

TEXT BY JOEL MARASIGN





# REQUIRED INTERVIEW

## LLOYD BANKS & YOUNG BUCK

**2NR:** I understand you won a 2003 mixtape award. What was that about?

**LB:** Yeah that was for artist of the year. 50 actually won it the year before me.

**2NR:** Was there a feeling?

**LB:** That was my Grammy.

**2NR:** Like a street Grammy.

**LB:** Yeah because at the end of the day that's where I built my street buzz. If the hood ain't feelin' you they are gonna let you know. I can remember walking and putting in all the groundwork. There's a lot of different artists, especially from New York, that're on the mixtape circuit so to stand out among hundreds of artists it takes a lot of work and dedication—and I put that in. I came out with the award and that shit is hangin' over my bed. That shit is my Grammy.

**2NR:** How many tapes did you put out before that?

**LB:** I put out three Best-ofs but there were numerous CDs that bootleggers put out—so there's anywhere from 50 to 100 of those.

**2NR:** What do you feel about people bootlegging?

**LB:** If you can't beat them you join them. You gotta think of the bootleggers as your own personal street team.

**2NR:** What do you feel about the money that you're not making?

**LB:** Well the album hasn't dropped yet so I'm not feeling anything. But like I said they're the ones that built the buzz to help me get a record deal. I know I can't win and I have a relationship with the bootleggers. I'm pretty sure that it will be bootlegged but I hope the album comes out shortly after the bootleg! My feelings are if you buy the bootleg people would rather have the real thing. People get it now because they can't wait. When they find out that it's a quality album they're gonna go out and buy the real thing anyway.

**2NR:** People add a DVD or CD as a bonus. Will you have that?

**LB:** Actually there's going to be a bonus CD. I have two different CDs going out period. There's a limited edition version with entirely different artwork. Not only that, you'll get a bunch of different videos that I've done—you'll get the "My Buddy" video that was never released. You'll see a lot of behind the scenes footage. Also there are extra records that didn't make the album.

**2NR:** What are your three rules of business?

**LB:** One, learn how to separate business from pleasure. Two, you have to change people, places and things. Everybody is not ready to do business the same way you do it, or at the same time as you. Three, you have to be a great judge of character. You will make bad business decisions if you are not a good judge of character. You have to be able to read people as well as yourself. Knowing is half the battle. You have to

know what you're prepared to do and what you're capable of doing. If you know that you're not prepared to do a show in front of 50 thousand people but do the deal—you get up there for an hour show and can't do it then you get sued. Knowing is half the battle.

**2NR:** What was your favorite car before you made it?

**LB:** There was none. I'm glad I did make it.

**2NR:** Now?

**LB:** I got a lot now! Personally I have one—a 600 Mercedes. I got all of 50's cars. Whatever he gets I drive.

**2NR:** Three tips for upcoming artists...

**LB:** Market yourself. You gotta shake hands and you never know whose hand you're shakin'. You never know what position they'll be in the next time you meet them. You need a quality performance. You're appearance matters in your material. Your surroundings are important. If everybody is not ready to make the decision to rap it's hard for people to understand what's important to you. If you have an entourage and they're still doin' the things they did back in the neighborhood they're not going to blame the entourage when the police come—they're gonna blame you.

**2NR:** You seem to think a couple steps ahead.

**LB:** Yeah. It's through experience. I mean everything I'm going through now is planned through 50. He planned all this so it's hard for me to be shocked or excited or surprised. Through the success of his project and the G-unit project he told me what was going to happen from A to Z. Maybe I'll feel excited about my project because that one is all me.

**2NR:** Do you think this whole thing would have been different if 50 didn't get signed by Eminem?

**LB:** 50 had a buzz on mixtapes prior to that stuff. Mixtapes are like a resume and you always have to have some kind of resume. I mean, you can't go to the NBA straight from the street. Doing the mixtapes is like going to college. The consumer wants a reference. They'll be like, "I don't want to buy," because all they like is the single. They go and get the mixtape and hear over 200 different freestyle references of what that artist can give to you.

**2NR:** If you had an opportunity to do one thing over again what would it be?

**LB:** I don't regret anything that I've done. I'd do school over because I know I could have done it. School is not for everybody. It depends on what you want out of it. I felt that I was so advanced. I was the one that came in on Friday and passed tests just out of common sense.

**2NR:** Upcoming projects?

**LB:** I got an outside venture coming up. I met a lot of people that I opened the door for. I started my own film production com-



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**The Music:** Hot! Laughs. That's the one word explanation. I mean my music is unique in it's own way. I think quality for one. The sound is quality. Everytime you're guaranteed a good performance. If I have a mediocre record I won't put one out period.  
**Official Years in Music:** Almost 2 years.

pany. It's called Bangstar Productions and I'm producing an adult film. I met the people from Digital Sin and they let me know a few things. The leader in adult film is Jenna Jameson and she sold 60,000 copies. I was thinking that we sell over 800,000 copies of our CD so why can't I sell some adult entertainment. I'm tapping into a market that uses our influences so why can't I tap into their stuff. This is not a regular porno where you pop it in, press play and it's over. This is an enhanced DVD. It's interactive entertainment to where you can determine situations. You can be on the floor, in the bed, in the bathroom, the tour bus, backstage. There's racial preference: black girl, white girl, Asian, Latin. You can change a girl's attitude where you have a girl that's like "I never did this before," or a girl that's aggressive. You can have different camera views. The average film is shot

like it's done from across the room. Ours does that but includes different views of the person that's actually participating.

**2NR:** Like a virtual sex video game.

**LB:** I wouldn't say video game but it has the options like one. It's also a teaching tool. You could give to your partner on Valentines Day or Christmas. If you want her to be a certain way all you got to do is play the movie and pick the aggressive role if you want her to be aggressive. She'll have a reference to go off of. You could say, "Honey I want you to be more like Christina."

**2NR:** When does that come out?

**LB:** Well first of all, my album will be out by this reading—June 29th. I would say that the DVD should come out late July. I'll be doing the whole promoting thing so while I'm doing that I'll be promoting the movie as well. The movie ties into the music game because I'll have music on the soundtrack that didn't make the album as well.

**2NR:** What were some of your jobs before you did music?

**LB:** I didn't have any jobs. I got money anywhere I could.

**2NR:** If you were to quit music what would you want to be known for?

**LB:** Damn. I guess I'd like to be known as one of the best and not just of my time. I want to be known as someone that changed the game. Longevity is cool. But if you can sell 11 million albums in one year you're doing more than what some artists can do in two decades.

**2NR:** With that, what is the key to making it?

**LB:** Well first you have to have a set goal. Goals change but you have to go through the sets. Like in push-ups. You start off doing five, then 10, then 20. Hip hop is about taking risks too. Never compromise yourself to sell records because at the end of the day it'll bite you for it—as soon as the times change you won't be able to change with it. Bring whatever style you have to the table. Whatever works for me might not work for you. Maybe your energy wasn't meant to be the artist. May it was meant to be the manager.

**2NR:** What do you think about people using the call "G-Unit" as the new "Westside" for whites?

**LB:** That line is something that came out accidentally. 50 was in the studio and he did the stuttering, "G-G-G-G-unit". Before you know it, it was stuck. Now when people do that it's like saying "Was'sup."

**2NR:** What is your ideal chick?

**LB:** I don't have one specific. I like a petite female. I don't need them to have the biggest chest or the biggest butt. I'm a face guy. If I can't look at your face in the morning...I gotta be able to look at your face when I'm mad at you. I gotta be able to be around you and take that I'm mad at you today. The girl has got to be understanding because my schedule is unpredictable. You gotta be down to earth and attractive. I can't tell you that looks don't matter because I'd be lying to you. And you could put it out there that I am single. Let the

ladies know that. Single as a Pringle.

**2NR:** And your phone number where they can contact you?

**LB:** Yeah.

**2NR:** That wraps it for me. I appreciate your time. If you could hand me over to Young Buck I'd appreciate that—

**LB:** Sure, hold on. <Click>

**2NR:** <I call back and get Buck> Yo Buck! What was THE song that made you get into music?

**YB:** "The Wild Wild West."

**2NR:** Kool moe Dee?

**YB:** I used to like that shit man. I didn't even know what music was. I just wanted to sing that shit. "Wild Wild West." I had a fuckin cap gun and thought I was the shit. I'd point that motherf@\$%er at you and let off about six rounds of paper caps. Just a baby talking 'bout the Wild Wild West and I was gone ever since.

**2NR:** How old was that?

**YB:** Man. I was 10 or 11. I'm 23 now. I'm still young.

**2NR:** Young and holding a gun.

**YB:** Man, when I was a baby I had a love for guns. I went from holding cap guns, to BB guns, to the real ones.

**2NR:** How's your aim?

**YB:** I went up against one of the best marksman in the world and beat him. I bullshit you not. That shit is on tape. I went up against...uh, what's that shit where they pull the...uh, skeet shooting.

**2NR:** Skeet?

**YB:** Skeet.

**2NR:** Skeet. Hehehe.

**YB:** I went up against the best skeet shooter in the world and beat his ass. You'll see us in *Vibe*. We went at it with 12 gauges.

**2NR:** Where did you get the practice for that?

**YB:** I never practiced with no 12-gauge shotgun. This guy was the champion of the world. They told me he was so f@\$%in' good. They hyped him up so much. I got out there and blew his ass out with that 12. Tore his ass up with a gauge! He was pissed. His teacher was the guy who taught me how to shoot but they didn't think I'd pick up on it that quick. It was so easy and I picked up on it so quick I was thinking damn, no wonder he's the f@\$%in' champion. He used a different gun. But I beat him by one though. We went shot for shot. We did the best of 10 but I beat him.

**2NR:** So cap guns, BB guns, to...

**YB:** To shooting people for real—the real life shit to shooting skeet. <Laughs>

**2NR:** At least they're both targets.

**YB:** Moving targets! <We both laugh> Fast ones!

**2NR:** What's your favorite piece of artillery?

**YB:** A 223.

**2NR:** What's that?

**YB:** Just short for the 223 Assault Rifle. It's like an AK.

**2NR:** That's not illegal?

**YB:** Nah. Where I'm from the gun laws are kind of different. You could have a 12-gauge in your house. No problem. Man, for a long time as a kid growing up in the south we used to see the f@\$%in' hillbil-

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Hood. Street. In your face and straight to the point.  
**Official Years in Music:** 10 years in the game and about 2 years getting money! Ha!  
**Favorite Dish:** Money!  
Nah.<Laughs>

lies ridin' with their shotguns in the windows.

**2NR:** That didn't make you nervous at all?

**YB:** Oh hell-f@\$%in' no. It made me wanna kill one of them motherf@\$%ers with the rebel flags on their windows and shit.

**2NR:** The artist you'd most like to work with?

**YB:** Ah, man. Tupac.

**2NR:** You can't actually work with Tupac. You have to pick someone that's alive. <His agitated tone makes me think I asked a sensitive question.>

**YB:** What makes you think 'Pac is not alive? Huh?

**2NR:** <I have a thinking type of silence—like the kind you get when your dad asks you if you did something wrong.>

**YB:** The homie 'Pac is right here. Hold on. You wanna holla at him? <He laughs, then continues> I think I'm working with all the people I want to work with, and that's crazy





because I always wanted to work with Dre. Ya know, I'd like to work with this one underground artist from the west. Brotha Lynch Hung. I'd wanna f@\$\$ with him. He's hard.

**2NR:** Three rules of business?

**YB:** One, mind your business. Two, watch ya back. Three, don't burn any bridges.

**2NR:** What was you're favorite car before you made it?

**YB:** A '73 Caprice Impala.

**2NR:** And your car now?

**YB:** A '73 Caprice Impala! A '79 Cadillac Eldorado. I like old schools.

**2NR:** Three tips for upcoming artists?

**YB:** Read your paperwork. Stay focused through the times and with what's goin' on around you. Don't let anybody know that your shit is not what's up.

**2NR:** If you wanted to do one thing over again what would it be?

**YB:** Sell dope. Nah. <Laughs> I'd go and win 10Gs from Vegas again. I tore their ass up last year. I never won that much money ever. I won 10, then lost 10 about three or four days later.

**2NR:** You gave it back?

**YB:** Well I had already done that. I spent theirs then spent ten of my own.

**2NR:** That must have hurt.

**YB:** Yeah, uh, nah. That didn't hurt.

**2NR:** Whatever. You know that hurt. It hurts ME hearing it.

**YB:** <Laughs> Hell yeah, that shit hurt. Anything losing hurts. I gotta win Gain, gain, gain.

**2NR:** What were some of your jobs before you made it?

**YB:** I ain't never really worked a 9 to 5 in my life. I always did something illegal. If I wasn't standin' out on that corner selling "that shit" it was putting that pistol up to somebody talking about "let me get that out you." It's easy to be open about talking about this because I've moved so far away from it. I don't need that anymore.

**2NR:** What's the key to making it?

**YB:** It's to say grounded with yourself and be yourself. Putting out reality music instead of fiction music. Keep it real.

**2NR:** Everyone says that but what does it mean to keep it real?

**YB:** To say truthful things, homie. Don't live a lie. I worked with so many people. I just figured out that you have to be truthful and real with your shit. F@\$\$ what everybody else says.

**2NR:** How are you with Cash Money? Any plans?

**YB:** We good. When we see each other we speak. As long as they're doing the same thing we'll always be good. I'm not really planning anything. If it happens then it happens but I'm not planning on stretching out. Holla at me if they wanna do something.

**2NR:** You moved from them to G-Unit. Equal in step. Equal in opportunities. What do you think about that?

**YB:** I know. I'm all right with the man upstairs so far. It's like going from boy to man. I experienced the sidelines so I know what it feels like to have nothing and to just be watching someone do their thing and me wanting to do mine but not allowed to get the full chance. This makes me work harder to keep what I got.

**2NR:** Cash Money said if you see something better go ahead and take. It. Is that still true with G-unit?

**YB:** Hell yeah.

**2NR:** What's your contribution to G-unit?

**YB:** I bring that real shit. That wild shit. I don't give a f@\$\$%. For real. I know I gotta go one day. I love the money and all this shit but at the end of the day when everything is said and done we gotta go. So I'm gonna do anything.

**2NR:** Talk about your Southern style?

**YB:** It makes me feel good knowing that I'm comin' from where I'm comin' from. I'm excited to see who's next because I'm only one that made it out of this bubble. As soon as the world sees that there's a thousand other Young Bucks it's gonna be a trip.

There's going to be a whole new sound.

**2NR:** When you took off to work with Cash Money you left high school. Was it worth it to head for New Orleans to do music?

**YB:** Nah. I would have stayed home and stayed in the streets. I would have kept selling dope. Heading out there was a waste of my time. I left school and hung around somebody doing nothing. I'd trade that for a kilo of cocaine any day.

**2NR:** Do you have any upcoming projects or appearances?

**YB:** Yeah. "Straight Outta Cashville" is droppin July 4th. I'm ready to go out with Banks on his promo tour so you'll see me pop up in certain cities. Just got done with my video for "Let Me In" which is the lead single off the album.

**2NR:** What is the best way to roll a blunt?

**YB:** <Without hesitation> Split a swisher sweet down the middle. Roll that motherf@\$\$er over one time. Don't worry about all that paper—and blow.

**2NR:** You seem to be real popular with the ladies. A couple want to know what it would take to become your ideal chick.

**YB:** A girl that's independent and can hold her own. A girl that can hold it down whether I'm there or not. Someone that looks good. Someone that will accept me for me and not my motherf@\$\$in' pockets.

**2NR:** You could make some serious cash in the next few years.

**YB:** True. You don't go lookin' for those types of people.

**2NR:** Yeah but you are gonna have big pockets. They WILL come to you.

**YB:** True.

**2NR:** Anything you want to say?

**YB:** Ya'll got a real-ass magazine. This interview has been real. YOU made this shit real. Make sure you put it in there and tell them I say that personally. At the same time make sure you keep doing your thing cause I'm for damn sure I'm gonna keep doing mine.