



***Atomic Dog*: How a Fraternity Immortalized a Song and Vice Versa**

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December 2022, marked the 40th anniversary of the release of George Clinton's *Atomic Dog*. P-Funk All-Stars, Garry Shider and David Spradley, along with George Clinton created a sound that altered the cultural landscape of colleges and universities wherever there was a chapter of the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Before the ball could drop in New York's Times Square, ringing in 1983, the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., had adopted *Atomic Dog* as its own. I don't remember the precise moment I heard the record (yes, record!), but the lyrics struck me as odd and different, even for this incredibly talented and eccentric group of artists.

Bow-wow-wow-yippie-yo-yippie-yaay
Bow-wow-wow-yippie-yo-yippie-yaay

The apex for George Clinton's crew came in the late 1970s, namely, with the hugely popular *Flashlight* (Parliament) and *One Nation Under a Groove* (Funkadelic). By the early 1980s, however, internal dissension threatened to rip the crew apart. What's more, Clinton's army had hit a lull, that is, until *Atomic Dog*. Although *Atomic Dog* was not among the years' huge hits, either in 1982 or 1983, its quirky lyrics and unique baseline spoke to the men of Omega. Sure, it reached No. 1 on the R&B chart in 1983 for a few weeks, but it offered no real challenge to Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean*, Marvin Gaye's *Sexual Healing*, Mtume's *Juicy Fruit* or Lionel Richie's syrupy *All Night Long*. Still, it was astronomically popular among Black college kids, mainly because of the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Parties on college and university campuses haven't been the same, since. Playing that record at a party, a club, in the cafeteria, the student union or any venue for that matter, is an invitation to the men of Omega to take-over. Hearing, "why must I feel like that . . . why must I chase the cat . . . nothing but the dog in me" sets off a chain of instincts and reflexes in the form of synchronized hopping (an

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explosive West African influenced creative expression) that often turns other party goers into spectators.

Few records have had a greater cultural impact on the college scene than *Atomic Dog*. The song has given rise to a culture within the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., that has been passed down from generation to generation. There is no doubt that the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., is largely responsible for the iconic status that the song continues to enjoy. In the months following *Atomic Dog*'s release, the men of Omega turned the song into a cultural happening, thrusting Dr. Funkenstein (as Clinton was known) and crew back into the spotlight where they resided just a few short years earlier. Some songs fade from public memory, as the years pass, not *Atomic Dog*.

Although the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., was already seventy-one years old when *Atomic Dog* was released, the song undoubtedly raised the fraternity's profile in ways that are difficult to measure. At the same time, the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., has turned *Atomic Dog* into the kind of cult classic that has transcended time and space. There's no denying that *Atomic Dog* and the illustrious Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., are inextricably linked. Word has it that a documentary or sorts is in the making. My suggestion for a title: *Atomic Dog: How a fraternity immortalized a song and vice versa*.

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