

Biography of Manny D

There are very few 21-year-olds that are athletes, as well as rappers. Manny D, born Immanuel Dent II on August 27th, 1985, happens to be one of the few who have been gifted with both talents, plus a humble demeanor, to top it all off.

“I’ve been rapping since I’ve been 13 years old,” says the young man born in Texas and raised in Bradenton, Florida. As the second youngest of nine siblings, he found music to be escapism and looked up to rappers like LL Cool J and Big Daddy Kane. “I’d enter and win all of the freestyle battles at my school,” he says. In the twelfth grade, Manny D’s remarkable rapping skills caught the attention of many of his classmates, including an old friend, Lastings Milledge. “We had met in the seventh grade, but lost touch when he moved to a private school for a few years. When he came back to my school senior year, he thought that I was going to be someone in the rap industry,” Manny D says of Milledge. However, rapping was Manny D’s second love, and took a backseat when he played football. In fact, he received a football scholarship to Missouri Valley College, where two years later, he earned his Associate’s Degree in business management.

After a scout recruited Manny D to the University of South Florida, the 20-year-old found himself with time on his hands, since he wouldn’t attend the university for another full year. While maintaining five jobs over a three month period, Manny began to yearn to rap once again. He entered various freestyle battles in Missouri, but “couldn’t wait any longer,” says this eager go-getter. He quickly released his first mix tape and it wasn’t long after that he began to receive positive feedback from A&R’s at major record labels in New York who were fascinated by Manny D’s unique style of rapping. Among those who took notice was an old friend from junior high school, Lastings Milledge, who went on to play baseball for the New York Mets. Immanuel, as his parents still refer to him, recalls Milledge’s interest in him during high school and soon took Lastings up on his offer to help him break into the rap industry. The two founded their record label, Soulja-Boi Records. The Southern rapper’s career catapulted when Lastings took on the position of manager to his long-time friend.

LL Cool J and Big Daddy Kane aren’t the only two people Manny D looks up to. His mother and father, he says, are his two idols. “My dad is 72 years old and still works. He’s a real man and has worked to give me everything I have. My mom raised me and took me to all of my activities and sporting events.” Not only have they given him everything he has, but they have provided their son with fervent determination, loyalty to his home town, and humility. After achieving his goals and financial success, the rapper whose spare time activity is dancing, has goals of forming his own foundation for kids that aren’t fortunate enough to have a role model in their lives. “My main focus is kids because the world is changing fast. I want to model my foundation after Big Brothers Big Sisters.”

On March 13, Manny D will release his second mix tape entitled, “The Problem.” Why is it called the problem? According to the man himself, it is because “I’m going to be a problem... a good problem, though! I’m going to make it hard for a lot of rappers to

eat,” said with a chuckle. In April, his first single, “Get Cha Hands Up,” off of his untitled album will be released to radio stations such as Hot 97 in New York, and Power 96 and 105.1 in Miami. The album, set to drop in May, features a few unknown artists, such as Teddi, a female hip-hop/R&B singer with whom Manny D collaborates for a song entitled, “Since You’ve Been Gone,” in which he talks about the current state of the world and our culture.

While Manny D may have set a great deal of aspirations in his life, his greatest goal is to create positive music, which, he says, is “something that most rap music is lacking.” His sheer force as an athlete, combined with his smarts formed in college, and humble approach as a result of his roots are enough to produce a positive transformation in rap music, as well as the music industry as a whole.