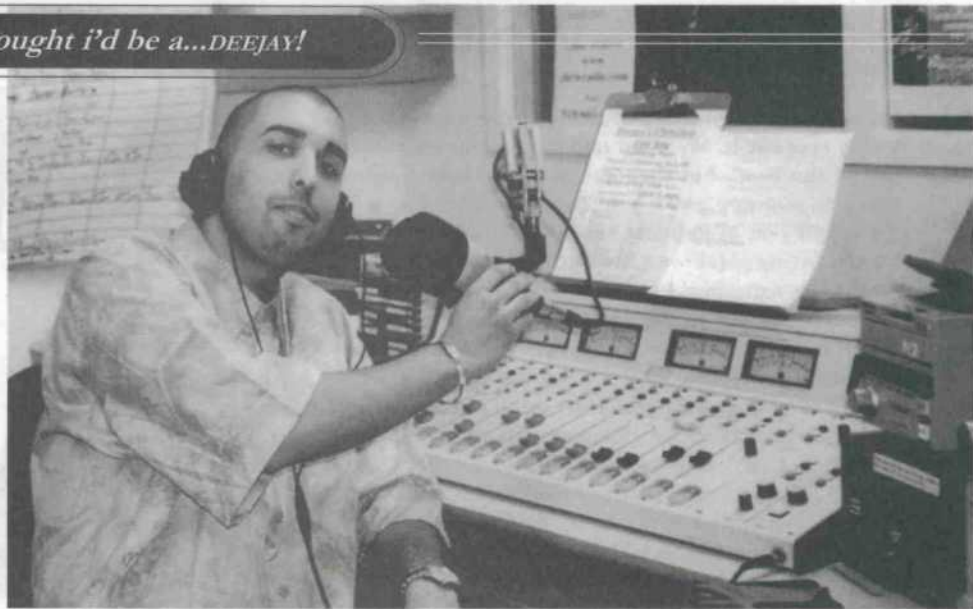


*whoever thought i'd be a...DEEJAY!*

**Twenty-two year-old RAOUL JUNEJA on how he found his groove**



**“A**s far back as I can remember, I have been a rebel. Not necessarily in an extreme way, but more someone who wanted to be in a position to make a difference,” says **Raoul Juneja**, now making waves as **Deejay Ra**.

Growing up, he feels that he was pretty much lost in the school system here until he left Toronto for Western University.

“I don’t believe enough emphasis is placed on arts or culture for students prior to their graduating high school. I was given the impression that to succeed in life one had to study business or science at university!”

But factoring in all the community work he did during high school, Raoul decided to take a chance and enroll in programme more suited to his love for music and public work. An opportunity presented itself near the end of high school when he found out about Western University’s **CHRW 94.7 FM** and **TV Western**, and decided to arrange a meeting with their programme director, **Tom Everett**, about doing some hip-hop radio and tv work in London. Having simply a love for music and community work and no direct media experience at that time, Raoul was taken aback when Everett had enough faith to offer him his own shows on the spot before his first university year had even started!

Like many South Asian families, his was a bit concerned with his rejection of the ‘normal’ university education, but they began to understand after realizing his

dedication to his chosen line of work.

“My media work is definitely unique in the family – my Dad’s side comes from a business background here in Canada while my Mom’s side comes from a teaching and military background in India!”

The alias **Deejay Ra** actually came from a few places.

“I learnt about Ra, the Egyptian Sun god, from my two closest friends in New York. It also just happens to be the first part of my name! I never really thought of officially using it until I asked **Russell Peters** for advice on what to call myself on the radio and he was like, ‘Yo! just keep it real and go by Raoul or Ra or something!’ The ‘Deejay’ part I added to emphasise my sole commitment to the radio medium and to distinguish myself from the DJs who spin at clubs.

“Back in the early 90’s, when hip-hop was at its peak, deejaying was considered a guarded art form above all else that could only be learned from the streets. But as time passed, the privileged title of deejay ended up being degraded to DJ, letters that any wedding party type could put in front of his name without having a clue about hip-hop’s history. So, at present, although literally anyone can call themselves a DJ, I

believe it takes a true commitment to the survival of our culture to be considered a deejay.”

With this commitment to his music, it’s not surprising to hear Raoul describe his style as “poetry and politics”. For the uninformed, he points out that in its purest form, the essence of hip-hop is poetic words with a political edge.

Raoul believes the two strongest influences on his professional life have been the legendary New York emcee **KRS-One** and the fiery Los Angeles rapper **Ice-T**.

In Toronto, he counts Canadian emcees **K-Os** and **Tara Chase** as those who caught his attention and opened his eyes to the global reach of this hip-hop art form.

He considers his *Comedy Meets Hip-Hop Radio Special* CD to be the highlight of his years at **CHRW 94.7 FM** and **TV Western**.

“Having three of the finest comics in Canada, **Mista Mo**, **Gavin Stephens** and **Rasul Somji**, provide a detailed look at our country’s comedy industry was priceless enough, but receiving music from some of the most conscious emcees in North America to premiere on Canadian radio just blew me away!”

Not only will it be the first time people get to hear an entire one hour Radio Special on CD,

but considering it was over a year in the making, Raoul’s confident it will also be one of the best one hours of radio comedy and hip-hop fans will ever hear.

In the hopes of calming South Asian parents all over North America, Raoul would like to point out that this is considered a ‘real job’ paying ‘real money’ across the globe! However, as in any industry, a love for what you’re doing and an ambition to make a difference is the most important issue when one is choosing a career.

**KRS-One** has this phrase, “Rap is something you do, hip-hop is something you live”.

“For me this dedication to the survival of true hip-hop has never been a passing phase inspired by some garbage I read about Puff Daddy’s new album. It’s a way of life – some even say a religion – that’s been developed for years by studying everything from **Gandhi’s satyagraha** to **2Pac’s** poetry, from **Bruce Lee’s** philosophy to **Malcolm X’s** teachings, and from **Trudeau’s** liberalism to **Rubin Carter’s** struggle.

“At this point only the Lord knows where this passion will take me!”

• **RAOUL JUNEJA** can be reached at [deejay\\_ra@chrwradio.com](mailto:deejay_ra@chrwradio.com)