



entertainment main | **blogs** | dvd | **movies** | news | photos | tv

Movies



Buzz Index

Regina King Stay Tuned American Gangster The O-Unit Bee Movie What the Flick? Frank Lucas The Entertainment Spotlight BET DVD Ludacris

Hot List Top Movies

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Bee Movie | \$26 million |
| 2 | American Gangster | \$24.3 million |
| 3 | Fred Claus | \$19.2 million |
| 4 | Lions for Lambs | \$6.7 million |
| 5 | Dan in Real Life | \$5.9 million |

Still Gangsta | Frank Lucas

by Tim Gordon, BET.com Staff Writer



Posted Nov. 8, 2007 - With a movie based on his life, "American Gangster," as the number one film in country and with Oscar-winner Denzel Washington playing him, former drug kingpin Frank Lucas is enjoying a brief renaissance. For a man who has lived in the shadows for so long to finally be recognized for such infamous achievements has been both a blessing and a curse.

His rags to riches story began to takeoff when he met legendary Harlem crime boss Ellsworth "Bumpy" Johnson in the mid-1950s. For Lucas, that experience was life-changing. "You couldn't find a better person in Harlem than Bumpy. He was the boss and everybody knew it. You couldn't get any money in Harlem except through him."

During this period, Johnson took the aspiring hustler under his wing schooling him to New York's mean streets. "Bumpy taught me that it was just a business," said Lucas. "He was not just a drug dealer or a hustler but a businessman and that's how I ran my business."

Lucas learned his lessons well and when his mentor died in 1968, he assumed control of his territory. Being anonymous had its benefits because Lucas was able to operate a thriving heroin business without federal intervention. Unfortunately for him, he committed one fatal flaw that would largely contribute to his ultimate downfall.

While attending the Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier "Fight of the Century" in 1971, Lucas and an associate bet \$500,000 and also received additional unwanted attention by not only sitting ringside in front of fellow mob associates, but wearing a garishly loud, chinchilla coat. "Once they were on me, I was never able to shake them off," Lucas said in a defeated voice.

Once they identified the strength and scope of Lucas' organization, his anonymity was gone forever. "I was out there 14 years before they knew my name. I wasn't rah-hah riding or all that kind of stuff," said Lucas.

In the early 1970s, competition in the drug game was fierce and profitable. Some accounts pegged that Lucas made as much as a million dollars a day. "The life is glamorous, but temporary," said Lucas. During this period, Lucas enjoyed all of the trappings of success, buying expensive cars and traveling around the world.

Get Music Alerts

Enter Email **SIGN UP**

- [Printer Friendly](#)
- [Send to Friend](#)
- [Discuss Now](#)
- [Del.icio.us](#)
- [Digg This](#)

:advertisement

Advertisement

The New Nissan Pathfinder

Adventure. Locally.

- ▶ Build Your Pathfinder
- ▶ Request a Brochure
- ▶ Locate a Dealer

NISSAN SHIFT adventure

"Of course I had the cars and all that stuff, but I didn't show them. When I got ready to do that, I took the 'hotwire' to South East Asia or someplace over there. I went to the South Pacific a lot, Pango Pango, Fiji and down in South America a lot; that's where I did my thing, not in Europe."

Page 2 >>>> Lucas has nothing but praise for Denzel Washington's performance. Read more.

