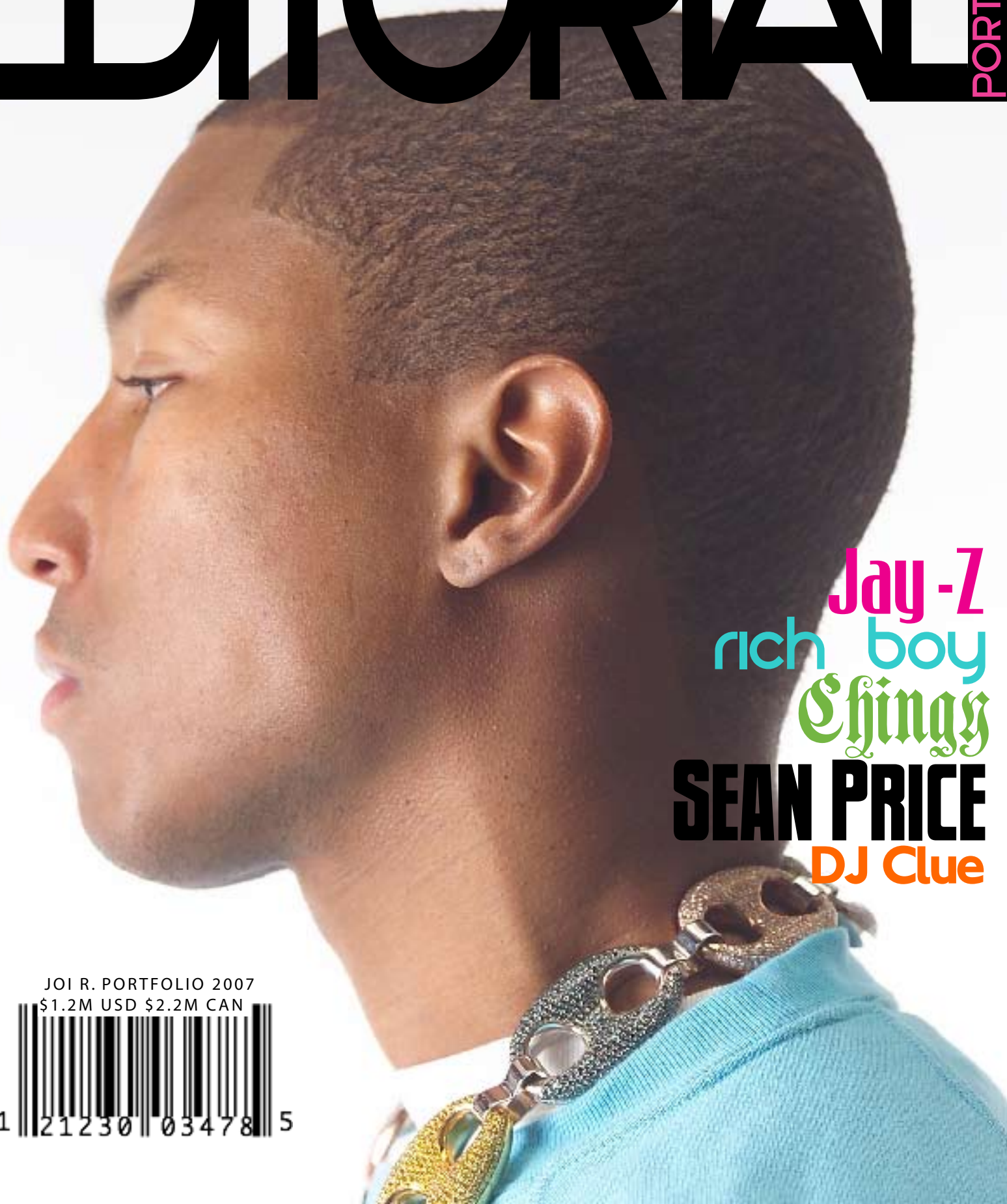


EDITORIAL

PORTFOLIO



Jay-Z
rich boy
Chingy

SEAN PRICE
DJ Clue

JOI R. PORTFOLIO 2007
\$1.2M USD \$2.2M CAN



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Sou have entered an untouched realm of uncertainty when you find yourself swimming in what was previously your idea of "the future." I am not speaking of hover crafts and teleporting, but rather, more attainable ideas like the massive, infectious force of news and information.

I wake up, and I am checking



10 or so blogs for the latest news, gossip and such, while procuring thoughts of my own grandeur to craft short stories for my piercing online audience. Perhaps the wave of the future isn't much of a wave at all. It could very well be a series of rather calculated events that peak their tiny little heads through to crack at the shell of past encumbrances.

The idea of news, both informative and editorial in nature is an insatiable beast barking loudly over the fence of someone's backyard to be fed.

With thoughts of this idea of a future past, and a desperation for more information hoarders, forecasters and truth hounds, I have compiled a collection of my most recent work. The following features showcase published

pieces written for various online and print media outlets. Artist Interviews, Reviews and Biographies join hand and hand in portfolio jubilee, for your reading pleasure.

For future inquiries I may be reached presently at 212.300.3478 or via E-mail at joi@reinnovating.com. Until we speak again, be well comrades.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joi". The letters are fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'J' and a trailing 'i'.

Joi Rogers
Writer In Chief



CHINGY

Words: *Joi Rogers* Photo: *Shawn Taylor*

Chingy has been through a crash course in hip-hop's heaven and hell. Entering the game as Ludacris' first protégée, he quickly climbed to the number one spot, only to disappear from the limelight faster than you could say "cha-ching." The artist who cashed in with hip-hop hits like "Holiday Inn" and "Right Thurr," wasn't about to give up on a flourishing music career after being bit by the big, big mouth that fed him. Instead, he picked up right where he left off, inking a new label deal and pushin' for a third-platinum plaque.

Following the inception of his new Capitol Records imprint, Slot-A-Lot Records, his dissolution with DTP and battles with a \$250,000 lawsuit this summer, "the #1 Git It Boy's" new album entitled *Hoodstar* has peaked at #8 on The Billboard Top 200. This go round, Chingy left the beef and legal drama on the backburner, and tried to focus on what he does best, make quality records. "I ain't out here always talkin' about blowin' somebody's head off," he maintains in reference to what his new album

Hoodstar, is bringing to the table. "I try to keep my music more energetic."

Rappin' at age 6, recording at age 10, performing at age 12, Chingy was right on schedule with his first mixtape when he was only 16. Much has changed for the 26-year-old, and he mainly cooks up new joints in the privacy of the recording studio located in his basement. His new method of working consists of packing iTunes with beats, and writing journalistically about the events occurring at the crazy parties he attends. "I like to go out," he confirms, "I could be in the club say tonight, tomorrow, I might write about, what went on in that club." His systematic creation of music for dedicated club patrons has defined his mainstream sound.

For this project, Chingy traveled to Memphis, Atlanta and Florida, collaborating with the likes of Timbaland, Poli Paul, Jermaine Dupri, The Trak Starz, Mannie Fresh, Kwame and Mr. Collipark. To deliver his signature party ridden sound, both the Hood Side and Star Side host features from Tyrese, Jermaine

AS FEATURED IN BLOW! MAGAZINE WINTER 2007



Dupri, Keri Hilson, Mannie Fresh, Spiffy, Midwest City and Fatman Scoop who sprinkle their fame juice on this upbeat record.

"I come from a wild place, I come from a rough place, St. Louis City, Walnut Park, North Side," says Chingy about the troubled city that raised him. "I seen a lot of things, been through a lot of things, but that's where I get my ego from, to not- I don't wanna see those things no more." This rare trait in successful rap artists has been both instrumental and vital to his recent success. "I want to put a positive thing in peoples heads when I do my music, and that's just to have fun and party..."

Chingy's first album "Jackpot" peaked at #2 on Billboard Top 200 and was certified 3x platinum in 2003. With four gold singles under his belt and a platinum sophomore album, "Powerballin'," Chingy puts down the mic and rolls up his sleeves to head Slot-A-Lot Records. "With my label I'm tryna help people that love music the same way I love music," he adds. "There's people that don't understand, it takes patience, it takes time, it takes hard work, it takes dedication, and it just takes grindin'."

His cousin Young Spiffy and little sister Ziggy are signed to Slot-A-Lot whilst he serves as president and franchise player for his organized crew, "Git It Boys". He asserts, "With my record label man I understand, I ain't tryna sell nobody no dreams... If I could help you, I'm gon' help you. If I can't help you, ain't nothin' I can do for you."

Unfortunately the alleged help of Ronald Gavin's 49 Productions Inc., just seven years ago, recently spurred a

lawsuit against the Hoodstar. Gavin claims to have discovered Chingy and to have poured over \$100,000 into revamping his image, solidifying radio airplay, development, and performances. Gavin also produced an album for Chingy, and started work on another when Chingy began to "enjoy commercial success." Shocking that it would take 3 years after Chingy's debut for this suit to rear its ugly head.

Making the situation into a learning experience instead of letting it affect his career, Chingy explains that its important to learn the ins and outs of the record business. "If you graduate from high school, go to college. Take up marketing. Take up business. Do something to understand this business... before you get in it, because that's the mistake I made..." He explains, "You gotta be on top of your game and understand what you wanna do and go in and speak for yourself, ya dig, because that's how your money end up missin', that's how your business don't be right."

A series of unfortunate events can either certify an artist platinum status or wipe them off the face of the earth. With Chingy voicing his plans on not "rapping in [his] 30's," we may never have the skeptic pleasure of finding out. Learning from his prior mistakes in the music business, the young talented star has done what plenty of rappers have done before him- taken up acting as a plan b. Landing small parts in both Scary Movie 4 and The System Within, Chingy clearly has no intention of slowing down in the hit making or the money making department.



Rich Boy

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es, candied colored dub adorned cars, remnant of some brilliant, LSD induced psychedelic high, crisscross around you like a synchronized swim in your newest video. Busta, Kanye and the likes make their own renditions of your hit song, and you've been so busy you hadn't even a moment to hear them. You permanently add the term "Throw Some D's on It" to Hip-Hop Dictionaries for perpetuity. Who done it? Rich Boy. That's who. A Mobile, Alabama native with a beat and a dream finds himself at the top of rap charts and video countdowns nationwide.

You can gather this anomaly was the exact reason for my journey to the west side of lower Manhattan on a frigid New York evening. Of course, we were just shy of the doors closing. But not to fret! A girl must always have the promoter's info handy (or know someone who does), and with that, I was in. Me, the girls, and a room full of industry insiders, backpackers and DJ's enjoyed the open bar whilst Polow Da Don and Rich Boy previewed cuts from the upcoming album. Now, this *would* be the part of the story where I'd give you a quick review, but I'd rather sum it up so you can get to the good stuff. I will say this, his sound cannot be exactly defined or placed into a restrictive

little box. It was refreshing in a way, that, although there are but so many regurgitated topics in rap, we can always depend on delivery and super-producers to carry us through.

In conclusion, his story is interesting and inspiring and cool, not only to all the college dropouts of this decade, but to all the producers who haven't set their inner rapper free. Our interview was as follows. Read on!

Hey Rich, how are you?

Aye, how you doin'?

I am amazin'. What you doin' today?

[Laughs] Sittin' in the studio like a Zombie.

What are you workin' on—

From yesterday [Laughs] ummm—

Are you serious?

The remix with me Lil Jon, Nelly, Murphy Lee, Jim Jones and ummm... The Game.

For the "Throw Some D's" Remix?

Yeah

How's it commin out?

Yeah, we just got through wit it so, we just sent it off to get mixed.

THROWIN' D'S: THE RICH BOY WAY

Really, do you like it?

I love it.

[Laughs] What else are you working on? What's gonna be the second single?

The problem is that we got too much good music, so it's just like, it's not a problem getting a second single, I think the problem is picking the second single.

Aaaahh, I wish everybody had that problem.

Yeah, [Laughs] Yeah

[Laughing]

It's a real headache. That kind of problem is a real headache.

Is it? Is there any one that you are leaning toward more than anything else?

No, I'm confused myself actually.

What tracks on the album are you really excited about?

I can't wait 'til, like everybody get a chance to hear "Get 2 Poppin'" the one that was produced by Brian Kid.

--Ok I heard that one.

Yeah. I just think that it's somethin I don't think not too many southern artists would do, or cut that record.'

How did you come up with the name Rich Boy?

They call my pop Rich, and then they see me and they be like, 'that's Rich son there... that's Rich Boy'

Before you really got into the rapping thing, you were a producer, what inspired you to start rapping?

My boy, Polow Da don, he taught me to—and I just tried it, and sh*t just went crazy.

How'd you hook up with him and Zone 4?

I hooked up with him actually, tryna sell him some beats, there was one song on there that I rapped over that was on the radio called Cold As Ice.

Ok...

So he just kept calling me back like 'man I love this song, you rhymed crazy on this song... you ought to try to rap, you know what I'm sayin, I know you sellin' a beat, but you ought to rap.' He kept just talkin' to me, stayin' in touch with me, so eventually we just stayed down there, I go to Atlanta, we put a demo together, and shopped it around and got a deal.

Ok dope. Do you still plan to keep producing?

Oh yea, I'm most definitely gonna do that. I did make the album. I made the album with two songs.

Another questions about, when you hooked up with Polow, or if it was before, how'd you link up with Roy Jones Jr.

Ummm... through the dude that taught me how to do beats. This dude named Terrance Kid. He stayed in Pensicola, Florida, and his girl worked at the Waffle House, and she had a copy of one of my CD's, and Roy Jones walked in the waffle house and

she gave him a copy.

Oh wow, that's crazy. Being from Alabama, how do you plan to put your state on the map.

Ima just stay original. My sound doesn't sound like it's from any other place, because we do have like, original sound in Alabama, and if I just stay original we'll most definitely be on the map.

Have you heard the Kanye West remix?

It's *craaaaaazy* that you ask me that. I was just tryna listen to that, right before yall called, but it won't download on my computer.

Are you serious—what do you think about that, is that something that makes you feel real good, knowing that someone of that caliber is doin' a remix on one of your tracks?

Yeah, it's a good feelin' you know what I'm sayin', everybody's jumpin' on it, doin' little remixes right, Rick Ross got one out—who else got one out? It's a lot of people that got one out, it's actually a lot, Busta Rhymes got one, you know, it's just a lot of people got one.

"The Product of the Hustle." What were you going for when you started putting the songs together and you started putting the beats together, was there anything that you were gonna try to do real different? I know you want to be original but is there anything that you really wanted to—

We just had the whole fight, the whole fight that I had with myself was, just picking, the music, know what I'm sayin', just pickin' the tracks that were on the struggle, really tryna stand out with the tracks I pick, and the tracks I pick was kind of different, where it's just like, put my kind of swag on it, but that's what made it so special, that actually took time to, you know what I'm sayin' make shit happen. Like there is one song on there called "Lost Girls." It's like reggae, kinda like a Bob Marley beat, like you wouldn't expect somebody to rap over that and I pulled it off.

What does "Throw Some D's" mean?

"Throw some D's" means throw some dubs on it.

You are blowing up very quickly, very fast, you really hit the scene I guess in 2003 and it's only been about four years since you started. How has your life changed because of music?

My life changed proly, 'cuz I see the studio more than anywhere, ummm... you rarely see people, and stuff like that, it's just out here on the road constantly, and it's worth while 'cuz you could provide things that you never could provide, but you can.

Alright, dope, and is there anything you want to leave off with?

Oh na, na, na, that's all. I just make sure I keep good relationships with everybody, I keep doin' good music, and I think I can last like that.

Authentically gritty and most likely unshaven, Sean Price reenters with 90,000 MySpace friends in hand as “Jesus Price Superstar.” To help spread his Gospel across the land, the former “brokest rapper alive,” has brought his apostles together. 9th Wonder, Sadat X, Rock and Khrysis join in to assist in the resurrection due out on January 30th.

Now, in all of Price’s divine holiness, he and Rock have been unable to reproduce a new Heltah Skeltah album.

**“GOTTA ACT LIKE THIS SH*T WE DID NEVER EXISTED, AND KEEP GOIN’ ON.”
- JESUS PRICE 3:2**

Amen. That’s right folks, the Holy word of Hip-Hop according to the infamous partners-in-rhyme will not arrive at stores and Churches any time soon. Peace be with them. Luckily the Boot Camp Clik members are still in tact, and with the recent capture of the man who is believed to be responsible for the stabbing death in the parking lot after Sean’s show last month, things are already looking up. Hip-Hop’s followers can rest assured; the world is a better place.

Sean had a thing or two to preach to us today. Read on. Chuuuuch!

Tell me about your outlook on the Jesus Price Superstar Album.

I hope it do better than the last album, you know I mean, I hope for the best expect the worst. Of course Ima hope it do better than the last one and the next one I put out I hope it’ll do better than both of them. You know that’s just normal thinking. You know like I said I hope for the best but I expect the worst.

It seems like this album is really heavily anticipated, there’s a lot of press, a lot of your fans are talking about it in forums, what ingredients did you add to this that’s creating such a crazy buzz?

Nothin. It’s the same formula from last album it’s just that people love what I did the last time, so Ima give ‘em that. I’m givin ‘em that. I ain’t do nothing extra. I kept the same producers, you know what I mean, the same formula. If it ain’t broke you know what I mean?

How many hours a day do you spend on MySpace?

Probably 45 minutes.

You know, no one has 90,000 MySpace friends, how do you think this huge audience is going to relate to album sales this month?

THANK YA JESUS... PRICE

I don’t know man, you know I mean, just cuz they your friend on MySpace don’t mean they your real friend.

Cuz, I’m checkin’ out a few of the songs, even if your looking at the song count, there’s like 60,000 people listening to one song.

On my MySpace?

On your MySpace page, its crazy.

Well, it might be 60,000 people that listen to it but, that prolly represent like one quarter of the sales though, they ain’t all gonna buy it. Half of ‘em write me back like “yo man make the song downloadable...”

What do you hate about rap or hip-hop in general right now?

I love rap, I do, but the game is fucked up.

Ok, how?

Just you know, like the artists that the majors put out they real like, one hit wonders n sh*t like that, ya nah mean, but besides that, ya nah mean, the independent game is where it’s at. Not even cuz the sales and all that, just cuz it’s more true artists out here, people who do good albums. You got dude’s on a major that do good singles. And if that’s what you see all the time is these disposable here now, here today, gone tomorrow ass n*ggas, ya nah mean, then your whole perception of hip-hop might be fucked up if you’re a youngster.

If a major label came hollerin’ at you right now would you sign with them?

Yeah.

You would?

I would to let ‘em know this is how a real artists is. This is a real artist right how—this is how you do it. And I would show the people and the label how the f*ck you make a real album—work with a real artist.

Is anybody hollerin’ at you right now?

They are, they are hollerin’ at me.

They are, that’s a real great thing, congratulations on that.

Do you see yourself rapping 10 years from now?

I see myself rapping as long as I can. Until I can’t do it no more. Ain’t no limit.

Is there any other business endeavor that you wanna get into?

Yeah, real estate.

That’s it?

Yeah, that’s it really.

You’ve gone back to hustlin’ a lot when the goin’ got rough.

Do you see yourself goin’ back to that if the funds get real low?

Nah nah nah, I already got other options now.

What do you think about the “Got You Open” track that 50 just put out?

Oh, I think its poppin’ man. I like fif.

You think it’s shinnin’ some light into your whole movement? Like it’s bringin a lot of people back to how music was 10 years ago?

I mean Black Moon was a big influence on a lot of people. Their

MC's, ya nah mean, you can't front on "Enter The Stage" no matter how old it is. Buck came in the game and changed it a little bit with his flow and all that, the way he laid it down so... I'm not surprised if fif redid it and all that, and we not mad at that too, matter fact we admire that, we appreciate that.

How is Rock, and how is the Heltah Skeltah album coming along?

Rock is good. The Heltah Skeltah album is commin' together real f*cked up.

It is? Tell me more. I read about it a little bit but I wanted to hear it for myself.

It just sound fucked up right now, we got a lot of work to do.

What do you have to do? Is it the production? Is it—

Everything

Is it the chemistry?

Everything. Everything. Gotta act like this sh*t we did never existed, and keep goin' on.

[Laughs] What's next for the Boot Camp Klik this year?

Well my album will be out January 30th.

Ok.

Tek is still workin' on they album. They 'bout to go overseas and work on they album.

Ok.

Ummm... Buckshot and 9th workin' on they album, and my artist Rusty Jugs he 'bout to drop an album. His album may be next after mine.

On Duckdown?

Yeah. And then Dru Ha signed some more artists to Duckdown, they not Bootcamp Klik, but they on Duckdown.

What are there names?

Ah, you know, I'll let Dru talk about it. You know just, I'm all for it though.

I've seen that you've put a lot of effort into making music and reinventing yourself with your new persona. What really keeps you going?

I desire to be heard. Ya know I mean, I want to be heard. I wanna be heard and appreciated. Also I want to be rewarded for my craft too. So that's what keeps me goin'.

Who do you look to for inspiration? In Hip-Hop and out of Hip-Hop.

I don't look to nobody for no inspiration man...

[Laughs]

Don't nobody inspire me.

Who in the rap game is doin' they thing right now?

Nobody.

Nobody... [Laughs]

Nah let me stop I like Uncle Murda.

Oh my god, I love Uncle Murda too...

Yeah, I like Uncle Murda, he don't like police and neither do I. I like him. I like Papoose. He cool.

All these New York heads, anybody out of New York?

Ummm... nah.

What are you listenin' too right now, what's in your CD Player?



Ummm... what's in my CD Player? Ima open it up right now and let you know. Ciara album, her new album.

You like it? [Laughs]

I gotta wife, she listens to—it's our radio. It's not just mine.

I hear that, and what else is in there?

Ya know what I mean, the wife got Ciara in there, Chris Brown, and Fantasia. I had my album in there but she took it out.

[Laughs]

She didn't wanna hear that sh*t. [Laughs] Let me stop.

[Laughing] Alright, is there anything else you want to leave off with.

Yo I appreciate the love everybody sendin' me, and enjoy this album when it come out January 30th. You know, a few people heard the promo copy, and they said they like it and I appreciate the love. But definitely go get it when it drop January 30th man.

The nineties are rapidly becoming “old-school.” Those who reigned supreme in Hip-Hop then, left the building to fly around the world lavishly in G4’s with R&B Diva’s. They are back, fighting to save what’s left of the 2000’s they so quickly abandoned. I can only hope that the orphaned fans are receptive to their reappearance.

“The Professional 3” drops in two weeks, and DJ Clue rides on the snow-covered sleigh of scheduled

With this in mind, Clue forces the comradery that West Coast and Southern acts capitalize on. Only Clue can smack a bunch of artists together and sell millions of records—no beef attached. Only Clue can assemble the most contrasting superstars on wax, while repeating his reverbed drops over and over, without losing our attention. I watched the EPK for “The Professional 3,” and, Mariah Carey’s “Don’t Forget About Us” Remix featuring Fabolous and Styles P on Clue’s mySpace page. The clips show Mariah prancing around Right Track

Studio’s with Fab and Styles P while striding barefoot through a picture-plastered apartment, belting out her soprano hip-hopped notes. Clue is attempting, along with the Def Jam Family, to recapture the essence of a time that may be lost forever. Do you think Clue guessed, back when he was dubbing copies of cassettes 15 years ago, that he could skip TV Promo and replace it with free streaming video broadcasts on some vast online community? I seriously doubt it. E-mail

was barely commercialized and mp3’s took hours to send!

As far as predicting which direction these winds of change will carry us, time will most certainly tell. What we do know is that Clue has enjoyed unmatched success as a Mixtape DJ, MTV VJ and Hot 97.1/Power 105.1 radio personality. Contrary to type of character normally acquainted with his level of popularity, he is a man of few words. He keeps a very low profile—so low in fact, that I couldn’t even dig up any juicy rumors on him—well I’m lying... I dug up a few—but they weren’t down right dirty enough to share. This afternoon, he had



releases this season. Sandwiched between where “The Kingdom Came” and “Hip-Hop’s Death,” his album has yet to leak like his Def Jam counterparts, but it shares the same level of both anticipation and nostalgia. “The Professional” and “The Professional 2” were classic and essential to the Roc-A-Fella dynasty, but much has changed. Who knows if a label will ever be able to replicate the emotion evoked through the production of the epic Rap adventure, “Backstage?” Now days every rapper hates each other! Who ever would have thought that Lil’ Wayne would throw shots at Jay-Z, and Jeezy at Nas? Can’t we all just get along?

CLUE PROVES HIP HOP IS NOT DEAD

a few moments to speak with me on his new project. Our conversation was as follows:

Hello?

Whats up.

Hi Clue, how are you?

Er'things good.

Are you in New York

Unfortunately yup.

[laughs] It's freezing

[laughs] Way past freezing

Coming back from your hiatus, do you think there's any pressure to deliver an album as successful as your previous two?

Definitely.

Definitely—why?

Mmmm... just cuz that's what people expect, you know what Im sayin', people expect, you know, you just do as good as you did before, but, I mean, not saying I don't think I cant do it, but it's just a different time in Hip-Hop... you know what I'm sayin', as far as the whole digital world is concerned.

What do you mean by that? Elaborate. What do you think about the state of Hip-Hop?

A lot of people just downloading music for free.

You know, one of my questions on the list was do you use iTunes?

Oh yea, even I use iTunes to download, to download ummm—to download records. But I mean... I'm not even talkin' about iTunes. iTunes you gotta pay for. A lot of people don't pay for their music, a lot of people you know... just steal it

Do you think that just selling singles alone on iTunes, is affecting album sales?

Ummm... I think so.

Are you really excited about your release, and did you intend to take so much time between albums?

Nah—nah... I didn't intend to take this much time, but you know, stuff happens, you know...

What really brought you back—I know you're really in a good place in your career right now, what was

the catalyst in bringing you back at this time?

I mean—of course I was buldin' up my fan base—you know what I'm sayin'—and just tryin' to research different things and make different things happen. But—you know I just felt it was time to put the album out because it was long awaited and, you know, I think I had some of the right music, so I thought it was time.

How's Fab doing, and when is his album due out on Def Jam.

Fab's doing good. His album is droppin' like 1st quarter next year. You should definitely look forward to it. It's hot.

It's still called "From Nothin to Something?"

Ummm... I'm not sure.

You still workin on it?

Yeah

You've been on 105.1 for a few months now are you happy with your new position there.

Yeah—its tweakin' up, been workin' out the buzz, tweakin' it... you know...

Do you think it's broadening your fan base any more than you already had?

I definitely think it's a big machine.

Do you miss the MC Drama days back in '89?

I don't miss'em. I just think it was a different time in Hip-Hop, you know...

What other artists can we look for in Desert Storm in '07?

My man Ransom, my man Killa,

That's it?

—and Fab

Is there anything you want to close with?

I just want people know that, you know what I'm sayin', the album is hot, and you know e'ryone's talkin' bout they lookin' for a hot Hip-Hop album, I think this is it.

YORAPS
DOT COM
senior writer

HIP-HOP'S ROYAL EMPEROR

300 million people in America, Rap album sales hit 500,000, the crowd goes wild. Makes you wonder. Sure, the music industry has cited many reasons for its untimely decline, but, the surge of music waning its livelihood into the hands of persevering independents as a result of the inability for major labels to mold almighty superstars from budding artists, isn't a difficult rationalization to swallow. Amidst the horrid shuffle of who did what and why, Hip-Hop's royal emperor, Jay-Z, spreads his sonic powers over all the land with the release of "Kingdom Come."

Of course, news surfaces that your recent rival, turned friend, turned label-mate's baby mother has kissed and told her way to feed the famished press with the explicit story of an alleged relationship you had with her, in a tell all book she's self promoting. What does International Hov do? Go on to scan almost 1 million records in one week. Easy right? Well... not for common folk, but for "Hip-Hop's Savior" Jay-Hova, piece of cake. He can do that, with both hands tied behind his back, and generate the highest first sales week in Hip-Hop this year while bringing wells to Africa's most impoverished areas. Now that's diplomatic. Jay-Z cut short his early retirement, whipped out a booster cable, and jump-started Hip-Hop.

Here's what he had to say about it all:

Your world tour brought Hip-Hop music beyond the States, to the worldwide market. How do you feel about spreading the music globally?

Yeah, I'm tryna open it up for the genre, you know, for the culture. Let e'rybody know that, you know, we could touch everything. Hip-Hop is a powerful thing. I just came off like a global tour where I touched four continents, and every single continent, you know, Hip-Hop is the main, you know, driving force for the youth culture. Hip-Hop is driving culture.

You recently traveled to Africa to support the world water crisis, tell us about that experience.

People have to trek, like, miles to go get water. And it's mostly the young women that's doin' it. Fourteen year old girls, goin' gettin up six o'clock in the mornin', goin' down to a river, wit a bucket, to pick up water that's--that weighs about 30-something pounds, and they weigh about 80, so its almost half they weight. They gotta trek down and get this water, and then six people are sharin' like 40 liters of water, 20 liters of water is one person just washin' up and basically... I personally built fifteen wells and we raised money for a thousand of 'em so we just gon' keep that fight goin' because it's a solvable problem and it's 2006 and... I mean it's water. And they define access to water as a half-a-mile from the home in Africa. A half-a-mile? That's not access. Access is when you get up and you go to the bathroom, you know, and you turn on the water and it's there. A half-a-mile is access? I don't even understand how that could be.

Tell us about your shows in Africa?

It was great. It was rewardin'. It was bein' a rockstar at night and also, you know, gettin' out and touchin' the people and goin' to the shanty towns and also I teamed up with the UN and MTV so we was buildin' wells and bringin' water to villages that didn't have water, so it was a very rewarding experience.

Does your new album have influences from your travels during your world tour?

Yeah but, what happened was, the album was pretty much done, like I finished it in Australia, I finished--I put the final touches on it in Australia and I got like one verse, you'll hear it when you hear the album, you'll hear that I got one verse about, you know, the trip, but it was pretty much done before I started ummm the tour.

What is the track The Lost Ones about?

No, every once and a while you have those moments where you just have, like, a cleanin' out the closet moment. So those, some of those emotions could be for a day, or for a day two years ago

but because they're on wax you know that it's a tangible thing that people could hear, they think it's an emotion that's current or that's happened in every day, you know, it was just one of those moments that I had where it was just like, I just, got all—'cuz I'm not the type of person to really talk about, you know, what's goin' on, unless it's through my music, so it's more so therapy for me. It was like a—psychiatrist session, you know, in the booth.

I believed it, and then, you know, passion had different plans for me.

What were your feelings about hip hop when you came out of retirement?

I think it was a lot of music and not, you know, people, it was not artists that you could attach yourself to, like people—you know have to be emotionally attached with an artist for you to follow

their career you know a lot of people had great, huge songs but people didn't buy they albums. And they didn't buy they albums because they didn't know what type of person they were or, you know, they didn't relate to that person who made the songs so I think it was just lack in personality in superstars in people who really had real feelin's and emotion in they music.

You have been known to make amazing music videos. What goes into shooting a video?

I like, I like tryna capture--cuz when you have an idea for a song of what it's about you try to pretty much capture what people--what you feel about the

song at the same time without losin' everybody, so yeah, I like, shootin' videos I hate, but umm... gettin' that vision out there you know I take that very serious. I believe it's just as important as making a song, the vision that you attach to it.



Who has worked on this album with you?

I got Dre that's doin' a lot of the heavy liftin' he did a—he's mixin' about 80% of the album and he did about five tracks that's on the album. We got Just [Blaze] there for three, then I got Kanye West. Then I got a—Pharrell, then I got Swiss for one. Then I got these two new producers. Every album I try to, you know, introduce some new blood to the game.

Did you honestly think you were going to stay in retirement?

Yeah [chuckling] for two years, for two years I thought you know,



ATTACK OF THE KILLER SKATEBOARDER

A new sheriff is in town. Ushering in the new meaning of "extra medium," he is neatly attired in skin-tight dungarees, and perhaps the most bold accessory, the necktied bandana. Topped with a neon trucker hat and something of a rebellious slogan adorned across his t-shirt he demands all public attention.

I gather we address our thank you letters to Pharell for spearheading this skateboarding movement, but this has evolved into much more. It's difficult to overlook the resurgence of the mohawk or the uncanny similarity to punk rock teenagers in the eighties. This new wave of attire is more powerful and has spread more quickly than we could have ever imagined. On rare occasion you may catch one of the cowboys sporting a Louis Vuitton multi-colored bandana or toting a stylish color coordinated skateboard. Take an even closer look, you'll notice the wheels are in pristine condition. How dare you suggest the skateboards were for skating? Absolutely not! They are merely a fashion statement.

Public apologies to the authentic skateboarding community. Soon enough we will be sure to find skateboards in New York City's Transit, Active Wearhouse and Jimmy Jazz. Don't shutter at the thought. It was only time before this phenomenon plagued the Entire New York Area. Take note and head to the Urban Skateboard Cowboy.





Pharrell



De Sijal

DJ BIJAL BIOGRAPHY

As waves of music ebb and flow, we tend to occupy ourselves with the idea that our favorite DJ's, the gatekeepers of dear old music, hail from our bordering neighborhoods and cities. To this we attribute our unyielding embrace. We are not all too familiar with the small city of Surat, located in Gujarat, India. Nestled only a few miles from the Arabian Sea, on the Tapi River, Bijal was born here. No sooner than he'd reached the age of 1 his parents, middle-class tobacco wholesalers, took a valiant trip to America. Throughout his adolescence he moved from town to town along the Northeast Coast, living, at some instances, in Motel's. "We had no camera, TV, video or games or anything nice, all money went to my clothes, [and] food," Bijal recalls. It was then that he was swept by the power of music.

At age 15, "[my cousin] caught me and showed me how to [play] a record..." Within a few months he paraded to Canal Hi-Fi (a sizeable electronics boutique located on Canal St. in Manhattan) and bought his first pair of turntables. Playing 24 hours a day at first, he soon wanted to record some of his handy work. The now self-proclaimed "DJ Bijal" made his first mixtape, entitled "No Doubt Dancing," when he connected his DJ equipment to his tape deck. He began recording himself DJing and his personality on tape transformed. It was his calling. In 2001, while attending Long Island University in New York City he landed his first weekly gig at Club Exit in NYC. In May 2002 during a Network 40 magazine interview Bijal comments, "I don't just scratch into every song. I blend vocals and beats and toy with repeating words and playing with the instrumentals..." With trendy mixtapes under his belt he harnessed his cult following. "What I like to do

is slowly work some Indian artists in on my own mixtapes and put them alongside hip-hop and R&B heavyweights." New York's hip-hop/reggae crowd flocked to his room each and every Friday and Saturday night. With career highlights including honorable mention on MTV as "the next big thing" and numerous features in MTV's Mixtape Monday, he capitalized on his notoriety. In Fall 2005, The Ave Magazine dubs him "DJ Clue of the Indian urban music market." Bijal adds, "I feel Indian artists fusing their sound into hip-hop or R&B has the potential to create the next wave of music..."

As his popularity increased he became the first Indian DJ to have his own syndicated urban radio show on AOL Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio simultaneously. In February 2004 Bijal joined forces with well-known mixtape master DJ Krupt, "The Master Jedi," to create Team Jedi. Within a few short months Team Jedi was branded by MTV as 2004's "DJs On the Rise" and the partnership gave birth to Bijal's first commercial release on vinyl, Sumeet and Jay-Z's "Agony - DJ Bijal Remix," which was featured on Jedi Blends Volume 3. From spinning vinyl to being featured on vinyl, he went on to produce the Sumeet featuring Nivla "Ghost - Remix" and Deesha featuring Saj Supreme "Do You Remember - Remix."

What began as fascination and hobby blossomed into his life's work. He currently provides wireless content such as voice tones, ring tones, and wallpapers to wireless providers Jamster & Candy Mobile. Consciously bending and shifting to his ever-changing, ever-growing career, he has solidified himself as outstanding DJ Royalty.

I CAN MAKE YOU FAMOUS BIOGRAPHY



With more than 5 years of entrepreneurial leadership experience building brands and guiding national firms, major and independent record labels, as well as signed and unsigned acts, Sickamore, the founder of I Can Make You Famous, is pioneering a new age of influentials.

Established in Spring 2004, this Artist Development Firm has significantly impacted the music industry with a refreshing movement that has been featured in, but not exclusive to The Source Magazine, Vibe, XXL, Mixtape Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, MTV, BET, VH1, allhiphop.com and hiphopgame.com. The press has feasted on Sickamore's vision and expertise in brand revitalization, concept creation and performance excellence.

Sickamore began in 2001 with the development of custom mixtapes, which, in turn grew to international commercial releases with collaborations of multi-platinum artists and superstars such as Steve Francis, Snoop Dogg, Dylan from Making the Band, Jay-Z, and Jacob the Jeweler. He soon mastered his craft and monopolized this rapidly growing niche until his brand was overwhelmingly dominating. As a result, he was crowned "Best [Mixtape] Personality" at the 2004 Mixtape awards, which propelled him in the top ten mixtape DJ's of 2004 according to MTV.

Sickamore's significant impact in the music industry coupled with his smart, charismatic, and resourceful personality assisted in his outstanding relationships with the industry elite. His uncanny ear and almost psychic foresight of excellent off-the-radar talent caught the eye of production guru Just Blaze. Blaze consequently brought him aboard as the executive A&R of what was at that time a budding label, "Fort Knocks." Sickamore

went on to introduce and influence Just to sign, then unknown rapper Saigon who has now gone on to become, as Rolling Stone Magazine states, "one of the most highly anticipated acts in recent times"

"[SICKAMORE] HANDS ME [A CD] AND HE HANDS ME A PRESS KIT," REMEMBERS JUST. "DUDE HAD ABOUT TWO INCHES WORTH OF PRESS AND I'M LIKE 'WHO IS THIS DUDE? I NEVER EVEN HEARD OF HIM BEFORE.' IT WASN'T EVEN JUST US, IT WAS FRANCE AND GERMANY, HE HAD PRESS FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE. I STARTED DOING MY RESEARCH AND GETTING INTO HIS MUSIC AND I JUST BASICALLY PUT THE CALL IN AND HOLD HIM TO COME DOWN."

- JUST BLAZE, ELEMENTAL MAGAZINE MAY 2005

Concurrently, Sickamore caught sight of Manhattan's Lower East Side rapper Tru Life. They began working closely together in Spring 2005.

Sickamore formulated a campaign for Tru, intended to span 6 months. "I actually met Sickamore through Saigon and that was one of the greatest things. To be honest, I was just playing the background for a minute. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be an artist anymore," Tru explained. Sickamore sparked this promotion with the formulation of a Mixtape, entitled "The New New Yorker" starring Tru Life. Six weeks later a bidding war began. In August 2005, through Sickamore's consulting and direction, Tru went on to sign a 7-figure deal to Def Jam directly through Jay-Z.

“... I WAS JUST STUCK IN BAD PAPERWORK AT DREAMWORKS AND I COULDN'T MOVE... SO WE DID “I CAN MAKE YOU FAMOUS PART 2” AND THE REST IS HISTORY.”

-TRU LIFE, HIPHOPGAME.COM INTERVIEW JULY 2005

Sickamore then went on to negotiate deals with hordes of record labels and unsigned artists, which led to the formation of The Famous Firm. Specializing in the lost art of Artist Development through Brand Identity Campaigning, he has strategically developed exceptional plans for his clients, creating maximum visibility for their respective movements, whilst staying true to what they and their brand represent. The results of this organic grass-root approach are based on quality and talent, not exposure relying on publicity stunts, gimmicks or any other plays that take away from the authenticity of a brand.

With Sickamore's direct connection with the trendsetters, influentials, and power players in today's urban culture, he has created an extensive array of opportunities for his clients. Utilizing the ear of captive audiences and his team of key decision makers, he presents artists' in a manner ensuring brand identity and attracting valuable exposure. Sickamore has masterminded a maximum impact company that can, in a cost effective way, directly access a powerful audience.

Most notably, Sickamore is a thinker and problem-solver. He provides innovative ideas, techniques, processes and solutions to improve outcomes in all areas of business operations. He has an effective and systematic approach to his work, and has created a free-spirited and productive work environment, which has attributed to his success. With a revolving roster of clients, the Famous Firm is continually tackling new heights, and making ordinary people "famous" along the way.



There is intangibility in music. It is dangerously easy to submerge in it and get lost helplessly in its beauty. The memories Chris recollects as he reveals his childhood embodies this submersion. His first encounter with music's entrancing power was with his father, whose never ending record playing suspends in his thoughts. Sonic winds of The Whispers and Anita Baker sailed into his room. However, he had other plans. He confesses, "I remember sneaking off with my older cousin who had the first Scarface CD, the raw version!" Hip-Hop was his secret love.

Quite a few years prior, in the Fall of '79 Christopher Ford was born in Houston, Texas. The southwestern town of Missouri City

CHRIS FORD ESQ. BIOGRAPHY

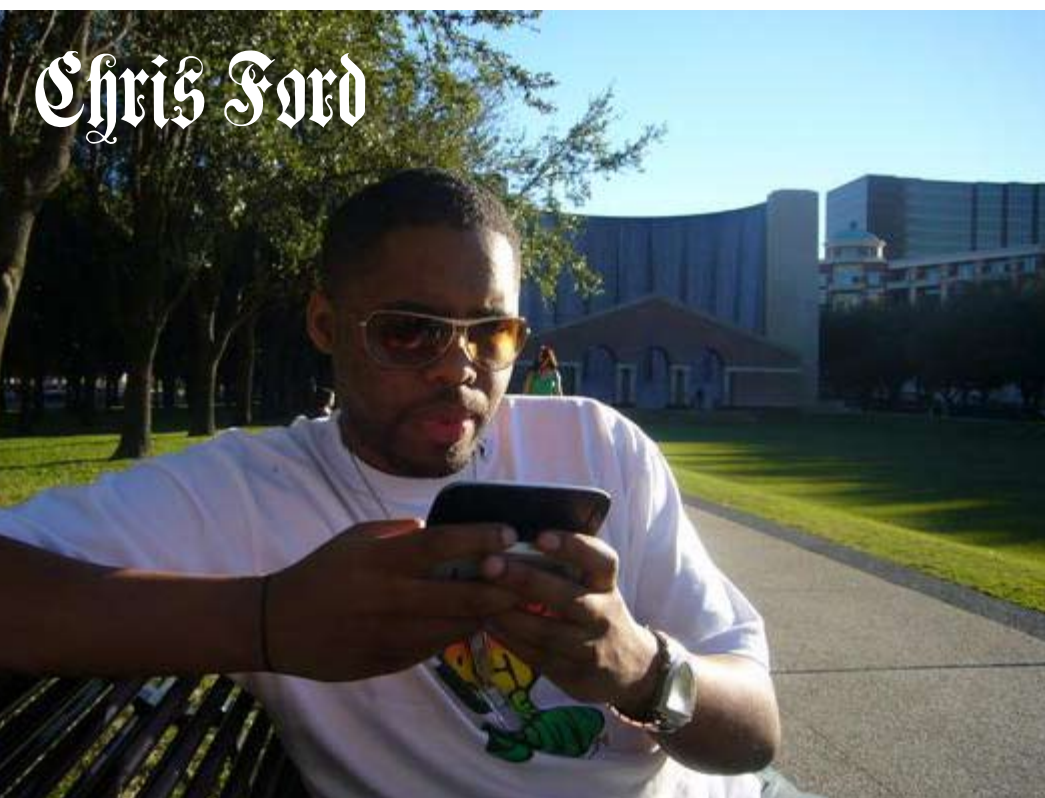
a conscience decision that his future lied in music. "Through research, numerous phone calls and emails, I discovered an Indie hip-hop label in New York, Jambetta Music..." It was there that he learned the ropes, and worked directly with their premier act "Tha Supa Group US." Members included "Rhyme 'Animal Steele,' (A&R accreditations for The Last Poets, Sky Balla and Freck Billionaire)," "Bruce 'Thief In Da Nite' Wayne," (production accreditations for Lil' Flip and G-Unit went on to sell over 10,000,000 records), and "Chris Styles," (production accreditations currently include 50-Cent, Christina Aguilera, Avant and Missy Elliot). Chris recalls, "hanging out in the studio w/ (Bruce) Wayne and Slinkco trying to make a beat and hearing a beat Wayne threw together in 3 minutes which was better than anything I

had done. I kinda knew the production thing might not be for me and I even told Wayne he needed to start selling his beats and not just hording them for us." Besides the thousands of agonizing packages, press kits, vinyl's and mailers he put together, Chris had the opportunity to work hands-on and observe the inner workings of a well-oiled train. He was right smack in the middle of the music industry capital of the world and was privy to the creative and business aspects, not to mention a few parties now and again. Ford received straight A's in the program.

Chris finished up school in 2001, graduated, and came to the realization that he wanted to take on music industry law. Several months and a few student loans later, he found himself at the University of Miami School of Law in 2002. During this time he took a year off and was selected for a position at one of the largest law firms in Houston. In only a few short months he fought his

way out of the mailroom and worked directly with the legal experts. After completing school he spent time in Los Angeles. "I didn't know anyone when I first got there, just like NY." Chris testifies, "I just buried myself in school... Cali gave me time to put my business game together which was very important for me."

In summer of 2006 whilst perusing through mySpace he ran across a familiar face. Animal Steele, who'd began as a clever rapper and marketing mastermind for "Tha Supagroup US" had gone on to start a middle-management firm for the music and fashion industry. Chris enthusiastically reconnected with Animal and a partnership was born. Animal asserts, "I always recognized his talent when he interned at Jambetta." Animal Steele immediately brought Chris on as head of Business and Legal Affairs for his thriving company. Together their collected efforts focus on new clients, fresh talent and promising business endeavors.



was a rough neighborhood, and he imagined escaping through sports. His skill in baseball manifested itself. Aspirations to become the next Ken Griffey Junior fueled his hunger. Both parents and his younger brother were his support system. They boasted proudly when he was accepted into Southwest University in 1997. Chris was awarded an academic scholarship, and took out student loans to cover the expense. At this point, he was the only child in his neighborhood to go to college. There he worked zealously at baseball until a torn ACL ripped at the wallpaper of his dreams. Whilst in school in 1998, he borrowed from his parents and put extra hours in at Wal-Mart to buy his first keyboard. He was officially a producer.

He continued with school until 1999 when a friend told him about an internship program in New York where he'd worked at Rawkus Records. Eager for a reunion with his first love, he applied and was accepted to attend in Spring 2000. He made



Empire City Records

As the scale of success in the music industry shifts slightly from domineering majors to risk-taking, forward-thinking independents, revolutionaries emerge. Tenderly founded by music enthusiast and Wall Street connoisseur Jason Rockland, Empire City Records was born in April of 2005. As its chief financial sponsor, brainchild and President, Jason Rockland has divulged all of his time, capital, and energies, into producing an outstanding musical organization.

Immediately summoning the services of a most entrepreneurial and accomplished staff, he initiated a strong foundation of taste-making musical elite. The Empire City partnership is fueled by: Sickamore, VP of Operations; an influential personality, trendsetter, and music industry pioneer, accredited to jump starting the careers of Def Jam signee Tru-Life, Atlantic Records signee Saigon and countless others. Kori King, General Manager; a self-starter and Columbia University grad who's career highlights include both opening a record label with the release of three albums and founding a successful tech company of which he single-handedly financed his computer science major. Animal Steele, Executive Dir. of A&R; a middle management guru/

forecaster in both music and fashion, whose ten-year position as a buyer and indie label confidante spawned long standing relationships with Hip Hop's superpowers and led him to A&R the legendary Grammy nominated Last Poets album. Together they infuse a fierce love for music with a history of bold dedication to accomplish their goal.¹

They, like many budding labels, started with a vision and many prospective candidates for signage. Stretching their arm 3000 miles away from their home city of New York, they unanimously courted Bay Area native, Sky Balla. With accolades stemming from self-made fame and success on an underground level, he has solidified himself as a resilient force in Rap. With an up and coming album release they are on the verge of making their premier imprint in music history.

Empire's mission is to shape music through developing artists. They, unlike the industry norm of conformity, refuse to surrender to the ease of mimicking fads. With a goal opposite of the all too familiar one-hit-wonders of our time, they set out fearlessly at an endeavor to motivate the masses.

EMPIRE CITY RECORDS BIOGRAPHY

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