**Young Domi: From The Field to the Industry**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| Longwood University's Deon White, a.k.a. Young Domi |

 |

By: Roberta Collier
Rotunda Reporter

On the song "Menace 2 Mayor" from his 4th & Goal mixtape, Deon White says, "Ask me what I'm doing, writing hits in the dorm room." White is a junior at Longwood University majoring in business with a concentration in management. He is also a hip-hop artist, so when he is not doing schoolwork he is working on his music. White usually writes songs in his room. White left his music equipment at home for his friends to use, so he no longer produces songs in his room. Thus, he goes home more often to do so. He "tries to record as much as [he] can. I try to do like five or six records in a session." White hopes what he learns at Longwood will help him manage his finances, as an artist, when he graduates. He thinks of himself as a hip-hop artist because "rap limits [artists] to just rap, hip-hop [has] all kinds of [elements], and it offers much more than rap." White has released eight mixtapes, that including: The Champ Back, Bottom of the Barrel, Respect My Hustle, 4th & Goal, Diary of Domi, Diamond in the Rough, Channel 8 News, and Language of the Avenue. He was nicknamed Domino, but later shortened it to Young Domi. According to White, "Domino represents the gamble."

In his song "Tryna Survive" from the Respect My Hustle mixtape, he rhymes, "What's next I don't really know, but I take chances, so my name Domino." He was in a group called The Basement and "one of [his] group mates came up with the name Domi while freestyling. Young is just a part of Fredricksburg slang; we call each other young there." He is also known as Mayfield's Menace, The Prime Minister, Mayfield's Mayor, The Prodigy and Mr. Dow Jones. The Prodigy is the nickname that means the most to him. "A prodigy is someone who's heaven sent, [but] the real definition is a highly-talented child. That's what I feel I am because of who I am; I feel like I am special and that I have a gift."

White was born June 27, 1989. He has been rapping since the age of 8, when he began to write down lyrics to other rappers songs. He was inspired by Tupac, Jay-Z, Lil' Wayne, T.I. and Kanye West. Yet, his favorite hip-hop artist is Devin The Dude. Domi was raised in Fredericksburg, Va. in as neighborhood called Mayfield, or The 'Field. Domi said "growing up around rap" really influenced him to become an artist. According to "Mayfield" from the Diary of Domi mixtape, "Everybody got a buzz in my neighborhood cause everybody full of drugs in my neighborhood. You got Crips you got Bloods in my neighborhood, so on the block it won't no love in my neighborhood." White said, "Mayfield is a black community, and everything you can think of [goes] down there."

The song "Can You Relate to Me" from the Respect My Hustle mixtape explains his childhood, "My dad was an alcoholic, but I feel for him. Mama was a Christian up in church every morning, so the church used to help pay bills for us… My little sister passed away when I was around four. My step-sister ran away about a year before." At the age of 10, White, his brother Michael, or Mike, and his mother moved in with his grandmother. According to Young Domi, in his grandmother’s house there "were more people than rooms." However, "My childhood was good. I don't regret anything because it brought me here and I'm here and happy," said Domino.

Language of the Avenue is his favorite mixtape because, "It's the most up to date; it looks the best, sounds the best and has the most records." He does not have a favorite lyric, but his favorite song is "The Power of Prayer" from the Respect My Hustle Mixtape. "I got the best response from that song. I think it touched a lot of people. I remember people were coming up to me and [telling me The Power of Prayer] made them start praying," said White. Misha Williams, White's good friend from Fredericksburg, said, "I feel like he is trying to reach the youth in that song. Basically, yes it is about God, but you're able to relate to it." The hook of the song lets people know, "If you need money, love, [are] in jail, or scared, the power of prayer [will] get you through all that." According to White's brother and producer Mike White, "It's a real spiritual song that brings out some emotions, and the older crowd loves it."

Williams owns all of White's mixtapes. She listens to his mixtapes "all the time." In her opinion, "He's like a biblical rapper [because] a lot of his songs have messages, but he puts it in a way that most of us can relate to." Williams' favorite song is "VA Made Me" from the Language of the Avenue mixtape because White "collaborated with a person from Fredericksburg with cancer." Also, "The song is really inspirational, and something that everybody from Virginia can kind of rep." Her favorite mixtape is 4th & Goal because, "It just goes so hard … Just the name 4th & Goal basically says he has won. It's a touchdown mixtape."

Deon and Mike are partners in a Limited Liability Company (LLC) named Street Dreamer Ent. Young Domi works with Mike and/or other Fredericksburg natives to produce his songs. He has worked with two other entertainment companies to promote his mixtapes. Mike and two or Fredericksburg residents design his mixtape covers. Mike also designed the Street Dreamer Ent. logo.

Mike and Domi distribute the mixtapes themselves. "When we see people we just ask if they want a [mixtape]," said Mike. "Now, we put them on the Internet and we're trying to build our web presence," said The Prodigy. He used to pass them out in barbershops, tobacco shops, and other places in his home town. Mike feels as if he is just helping his brother out. Mike thinks that Deon is "talented and ambitious." So, he wants to push his brother and his music as far as they can go. Mike said "We're just trying to get money, with a positive message."

White's long-term goals are to graduate, become an artist that owns all of his work "as well as a label, make money and touch people." His purpose as an artist is "to inspire people and tell them [his] story." Street Dreamer Ent. currently consists of Domi and Mike, but they work with other artists in Fredericksburg. Deon is currently working on a song with Miss V from Prince Edward County. He is willing to work with "confident artists that will bring something to the table."

Deon wants people to listen "to expand their mindset. [My music] talks about the good and the bad; I could make a religious song that will touch [someone] or a hardcore street song too. So, [it] has both sides and can open your mind." On "Menace 2 Mayor," White rhymed, "Everywhere I go people say I'm great I left Fredericksburg now it's time to conquer the state." Young Domi will be releasing an album entitled "Domi Nation" sometime this spring. You can download his latest mixtape, Language of the Avenue from <http://youngdomi.host22.com/>.