musicians, and mixing a fully produced record. I added immense value to this service by investing in my own personal projects then showcasing the results.*

*One client in particular is my guy Brandon (B. Shields). Brandon came up as a fan of mine during the Cincinnati Top Cats era and reached out years ago to purchase some beats. The exchange went well on all fronts and a couple years later he reached out for a logo design, a more costly service, The exchange went well again. After releasing my "Idiot's Guide to*

*Anarchy” album of which I’d pushed my production skillset to its max potential, Brandon reached out for custom production work. As we’ve now built an extreme trust in each other, this new process involved composing an idea from scratch, pushing my creativity into areas I’ve been wanting to personally travel for years. Not to mention, Brandon trusts me to find top tier musicians from my local scene to execute where needed. Per his financing, not only am I able to work with top level musicians and widen my skillset as a producer, I’m able to pay them up front and build a strong relationship with them for future needs and opportunities.*

*In reciprocation, I print out my notation sheet music for the musicians, session notes, pics and video for Brandon to use in his eventual campaign. The entire experience is a win for all parties involved as we’re each adding value to each other in ways we’d never even meant to when this started. The price for this tier of production is far different than buying a beat and for me, the process is so much more rewarding, as I’m producing work I’m genuinely proud of and growing from.*

- **ACTIVE:** *Sound-Design and Scoring major film, small film*
  - I’ve sound-designed my friend’s short films but haven’t done a ton more. While really fun, this one wasn’t quite for me so I tend to avoid. I’d prefer to stick to scoring. I recommend starting small, reaching out to local budding filmmakers and at least pick their brain and offer scoring services to get your feet wet. Scoring is an entirely different monster to learn as a producer.
- **ACTIVE:** *Live Sets / DJing*
  - If you consider yourself a bedroom producer, I recommend stepping on to a stage and playing your music out. Great for general feedback on what works and what doesn’t, but opens up a revenue stream on the live show circuit and could eventually couple itself with DJing opportunities if so inclined.
- **ACTIVE:** *Creating albums*
  - Finally, what better way to present your portfolio of work than to put an instrumental album out, or an album showcasing your strengths as a producer. This is your greatest resume and will travel farther than any business card or meeting.



- **Income Streams - Post-Production**

- **PASSIVE: Licensing & Leasing Beats**

- Sync licensing is a term most producers and artists know by now: you're offering the recipient ( commercial, film, TV music company) the rights to use your music within their content for an agreed upon fee, either upfront or on the back end in perpetuity (like royalties). You can also choose for your music to be exclusively or non-exclusively licensed to the client in question.

- Has anyone licensed their music before? Do you mind sharing?
- I get the feeling most producers and artists imagine music supervisors at these companies to be white dudes in suits far removed from anything really out here popping. I want to share the story of how I recently placed a beat for a show on HBO and how that all originated from being involved in the Cincinnati hip-hop scene, specifically Top Cats
- **Story:** Meeting Donwill



- *Leasing*: I've always been averse to leasing beats, I don't like multiple artists using the same beat, it feels scammy. However, leasing may be an option to be viewed as low-level licensing: offering podcasts, YouTube influencers and vlogs access to borrow your music for a sliding fee. **PASSIVE**: *Publishing*
- I talked about owning your content when we started, and this is where it comes in handy. By having your publishing and performance rights in order, whether via BMI or ASCAP, you set yourself up to receive quarterly checks that pay *in addition to* your licensing check.
- **PASSIVE**: *Mechanical royalties*
  - Don't plan to pay bills off your streaming royalties, but at least take solace that this is a perpetual form of passive income. If you have anything available on a streaming service, you're making money right now and already have a clear hold on the concept of passive income. There's incentive here to create as well, the more music you have available the more you make.



- ***Income Streams - Additional***

- **PASSIVE:** *Production tutorials*

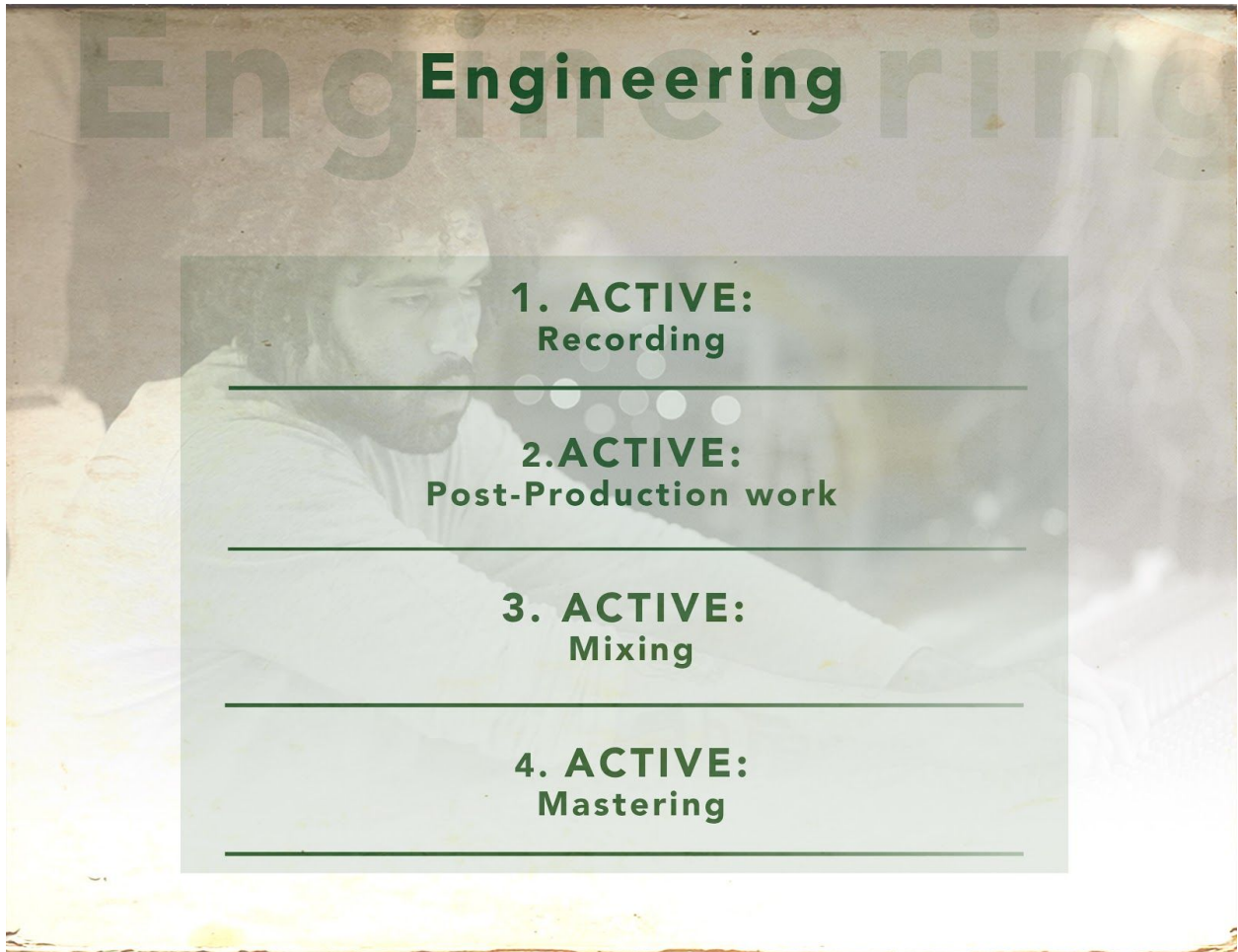
- As with writer workshops, there is still a huge interest in online tutorials; production, mixing or mastering. There have been numerous successful YouTube tutorial producers who have gone on to both offer workshops and live sets at large scale festivals based on their ability to blend their tutorial with their art.

- **ACTIVE:** *Certified Trainer*

- If you know your DAW well enough, you can go through some basic classes and steps that will give you official certification to ultimately train others on that program.

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## Engineering



- **Income Streams**

- **ACTIVE: Recording**
  - This includes recording music, sound design for film, voiceovers, jingles)
- **ACTIVE: Post-Production work**
  - I feel there's a new marketing opening for post-producers: producers who may not make the original beat, but may add additional instrumentation as well as particular automations and EFX to existing vocals or music. This career may also come via an engineer who gains trust from the artist and producer, they may be given more clearance to add effects, vocal switch ups and other ideas typically offered by the producer. Great example, Mixed By Ali for TDE albums.
- **ACTIVE: Mixing**
  - This can be a natural career choice for producers and artists who get good at mixing their own work and get strong feedback from fans, artists and other more legitimate engineers
- **ACTIVE: Mastering**



- As with mixing, when you really learn what mastering entails, you may find you really enjoy that process and want to focus solely on mastering. My mastering engineer for “*Idiot’s Guide to Anarchy*” is considered one of the greatest mastering engineers in the world and he did so by focusing exclusively on mastering.



- **PASSIVE:** *Owning & running a studio with employees*
  - This only becomes passive as a studio is running smoothly and making enough money for itself. Typically, owning a studio is a full-time job just for recoup alone. Benefit to owning a studio is having access to high quality recording and mixing rooms and equipment at your leisure.
- **PASSIVE:** *Mixing & Mastering tutorials*
  - Same as producer tutorials above
- **ACTIVE:** *Studio Design and Development, treatment design, hardware design & repair*
  - You may find as a producer that you’re interested in live recording and producing. As you get into this world, other side careers open up,

including studio design and development, treatment building, hardware design and repair. Again, you can still lead with your art and specialize in these trades.



- **Personal Stories**

- Though I am a student in the San Diego City College Music Program, my company SoundRzn was hired last semester to both oversee the SDCCD campus studio as well as organize and brand events throughout the school year. I now get paid to learn how to use a large-scale studio space. This revenue stream flows with all of my others and makes sense to keep.

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**Visuals: Graphics, Video, Pics**





- **Income Streams**

- **ACTIVE: Album Art Design**

- Once an album is mixed and mastered, the logical next step is album art. Whether just a digital release or pressing to CD or vinyl, this definitely a career that works hand in hand with creating your music. I've learned so much on how to better brand myself and visually present my albums because of the numerous other album designs I've taken on.

- **ACTIVE: Press Pics**

- Just as with writing for artists in need of better social media, if you find your IG page really stands out with great pictures, this is a service to offer other artists you feel may be in need. If you see an artist in need, it may help to present some ideas alongside your offer, chances are they don't even give their IG page enough thought to realize this is an issue.

- **Lesson:** This is often the job of a freelancer, to convince someone why your service is of so much value to them

- **ACTIVE: Posters & Flyers**

- Same with album art.



- **Story:** My graphic design career started because I was sick of seeing my name on poorly designed flyers. (etc)
  - **Lesson:** If someone wants to pay you for your services, let them pay you. Don't become so focused on your own path that you miss out on opportunities that will fund your long-term career while not taking you too far out from your original artistic goals. I don't always love every client piece I take on, but the longer I do this, the more I've developed a style and trusted clientele. A majority of my graphic design pieces now add to my own career and inform my stylistic choices for my projects.
  - **ACTIVE: Logos**
    - Every brand hits a point where they realize they need a logo, especially with a Facebook and IG page. Logos go beyond artists, every small business is in need of a logo. Logos tend to take longer to create and perfect, but as an exchange, I price much higher for them.
  - **ACTIVE: Video**
    - Music is almost fully dependent on video accompaniment in our current era. The more you know about videography, the better for your own career. As you learn for yourself and perhaps invest in a small DSLR camera, you may find friends and other artists reaching out for your services. As you gain experience, you may also find your services work well with local production crews.
  - **Lesson (Negotiation):** I want to use this section to touch on a question we all ask when we begin offering a service or skill or even our performance as an artist. How do we negotiate for higher rates when there doesn't seem to be a willingness to pay it?
  - *How did I get my rates higher and higher when people don't pay that price?* I developed more streams of revenue as to never be fully dependent or thirsty for one. I never want to appear thirsty, even when times are tough. This allows me to maintain a brand of high quality both in product and experience with the client. I can now charge \$1000 for a logo or \$2000 for custom production with confidence and use it as a barometer to turn down client work I may not be interested in.
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## PROJECT PREPARATION & RELEASE



- **Income Streams**

- **ACTIVE: Project management & release Consultant**

- Once you've fully released a project, you become aware of all the moving parts and all the hurdles you've cleared in releasing. In this you've developed a unique set of skills that actually translates well to other industries, specifically as a project manager. I remember sharing my Google Doc with one of my partners while he was working at Tesla and he told me how much my doc mirrored corporate project docs as well. That really let me know that we as artists have it in us to build and execute on projects just as much as any corporate entity can if we're willing to put the work in. Years ago when I was hired by JCPenney as a manager in their call center, it wasn't my customer service experience that got me hired, it was my experience in organizing projects and problem solving in real time. You'd be surprised how much your experience as an independent artist can translate over into a nice job. If ever interested in going that route, just know you're building strong skills to do so by self-releasing projects.

- **ACTIVE: *Social Media Consultant***
  - There is definitely a market for this, I know because we're currently using them ourselves. This is an area where young artists can really thrive and connect with the older artists in their scene who may need a little help really maximizing social media. There are things about current platforms that just come naturally to younger people, period. Older artists like myself have to learn from you and figure out how to transform it into something that fits my MO. If you're willing to take a few more steps in learning how to maximize social media for your own career, which you probably already are, then start looking for some other local artists who you think could use a helping hand and offer it.
- **ACTIVE: *Copywriter***
  - The Copywriter is responsible for writing press releases and marketing plans. If you found yourself excelling at writing social media stories for other artists or small businesses, your next step may be in writing a press release that really tells their story and clearly states the intent of what they're preparing to present. This side-career may also spill into artist and project branding.
- **ACTIVE: *Artist and project branding***
  - tbd
- **ACTIVE: *Publicist***
  - A publicist is responsible for helping an artist get and manage press for their project. Early in an artist's career, you find yourself reaching out to local press, blogs, sites, curiators and tastemakers in hopes that they will highlight your music. If you're good at building these relationships, you may find that you have some other artists you're a fan of in your local scene who you feel should be highlighted on these platforms as well. As you begin to pass them on to these press outlets, you build a reputation as somewhat of a talent scout. If done right, these press outlets begin to trust you when you send artists their way. This middle-manning between artists and press positions you as somewhat of a publicist which is still an in-demand position within the music industry and even at a local level can offer a new stream of income.





- ***Personal Stories***

- I believe in using all parts of the animal after you've killed it. When I prepare to release a new project, I am thinking of every possible monetizable angle I can for that project. The roll-out to my most recent album "*An Idiot's Guide to Anarchy*" was started a year before it dropped. I built a Google Doc and figured every angle of potential income stream I could.



- Pressing & Selling Vinyl
- Licensing Music
- Continuing the brand into a short animated piece and series of workshops and curriculum
- Using email blasts not just to promote the content but to offer genuine maintenance to the various music and art industry relationships I build
- Adding another album and more income to our label's growing catalog, building our overall long-term value as a company.
- Producing a full analysis of the projects creation to present as a resume to future clients, therefore netting client work with examples of my production, co-mixing, visual branding and execution of release
- Providing various forms of social media content (videos, pics, BTS stories, marketing assets, etc) to last me through a season of social media and keep my name relevant in social circles.
- **LESSON:** Nobody is going to figure your path out for you. Workshops like this should hopefully help generate some ideas, but self-employment means figuring it out for yourself as your life depends on it. You have to

have more faith in your own decision making and critical thinking skills than you do your current boss. As it relates to my music, I'm no longer dependent solely on the record to pay for itself. It's my responsibility as an artist to stay abreast of evolving revenue streams and see if one fits my path and skillset then adapt as quickly as possible.

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A lot of artists lose interest or may just be confused as to how to keep generating momentum and income from a project once it's released. Below are some examples that can be implemented with everything listed above.

## Post-Release

**Post-Release**

- 1. PASSIVE:**  
Streaming Royalties
- 2. PASSIVE:**  
Synch Licensing Opportunities
- 3. PASSIVE:**  
Publishing

The graphic features a dark background with the title 'Post-Release' in large, bold, yellow-green letters. Below the title, three items are listed in a vertical stack, each separated by a horizontal line. The items are: '1. PASSIVE: Streaming Royalties', '2. PASSIVE: Synch Licensing Opportunities', and '3. PASSIVE: Publishing'. The text is in a bold, yellow-green font. In the background, there are faint, semi-transparent logos for 'BMI' and 'ASCAP'.



We've spoken about these already, but worth repeating, once your album is released, you are available to receive streaming, licensing and publishing revenue.

- **Income Streams**
  - **PASSIVE:** *Streaming Royalties*
  - **PASSIVE:** *Synch Licensing Opportunities*
  - **PASSIVE:** *Publishing*



- **ACTIVE / PASSIVE:** *Selling Merch / Physical Product*
  - Once the album is released, most artists typically think about what merchandise might work best with the release. Not every project calls for CD or vinyl pressing. You have to know what you think will move
    - **Example:** In preparation for our label release of HunterPrey "HyDef", we decided to forego CDs and vinyl and instead create custom digital pens that not only hold the album inside it via USB, they write and record audio. Hunter has a strong fanbase of writers and creatives, so not only does the pen act as his album, it

acts as a collector's item and actual tool for other creatives. The cost of purchasing a limited run is low so recoup is extremely probable and quick. If this doesn't work, we've lost little money and can invest elsewhere.

- **Lesson:** In addition to an online store, you should definitely be selling any available merch at shows. And if doing so, I recommend making sure you live at the merch booth any moment you are not on stage. If friends want to see you, have them visit you at the merch booth, This is the difference between a night of no sales and hundreds to thousands of dollars in sales. Always be near your merch.
- Though initial investment may be potentially sizable, this acts as passive income in that it creates long-term fans who come back to more shows and more merch. It does however require constant reinvestment.

**Post-Release**

**5. ACTIVE:**  
Performance Income (Shows & Tours)

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**6. ACTIVE:**  
Booking Agent, Festival or Show Promoter

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**7. PASSIVE:**  
Tour Manager

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**8. ACTIVE:**  
Stage Design, Live Sound, Tour Design

- **ACTIVE:** Performance income (Shows & Tours)

- This topic is a workshop all on it's own. Suffice to say, once you've amassed a following, you gain leverage to begin charging a performance fee. The more leverage you have, meaning the more aware you are of how many fans pay to see you, the larger a fee you can charge.
  - **ACTIVE: Booking agent, festival or show promoter**
    - As you spend time in the club circuit, you build relationships, ideally with goal-oriented partners. Artists tend to book shows with each other to increase draw. Some may have goals of booking larger national artists while others may ultimately cultivate a sub-scene of the local music scene by building platforms for artists to create community (*Sam Rothstein example*). As you continue booking, you may see opportunity to book larger artists and align yourself with them. Once you've massaged this relationship, you may find yourself an asset to their team, which could ultimately lead to joining them on tour.
  - **ACTIVE: Tour Manager**
    - One of the best ways to join larger artists on tour is to learn the skills and gain the experience needed to become a tour manager. Beyond just booking shows with a series of local promoters, a tour manager may be responsible for booking the hotel and budgeting time and money for expenses. This tends to be a job you learn by accident through booking your own tours and figuring it out as you go. I personally hated doing this, which is why I only tend to take on show or tour opportunities already booked for me.
  - **ACTIVE: Stage Design, Live Sound, Tour Design**
    - If you find yourself designing elaborate stage shows for your existing act, this may be a service you begin offering to other acts or even other industries that use a stage platform period. I've never gotten into this world, but if you begin envisioning a massive stage show for yourself, finding work on larger stage platforms could
  - **Personal Stories**
    - I've tried my hand at many of these but didn't have the patience to see many out. I stuck with what showed me the best results
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Once you've released a series of projects, you gain an extremely rare skill-set and you have genuine stats behind you to back your skills up. You have proof of projects executed and released and numbers to actually show these accomplishments. You don't have to be a multi-platinum artist or producer to have genuine credentials, however over the course of your career you've ideally built a reputation through your ongoing work which speaks for itself and opens up doors that may not have initially been available.



## Career / Legacy



- **Income Streams**

- **ACTIVE:** *Teaching, Workshops & Lectures*

- I shared my AIGTA release campaign with one of the directors at Groove University in Columbus, OH and was offered a soft invite to teach what I'm speaking on now if I ever return. Same response at SDCCD inspired my to develop my curriculum and workshop at colleges, festivals and community centers to sharpen and actualize it. This is literally what I'm doing right now.

- **PASSIVE:** *Online Classes for independent artists*

- Once my curriculum is established, I may choose to present workshops like this online either for free, a fee or subscription. Whatever I choose, I'm ultimately bringing in people who ideally find enough value in what I offer to support me either socially or financially.

- **PASSIVE:** *Selling Curriculum, book writing*





- **Income Streams**
    - PASSIVE: Grants, scholarships
  - **Personal Stories**
    - I've gone back to school as a full-time student to pursue my BA in Music (possibly MA or PhD) which will allow me to teach my curriculum. I've sought out every grant and scholarship I can get my hands on to assist in this.
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## MARKETING & DEVELOPING A STORY



I've learned in my own career that by introducing your side-careers into your 'artist brand' you don't want to create too harsh a pivot that makes your narrative hard to follow. If you still prefer to be looked at as an artist and not a freelancer or booking agent, etc., you have to figure out



ways to integrate these side careers into your artist fold in a way that expands who you are in the eyes of your followers and keeps your artistry in the front.

Many people have day jobs within the music industry while creating on the side. By reframing and effectively branding yourself, you can merge these passions together and create a single entity under your artist name, specifically in how you choose to tell your story. You define your own narrative and it's up to you to see yourself first as you hope others to see you publicly soon following.

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### Contact Info:

- I help run Beat Box Records in San Diego, CA. This business We specialize in rare funk, soul, jazz and hip-hop. If ever out there give me a ring - Follow the shop at IG [@beatbox\\_records](#).
  - I operate SoundRzn Design, my audio production & visual design company. If ever interested in my services, visit [www.soundrzn.com](http://www.soundrzn.com) and send me a message there.
  - I co-run a music label, Definition Music and license my music through our publishing company, ReDefinition Publishing. You can check out our catalog of music at [www.definitionmusic.net](http://www.definitionmusic.net)
  - I'm part of an organization named All Ranges of Thought (or ART), a small collective of businesses that offer a series of resources designed to inspire and assist creative individuals and creative communities. Resources from this lecture can be found via their website, [www.allrangesofthought.com](http://www.allrangesofthought.com)
  - I am Ill Poetic. I'm a music artist, emcee and producer who writes and sells vinyl, shirts and more at [www.illpoetic.com](http://www.illpoetic.com). You can listen to or purchase my discography on any streaming platform at [www.smarturl.com/illpoetic](http://www.smarturl.com/illpoetic).
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## EXTRA

### TENANTS OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT + BALANCING STREAMS

\*\*Goals, Prioritization, Habits, building boundaries, life work balance, etc. etc (carry over from OG doc).