



Doctor Dre (center) with Web D (left) and Boulevard Tenard (right) of Long Island group the Players Club. Photo courtesy of Ray Davis.

urban DJ thing with this rock and roll-ish format but playing hip-hop, with all these characters and different mcs. And me as the centerpiece, because I sounded like the conventional radio guy. Monday nights became a clubhouse. It was one big snap session, with sports talk, political talk, and music.”

As Stephney slid into the program director’s role, he gave Spectrum their own Saturday night showcase, *The Super Spectrum Mixx Show*, from 11:30 to one. “We agreed radio gave us way better exposure than the mixtapes we were doing,” says Chuck. “We couldn’t understand why people would spend money on what you could tape over the radio. BLS and Kiss weren’t doing mixshows then, so we were able to be an alternative and give people what they really wanted.”

Calling himself “Carl Ryder,” Chuck began using his booming voice to call sports games. While answering phones for *The Mr. Bill Show*, he also copped the soon-to-be-ubiquitous term “Strong Island” from a caller.

“We needed a system for answering phones, so I started giving nicknames to all the towns,” Chuck says. With the exception of Adelphi’s campus, Garden City was an all-White town, but it was adjacent to Hempstead, Roosevelt, and a string of other towns that had become predominantly Black following wholesale White flight in the ’60s and ’70s. “Uniondale became Chill City, Hempstead was the Hills and the Heights, and there was an area by the bus terminal we called Termiteville. Roosevelt was already the Velt and

Freeport was already the Port, but we really expanded upon it. That these names stuck the way they did really showed the power radio and music had for high-school kids.”

Chuck and Hank furthered Strong Island’s identity by recruiting and coordinating groups to make tapes for BAU and perform at Spectrum parties. Renting a studio at 510 S. Franklin Ave. in Hempstead with producers Eric “Vietnam” Sadler and Paul Shabazz, they began banging out budget recordings. “We made our own music because there wasn’t enough hip-hop records to play on our show,” Chuck says. “We needed to fill the space. But people always thought they were actual records.”

“N-41,” the first song made expressly as a promo for WBAU, featured Butch Cassidy, Chuckie D., and Tony “T.A.” Allen of the Townhouse Three, with music and cuts by K-Jee. “N-41 was the bus that went from Roosevelt to Hempstead—all the rappers would be in the back just busting,” recalls Butch Cassidy, who later recorded for TNT and Profile Records as Butch Cassidy’s Funk Bunch and Aaron Allen (his real name), respectively. “From there, we played it on BAU and people were like, ‘How can we be down?’”

Groups like the Townhouse Three (later known as Son of Bazerk) and the Choice Five MCs (who morphed into Arista artists Serious Lee Fine) soon emerged from these sessions; Leaders of the New School, Young Black Teenagers, and Kings of Pressure would form in a similar fash-



The WBAU crew outside Twilites, aka Entourage, circa 1984. Left to right: (back) Hank Shocklee, Rusty J (on van), (middle) unknown, Chuck D, T-Money, Wizard K-Jee, Dubmaster, Doctor Dre, Eric “Vietnam” Sadler, unknown, (front) Butch Cassidy, unknown, and Harry Allen. Photo by Tyrone Kelsie.

ion years later. The Townhouse Three’s Tony “T.A.” Allen would inadvertently introduce Flavor Flav to the Spectrum fold when he brought his piano-playing friend to play Cat Stevens’s “Was Dog a Donut” over a beat.

Chuck remembers ordering the hyperactive Flav to answer the phones during his first visit to WBAU. He never left. “I remember we were joking, ‘Can you imagine Flavor having a show?’” Chuck says. “Bill gave him one then and there.” The *MC DJ Flavor Show* led into the *Super Spectrum Mix Show* on Saturday nights and quickly rivaled anything on the station in popularity. “You want to talk about classic—if those tapes were unearthed—” Chuck pauses. “His show was the most unique and the most egotistical. As many people loved it as hated it.”

The hosts of another popular BAU show, *Who Knows What*—several of whom would later join *The Howard Stern Show* (Gary “Bababoey” Dell’Abbate attended Adelphi at this time)—devised a method to measure the popularity of BAU’s shows. “Every phone call you got meant a hundred people were listening,” Chuck recalls. “Which was bullshit—in college radio, whoever calls is probably the only ones listening. But we were getting ninety phone calls on a Saturday night.”

Interestingly, many of these calls came from the city. “BAU had a strong fanbase in Southeast Queens,” Stephney explains. “The signal was only one hundred watts, but they were only twenty minutes away—which was cool,

because that was becoming the heart of hip-hop. The first rap artist we had at the station was Spyder-D. Guys like DJ Divine and Infinity Machine were listening, which was cool, because we looked up to them. Davy DMX and Kurtis Blow came up around this time. In early ’83, my loudmouth friend Russell was screaming about his brother coming out with a record with this guy DMC. We had them come for what I think was their first interview, and that’s when things started taking off for all of us.”

In time, Run, DMC, and Jay would become semi-regulars at BAU, and the Beastie Boys, LL Cool J, and the rechristened Fat Boys (who changed their name from the Disco 3 at Chuck’s suggestion following a gig at Adelphi) would do some of their first, if not their very first, interviews at the station.

“The BAU era was when everybody connected with each other,” Keith Boxley recalls. “People called Long Island ‘country,’ but you could hear all the new shit on BAU two weeks before anyone else. We didn’t have to wait for what the city was doing. In those days, we ran a club called Entourage. People from Brooklyn and the Bronx came through, which was unheard of, because it was another half hour east of us. Everybody’d be listening to BAU while they were driving out to the club.”

While a boost to the station’s wattage began pumping BAU as far as New Jersey and the Bronx, the station’s signal always faded just twenty miles to the east, meaning