

EMINEM Biography

The average rapper wouldn't be able to grace the pages of Rap Pages, VIBE, Spin, The Source, URB and Stress and go on a national tour months before their major label debut album is released. Then again, Eminem isn't an average rapper. He's phenomenal.

The release of "The Slim Shady LP," his first set on Aftermath/Interscope Records, already had hip-hop heads fiending for Eminem.

Chock full of dazzling lyrical escapades that delve into the mind of a violently warped and vulgar yet extremely talented wordsmith, the 14-cut collection contains some of the most memorable and demented lyrics ever recorded.

For Eminem, his potentially controversial and undoubtedly offensive songs struck a chord with a multitude of hip-hop loyalists who believe they have little to lose and everything to gain.

"I'm not alone in feeling the way I feel," he says. "I believe that a lot of people can relate to my shit—whether white, black, it doesn't matter. Everybody has been through some shit, whether it's drastic or not so drastic. Everybody gets to the point of 'I don't give a fuck.'"

Those words are more than just a slogan for the Detroit resident. "I Just Don't Give A Fuck" and "Brain Damage" are the two songs comprising Eminem's initial single from "The Slim Shady LP." Each tune is sure to paralyze meek listeners with their relentless lyrical assault.

Produced primarily by long-time collaborators FBT Productions, the "Slim Shady LP" also features beat work from Aftermath CEO Dr. Dre. The N.W.A. alum handled beats for "My Name Is" (the second single), "Guilty Conscience" and "Role Model."

Dr. Dre was so impressed after hearing Eminem free-styling on Friday Night Flavas on Power 106 that he put out a manhunt for the Michigan rhymer. Shortly thereafter, Dre signed Eminem to his Aftermath imprint and the two began working together.

Thoroughly impressed with Eminem's previously released independent "The Slim Shady EP," Dre said they would include many of the EP's tracks on the album.

"It was an honor to hear the words out of Dre's mouth that he liked my shit," Eminem says. "Growing up, I was one of the biggest fans of N.W.A, from putting on the sunglasses and looking in the mirror and lipsinking to wanting to be Dr. Dre, to be Ice Cube. This is the biggest hip-hop producer ever."

But like many other rappers, Eminem's rise to stardom was far from easy. After being born in Kansas City and traveling back and forth between KC and the Detroit metropolitan area, Eminem and his mother moved into the Eastside of Detroit when he was 12.

Switching schools every two to three months made it difficult to make friends, graduate and to stay out of trouble.

Rap, however, became Eminem's solace. Battling schoolmates in the lunchroom brought joy to what was otherwise a painful existence. Although he would later drop out of school and land several mini mum-wage-paying, full-time jobs, his musical focus remained constant.

Eminem released his debut album, "Infinite," in 1996. Desperate to be embraced by the Motor City's hip-hop scene, Eminem rapped in such a manner that he was accused of sounding like Nas and AZ.

"'Infinite' was me trying to figure out how I wanted my rap style to be, how I wanted to sound on the mic and present myself," he recalls. "It was a growing stage. I felt like 'Infinite' was like a demo that just got pressed up."

After being thoroughly disappointed and hurt by the response "Infinite" received, Eminem began working on what would later become "The Slim Shady EP"—a project he made for himself. Featuring several scathing lines about

local music industry personalities as well as devious rants about life in general, the set quickly caught the ear of hip-hop's difficult-to-please underground.

"I had nothing to lose, but something to gain," Eminem says of that point in his life. "If I made an album for me and it was to my satisfaction, then I succeeded. If I didn't, then my producers were going to give up on the whole rap thing we were doing. I made some shit that I wanted to hear. The 'Slim Shady EP,' I lashed out on everybody who talked shit about me."

By presenting himself as himself, Eminem and his career took off. Soon after giving the Rap Coalition's Wendy Day a copy of the Infinite album at a chance meeting, she helped the aspiring lyrical gymnast secure a spot at the Coalition's 1997 Rap Olympics in Los Angeles, where he won second place in the freestyle competition.

During the trip, Eminem and his manager, Paul Rosenberg, gave a few people from Interscope Records his demo and he made his major radio debut on the world famous -Wake Up Show with Sway and Tech.

Realizing that this was the opportunity of his lifetime; Eminem delivered a furious medley of lyrics that wowed his hosts and radio audience alike.

"I felt like it's my time to shine," Eminem says of that performance. "I have to rip this. At that time, I felt that it was a life or death situation."

Eminem would soon record the underground classic "5 Star Generals." This record helped establish him in Japan, New York and Los Angeles. It also helped him earn a spot on the inaugural Lyricist Lounge tour, which took him to stages from Philadelphia to Los Angeles.

Set to take the hip-hop world by storm with his unique lyrical approach and punishing production, Eminem and his "The Slim Shady LP" are sure to have listeners captivated.

"I do say things that I think will shock people," he says. "But I don't do things to shock people. I'm not trying to be the next Tupac, but I don't know how long I'm going to be on this planet. So while I'm here, I might as well make the most of it."