

Twin Cities rapper sets out to prove he's not a disabled rapper, but a rapper with a disability

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.



Coming to the club I arrive in a hybrid/Blow the brains out, now the mind's undecided/When I'm pullin' up, they attention undivided/You ain't robbin' me and I ain't Batman's sidekick.

Rick Ross? Two Chains? Ludacris? Lil' Wayne? Nope, it's none of the above. Those witty lyrics are from the mind of metaphorical Golden Valley rapper Mykal57, on his single, "Candy Paint," a tale of the rapper's affinity for his tricked out wheels.

Lyricaly, Mykal57 can go bar for bar with the best of them, but that's not even half the story as to why the 30-year-old lyricist could be the next big thing in hip-hop. For those who have seen the Gary, Ind. born rapper live, they immediately know they're witnessing something wholly unique.

What's so different about the clever rapper, besides his gift for outrageous punch lines?

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Mykal57, born Mykal Watson, has cerebral palsy – a motor condition that causes physical disability in human development – that causes Mykal to require the use of a wheelchair or crutches to get around. But don't feel sorry for Mykal57.

"I just love proving people wrong," said Mykal57, discussing how people perceive him on first sight. "When I perform at a show I hear people saying things and laughing at me getting on stage. One stage was really high, so I had to crawl to get on the stage, so some people in the crowd were laughing, but after people see me perform, it's all respect and they treat me like any other entertainer."

And he's certainly not just some gimmick – Mykal has *skills*.

"At the start of all my songs, I yell 'crippled' to say yeah, I have a disability, but that doesn't stop me. It's not a gimmick," said Mykal, discussing his ailment, which was diagnosed at 7 months of age, and was attributed to his breech and premature birth. "If it is a gimmick, it's a God-given gimmick."

Mykal57 said his extraordinary confidence comes from his mother, who passed away in 2005. As a tribute to her, Mykal adopted the 57 moniker to commemorate her birthday, May 7.

"She put her life on hold for her kids and I owe her so much," said Mykal57. "She's the one who gave me the passion for music."

Unsigned, Mykal57 said he performed for record executives at a talent competition and was told that they love his music, but they were hesitant to sign him because of his condition.

"Years ago to be a white rapper was different, but once you get over that first hurdle, being different is a bonus," said the rapper. "Yeah, I have a disability and I still rap better than most guys and girls out here."

Judging from "Candy Paint," Mykal57's bravado is well earned. With lyrics such as "My candy, my candy got wrappers on it/so cold I was told to put a jacket on it/this bump Ko-Red put acne on it/and the whip change colors, Michael Jackson on it," it's clear that Mykal57 lyrically stands taller than most ... even when he's sitting in his wheelchair.

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