**CURLY J BIO 2020**

Curly J learned how to do it himself. The self-proclaimed “King of Melodies” is the most exciting star to emerge from Long Island in years—effortlessly dextrous as both a vibe-setting crooner and double-time rap assassin, over moody guitar-streaked bangers or bright electro-tinged trap. But while he may seem fully formed, his rise was predicated on a stubborn effort to become as well-rounded as any rapper doing it. When he was in college, Curly says he spent more time in his dorm watching videos and recording than he did in class. "I knew the only way to be great was to get the reps in," he says. "I just kept learning everything I could before I felt comfortable releasing music." And when he deemed himself ready, well, Curly J popped all the way off.

His life changed forever in the summer of 2019, when his single, “Bag Different” went viral on SoundCloud. It was the first of a string of hits for Curly, and illustrative of why so many fans of R&B’s intersection with rap have crowned him as a rising king. “Oh you mad, get yo shit popped / I'm up next in hip-hop / I came straight from nothing lil n\*\*\*a, so ain't no way I could stop,” he rhymes on “Bag Different.” He slides fluidly between raps and melodies, earning a seat next to New York luminaries like A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie and the late Speaker Knockerz (a major influence), all while shooting his sing-song bars at haters with the smoothness of Kyrie Irving.

That breakthrough success was the result of Curly betting on himself. After studying stars like Drake and dabbling in rap growing up, he relocated to attend college in Texas, where he lived with his grandparents while his mother battled breast cancer. Given the circumstances, music was a natural place to focus his energy and anxieties, and he soon realized it was time. Curly took his paycheck from his on-campus job and paid to have “Bag Different” mixed. And then: “I risked it all,” he says. “I decided to drop out and move back to New York. The first thing I told my mom was give me two years, I'll be a star.” It only took a few months for that to come true.

Curly followed up with songs that ran the gamut from candy-coated nostalgia trips (“Kappa”) to  acoustic-blessed flexes (“Taking Off”) to dreamy sex romps (“Addicted”), all brimming with an energy to match his lively flow. In the video for “Bag Different 3.0”—a refined take on the braggadocious original—he takes two girls on a shopping spree, and his on-camera presence is infectious. It’s clear that Curly is the life of the party, and all of New York is waiting on an invite.

Everything Curly does is in service of connecting more directly to his fans. “I speak about things that are going on in my life and I think that’s why so many people relate to me,” he says. He’s an open book whether drawing on his mother’s cancer battle (which she won) to fuel his hustle, or tapping into the childhood poverty that’s increasingly in his rear view. He expresses this clearly on songs like 2020’s “Star,” where he raps, “I came from the mud, I came from the dirt / Just like a diamond, you know what I'm worth.” His flow is intoxicating and his voice is a knockout. After all this hard work, Curly J’s become a pop-rap maestro, bending beats to his will and switching flows with pinpoint precision. “I just want to be as versatile as possible and bring my best self to everything I do,” he says. “As long as I’m the best version of myself, there’s nothing I can’t do.”