

Eminem biography

Eminem, born Marshall Bruce Mathers III, 17 October 1973, Kansas City, Missouri, USA. This white rapper burst onto the US charts in 1999 with a controversial take on the horrorcore genre. Mathers endured an itinerant childhood, living with his mother in various states before eventually ending up in Detroit at the age of 12. He took up rapping in high school before dropping out in ninth grade, joining ad hoc groups Basement Productions, the New Jacks, and D12. The newly named Eminem released a raw debut album in 1997 through independent label FBT. *Infinite* was poorly received, however, with Eminem earning unfavourable comparisons to leading rappers such as Nas and AZ. His determination to succeed was given a boost by a prominent feature in *Source's* *Unsigned Hype* column, and he gained revenge on his former critics when he won the *Wake Up Show's* *Freestyle Performer Of The Year* award, and finished runner-up in Los Angeles' annual *Rap Olympics*. The following year's *The Slim Shady EP*, named after his sinister alter-ego, featured some vitriolic attacks on his detractors. The stand-out track, "Just Don't Give A fuck", became a highly popular underground hit, and led to guest appearances on MC Shabaam Sahdeq's "Five Star Generals" single and Kid Rock's *Devil Without A Cause* set. As a result, Eminem was signed to *Aftermath Records* by label boss Dr. Dre, who adopted the young rapper as his protege and acted as co-producer on Eminem's full-length debut. Dre's beats featured prominently on *The Slim Shady LP*, a provocative feast of violent, twisted lyrics, with a moral outlook partially redeemed by Eminem's claim to be only "voicing" the thoughts of the Slim Shady

character. Parody or no parody, lyrics to tracks such as "97 Bonnie & Clyde" (which contained lines about killing the mother of his child) and frequent verbal outbursts about his mother were held by many, outside even the usual Christian moral majority, to be deeply irresponsible. The album was buoyed by the commercial success of the singles "My Name Is" and "Guilty Conscience" (the former helped by a striking, MTV-friendly video), and climbed to number 2 on the US album chart in March 1999.

Eminem subsequently made high profile appearances on Rawkus Records' Soundbombing Volume 2 compilation and Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott's Da Real World. He was also in the news when his mother filed a lawsuit claiming that comments made by the rapper during interviews and on The Slim Shady LP had caused, amongst other things, emotional distress, damage to her reputation and loss of self-esteem. None of which harmed the sales of Eminem's follow-up album, The Marshall Mathers LP, which debuted at number 1 on the US album chart in May 2000 and established him as the most successful rapper since the mid-90s heyday of 2Pac and Snoop Doggy Dogg. By the end of the year, however, his troubled personal life and a serious assault charge had removed the gloss from his phenomenal commercial success. Despite criticism from gay rights groups, the rapper swept up three Grammy Awards the following February. He also reunited with his D12 colleagues to record the transatlantic chart-topping Devil's Night.