

SNOOP DOGG

LOVE WHAT YOU DO!

Sal Masekela: 22 years you have been in this game, so to speak. 30 million albums. The story is well-known. But what I want to know, where it began for you. You are still here. You are still beyond the call of relevant. But tell us a little bit about where you come from.

Snoop Dogg: Well, I come from east side Long Beach, Long Beach, California. I was raised by my mother, single parent. And she raised me on good music, having a good time. I'm a '70s baby. So in the '70s, it was all about peace, love, and happiness. So I believe that spirit is the spirit I live by today, you know, being a kid, just being a big grown kid. And I love to have fun. I love to show love. I love music. I love art. I just love being creative. And my mother always kept me in the presence of people like there were times in the '70s where it would be a party in the living room and all the kids would be in the back. And they would call me in the living room to come dance because I could dance real good with the big girls.

Sal Masekela: What was some of that music that your mother was playing?

Snoop Dogg: It was a song called "I ain't going to bump no more with this big fat woman." That was one of the songs I used to dance to the most. "I ain't going to bump no more with no big fat woman."

Sal Masekela: And growing up in school, I mean, you were not a rapper first. You were into music. You sang in the choir. You were very much a child of the arts even though, quote-unquote, you were in the LBC.

Snoop Dogg: Yeah. It was brought to me at an early age at the church I went to, Golgotha Trinity Baptist Church. My auntie and the people at the church, they would always put together plays where we would have to act and reenact certain heroes of yesteryear to become who we are. And it was through singing, acting, and just being in front of a crowd at an early age that helped me develop the confidence, to when I was able to speak in front of a crowd, I was able to be confident all the times.

Sal Masekela: That's something that you see not just in your music but in the way that you deal with your brand. I mean, I watch you. You can deal with -- and you do -- you deal with just about anyone, which might be hard for some people to comprehend when they think initially of, like, Doggystyle, 1992. How many of you bought that album? Okay. Good, good, good. But you are an everyman. I like to call you Black Switzerland.

Snoop Dogg: It feels like that because, I mean, I can do whatever I want to do whenever I want to do it. It feels good to do it. I feel like you shouldn't be restricted. You shouldn't be put in a box. You should be who you are at all times. And I've always been a loving, happy, fun, outgoing individual. I'm a fun guy that loves to have a fun time.

Sal Masekela: Over the course of these years, you've made many records. But a lot of -- a lot of your peers who were making records at the same time as you in the early '90s, they're no longer making rap albums. Some of them are still in the business, but they had to sort of shed their hip-hop persona to continue to move forward. Why is it that you think you've been able to maintain your place in pop culture without reeling having to shed the fact that this is the Snoop D-O-double G.

Snoop Dogg: I think it is the way I came. I came being pure and sincere, being honest. That's all I know. I just got to be me. I don't know how to be nobody but me. This is what I'm great at. I am going to continue to do that. I don't know if it rubs you the right way or the wrong way. It makes me feel good, so I am going to do it. If it is good to you, it must be good for you.

Sal Masekela: Within all that, though, you are going to have -- you are going to have challenges and struggle in figuring out which lanes to choose. What might be some of the harder decisions you've had to make in order to stay relevant or to stay on the journey where you are today?

Snoop Dogg: Well, my decisions are never made based on what the popularity of the world will think. It is always based on what feels good to me and what's best for me. I don't ever look at, you know, what I'm doing and say, "What are people going to think?" I do it for the reasons of if it makes me feel good, eventually it is going to make you feel good. That's all it's always been for me. Ever since I came into the music industry, it has always been about the expression of my expression becoming your expression. It is just we become one. I feel like the people feel like Snoop Dogg is a part of their life. It is not like I'm a rapper or producer or actor. I am like one of their family members because they have been with me for so long. I have been so up close and personal. It has never been, like, a secret. I have opened my closet up from day one.

Sal Masekela: I think that's one of the reasons why a little -- a little kid and the grandmother will both be like, "Hey, that's Snoop Dogg."

Snoop Dogg: That's crazy you say that because a lot of times the kids will approach me, and I'm trying to figure out why do the kids like me. This is before I had a football league, before I became, you know, more positive in what I was doing. And the kids would always come up and say, "We love you, we love you." I never understood why they loved me until I had to figure out that I'm that kid. I am who that kid is. He is seeing himself in me. So regardless of how my rhymes may sound, if they are derogatory, if they are explicit, that kid sees something in me that resembles himself. So once I figured that out, I started to aim my pen in a more positive direction to write songs that matter to the kids and do things for the kids like the youth football league.

Sal Masekela: You're from an interesting genre in music in hip-hop in that a lot of times artists are afraid to do what you just described, to make that lane change. There's this perception that you have to maintain the exact same struggle, the exact same front that you had when you first came out in order to stay relative. And you see some of these artists, that they're struggling because they can't let out what it is they have to give. Do you find yourself ever in a position where you are mentoring some of these other young artists? Because every other young artist I see coming out they look at you and they shout you out all the time, "Uncle Snoop, Uncle Snoop." You are on collaboration with a lot of these young artists. What do you say to them?

Snoop Dogg: I'm like a real uncle because I give them guidance on and off the field, meaning in business and in life in general. And a lot of times when I came into this music industry, I didn't have that. I didn't have big brothers to help me. I had to learn on my own. So what I wanted to do was be something like there had never been before. I wanted to be an uncle or a wisdom of guidance for these young rappers and young entertainers where they could call on me and get some information. And that's what it has been like for the past ten years. I have been mentoring. I have been helping. I have been associating myself with all of the young rappers and trying to be positive and give them an understanding that you do have to reach a certain point in your life and your career where you have to make a better decision for you. And by me having kids and a wife, it also structured my life in a different way to where I pulled back from the things that I used to do to the things I know how to do.

Sal Masekela: There's also something I think -- and I'm sure this wasn't planned. But there is something about your flow, the fact that your flow always came from a place of melody. And even though you were talking about things that were abrasive and sometimes downright guttural, you said them in such a nice way --

Snoop Dogg: Like, "oh, I don't let him out."

Sal Masekela: Exactly. They were less abrasive. But I think -- Where did that come from? Where did you get that sound? Because obviously everyone -- any rapper, it is about that cadence and flow. But yours is unique and timeless.

Snoop Dogg: Well, like I said, I'm a '70s baby. So in the '70s, we only had certain people to look up to and players, you know. I don't know if you understand what a player is, not a football player or basketball player. But a player in the neighborhood had a certain conversation about his self. He would never speak too loud. And when he spoke, you understood what he said because it was so smooth and so melodic. And I have always wanted to be a player from a kid. So when I was able to become a player, that was one of my traits, one of my accolades, to be able to speak smoothly on a microphone at not be so aggressive and so loud but to get your point across by being smooth and in pocket.

Sal Masekela: I said to someone the other day there are only a few rappers that I look forward to seeing when I'm old. And I know one when they, "Hey, Snoop is playing Vegas," "We should go. We should go. Come on. We should go." And you are going to be able to come out there and be like bow wow wow yippy yo yippy yay and everyone is going to get down.

Snoop Dogg: I just might be in the wheelchair though, but it will be cool because I'm still going to be rolling.

Sal Masekela: Nonetheless, you move forward and we talk about the things that you've done just to be in the conversation. And you got 35 million followers on Facebook. Your YouTube channel just broke the 1 million subscriber mark. If you have never watched "GNN News" which Snoop hosts, it is just pure brilliance. I'm doing a bad job of interviewing compared to what this dude does on his show, and he can talk to anybody. I follow you on Instagram. You cloud my feed in the most wonderful way. But you do this really interesting job of showing - - you don't just say -- you actually don't even say, "Look at my cars. Look at this. Look at that." You really take people on a journey of your life to the point where they feel like they're on the journey with you. And they feel like you are not just Snoop Dogg but you really are the homey. What is it that sort of made you embrace social media the way you have?

Snoop Dogg: My team, Cashmere and Stampede. I wasn't a fan of it at all. I remember the first time, they was like, You want Twitter people following you. I was like, "I don't want nobody following me. That would be weird." Because I didn't understand the dialect. You know, I'm like -- and there's people would be like "Hey, Snoop, I'm following you." I'm like, "What you mean you following me?" So once they explained it to me and I understood it, then I put my twist on it and I made it what it is. It is like, I wanted it to be personal. I didn't want it to be my people put up pictures and put up and say, well, Snoop is going to be here. I wanted it to be more personal where they could see and feel me. And I interact. If there's things on there that I do like, I say, hey, I like it. If there are things on there I don't like, I speak on it. And I feel like people respect the fact that I'm so up close and personal with them. And I don't have a star wall because when you become successful, it is a star wall that pops up whether security or it is just some sort of wall that prevents the people from getting to you. And I never wanted that wall. I always wanted to be up close and personal with the people who make me who I am.

Sal Masekela: It really resonates. One of the ones you posted the other day was real simple. But it just said find something you love and do it forever. And that's all you said. But it was like, oh, he's not just -- this isn't such a job. It is a reminder like, you love this. And being on that journey with you following you, I feel like your followers, even when you read the comments, it's cool to see the way people respond to you. And they are inspired by you.

Snoop Dogg: And I'm inspired by them because they make me who I am. There may be some days where I want to quit. 22 years strong doing this thing, I wanted to be saying: When do I

get a vacation? Some people take vacations. I don't know what a vacation is. I have never been on one because I'm so caught up with what I do and what I love. I love doing what I do. It is not even about the money. It is about the passion that I bring because I'm so creative and I love getting it out and I love working with positive people. So at the end of the day, it is more about do it until you can't do it no more. Then when you done doing it, then you can look back and enjoy it because I don't get a chance to look at what Snoop Dogg has done. When I see documentaries of things in my past, I have to stop and watch because I'm so busy playing. I'm in the game right now, so I can't watch my stats and my highlights because I have got another game to play tomorrow.

Sal Masekela: How much has parenthood shaped and framed the mindset of the 21st-century, 2014 Snoop?

Snoop Dogg: Whew, man, my kids are special. They make me better, you know, in all ways, especially on the music side. Like, my oldest son, I'd never heard of Wiz Khalifa. And he turned me on to Wiz Khalifa, and me and Wiz Khalifa became best of friends and went on tour, made a movie, made a record. And we're brothers now. So it's like, you have to listen to your kids, not you dictate to them all the time. Because a kid can teach you if you're just willing to listen. My youngest son, he's a football player, but at the same time, me and him, we agree to disagree. And then my daughter, she's a singer-songwriter, so I'm hard on her, telling her, look, baby, you've got to get it all the way together. And don't be mad when I tell you this, because the public is going to be even meaner than I am. It's just getting that understanding with the kids and being able to and being able to have a relationship with them to where they're my friends. They don't look at me as a mean old dad, they look at me as a cool father. And that's what a lot of things going wrong with the parenting nowadays, there's not the communication. It's a gap. Kids and parents need to be friends. It's okay to dictate, but at a certain point in time, they're going to become grown. And if they're your friend, they're going to be able to tell you everything and you're going to be there for them and it's going to be a beautiful relationship. That's what I found out.

Sal Masekela: That's amazing. I made the black Switzerland -- not really a joke earlier, I really do think of you as black Switzerland. It could be a movement. But it's because as a hip-hop artist and a guy who really put the LBC on the map, you go to China, you go to South Africa, you go to South America, you go to Dubai, you go to India and make Bollywood movies. And anywhere you go in any of these other countries, you dive 1000% into the culture. You don't just show up and do a show. You go, and you go all in. What is it that motivates you to take it to that level as opposed to just going, doing the show, getting the cash, and getting out?

Snoop Dogg: These people love me. I was taught love. See, when you're taught love, you've got to give it back. And the love that these people give me, some of these people from different countries don't even speak English, but they know every word to my song. So it's my obligation to give them the experience and the ride of their life, to be able to get up

close and personal with Snoop Dogg, so when I leave, it's like I never left. We still connected from the hip to the dip.

Sal Masekela: From the hip to the dip. Highlight one of the top international experiences for you. Culturewise.

Snoop Dogg: Performing at Live Aid, and Paul McCartney, Bill Gates, David Beckham, and a host of other people that's billionaires on the side of the stage, rocking to my music. And there was one point I just stopped and looked at them. And it was like, I can't believe you all know Snoop Dogg.

Sal Masekela: Bill Gates.

Snoop Dogg: The Bill Gates. Yeah.

Sal Masekela: Yes. That's a beautiful thing. Snoop, thank you so so much for coming out today, I couldn't think of a better way to end our first day. Snoop Dogg.



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