

# IT AIN'T EASY BEING JEEZY

It was late 2009, at Madison Middle School. A young Jaquille McNeal sat slumped in his chair, pencil tapping, eyes drooping. His work sat too — on his desk, however, completed, waiting for collection.

Suddenly, a bolt of inspiration ran through McNeal, eradicating the plague of boredom, and replacing it with what became Jayjeezy's first rap.

This first taste of rap-creation sparked more raps, and more. He continued on rapping with his middle school compatriot, James Warner, until February 2010, when he felt that he had "run out of words." From there, McNeal went into a two-year hiatus, until May 3, 2012.

At that time, McNeal had recently gotten out of a relationship, and became "emotionally distressed, and [he] felt like giving up on everything," but instead channeled his emotions and fears back into rap.

On that day, in Mr. Lockley's first period, the new Jayjeezy was born, on a small green Post-It. On this Post-It, McNeal wrote a little rhyme, which he put in his pocket, saving it for later. When he arrived home, McNeal contacted one of his old friends from middle school, Mohamed Farah, to help him record a rap video. This video was posted on Facebook the same night, starting the ball rolling for McNeal's rap career.

Things weren't all rainbows and raps on the path to standing where he stands today. In middle school, McNeal was ridiculed and mocked, called "retarded, slow, disabled." He wanted to pursue a rap career to "prove wrong all the haters that [he can] one day make it." In high school, McNeal originally pursued a career in architecture, designing buildings and such. His hobby, before rap, was drawing floor plans and buildings, but late in his freshman year, he was forced to stop.

Later, McNeal fell in with the wrong crowd, trying desperately to fit in. He let his GPA drop to a 1.5, but junior year, he felt it was his year to build up his rap career. He strived to be a "known artist," to be a part of Hillsborough's alumni and history.

Rapping is hard work, and has deeply affected McNeal's life. The hardest part of writing a rap, is, well, writing it.

"Coming up with words" is a great challenge, and actually recording them isn't a cakewalk either. Juggling rap and school, rap has become "like what [he does] half the time now."

Creating simply one song can take anywhere from a couple hours to a week to do, sometimes he has to wake up at 3 a.m. just to get it done.

He declares Best of Jayjeezy, Best of Jayjeezy III and SWAG EP his best works. In his early senior year, McNeal joined Political Murder, a school rap group, and so he no longer had to "chase [his] rap dream by [himself]."

McNeal drew inspiration from other rap artists, including Lil' Wayne, Drake, Tyga, J. Cole, and his latest inspiration, D-Pryde.

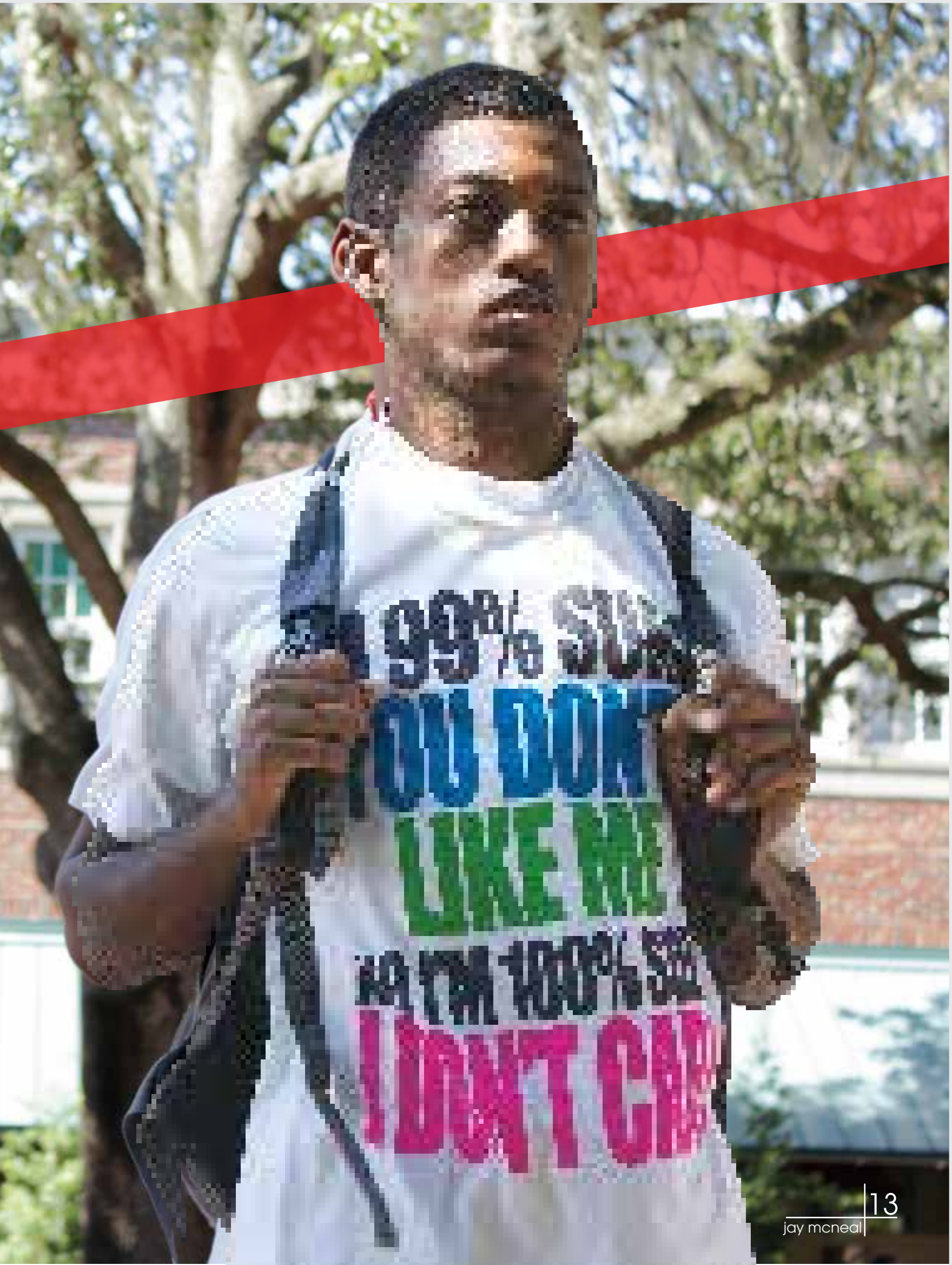
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Job # 01835 School Hillsborough High School

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**9**  
**13**  
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