

Enter Klock Work Entertainment Hip-Hop Artist T-Jay

Written by Robert ID2601

Tuesday, 09 May 2006 07:32 -

Hip-hop and multi genre music producer Johnny “J”, the man responsible for many of the beats laid down beneath the lyrics of the legendary hip-hop icon, rap artist Tupac Shakur (2Pac), has a record label called Klock Work Entertainment.

Many believed that Johnny “J” had retired or was slowly exiting the game, bowing out with grace – but in fact Johnny “J” and his company Klock Work Entertainment have slowly been developing new artists and doing what Johnny “J” does best; making good music.

The first artist to come out of the Klock Work Entertainment camp is a young rap artist named T-Jay.

T-Jay has been around music all of his life and his self built relationship with female hip-hop rapper Da Brat led him down an unbelievable path at a young age and now, although only 19 yrs. old, he handles himself like a seasoned vet – in and out of the booth.

In a period where the young up and comers seem to act like they are the next big thing and they over look all those who have built the game to the point it is today, T-Jay is a very respectful, sincere and talented young man.

Hip-hop is full of the ‘next big thing’, I hear them telling me that everyday, but with a producer like Johnny “J”, who has sold over 60 million plus records, as a mentor, T-Jay is confident but not cocky about his future in the hip-hop industry.

I hope you enjoy ‘meeting’ T-Jay as much as I did and if you want to hear what this amazing young artist can do visit the Johnny “J”’s MySpace page [HERE](#) to hear a few tracks from T-Jay’s album. To see the lyrics to the tribute to Tupac (2Pac), 'still" click [HERE](#)

I’d like to thank T-Jay for taking his time to talk to me and Johnny “J” for his never ending love

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for the fans and to the entire Klock Work Entertainment family for allowing and hooking up this interview for me.

ThugLifeArmy – First thank you for taking time to do this, it is much appreciated.

T-Jay – Yeah, thank you dawg.

ThugLifeArmy – For only being 19 yrs. old and having done some of the things you have done, it is hard to find a place to start with you. Your 19, were born in Redlands California and have been performing since you were about 8?

T-Jay – I have been performing since I was 8 but I have been rappin since I was about 4. My dad's best friend, my mentor, 'Big Homie' or what ever – his name was Wade; Ronnie 'Swade' Johnson. He would always sing and I always use to look up to him. Like 'man, he's tight', and I use to always like the attention. So when I was like 4 I always tried to do everything. I couldn't sing really but I would dance and rap. I happen to be good at rappin and so I just took to that, and ever since then it has been what eva it is.

ThugLifeArmy – How did you catch the eye of Da Brat and end up on tour with them?

T-Jay – When I was 8 I had the Da Brat – 'Funkdafied' album. And I re-did a song that she did on a CD called Mind Blowin". I recorded it on audio tape and sent it out to her. I looked on the back of her album and got her manager or her A&R lady, her name was Lucy Raul; so that's who I sent it to. And I guess she gave it to Brat and Brat called and said can I speak to that 8 yr. old rapper. And at the time my name was Ice Boo. I was in a lil ice thing with hip-hop and rap artists Vanilla Ice, Ice Cube being out there ya know what eva. She said I like what you did on tape. And I was like fo sho, I have just been a big fan just following you. And she said 'Well I'm doing this show in San Jose in a couple of weeks, if you would like to come thru and watch it or what eva you can'. And I told her thank you, that's love. So I got some money together and went to the show in San Jose, and I hadn't met her yet. I met her road manager at that time, his name was Jonathan. I met him and he said "So you're the one they're talking about. Go ahead and do something for me, because I have never heard ya." So I did a little something and he said "yeah your real tight. How old are you?" I said 8, and he said "yeah you're real tight. I am going to try to let you perform with her tonight." It was all good but I still hadn't seen her (Da

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Brat) and the show was getting ready to start. The show started and right before she got on stage I seen her, she gave me a hug and said what's up. Her manager said yeah he's nice and she said don't even trip I got him. She got on the stage and was going to do the song 'Funkdafied'. That is the song with her and J D, but J D wasn't there that night. She asked the crowd how many of you know 'Funkdafied'? The whole crowd was going off and she said well this is what I'm going to do – I'm going to bring my little brother up here, she called me her little brother, and she said Ice Boo get up here and do this. So I went up there and I did J D's part and we rocked it ya know. And then I went off stage and she continued with the rest of her show and we talked later back stage. She said "yeah good job, your doing your thing real nice. If you ever come to Atlanta look me up." So I just stayed in contact with her and then later on they invited me down there to the studio. I did this little song called 'Love Being a Shorty'. She wrote the first verse, I wrote the second verse. It was cool for a little 8 year old. It really wasn't me ya know, but it was tight for back then. But I just hung around her and I got better and better. Then I went to New York cause she had a video shoot for 'That's What I'm Looking For'. By that time I was about 10 or 11; and I was in that video. And after that everywhere she went I would go; she was just giving me that experience and that exposure.

ThugLifeArmy - Also on that night of tour with Da Brat, other hip-hop and rap artists like Run DMC, Outkast, Cypress Hill, Aaliyah, Too Short, E-40 performed in front of 20,000 people. At such a young age how influential were the other artists you met on that tour?

T-Jay – It was an amazing influence. I thought 'this could be me when I get older'; because they all started off at the same point where I started.

ThugLifeArmy – Do you still have ties with any of those artists?

T-Jay – Naw, except for Brat. She still knows me and I have a lot of love for her, but now I am just doing my thing with Johnny "J".

ThugLifeArmy – At one time you were signed to A&M Records. Do you wish that would have worked out or do you see it as it wasn't your time yet and now things are the best for everybody.

T-Jay – They say things happen for a reason and so I guess it wasn't ment to be because I was so young; I was like 15 or 16 when I was with them. But I was kinda stuck in a zone. Like do I

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talk about adult subjects and get criticized and ridiculed from the public because I was so young talking about the streets and what is going on in the ghetto or do I just play it safe and talk about girls and teenage things. Then when I would get older I wouldn't be able to make that transition because of the image I would have already had. But looking back I am kinda glad it didn't work out because now I'm older and I can talk about whatever; I'm legal.

ThugLifeArmy – There is a lot of buzz about the tribute song that you and Johnny “J” have done for Tupac; how did you and Johnny “J” hook up?

T-Jay – Johnny “J” and I hooked up when I was over at A&M. I had my budget and they asked what producers I wanted to work with and the first one I said was Johnny “J”. I'm a major Tupac (2Pac) fan, have been since I was 8 yrs. old. I use to listen to All Eyez on Me and Thug Life and look at the cover to see who made the tracks because they were hot. When I saw they were produced by Johnny “J” I knew I had to hook up with that dude cause that dude is tight. If he does beats for my favorite rapper he has to be my favorite producer. My A&R lady at A&M hooked it up for me. I was in the car and she called and told me to come to the office ‘I got a surprise for you’. I asked what was going down and she said; “You will never guess who I got sitting in my office right now. I got Johnny “J” here.” Johnny “J” got on the speaker and asked ‘what up T-Jay, I heard your stuff. Your real talented.’ I was star struck at that time, ya know like wow Johnny “J”; this is the dude who did Tupac's stuff. By the time I got there he had already seen the performance I did on the Apollo, he heard all my music and he was ready to get to work. He played me about 20 tracks. 19 out of them were just smashers ya know; all of them were dope. After that I told my A&R lady to set it up and let's hit the studio; that's who I want to work with. They were like ok we are going to get to it, but they never really got to it. They would put it off like, let's check out these other producers or what ever. But I still had Johnny “J”'s number and we still talked. I'd call him and keep him updated on what was going on. There was a conflict of interests, I was like 15 or 16 and they wanted me to go gangsta, and talk about this and that. And at a young age nobody was going to believe that coming from me, I was too young. So things didn't work out but I still kept my contact with Johnny “J”. I'd let him know every move I made and I'd let him know the situation, and he said ‘don't even trip, I got you’, so from there on out I have been working with Johnny.

ThugLifeArmy – Here you are a 19yr. Old, a coming up rap artist and you're in the studio with a man that has sold over 60 million plus records. Do you find that intimidating or inspirational?

T-Jay – Yeah it is kinda like ‘dang this is a trip’, but you get so comfortable and you get that confidence in yourself like but I can do it to. I'm here for a reason. And Johnny tells me ‘don't even trip over the past or what I did, this is me and you’; and that helps out a lot. He says ‘I

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done stuff with Tupac (2Pac), Bizzy Bone, Jon B; I made records with all of them but when I'm working with you it's you don't feel no kind of pressure.' It's a whole new beginning, it's a whole new start; so don't even trip off that.' So when he told me that I thought kool cause I can just do me and be myself. And that is how I make my best music, no pressure, no time limit; just doing what I gotta do.

ThugLifeArmy – When you go into the lab (studio) at Johnny “J”'s and see his platinum records and plaques, do you ever look around and ask yourself ‘why me ‘?

T-Jay – Sometimes I do that. I think how did I end up like this? And then something tells me that everything happens for a reason, it's just thru God – it's like fate. I have been doing it for so long, so to be in the position I am in I feel blessed. But yeah I do look around and do that. Like this is crazy but things happen for a reason.

ThugLifeArmy – How long have you and Johnny “J” been together now?

T-Jay – I have been following him since I was about 8, ever since I started pursuing a career in hip-hop I have been following Johnny “J”. But we have been working together for about 3 or 4 years. I met him at 15 and I'm 19 now; so we have just been working.

ThugLifeArmy – So you're not nervous around Johnny “J” knowing that he is a proven legend in the music field.

T-Jay – Naw, Naw; I am real kool with him now. He is like an older brother. Telling me and giving me advice on the game, who to watch out for and stuff like that.

ThugLifeArmy – Is Johnny “J” demanding in the studio or does he pretty much let you do your thing.

T-Jay – In the studio, he's just laid back. He'll be like ‘do what you gotta do’. And then if it

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doesn't feel right he will say 'how about we whoop da whoop' and we compromise. And then sometimes he will say the lyrics are tighter than the beat, I don't like that, I am going to change my beat. Or sometimes it is the beat is tighter than the lyrics; so we got to redo it. So really it's like 50/50.

ThugLifeArmy – The tribute track 'Still', how long did it take to get that together.

T-Jay – The first night I done it, I did it in about 20 minuets. I wrote it in 10 and recorded it in 10. And after that 20 minutes as soon as we heard it, we were like yeah that's it. There were 2 beats to start. And I didn't know which one I wanted to use. The beat we got on it now, I just zoned out to it and we started. 'All eyez on the heart that we lost' and it was perfect. It just blended together and when we were done we both said yeah that's the one. It was kinda easy though because before we started I asked Johnny his feeling on Pac and what he wanted to say. Then I told him what I wanted to say and it was just easy from there on out cause that is what I do.

ThugLifeArmy – So you have that Pac work ethic where you can go in and just drop the track and your not going to sit and play with it for 2 or 3 years right?

T-Jay – Yeah exactly. That is where I got it from; I got it from him (2Pac). Like just keep going, as soon as you hit a track do whatever you feel and don't stop at that though; just keep going. That's why he (Tupac) has so much music now, because he wasn't satisfied with 'ok I made How Do You Want It, just let me chill now'. He kept going and kept going. That's the attitude I got to – just gotta keep going.

ThugLifeArmy – There are many tributes to Pac out, but I think what makes this one, and the one that Johnny 'J' did with ex-Outlawz member Napoleon awhile back – called 'Never Forget' produced by Johnny "J" and featured Val Young and a short shot by Johnny "J", doesn't have Pac lyrics running all thru them or a famous Johnny "J" Pac beat. Was that your way of thinking or Johnny "J"'s?

T-Jay – We wanted to do something that wasn't done yet. Like a lot of tribute songs they want to use his (Tupac) voice or sample a song of his and just rap over the beat; but we didn't want to make you cry. We wanted to make the memory live on like 'we're still riding for ya Pac'. When

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people hear it I wanted to lift their spirits up. It's the 10th year anniversary and we wanted people to be like 'yeah Pac is still there.' We just wanted his spirit to live on and for people to just be happy; happy for him. When you listen to Tupac's music, he always use to have premonitions about his death and now he is in a better place and we got to just rejoice and be happy for him. We have to acknowledge all of the work he had done, and how he influenced myself as well as every other rapper out there. So that is where we wanted to go when we made that track.

ThugLifeArmy – I know you're a big Pac (Tupac) fan, so how do you feel about the 'Loyal to the Game' album, did you like it?

T-Jay – Anything that Tupac does I'm going to like it. I don't care what beat you use, who did what or whatever, anything that Tupac does I'm on it cause it's Pac. You heard in the tribute where I said me and Johnny listen to producers wreck your songs; we say stuff but it is just not our opinion, it's what everybody is feeling. I liked Loyal to the Game for Tupac's lyrical talents as much as every other Tupac album out there; just cause its Tupac straight up. His lyrical content and style can never be replaced or overlooked.

ThugLifeArmy – Have you tried your hand at producing?

T-Jay – I do my thing. I know how to do it all. I play the keyboards, I make beats, I can get on the pro tools or what ever. I know where my bread and butter is, I know I got talent to rap. Eventually I might do something but I let Johnny "J" do the producing because he has been doing it for so long and he has it down packed. I feel ain't nobody touching him at that. He's the best to me, so why would I try to make a beat myself when I got the best right there. It's like you got Michael Jordan on your team, why would you shoot the ball in the 4th quarter. You already know who to give the ball to.

ThugLifeArmy – What is your favorite Tupac track

T-Jay – My favorite Tupac track would be 'Unconditional Love'. I like 'Unconditional Love', and 'White Mans World'. 'Unconditional Love' I like because how the whole sentimental value of how Johnny got to it and just the feel of it. It's so real, everybody can relate to that. Everything he is saying 'my broken down TV, shows cartoons in my living room'. Ya know, everything is just so

real, that's my favorite one. That one and White Mans World I just love the message in that.

ThugLifeArmy – One thing about the track 'Still' is the reminder that there is definitely a void since Tupac has passed. If asked, what would you say you miss most about Tupac not being physically with us anymore.

T-Jay – I miss just seeing him. Just seeing Pac always getting into something. Like either a movie, a new video, hosting a TV show or something; I know he would probably be on 106 and Park or TRL; I just miss seeing him doing his thing. When he was alive I use to look forward to seeing him show up and doing his thing.

ThugLifeArmy – You miss the charisma of Pac.

T-Jay – Yeah, the charisma and all that man.

ThugLifeArmy – What is the main thing that you have learned from listening to Pac's music?

T-Jay – I've learned from Tupac to never be afraid to say what you feel, straight up. Because as you listen to the tribute track, people try to say he contradicted himself when he said Brenda's Got A Baby and then he turned around and made Wonda Why They Call U Bytch and they try to say that he is contradicting himself. They say you can't make both, that either you are for it or not. That's not contradiction, that's just being real; that's what goes down. That is what I liked most about Pac, just the way he could be real with you.

ThugLifeArmy – What is the one main thing you have learned from being with Johnny "J"?

T-Jay – Mainly don't let the music stress you out, just have fun with it. He says cause you know you got the talent and you got the ability to do it – don't over stress yourself. At the end of the day that is the main reason that we do it; for the love and because it's fun to me. Even if rapping wasn't my career it would be my hobby, it's fun and I just love it. That's what Johnny "J" has

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taught me – the love of it.

ThugLifeArmy – Do you have a contract with Klock Work Entertainment?

T-Jay – Of course, you know that. I'm Klock Work thru and thru, everybody know that. I stress that in almost every song I got on my album.

ThugLifeArmy – What do you think you bring to the table that is different than anyone out there today?

T-Jay – I bring versatility, I go fast, I go slow. I can rap something about being sad, something about being happy, something that's going on in the hood, something that's going on in the suburbs, something going on worldwide – I'm just so versatile it don't make no sense. I can give you what ever and nice as someone who just does that. I can talk about being gangsta or gang bangin, and it can sound just as real as somebody who does that. Or I could talk about poverty and it can sound just as real as somebody who lives in the hood or who raps about the struggle or who are going through the struggle everyday. Because I know about all of that, I grew up in all of that. I just take everything around me and just put it into my lyrics.

ThugLifeArmy – I know you are putting the finishing touches on your album but can you mention anyone who may be featured on it.

T-Jay – I call this album All Eyez on Better Dayz because it is a mix between All Eyez on Me and Better Dayz. We got the singers, I got Danny Boy, he sung 'I Ain't Mad at Cha', 'Heaven Ain't Hard to Find' and others. I got Jon B, he did 'Are You Still Down'. I got DL from Lil Eazy E's group, he came thru and blessed me with a hot 16. We got Nutt-So from the Bay Area, he does a hot track; I like that track a lot. And of course we have the family – the Klock Work Entertainment family. I wanted to keep it with not many featured artists so there are no excuses. Ya know they would say the only reason he sold such in such is because he had this and that person. If I do it, it will be because it was me and Johnny. Straight up we are that good we really didn't need a lot of featured artists.

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ThugLifeArmy – Will 'Still' be the first single or is this preview sneek peek for Tupac fans?

T-Jay – We were just 'teasing' you with that. People are linking it so I don't even know where we are going to go with a first single but when we dropped 'Still', it is the 10 year anniversary of Pac, and we just put that out there to let you all know we are coming.

ThugLifeArmy – What kind of album would you say it is; Street, Gangsta, for the ladies or is there a balance for everybody.

T-Jay – It's balanced but I would say it's mainly for the adolescences, people my age; teenagers and young adults, but everybody can relate to it. But I am really speaking the voice of all the adolescences out there. Teen pregnancy, peer pressure, going to the club, boyfriends, girlfriends cheating on you, being broke, happy, sad, it is basically the voice of the adolescences.

ThugLifeArmy – Are there any videos planned for the album?

T-Jay – Most likely we will do a video for what ever single we pick first. We really are not that far ahead yet. We are just now finishing it all up but you will be the first to know what is coming.

ThugLifeArmy – Do you have a 'ball park' release time or date that you are shooting for?

T-Jay – Hopefully this year. If we keep the pace we are at right now. We are basically done with the album but we are just making sure everything is the best it can be before I drop it. But hopefully it will be this year.

ThugLifeArmy – Which artist, if you could, would you like to work with in the future?

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T-Jay – I am a real big fan of Fabulous. I learned for him, and Pac, Brat, Bone Thugs but right now I really like Fab a lot, he's real tight to me.

ThugLifeArmy – Well once the album drops, do you think you will be able to find time for me and let's do this again and you can get some feedback on the album?

T-Jay – Oh yeah no problem man.

ThugLifeArmy – Ok great. I got one last question that I always ask artists I talk to: If you were not blessed to be a lyricist or being in the music industry, what do you see your self doing now instead?

T-Jay – I'd probably be playing football. I'm good at basketball but I'm best at football. When I was young I was good in sports, football and basketball, but I was real good in football. I use to play for the schools and everything, but the music just jumped off so fast – I thought I could do that to but most likely I would be playing football.

ThugLifeArmy – Well I really appreciate your time and you sitting with me for this. You are a very intelligent young man and I look forward to the next time we can just spend a little time chilling together. Tell Johnny "J" I said what's up and thanks for his help in this interview.

T-Jay – Yeah no problem.

ThugLifeArmy – Peace and of course One Luv

T-Jay – It's all Luv, thanks.

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