

RAPPER ON THE RISE

Rossford rapper is determined to make a name for himself

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David Shinavar is not your typical rapper.

First of all, he lives in Rossford. His white house has a happy snowman on the front door, and icicle lights dangle over the edge of the roof.

Also: He tends to wear glasses, a white dress shirt, and a loose tie when he's performing.

Also: He's white.

As it turns out, that last quality might have given the 29-year-old, who goes by the rap name Dasit, his biggest break. He is one of 10 contestants who will vie for a \$100,000 prize on a VH1 reality series, *ego trip's The (White) Rapper Show*, which premieres at 10:30 p.m. Monday. Future episodes will air at 10 p.m. Mondays.



Dasit is one of 10 contestants who will vie for a \$100,000 prize on a VH1 reality series, *ego trip's The (White) Rapper Show*, which premieres at 10:30 p.m. Monday. (THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT)

The show places Dasit (as in, "That's it") and his fellow rappers in the South Bronx, birthplace of hip-hop, a genre dominated by African-Americans. The contestants live in "Tha White House" and take on challenges testing their musical cred, knowledge of hip-hop culture, and ideas about race.

Each episode, hosted by MC Serch, a white rapper from the group 3rd Bass, shows contestants tackling tasks that culminate in a rap battle between the two lowest-ranking performers.

The idea, according to VH1, is to find the next great white rapper, following in the tradition of the Beastie Boys and Eminem.

"We just wanted to see what talent was out there and sort of bring them to the forefront," said VH1 spokesman Lynne Davis. "I think initially people would think it's a joke or think it's funny, but these kids are serious."

MULTIMEDIA

- [See and hear more about the rapper Dasit.](#)
- [Listen to Dasit's song, "Come and Get It."](#)

It's not always easy being a white rapper. Some people automatically think back to Vanilla Ice, who sold a lot of records with "Ice Ice Baby" in the early '90s but doesn't exactly have street cred.

Still, he did more than just give the world another version of "Play that Funky Music." Vanilla Ice proved something to aspiring rappers like Dasit.

"I knew there was a market for white rappers," he said.

Even before the VH1 show started filming in July, Dasit had made some inroads in the business.

The Woodward High School graduate opened for Busta Rhymes a few years ago in Royal Oak, Mich., and signed a record deal in 2005 with MC Hammer, who presided over Dasit's wedding at Wildwood Preserve Metropark and took him to the MTV Video Music Awards.

It wasn't the bling, though, that got Dasit started rapping as he grew up in North Toledo.

"I got into rapping because I used to get grounded in my room so much or get in trouble, so I had nothing else to do," he said.

He began writing songs as a seventh grader, initially emulating the style of black artists he listened to, like NWA and Ice Cube.

"At first, I'd write about hard-core gangster stuff," he said.

Dasit is no 50 Cent (whose past includes being shot and dealing drugs), but it's not like he grew up with a picket fence in the suburbs either.

"Growing up in the North End, it was definitely rough," he said. "By the time I was 12 and 13, all the older kids in the neighborhood were already gone to jail for at least eight years. I put that into my music."

His said his father left when he was little, and in his song, "Do My Thing," Dasit sings about that - in a voice that's eerily similar to Eminem's - as well as about growing up poor in a crime-ridden neighborhood.

In the early days, he would make his own cassettes and give them out to the neighborhood kids. One night, he snuck out to a local talent contest with a friend, where they were the only white people present. It didn't matter to the crowd.

"They loved it," he said.

Local radio personality DJ One TyMe, from WJUC-FM (107.3), said he's been familiar with Dasit's music for about eight years and has played it on the station and previously on college radio at WXUT-FM (88.3).

"It was good," he said. "He was one of the few that always put quality in his music as well as making sure it was mixed correctly and making sure it was packaged right."

"The hardest part, I guess, for him was selling his image," DJ One TyMe said.

Dasit, who is married and whose wife is expecting a child, said he's gotten some stunned reactions over the years when people see the color of his skin, but those reactions never last long.

"Once the music hits them and once I start rapping, then they know I can rap and everybody gets into it," he said. "If you have talent, they will respect you."

As for the tie and the glasses, those are just for show. There aren't even any lenses in the specs.

A former factory worker, Dasit said he's focused on his music career full-time the last couple of years. There's a studio in his basement that was given to him by MC Hammer.

Dasit said he qualified for the VH1 show after hearing about it through an ex-manager and making it through live auditions in Cincinnati and New York.

The show itself was full of challenges, from official stuff like meeting neighbors in the Bronx to surprise hardships like not being able to listen to music on the show. (It apparently interferes with hearing everyone talk, Dasit said.)

Dasit said he got along with his fellow contestants. He can't say how he did on the show, but Dasit - who has his name tattooed on his arm and shaved into the back of his head - said he feels good about how the show went.

These days, he's trying to take the next leap forward in his career. That means trying to get out of his deal with MC Hammer and start a record label with the help of some local investors.

"I'm reaching for the stars," he said. "I'm ready for me to come out."

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