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Ziggy Marley Underlines Differences With Father

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ziggy Marley is proudly carrying on his father's musical legacy, but he wants to remind reggae lovers of their differences.

In a new album, the 42-year-old eldest son of Bob Marley reflects on lessons learned from his dad, who died at age 36 after contracting cancer.

On the tune "The Roads Less Traveled," he sings about his father's womanizing ways and inability to shed "yes men" in success: "My daddy had a lot of women, and my mama had a lot of grief. The bredrens (friends) that surrounded him became the enemies."

Marley said in an interview that while he's happy to expand his and his family's brand — whether with a "Marijuana Man" comic book or a Marley's Mellow Mood "relaxation drink" — he's kept his circle of friends small and purposefully avoided accumulating any sort of entourage.

"I'd rather be by myself really than have like a million posse around me," Marley said in an interview at his Los Angeles home. "Some of them you don't even know what's in their hearts. You don't know who you can trust."

"That's why I sing that song, because I learned from what I saw as a child and decided that I would take another way," added Marley, who was just 12 when his father died. "My father, we bumped heads when I was younger, much younger. ... I had different ideas that I shared with him. He didn't like them as much. He gets upset or whatever. I guess I had a strong opinion from when I was a little boy, you know."

Marley's fourth solo studio album, "Wild and Free," also includes a song obliquely about leaving behind his birthplace of Jamaica, titled "Get Out of Town." The five-time Grammy winner now lives primarily in Miami.

"He's from the country and I was born in the town. One day I told him that. I don't want to be a country boy," Marley said of his father. "He was upset with those things. And then another time it was about dreadlocks. I said to him, 'You cannot have dreadlocks. You

can be dread in your heart.' He was very upset. Each father want their sons to be just like them really"

But now that Marley — who does sport dreadlocks — has matured, his singing voice and his take on reggae music is arguably more evocative of Bob than others in his famously musical family.

"If it wasn't natural to be like him, it wouldn't happen. But since it naturally evolved to have a lot of the ideas and traits of my father, then that's fine," he said.

Like his father, Marley couches some downbeat themes in sunny-sounding tunes.

"Welcome to the world. I can't promise it's a good place," he sings to his children in one song.

Marley also gets political on the album, singing alongside Woody Harrelson of legalizing marijuana. And though his home proudly displays a picture of his family visiting the Obamas in the White House, he's not enthusiastic about the president's performance.

"I believe that he is a good person and wants to see the best, but politics is a game. If you want to be a politician you have to play it, and you have to skirt around the truth. And you have to kind of shift things differently, so you can't really be true as a politician," Marley said. "If you did that, you are going to be out in a second. You cannot. You have to play the game. So he has to play the game. And we had hope that someone would be brave enough to change that, but it is very hard to change that."