

# **Ryan Bengard**

## **Spiritual Warrior**

Having had struggles early in life, Ryan Bengard had to learn to be a fighter. And while fighting can lead down an undesirable path, Ryan was able to turn his rough beginnings into an inspiration that has helped him build his music career.

Born in Orange County, California and raised in Whittier, La Habra, and La Mirada, school was never easy for Ryan. Fights were the norm. Ryan tried to escape his challenges by looking to music, which got him through a lot of tough times in school, and in life. It is through music that he started to write down his emotions, aggressions and thoughts. Ryan took guitar lessons during junior high school and taught himself to play bass. After being expelled from La Habra's Sonora High School for knocking out two senior males who goosed him, he started writing spoken word poetry in a continuation school when he was 16. His English teacher recognized the talent in some of Ryan's elaborate writings, and she asked if she could send his writings to some people. Not knowing who these people were or what would be the outcome, Ryan said yes and he ended up winning awards from the National Library of Poetry, and the International Society of Poets.

After high school he started a punk rock band called "One Foot In." His musical influences were Bad Religion, Penny Wise, Social Distortion and others off the world-acclaimed Epitaph Records. The band soon broke up after everyone went their separate ways for college.

Ryan soon found an additional talent in the martial arts arena. He studied Muay Thai kickboxing under world renowned trainer Collin Oyama and progressed quickly. Within a year of beginning his training, he had his first Muay Thai fight and won by knockout. Ryan then began to cross train with Brazillian Jiu-Jitsu and has won many awards and including the Grappler's Quest Championship and the World Grappling Games Championship. He also became Martial Arts Instructor to the World's top Mixed Martial Artists and the US Marines at Camp Pendleton.

Since a young boy, Ryan had always been a fighter, mostly for protection, but now he was using it to help other fighters perfect their styles and techniques. Ryan says, "I've been fighting my whole life. Mixed martial arts only helped refine, and sharpen who I already am."

During practice, Ryan would listen to what he likes to call "fight music" to keep himself and the fighters psyched up. The music was mainly aggressive hip hop, but then Ryan started doing hip hop on the side while competing in Jiu -Jitsu and training in Muay Thai. Ryan got the name Crazy Ryan from training partners, because the relentless aggression he showed during training

with some of the best fighters in the world. Fighting taught Ryan how to further harness his fire and learn how to keep fighting in a certain time and place, either in the ring or on the matt.

Ryan suffered a serious injury to his right knee that resulted in three reconstructive knee surgeries. With competitive fighting no longer possible, Ryan had to learn to channel his aggressions back into other arts, and he knew that hip hop was an art he could do on his own. His aggression showed up in his producing, writing, and recording. His attitude became similar to that of his fighting: go for the win and never shoot for second place.

Ryan's love for hip hop really shows in his lyrics. The influence of 2Pac, DMX, Immortal Technique, Vinnie Paz, Eminem, Tech N9ne, Atmosphere and many others shows up in his work.

It was only natural for Ryan to link up with producer Ronnie King who has worked with Tupac Shakur, Pennywise and Sublime. Together, they worked on Ryan's new track called "Breath of Life" which is Ryan's first single. Ryan described the writing process as Inspiring. He said the collaboration was like the first lyric in his song "I was dying in the dessert and the heavens opened rain." Warren G's engineer Qtastic was brought in to engineer and master the track.

Ryan is a huge believer in the Most High God YHWH. This spirituality has influenced Ryan's writing and makes his music motivational and uplifting. He is a fighter and it shows through his music. If you listen closely, you can picture yourself in a battle fighting against whatever tribulations that you are facing.