

The MAN who would be KING

Five days away from becoming an international movie star, Jamal 'Gravy' Woolard was keeping it really real in Richmond VA! Meet the star of the biggest movie in the history of Hip Hop - and learn what staying REAL really means!

Jamal

Woolard - aka - Gravy. I'm sure by now you know who he is. Just in case you live under a rock and don't know, let me tell you - he plays the Notorious B.I.G. in the movie, "Notorious" - which makes its world premier on January 16, 2009. This movie is going to be huge! I'm predicting that this will be one of the top grossing movies in 2009, and will possibly be the top grossing Hip Hop movie of all time.

But that

doesn't really tell you who Jamal Woolard IS; it tells you what he's doing. Who is Jamal Woolard? He's a man who is four days away from super-stardom, but instead of making it rain in the clubs of New York, or using every single minute to plaster his face all over creation - Jamal Woolard spent his Sunday on a plane, flying down to Richmond, Virginia - to host a talent show as a favor for some of his childhood friends.

After

flying into Richmond and spending three hours hosting the most incredible talent show the city has ever seen (Richmond Idol - "Who's Hotter Than Me!" - Sponsored by Antonz Barbershop and Beauty Salon and Beyond Entertainment), Gravy sat down with IREP Magazine for an exclusive interview:

Jamal, you just completed the starring role, in the most anticipated movie of the decade. Yet, you took on this challenging, highly publicized, role as your first ever foray into acting. What gave you the confidence to take on this role?

"Well, first, I consider this role a blessing for me. It's an honor and a privilege to have been selected to play this role. In terms of confidence, the fact that Mrs. Wallace believed in me enough to choose me for the role, gave me all the confidence I needed."

Choosing Gravy for the lead role surprised many of the movie industry experts, but they are typically wrong anyway. Once you meet him, it's hard to imagine anyone more perfectly suited to play the role.

Forget about the physical similarities between the two (there are plenty of B.I.G. look-alikes running around); Jamal Woolard and Christopher Wallace are cut from the same cloth. Both men grew up in Bed-Sty Brooklyn, practically around the corner from one another. Both men were tested early in life with personal and professional ups and downs, trying to make it in the music business and in life. Both men learned early in life that your people can make you, or break you.

Another incredible similarity between the two men was the importance of their daughters in their lives.

"My daughter was born on March 10th, right after I found out that I was selected to play Big in the movie. Big's daughter was born right after he signed with Puff - so it's like both our daughters' came into our lives right when great things were about to happen."

Jamal also pointed out that his daughter was born the day after the date of B.I.G.'s death.

Interestingly enough, the two men never met, even though they grew up just blocks apart.

"I never actually met BIG. The closest I ever got to him was during his funeral" he said. "But I consider the opportunity to do this movie as a blessing. Not because of what it means to me, but because of what it means to Mrs. Wallace and BIG's family. That's why I'm doing this movie, because honoring his memory means so much to them. All the good words from the critics and fans is nice - but honestly, I've got so much love for Mrs. Wallace and them, I feel honored just to have my name mentioned in the same sentence as BIG."

So after years in the Hip Hop game, making music and establishing himself as one of the strongest MC's in the game, Jamal "Gravy" Woolard will soon add the title of blockbuster movie star to his list of accomplishments. So what's next for the star of the biggest movie in Hip Hop history?

"More music and more movies" says Gravy. "I definitely want to continue the acting thing. This is my first film, but it won't be my last" he says. "Of course, I'll continue making music as Gravy."

And let me

tell you - if you've never heard Gravy on the mic - you are truly missing something special. Gravy's smooth, laid

back style enhances the delivery of every verse. He's able to convey his message with energy and swagger without screaming all over the mic.

Gravy's that type of rapper that focuses more on the words that he's saying than on trying to sound "real" while saying it. When you ARE real, you don't have to ACT like it, you just be yourself, and the realness comes through.

So who IS

Gravy? Gravy is Jamal Woolard, a man who

took time out from his busy schedule to support his people, just days before one of the biggest nights of his life. He's

a man who shook every fan's hand, gave every female a hug, and showed every performer some love.

On the eve of unbelievable fame and fortune, Gravy showed the world that his people - his family and friends - will always be his top priority. That's who Gravy - Jamal Woolard - IS!