



JAY-Z

MTV: THE KING OF R.O.C.
2000

MTV News' Liane Su: When we first heard about the *Dynasty* album, we weren't expecting that it would hit stores so quickly.

Jay-Z: Y'all take my words too lightly. That's the problem. I keep telling y'all that: Don't take my words lightly. I'm dead serious, man. I know what I'm doing here. I got an agenda.

MTV: We'd thought it would be more of a Roc-A-Fella family compilation, as opposed to a project spearheaded by you. Is the compilation coming later, or is this it?

Jay-Z: This is it, right here. It's a Jay-Z album. The family, they're on a lot of tracks, and they're dominating the tracks, and they're showcasing their talent. But that was my whole plan.

MTV: The first single was going to be "Parking Lot Pimpin'," and it was switched to "I Just Wanna Love U" just before the video shoot. Why did you switch them up?

Jay-Z: "Parking Lot," up and running, was incredible, a hot song. I was all ready to go with it, but then, next day, I made this song, and it was just a vibe. Just the vibe of everyone in the studio, the immediate reaction -- people were singing it by the time the second hook came on, and I knew right there. Those types of songs -- I know, I made a couple of 'em -- I know what type of song this is right here. This is it. I'm unstoppable right now with this song.

MTV: The video shoot had to be switched up quickly as well.

Jay-Z: Yeah. I feel sorry for [director] Dave Meyers. We were all prepped to shoot "Parking Lot Pimpin'." He had a million low riders flown in, cars from all over the world, from Houston, from Atlanta, St. Louis. He just had to switch the whole thing around at the last minute, and he brought it together. I had a whole different treatment, so for him to put it together within not even 24 hours -- we could say 16 hours -- is a credit to him.

MTV: Tell us what the video is about.

Jay-Z: I'm in the house, and I'm trying to get some privacy, and just turn on some music, and this music is so loud that it's being heard all over, and everyone's coming up, they're running, they're sneaking in the house. Everywhere I go, I try to get privacy with the young lady that I'm with, and someone interrupts. Someone's running past, someone's coming in the kitchen, someone's in the low rider when we go in there. At the end, I finally just get on a ledge up above everyone else, and I finally get my little bit of privacy.

MTV: Is that what your life is like?

Jay-Z: Yeah. It's like art imitatin' life imitatin' art imitatin' life.
[Laughs]

MTV: Your last album came out less than a year ago. Do you ever rest?

Jay-Z: We got plenty of time to do that when we retire. I'm here to work. I have so many different ideas and... I want go on and challenge myself musically. I can't stop. I'm almost obsessed with this music. I had a lot to talk about, also. I had all these things on my mind and no outlet for 'em, and I don't write lyrics [down]; they just come to me. I can't just hold it for another year, just holding 16 songs in my mind. Anything can happen. I trip and hit my head, it's over. It's all gone.

MTV: What are some of the things you had to get out?

Jay-Z: I talked about my life within the year, all the things that happened. All the things that happen to me and the way people reacted to me, just off a hearsay and off assumption. I talked all about that: the way people reacted, the way the press did.

MTV: We're not talking about haters here.

Jay-Z: No, we're talking about Jay Leno and things like that. You know, different outlets like that. But it's cool.

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MTV: You keep getting bigger and bigger in this business.

Jay-Z: Yeah. I mean, before I get annoyed, I really think about where it's coming from. A lot of the time, people see you, they see you every day, and they have a certain type of love for you, and they really don't know how to profess that love. So they come at you different kinds of ways. I take the extra second and I think about it: "Where is this coming from? Why is this person coming at me like that?" The more success that you have, you've got to have a lot of patience. A lot of people are looking at you, and a lot of people want to deal with you on a one-on-one, but you're only one person. There's not enough hours in a day for me to deal with everybody the same way I would love to.

MTV: Are you a patient person?

Jay-Z: Nah. I didn't know anything about the music business five years ago; I didn't care, sort of like how [Memphis] Bleek is now. He's the young guy coming into the game; he don't really know all the politics. He's not concerned, he don't care. He just raps. That's all he knows. "I pulled the rap, and y'all supposed to pay me," and that's it. That's all he knows: rap; pay me. He don't know about the politics, [like] if you offend this person at radio, the ramifications; or you defend this person at MTV, the ramifications.

What it is, it's like you're in the room, and someone turns the light off, and you're feeling your way through, and you make it through all right. Then they turn the light on and show you everything that was in the room: alligator pits and rats and things like that. So next time you go into a dark room, you have that knowledge with you, so you go at it a little differently. That's how I go at it right now. Ignorance is bliss for them. They just run right through. It works sometimes.

MTV: You're still concentrating on your own career and creativity as an artist, but at the same time, the Roc-A-Fella artists are coming up under you. How does that work out for you?

Jay-Z: It's really good, because I could share my experiences and the things that I know -- the things that I had to learn on my own -- I could share with them. It's really good for me. It's another outlet; it's another way to show them how to make music and how to make songs from your heart and your soul and not make it for whatever other reason. I'm ready for them to just take it over; that's what I'm preparing for. That's what *The Dynasty* is about.

MTV: Does seeing your success put pressure on other members of the family to come out and do well?

Jay-Z: Yeah, I guess. For me, it would give me more ambition. I'm seeing the way they're working. Beanie Sigel, he's worked on *The Dynasty*; he's got another album completed, in the can, with his guys from Philly; and he shot a movie, all in three months. All it's doing is making 'em step up to the plate. They're seeing how far they've got to go. You can shy away from it, you can run away from it, or you could just zip up your jacket, buckle up, and get ready. That's what they're doing right now. They're stepping up to the plate and starting to work hard.

MTV: What kind of dynasty is it, for you?

Jay-Z: Not the TV show. Like the Ming Dynasty. The real dynasty, like the Chicago Bulls, San Francisco 49ers, you know what I'm saying? Like a dynasty, not like a television show. Not like Blake Carrington.

MTV: Anything else coming out from you that we should keep an eye out for?

Jay-Z: I might sneak another album on ya by December. [Pauses] Nah, I'm just joking. [Laughs]

MTV: I really wouldn't be surprised.

Jay-Z: Nah. Other than the movies, the clothing. Roc-A-Wear is really keeping us busy. We grossed maybe 80 million in 18 months, so it's obvious that we're doing something right.