

LIL' ROMEO

The New Face Of Nickelodeon Is Also A Lil' Entrepreneur

Interview by Anthony Q. Casanovas

With young artists, maintaining a noteworthy celebrity status grows increasingly difficult with age. As they grow older, youthful appearances fade and the novelty of being a child star vanishes. Plus, going through puberty while in the spotlight of the public eye can be quite embarrassing with voices cracking, acne sprouting and dating. In the case of the bite-size rap game, artists that were once "Lil'" have chosen to drop the moniker that marked them as nothing more than a little kid. This isn't the case with Lil' Romeo, who continues to clutch onto the prefix with pride.

The New No Limit artist has been running a pretty tight schedule lately. He's been recording his latest LP, filmed a movie with Jessica Alba, has an action figure coming out, has been in Vancouver shooting his sitcom, and is now the new face of Nickelodeon. He's a kid and knows it, and doesn't wish to rush along the aging process. Plus, he wants to become hip-hop's first billionaire, so what better way to accomplish this dream than to prolong your profitable youth? He's making sure his pop visibility remains strong with tons of different projects. We got to chat with Master P's golden child and he told us all about his new Nickelodeon sitcom, his film projects, clothing line, toys and more. Much like his dad, this young'n has become quite the lil' entrepreneur.

BLACK BEAT: Your show recently aired on Nickelodeon, right?

LIL' ROMEO: Yeah, it's called *The Romeo Show*.

And you also have a movie out, called *Honey*?

Yeah, it's called *Honey* and I'm the star — Jessica Alba and me. It's like a modern-day *Flashdance*-type movie. That comes out November 14th.

How does it feel moving closer to your goal of becoming the first hip-hop billionaire?





"My dad, Tommy Lynch and I did the pilot and gave it to Nickelodeon, and they liked it," Lil' Romeo (2nd from right, seen with the multi-racial cast of *Romeo!*) relayed, on the topic of how the show concept came about. "Then they tested it for like their pilots and everything, and it was the number one pilot on their network. And it all went from there."

It's a great thing and I feel like I should work hard at whatever I do. So, I feel blessed to be doing something I love.

And how does it feel becoming the new face of Nick?

It's a great thing, because like, me, my brothers and my sisters, we always watch Nickelodeon. We love their shows like *SpongeBob SquarePants* and all the cartoons and animation stuff. And to just have a show — a real sitcom on there — is a great thing and to see your face constantly on Nickelodeon. And it's a kid's face and that's who I sell my music to, so I think it's just a good thing.

Your press kit came with a P. Miller headband...

Yeah, *P. Miller Shorties*.

Well, what about the older crowd?

Well, my dad has a clothing line called *P. Miller Signature Collection* and I have my line called *P. Miller Shorties*. Mine is for the kids and his clothing line is for the adults. And we also have a girl clothing line called *P. Miller Passion*. We have everything for everybody.

Alright, now back to the show. How did it all come together — like the concept and how you got it rolling? What was the inspiration for the show itself?

Well, the people at Nickelodeon liked what we were doin' and everything. My dad, he came up with like a pilot or whatever. My dad, Tommy Lynch and I did the pilot and gave it to Nickelodeon, and they liked it. Then they tested it for like their pilots and everything, and it was the number one pilot on their network. And it all went from there.



How busy has all of this kept you? You're a multi-talented star and you're young. You've got school, the show, your music and now films.

Yeah, this is just like a hobby to me. I'm havin' a lot of fun. I still go to regular school, but like, when I'm on set I have a tutor and everything. So like, it's not too overwhelming because my dad owns the record company and if I need a break or something, he just tells them. I'm just having a lot of fun doing this.

So he's been both a big influence with that *and* understanding, since he's a big star himself?

Oh yeah.

What's Vancouver been like?

It's good. The weather's been really great so far. But now it's just starting to get really kinda cold and everything. So, it's been great while we were out here, real sunny.

How much of the show actually mimics your life?

Well, I impersonate Romeo on my show and he's basically trying to get where I'm at right now. Like, that's the difference, but they're both eager to be number one. Me and the character Romeo, they won't stop until they've accomplished their dream.

Your dad, Master P, plays your father in the show. Does his character have any connection to No Limit or another record company, since your character shouts out the label in the song at the end of the pilot?

Oh, nah. He's like a regular A&R and got nothing to do with No Limit. He's just like a successful person in the music business.

There's plans for a CD containing the songs performed on the show, but are you going to perform any of the songs you've already released as Lil' Romeo?

We always got many videos in the TV show. Like, we do

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(L-r) Noel Callahan (Louis Testaverde), Master P (Percy Miller), Erika O'Keith (Jodi Miller) and Lil' Romeo (Romeo Miller) shoot a scene for Nickelodeon's *Romeo*!

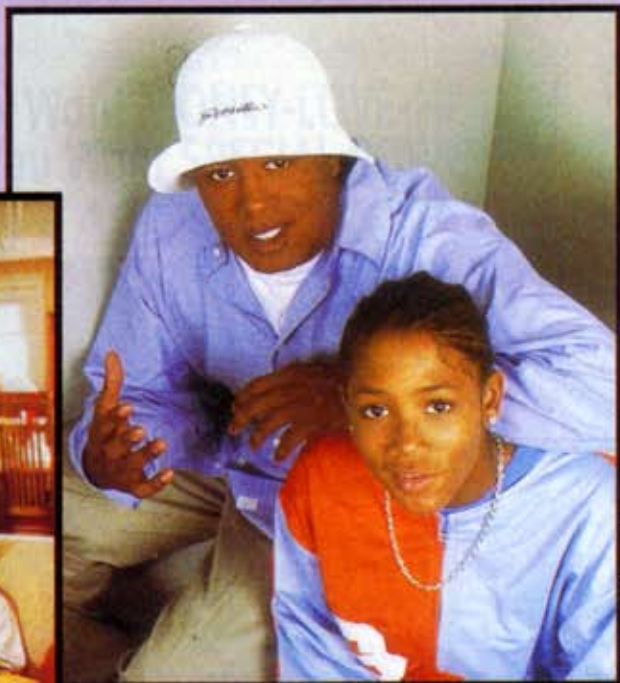


Photo courtesy of Nickelodeon

"He's [like] really multi-talented and he knows how to change himself and everything," Lil' Romeo said of dad Master P's transition from real-life dad to TV dad. "It's just a great thing to be doing something together with my dad."

new songs for whatever I'm feelin' that day. We do many videos for that. We'll probably do the *Romeo Show* album soon.

How does it feel seeing your dad go from being Master P to being this fatherly figure in a sitcom of your own?

Well, he's like really multi-talented and he knows how to change himself and everything. It's just a great thing to be doing something together with my dad.

Part of your show is sort of a cartoon/video game – it cuts from live-action to your character's thoughts in the form of an animated video game. How do your favorite video games or cartoons, like *SpongeBob*, factor into your show? Nickelodeon is known for their animation and everything, and we thought it'd be good to have some animation in the TV show. I have little fantasies or whatever I think of, like, if I'm trying to have an idea or something, like what to do next, it'll go into a little cartoon animation fantasy thing. You'll see what I'm thinking as a cartoon.

You're joining the ranks of Michael Jackson, LL Cool J, Will Smith – all these guys that started out as performers and went on to do television and film. How does it feel being amongst a list of such big celebrities?

I just feel blessed, like I said, to be doing something I love and be great at it – not just to be compared to them kind of people. I'm just gonna keep doin' what I'm doin' for my fans.

And how long do you plan on doing the show?

I don't really know yet. But you'll probably see it for the next two or three years, whatever goes from there. And I wanna get into a lot more movies.

Do you have anything lined up after *Honey*?

I shot another movie. It's called *Uncle P*, starring me and my dad. I play his nephew and my mother gets sick, so he ends up having to come take care of me and my sisters. I don't know when it's gonna be comin' out; it's in post-production right now. So, we already shot that. And I have another movie called *The Fusion*. It's like a modern-day *Matrix*, a kids' *Matrix*. We're working on that right now. We also got another movie called *Lil' Romeo & Lil' Juliet*. So I'll be doin' all of that after this.

Wow, you are gonna be a busy guy...

Oh yeah, and my new album is called *The Jump Off*. You'll probably be seein' that around February.

No Limit is also doing its own toy line?

My dad launched his own toys and everything. You'll probably be seein' a Lil' Romeo toy soon.

What would your action-feature be, some sort of Kung-Fu grip or something?

It don't matter. It'll just like, sing one of my songs or something. It don't really matter.

Okay, one last thing. It seems that everyone that had the prefix "Lil'" in their name seems to be droppin' it. When do you plan on doing that, if ever?

Well, I'm still a kid, so I'm not really thinkin' about that. I'm still Lil' Romeo. I might change it to Richie Rich, but I haven't really been thinking about that lately.