

# P.O.S.




ALBUM:  
*Never Better*

RATING:  
★★★★½

ROCKS LIKE:  
Eminem's *The Slim Shady LP*  
KRS-One's *I Got Next*  
Murs' *The End Of The Beginning*

## INDIE MC GETS HEAVY.

 If you thought P.O.S.' lyrics were heavy, *Never Better* makes his previous work seem positively fluffy. On his third disc, the Minneapolis-based rapper/producer uses his art as therapy for a variety of emotions bottling up in the

three years since his previous effort, *Audition*. He heads straight for politics, most notably the "goddamned recession" on "Let It Rattle," a blistering track that sets the tone for the album's dark vibe. On "Out Of Category," he opens up about race and stereotypes, describing his struggle as a kid who never quite fit in. It's all refreshingly honest, often revealing his insecurities and fears. While it's not exactly all sunshine, P.O.S.' aggression does come with a healthy dose of optimism, too—on "Goodbye" he keeps his chin up, spitting, "Giving up is like Latin, it's dead, it don't happen, don't even cross the head." His mic skills are stronger than ever, and the beats are absolutely stunning—he produced more than half the disc himself, increasing the amount of guitars and adding more textured layers to the mix. *Never Better* is a diverse and inventive effort that isn't afraid to color outside of the lines. P.O.S. has raised the bar again.

(RHYMESAYERS: rhymesayers.com) *Eddie Fleisher*

## IN-STORE SESSION WITH P.O.S.

### What was your state of mind when you were making this record?

My previous two records are really internal, whereas this one is a lot more outward. [I'm] kind of talking to different people about what's going on in their personal lives, friendships, the way your government treats you, the way you treat your friends and the way you treat your enemies—things like that. If it comes off heavier, I feel like that's gonna benefit it. I was definitely in a place where—oh, man, I don't know if you wanna hear the whole story...

### Nothing wrong with that, go on.

[Laughs.] I had done this tour with Gym Class Heroes right as "Cupid's Chokehold" was taking off. No disrespect to them in any way at all, but [I was] watching what they were doing, watching how they were getting that pop success—the sacrifices, plus the benefits that I could just see as an outside observer. When I started making the record, it was coming together in this heavy, aggressive sort of way—kind of lashing out at the idea of any pop success for me on anybody's terms but my own, meaning if I don't achieve that with this record, I'm not gonna be surprised. But if I do, I'll know that happened because people are open enough to check out something that sounds totally different than what they've been listening to.

### It's strange how groups like Gym Class Heroes have a lot of fans who don't even really like hip-hop.

Even me, I get a lot of that, too, because I do so much touring with so many different bands. I get, "This is weird, man, I don't really like hip-hop, but I really like what you do." [Laughs.] I was gonna put that on a shirt for [when I play] Warped Tour this year, because I know people are gonna say that so often.

### You touch on being an outsider on "Out Of Category," which specifically deals with race, stereotypes and the idea that white kids should be into rock, black kids into rap, etc. Did you struggle with that growing up?

Oh, you know I did! I came up getting it from both ends—being in a hardcore/punk-rock scene in Minneapolis, which is incredibly tolerant, but at the same time really kind of racist without realizing they're racist. In the hardcore community, you *believe* you are as open-minded as it gets. [Laughs.] Coming the other way, being in high school, hanging out, I was definitely rocking a huge blue Mohawk. [Laughs.] People just did not get it, and they had a lot to say about it. [EF]