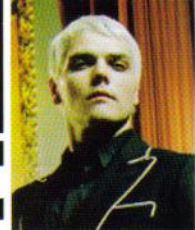


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Artest: "What rhymes with 73-game suspension?"

HATE THE PLAYER

RON ARTEST

Booted for a season from the NBA in 2004 after going hog-wild on Detroit Pistons fans, Artest launched a rap career; his album *My World* drops this fall, with cameos from Queens pals Nas and Mobb Deep

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE GIG?

I was touring with Fat Joe this summer. In January, we did 30,000 people in Germany at the Splash Festival. There were 60,000 hands in the air. It was like a playoff game.

WOULD YOU EVER GIVE UP YOUR DAY JOB?

It's the off-season now, so I'm doing music full-time. My music career is going to explode. Basketball is all physical; rapping is all mental.

DO YOU HAVE A MUSICAL ALTER EGO?

No. I'm Ron Artest. Some people call me Tru Warrior. I got that in uptown Manhattan, 151st Street, 'cause I play hard and have big energy on the court. It sounds kind of ill.

HAVE YOU EVER TRASHED A HOTEL ROOM?

Um ... yeah, I trashed a couple of hotel rooms. One time I was at a game in D.C. and I got real drunk or whatever and we had this party in the room, and by the time we woke up the next morning it was like a tornado ran through it. I forget what hotel—probably the Ritz or something.

DO YOU THINK YOU'LL TRASH MORE HOTEL ROOMS WHEN YOUR MUSIC CAREER EXPLODES?

Nah. They billed me for that last one. I'll never do that again. *M.S.*