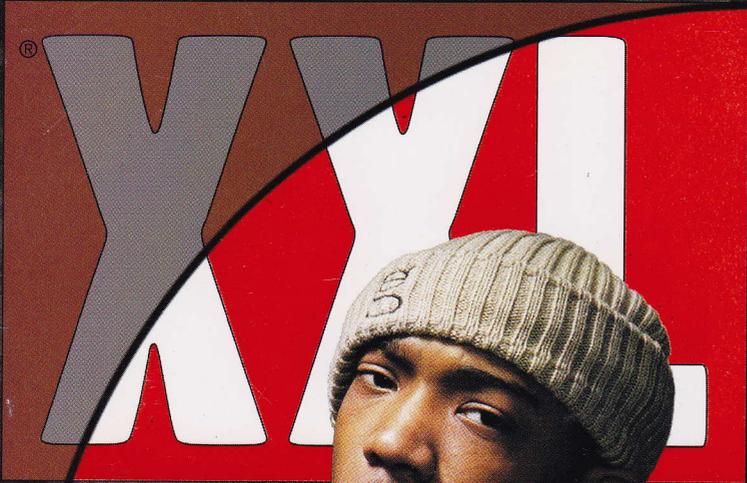


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KANYE WEST
I'm Good

S M L XL XXL

Most people with a jaw wired closed would try to keep their mouth shut. Not producer-turned-rapper Kanye West. This cat jumped right into the booth and spit two mush-mouthed verses on "Through The Wire" for his first mixtape, *Get Well Soon*. And after a few guest appearances on the *Paid In Full* soundtrack and Talib Kweli's *Quality*, Kanye dropped his follow-up, *I'm Good*, just to show how serious he is.

Throughout the 30-track excursion, which includes an assortment of previous Kanye-produced hits (Lil' Kim's "Came Back For You"), unreleased remixes (Jay-Z's "Excuse Me Miss") and

freestyles, West does double duty as producer and MC. The cocky Kan Man holds his own alongside heavy spitters like Mos Def, Jigga and Talib Kweli on the "Get By (Remix)," droppin' witty one-liners like, "If music gets you choked up/This is the tree and a rope." And he spits with equal precision on "Drop Dead Gorgeous," going head-to-head with the St. Lunatics' Murphy Lee where the Midwestern combo drop bars about curvaceous and triflin' groupies.

When he flies solo, however, Kanye's rhymes aren't as potent. His flow and content on "Heavy Hitters Freestyle" sound too simple to garner much replay value (i.e. "Made her show me ID so I know she old/She claim she never heard of me but I know she know"). But at times it's that same simplicity that makes his lyrics so appealing. On "Nowhere To Go Freestyle," Kanye snarls, "Dog, it's nowhere to hide/All I got is my pride/I almost died/I keep that 2Pac feelin' alive."

ILL techniques DJ JS-1



Right now, DJ JS-1 may be best known as the guy on the turntables behind one of the most famous motor mouthpieces, Rahzel. But if all goes according to plan, the Rock Steady-affiliated Queens-bred DJ will soon be recognized for his own record successes as he gets ready to release his debut album, *Ground Original*. JS-1 is the proud papa of 23 original tracks produced by himself and his partner Dub-L, featuring exclusive verses from subterranean big boys like KRS-One, Masta Ace, Kool G Rap and Breez Evahflowin'. A DJ who really does produce? Looks like Kay Slay and DJ Envy better watch their backs.

XXL: HOW'D YOU HOOK UP WITH RAHZEL?

I was doing MTV Jams with DJ Scribble in '98 or '99 and Rahzel was doing the different commercials for hip-hop week. That was right around when his first album was about to come out, and he told me he needed a DJ to go out on the road with him. There was no way I was turning that down.

WHAT KIND OF DJ ARE YOU?

I get respect for being a turntablist, even though I don't like using that term. I focus more on scratching and the show aspect of DJing. I guess you can compare it to Mix Master Mike or The X-Ecutioners, as opposed to like Clue or Flex. I like to play what I want to play, and some of the clubs here kind of don't allow that.

IT'S WEIRD YOU CAN'T PLAY WHAT YOU WANT WHERE YOU'RE FROM.

New York is the worst scene in the world for hip-hop. I'm a member of the Rock Steady Crew, and from a b-boy perspective, there's no real outlet for anything here except the major commercial artists. It's very strange that I can go to London and DJ three events in one night and over here it's hard to get one, let alone make any money.

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU JOIN ROCK STEADY, A NECKLACE OR SOMETHING?

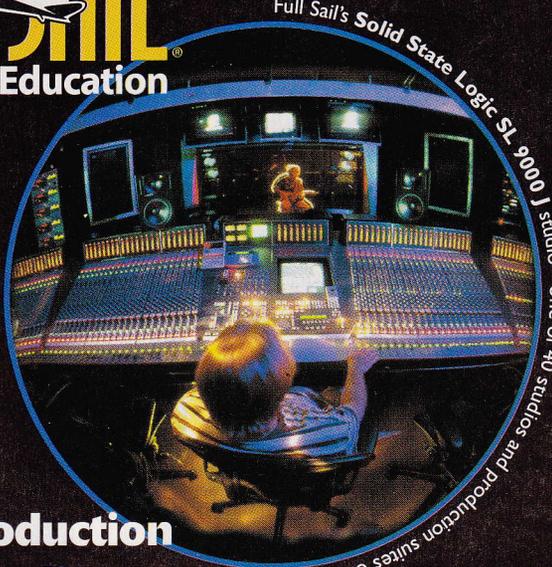
(Laughs) Nah, they have Rock Steady jerseys. But the real thing that you get is the respect of being in a hip-hop organization that's been there from the very beginning. I feel a close tie to these guys as far as trying to promote the hip-hop that we grew up on around the world. Now when I go to Europe I get a totally different treatment.

DO YOU GUYS HAVE GROUPIES?

Believe it or not, yeah. The DJ always gets groupies. If they tell you no, then they're lying or they're just really ugly.—LEAH ROSE

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