“Buss It” just proved to the world what Texas already knew: Erica Banks is a real rap spitter who knows an undeniable bop when she makes one. “I have a good ear for music,” says the Dallas MC, with an earned confidence beyond her 22 years. “I know what’s best for me.” True, but she also knows what’s best for car speakers and club systems: a relentless flow made sticky by her Dallas drawl, glued to a subtly explosive mix of big bass and eerie melody. You could say she’s been perfecting her style over three years of hotly tipped mixtapes and quickly shared freestyle videos, but Banks came out swinging from the start and now has the growing fame and clout to underwrite her tales of lust and luxury, beastly brags, and withering disses. No hook needed.

“Edgy but sexy” is how Banks boils down her approach, and that certainly describes “Buss It.” The cut cockily draws on Nelly’s 2002 monster single, “Hot in Herre,” looping an iconic line — “Girl, I think my butt gettin’ big!” — into a foundation for Banks to rhyme over. That standout anthem from her self-titled 2020 mixtape took on a life of its own in 2021 after a fan created a dance challenge for it on January 1. By the end of the day it was the soundtrack to about 5,000 TikTok videos. A week later, it was 1 million. Even artists and actors like Monica, Rico Nasty, and Tracee Ellis Ross picked up the challenge. “It’s outrageous,” says Banks with a laugh.

In a way, though, it’s not. Banks has been working toward this moment since she first fell in love with writing as a child. An aspiring poet since elementary school, she graduated from journals to slams to, by the age of 12, freestyling for small crowds of kids during recess. What happened next made perfect sense. “I always said music is poetry, so I decided to just tap into that,” she says. By the time she hit high school, Banks was making music while pursuing other interests that would benefit her in the long run. She joined her school’s theatre arts class, as well as the cheerleading and drill teams, perfecting her presence. “I always liked the limelight,” she adds.

That curiosity was piqued after Banks saw other local artists take off: Banks lists Asian Da Brat, Yella Beezy, Cuban Doll, and Tay Money as sources of regional inspiration. “Just seeing them come out of my city from up the street basically,” she explains, “it’s like — well, damn, if they can do it, let me see if I can do it.” During her sophomore year at Texas A&M, Banks took a chance on herself. In 2018, she posted her first single to SoundCloud, a fitting introduction called “Talk My Shit” that showcased her charismatic delivery over sparse, piano-led production. “I was just walking out on faith,” Banks admits, “hoping things happened for me.” Soon enough, they did.

Banks followed that momentum with her debut mixtape, the booming *Art of the Hustle,* and then two more — *Pressure* and *Cocky on Purpose* — all in 2019. By 2020, she landed her first deal, with Texas’ tastemaking 1501 Certified Entertainment. This year, Banks went major by also partnering with Warner Records. She felt overwhelmed at first, until she remembered this is right where she’s meant to be. “I make turn-up music,” Banks says, “so that’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to continue to push it, and keep running the numbers up. What’s better than that?”

**About Erica Banks:**

“Buss It” just proved to the world what Texas already knew: Erica Banks is a real rap spitter who knows an undeniable bop when she makes one. “I have a good ear for music,” says the MC. “I know what’s best for me.” She also knows what’s best for cars and clubs: a relentless flow made sticky by her Dallas drawl, glued to an explosive mix of big bass and eerie melody. You could say she’s been perfecting her style over three years of hotly tipped freestyles and mixtapes—*Art of the Hustle,* *Pressure,* and *Cocky on Purpose* represent 2019 alone—but Bankscame out swinging from the start. And now that “Buss It” is climbing the Billboard Hot 100, she has the clout to underwrite her savage disses and tales of lust and luxury. That standout anthem from her booming self-titled 2020 mixtape took on a life of its own in 2021, soundtracking nearly 3 million dance challenge videos in less than a month, and earning tacit cosigns from the likes of Nicki Minaj, Monica, Rico Nasty, and Tracee Ellis Ross. Banks calls the whole thing “outrageous,” but she’s been working toward this moment since she fell in love with poetry as a child. She graduated from freestyling for kids at recess to taking rap seriously after seeing local artists like Asian Da Brat, Yella Beezy, Cuban Doll, and Tay Money take off nationally. She released her debut single “Talk My Shit” in 2018, and her momentum has been growing ever since. And now that Erica’s aligned with both 1501 Certified and Warner Records the turn-up is real. “I make turn-up music, so that’s what we’re going to do,” says Banks. “We’re going to continue to push it. What’s better than that?”