
December 2008

2008

12-2008

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Recommended Citation

Liberty University, "LU alumnus hopes to hip hop his way to the top" (2008). *December 2008*. 31.
https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lj_2008_dec/31

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LU alumnus hopes to hip hop his way to the top

January 26, 2009 | Teresa Dunham

Robert Hillman is trading his Liberty University Police Department uniform for a Christian rap career.

Hillman, 26, who earned a degree in government and religion at LU, left for Texas in late October after working seven years for the LUPD — and he had a freshly signed music contract in his hand.

The Christian-based Tate Music Group (TMG) will allow Hillman to keep full creative control of his music and even take his recordings to other publishers and release them on a larger label if he gets an offer — and that's not out of the question because Hillman said a label under Universal Records is also interested in his work.

[Hillman's music](#) is holy hip hop, delivered in rhymes about living the real Christian life. In "Loud and Clear" he explains how Christians should make their faith visible, and he delivers a message of ministry in "Bring the Cross."

He will start recording with TMG in the next few months, and Hillman said those recordings will be available at retailers nationwide such as Target, Wal-Mart, Yahoo Music and iTunes.

Coming to LU

"I really enjoyed being at Liberty," Hillman said. "It was really a blessing."

Originally from Georgia, Hillman decided to attend LU after coming to College For A Weekend — and he's been on an unwavering path for God ever since.

"I wanted to go to a Christian university. I really felt that God wanted more of me and required more of me ... somewhere where I could be away from all my friends and family, and it would just be me and God," he said.

When he arrived at LU, Hillman wasn't thinking about rapping because he'd seen the negative impact of "battle rap" in high school, when one rapper spits insults at another rapper to see who can win with the best insults.



“I was kind of convicted of that,” he said. “I just stopped doing it for a while. I made a vow to God that when it’s right and I can get a chance to glorify him in what I do, to use my gifts to glorify him, then that would be the only way that God would use it.”

Instead, he focused on studying and searching for a job on campus.

“Funny thing — I went around here looking for a job. I was like any other college student — I was broke,” he said. “Then all the sudden my roommate calls me on my cell phone ... and he’s like ‘Robbie, the police department is looking for you. What did you do?’”

It ended up that an LUPD official saw Hillman’s job application from Human Resources and noticed that he was majoring in government. That was in 2001 — and Hillman worked for the LUPD ever since. He likes to joke that he took bad guys down, but he really served as a security officer, a communications dispatcher and a First Responder.

Eventually, inspired that he could use his rap skills for Christ, Hillman started saving the money he earned at the LUPD to buy studio equipment. He also helped co-found Bridging the Gap Urban Ministries, a Liberty University outreach team that uses step, mime, hip-hop dance, spoken word and rap to communicate the gospel.

Moving forward

Hillman is moving from Lynchburg, Va., to Texas with his wife, Ebony, an LU nursing graduate whose career as a traveling nurse means they’ll move every three or four months — but he views that as a blessing.

“Everywhere she goes it’ll be a big market where I could actually be visible ... and do some street ministry. I’m all about getting out there and touching the people,” he said. “Anybody could be a studio artist and put their music out there to sell, but it takes somebody who has passion to really go out there and reach the people.”

This story was originally posted to the Liberty Journal November 10, 2008. See the December 2008/January 2009 story [Christian rapper Humble T.I.P. makes righteous rhymes](#) for more on how Liberty rappers are seeking to make a difference in people’s lives.