

Wrekonize Biography

Good things come to those who wait. Patience is a virtue. Persistence overcomes resistance. Any number of clever aspirational phrases could be used to describe the career of Ben Miller, the rapper better known to the world as Wrekonize.

The fiery Florida-bred lyricist has been ploughing his trade for more than a decade, both as a solo artist and as the lead vocalist in the band Mayday! And despite a handful of mixtapes and straight-to-the-Internet album releases, he's finally set to drop a proper full-length solo release—*The War Within*.

“It’s a deadly combination of things that I’ve been holding inside forever,” says the 30-year-old. “Things about my family, things about the game, my battle career. Just talking about a lot of things, autobiographically. I needed to get this off my chest.”

There’s a lot of pent up emotion inside of Wrekonize, and rightfully so. He was born in Richmond Surrey, London, but by the age of 6 had relocated, along with his parents, to North Miami Beach, in Florida. From there the family moved North to Hollywood, Florida, where they settled for good. Only his parents were having marital issues, and soon divorced, which obviously had a profound effect on him.

Domestic issues aside, that didn’t stop Wrekonize from having an interest in the arts. He was practically born to entertain. No, really, he was. Prior to their divorce, his parents took him to concerts to see the likes of Duran Duran, Peter Gabriel and Pink Floyd. And they, too, were artists in their own right— his father was a songwriter, and his mother was a backup singer. What’s more, he was the grandson of Cardew Robinson, a popular British comedian/actor.

“I already knew I wanted to be an artist just because I looked up to my father so much,” he says. “I just respected him so much— his craft and his dedication and passion to it.”

Unfortunately there wasn’t much local music happening in Broward County in the late 90s, so he was forced to head South to Miami to mingle in the rap scene. He started attending local b-boy jams there and became well-known for his battling skills. By 2003 he’d landed a coveted spot on MTV’s second MC Battle, and was due to take home a \$25,000 prize and a single deal with Roc-A-Fella Records after winning. But while MTV made good on the cash, Roc-A-Fella never came through with the single deal.

“I was hype about it,” he says. “But nobody contacted us. And at the time Roc-A-Fella Records had like 16 different artists on the label. Nine or 10 of them hadn’t even seen the light of day. So I wasn’t too beat up about it.”

The money from MTV allowed him to move into his own apartment, which he stocked with production and recording equipment. A year after the Roc-A-Fella deal that never was, Wrekonize signed with Southbeat Records, a local independent label powered by the entrepreneurial muscle behind the Reality Kings porn franchise. Things were great at first, but the label was still green and didn’t really know how to properly set up a project for release. Wrekonize wound up putting out a mixtape, *Overdue*, in 2006, but the label folded before he could ever drop the LP he’d been working on.

Unsure of what to do next, his saving grace came from MAYDAY!, a local band that had also been signed to Southbeat. After collaborating and performing with the group off-and-on for years, they asked Wrekonize to officially join as lead vocalist in 2008. Mayday! hit paydirt in 2010 when they were featured in a pair of Lil Wayne videos— “Do Do Do” and “Get A Life.”

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“I never got that release that I’ve been chasing for a decade,” he says. “I’ve been chasing it for it so long to see my CD in the store, and all that classic shit that you grow up wanting to do. It’s always been there.”

And by listening to it, *The War Within* has been well worth the wait. Songs like “We Got Soul” find him updating his underground sensibilities.

“It’s the perfect combination of boom bap classic golden era shit with bass-heavy modern synth sounds,” he says. “I love the fusion of that. It’s the best of both worlds. It doesn’t sound like it belongs in 1993 but it doesn’t sound like I forgot everything I learned in the 90s.”

Then there’s “Can’t Be Alone,” where he explores— by way of singing, not rapping— our society’s attachment to social networks and technology.

“I want to showcase that I’m not just about rhyming, that I can do melodic stuff,” he says. “That it’s bigger, and not just hip-hop stuff.”

Elsewhere, he proffers on the effects of keeping emotions inside too long on “Anxiety Attacks” and admits that being a rapper isn’t always what it seems on “Easy Money.” But perhaps his most personal work is “Better Things,” where prods listeners to keep their faith that when things are going wrong— like they have so many times in his career— good times are indeed ahead. Which is all too similar to where he is in his career now, and that much more of a reason why he’s embracing this moment. Because he’s been waiting for it for so long.

“I’m very in touch with what my path is,” Wrekonize says, matter-of-factly. “I’m in it for the longevity and I just want to put out records that people enjoy. I’m here now, finally.”