

## Hip Hop Document Set

### Document 1 - Salt-N-Pepa Biography



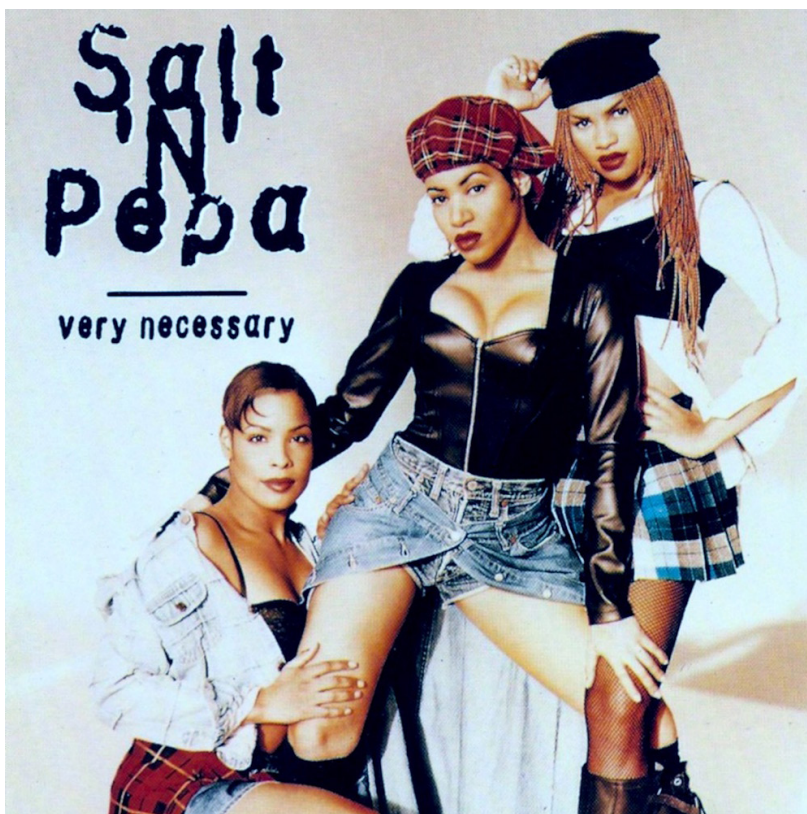
Salt-N-Pepa are a rap trio consisting of Cheryl “Salt” James, Sandra “Pepa” Denton, and Deidra “Spinderella” Roper. The hip hop group got its start in Queens, New York. James and Denton were best friends attending the same college, and also coworkers. Together with a classmate, they created a response record to a Doug E. Fresh’s song “The Show.” The track eventually got airplay and charted on the *Billboard* charts. They ended up renaming their group Salt-N-Pepa, with DJ Spinderella eventually joining the group as a full time member, and released their first album *Hot, Cool and Vicious* in 1986. The album produced the hit single “Push It,” which was nominated for a Grammy.

By the 1990s, Salt-N-Pepa were prominent figures in hip hop who used their platform to discuss issues such as sex, body autonomy, equal pay, and gender roles while promoting women empowerment. Most famously, their song “Let’s Talk About Sex” brought attention to open conversations about sex. In 1993, their third album *Very Necessary* spawned several singles such as “Shoop,” “None of Your Business,” and “Whatta Man.” *Very Necessary* was a commercial success and the single “None of Your Business” earned them their first Grammy for Best Rap Performance by a Duo/Group, making them the first women in rap to take home the prestigious award. In addition to using their music to talk about issues, Salt-N-Pepa raised awareness about HIV/AIDS and domestic violence.

Document 2 - Fashion/Album Covers



Very Necessary, US Release



Very Necessary, UK Release

Document 3 -Video Stills, "Shoop"





## Document 4 - Song Lyrics

### Salt-N-Pepa, "None of Your Business"

What's the matter with your life?  
Why you gotta mess with mine?  
Don't keep sweating what I do  
Cause I'm gonna be just fine - check it out

If I wanna take a guy home with me tonight  
It's none of your business  
And if she wanna be a freak and sell it on the weekend  
It's none of your business  
Now you shouldn't even get into who I'm giving skins to  
It's none of your business  
So don't try to change my mind, I'll tell you one more time  
It's none of your business

Now who do you think you are  
Putting your cheap two cents in?  
Don't you got nothing to do  
Than worry about my friends? Check it...

I can't do nothing, girl, without somebody bugging  
I used to think that it was me, but now I see it wasn't  
They told me to change, they called me names, and so I popped one  
Opinions are like assholes and everybody's got one  
I never put my nose where I'm not supposed to  
Believe me, if he's something that I want, I'm stepping closer  
I'm not one for playing high-pole  
Like the high soditty 90210 type of ho  
I treat a man like he treats me  
The difference between a hooker and a ho ain't nothing but a fee  
So hold your tongue tightly, wish you could be like me  
You're popping all that mess only to stress and to spite me

Now you can get with that or you can get with this  
But I don't give a shit cause really it's none of your business

1993, S-N-P, packing and macking  
Bamboozling and smacking suckers with this track  
Throw the beat back in!

(Chorus)

## Document 4 - Song Lyrics, cont.

How many rules am I to break before you understand  
That your double-standards don't mean shit to me?  
I know exactly what you say when I turn and walk away  
But that's OK cause I don't let it get it to me  
Now every move I make somebody's clocking  
Don't ask me nothing, will you just leave me alone?  
Never mind who's the guy that I took home...to bone

OK, Miss Thing never giving up skins  
If you don't like him or his friends what about that Benz?  
Your Pep-Pep's got an ill rep  
With all that macaroni trap for rap you better step  
Or better yet get your head checked

Cause I refuse to be played like a penny cent trick deck of cards  
No, I ain't hard like the bitches on a boulevard  
My face ain't scarred, and I don't dance in bars  
You can call me a tramp if you want to  
But I remember the punk who just humped and dumped you  
Or you can front if you have to  
But everybody gets horny just like you  
So, yo, so, yo, ho - check it, double deck it on a record butt-naked  
Pep's ass gets respect, and this butt is none of your business

(Chorus)

So the moral of this story is: Who are you to judge?  
There's only one true judge, and that's God  
So chill, and let my Father do His job

Cause Salt and Pepa's got it swinging again...



## Document 5 - Academic Account

### **“Never Trust a Big Butt and a Smile,” by Tricia Rose**

Salt-N-Pepa have reputations for biting raps that criticize men who manipulate and abuse women. Their lyrics tell the story of men taking advantage of women, cheating on them, abusing them, taking their money and then leaving them for other unsuspecting female victims. These raps are not mournful ballads about the trials and tribulations of being a woman. Similar to women’s blues, they are caustic, witty and aggressive warnings directed at men and at other women who might be seduced by men in the future. By offering a woman’s interpretation of the terms of heterosexual courtship, these raps cast a new light on male/female sexual power relations and depict women as resistant, aggressive participants. Salt-N-Pepa’s 1986 single, “Tramp,” speaks specifically to black women, warning us that “Tramp” is not a “simple rhyme,” but a parable about relationships between men and women. [. . .]

In the absence of any response to “Am I right fellas?” Salt-N-Pepa “show and prove” the trappings of several men who “undress you with their eyeballs,” “think you’re a dummy” and “on the first date, had the nerve to tell me he loves me.” Salt-N-Pepa’s parable, by defining promiscuous men as tramps, inverts the social construction of male sexual promiscuity as a status symbol. This reversal undermines the degrading “woman as tramp” image by stigmatizing male promiscuity. Salt-N-Pepa suggest that women who respond to sexual advances are victims of circumstance. It is the predatory, disingenuous men who are the tramps. [. . .]

The resistant nature of black women’s participation in rap is better understood when we take the historical silence, sexual and otherwise, of black women into consideration. Salt-N-Pepa are carving out a female-dominated space in which black women’s sexuality is openly expressed. Black women rappers sport Hip Hop clothing and jewelry as well as distinctively black hairstyles. They affirm a black, female, working-class cultural aesthetic that is rarely depicted in American popular culture. Black women rappers resist patterns of sexual objectification and cultural invisibility, and they also resist academic reification and mainstream, hegemonic, white feminist discourse.

Given the identities these women rappers have fashioned for themselves, it is not surprising that they want to avoid being labeled feminists. During my conversations with Salt, MC Lyte and Queen Latifah, it became clear that these women saw feminism as a signifier for a movement that related specifically to white women. They also thought feminism involved adopting an anti-male position, and they did not want to be considered or want their work to be interpreted as antiblack male...For these women rappers, and many other black women, feminism is the label for members of a white woman’s social movement, which has no concrete link to black women or the black community. Feminism signifies allegiance to historically specific movements whose histories have long been the source of frustration for women of color.