

Marshall was his
uncle, ronnie, who
was



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Marshall Mathers: Legend or Controversy? A question that often arises when discussing Marshall Bruce Mathers III, better known as rapper EMINEM or Slim Shady, is why is this man such a controversial artist? Marshall was born on October 17, 1972 in Kansas City, MO to a single mother, Mrs. Debbie Mathers - Briggs. He has a half brother, Nathan, born in 1986. During his young childhood, Marshall moved back and forth between his mothers home town of St. Joseph, MO and the Detroit area, where he was often beat up by bullies because he was always the new kid.

Because of his frequent moving, Marshall didnt make many friends. His only true companion was his uncle, Ronnie, who was the same age as Marshall. The two, big fans of rap music, which was quickly becoming popular, began rapping together. At age 12, Marshall was forced to grow up quickly when his uncle, who was a very troubled boy, committed suicide.

After the death of Ronnie, Marshall settled with his mother in Warren, MI, a working-class suburb outside Detroit. There, Marshall attended Lincoln High School, but dropped out after failing 9th grade in 1989 at age 17. Being more interested in hip-hop music than school, he began rhyiming at amateur nights in Detroit clubs.

And worked at Gilberts Lodge in St. Clair Shores. Mike Mazar, a manager at the restaurant (where Marshall was a cook from 1993-98), recalls Em as a hard worker with a certain dedication to music. Mazar was quoted as saying, He worked Friday nights and was scheduled until 11 but at about 9 PM, he would just leave to go to the rap clubs.

There was nothing we could do. We'd yell but it was hard to find good employees. Eminem releases his first full-length debut album, *Infinite*, on an independent label, but was not accepted into the rap community. He was dubbed a Vanilla Ice wannabe. He became very discouraged, but after talking to Wendy Day, founder of the Rap Collection, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting hip-hop artists, Marshall decided to work harder to achieve his life-long goal. In 1997, with his debut album going nowhere fast, Day flew Marshall to the Rap Olympics in Los Angeles in hopes of the rapper taking home the \$500 top prize. Although he didn't win this money, this was the beginning of his big break.

His tape made its way to Interscope Records CEO, Jimmy Iovine, who liked what he heard. He then sent the tape to Dr. Dre, who signed Marshall immediately to his Aftermath Label, and moved on to produce his next album, *The Slim Shady EP*, which was released in 1998. Marshall's manager and longtime friend, Paul Rosenberg says the following of Eminem's feelings on fame. One minute he's thrilled because he's selling records and people like him. Then he's unhappy because he can't go to Taco Bell with his daughter without getting hassled for 700 autographs.

He doesn't mind giving autographs, but just when the time and place are right. Marshall has his 1st number one hit, *My Name Is* off his album *The Slim Shady LP*, in 1999, the same year it was released. He has another hit song, *Guilty Conscience* featuring Dr. Dre, off this album.

His next album, *The Marshall Mathers LP* released on February 23, 2000, caused great controversy with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against

Defamation (GLADD). This album has three singles, two of which went to number one on the billboard charts, The Real Slim Shady, Stan, and The Way I Am. As Marshall's career continues to gain momentum, through, it seems that Marshall is only hurting those closest to him as his wife recently expresses.

Kim Mathers, age 25, attempted suicide at the couple's sprawling 2-story home in Sterling Heights, MI. Although, no one is certain what prompted Kim's suicide attempt, her tense marriage to this shady character could be partly to blame. Marshall has also hurt someone closer to him than his wife, Kim: his mother, Debbie Mathers - Briggs.

She says this, You always think you want your kids to grow up and be entertainers. But after seeing the pain it has caused, I realize it's not such a great thing. It's not the lyrics that have an effect on kids who look up to Eminem, as a rap artist and as a person. They think, Oh, look, Eminem can do it and not go to jail.

That is what is wrong with society today. They can try to blame it on Eminem, but in reality, he's not the one to blame. I firmly believe that all people should be tried fairly, whether they can make bail or not. Of course he gets away with what he does because he has the money to. THIS is what influences kids, not his lyrics. It is kind of like saying, ok he's just talking. But now he's actually going out and acting out his frustrations and pulling a gun. He deserves to be punished like anyone else.

On June 3, 2000 in Royal Oak, MI, Marshall pulls a gun on ICP's tour manager. He was charged with two counts of weapon possession and faces up to 5

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years in jail. (He is currently serving a jail term.) The next morning, Eminem was arrested for allegedly assaulting Kims friend John Guerra with an unloaded gun after he kissed her outside a night club. He then received two more counts of weapon possession as well as a \$50, 000 civil suit filed by Guerra.

Eminems former body guard, Byron Williams says, If I was still his bodyguard, Slim would have no gun charges right now. I was the only person who has his ear and could make him think. He would just mention Ems now 5 year old daughter, Halie. This is how Byron would keep Em grounded.

Marshall has often been accused of being a gay basher or a woman hater.

He says In Rolling Stone in August 2000, Has anyone went out and bashed a gay person because they listened to my record? So whats the point? The term faggot doesnt necessarily mean a gay person. To me, it dont. As a responsible parent, when asked whether or not he would allow his 5 year old daughter to listen to his music he says no. He recalls before, when he would allow her to because she didnt understand what he was talking about. As any responsible parent, he censors what his daughter listens to and what his daughter picks up on.

Growing up without a father, Marshall knows what its like to not have a responsible, stable male adult in his life. In no way does he want this for his daughter. In May 2000, at an online chat with Mtv, Eminem writes, I want to be there for Halies first day of school. I want to be there for everything my father missed out on. So you can decide for yourself, is this man, Marshall Bruce Mathers III, a. k.

a. Eminem, a legend? Or just a controversial artist? Words/ Pages : 1, 164 /

24