

The Evolution of an Angel

At 27 years of age, **Angel Antonio Fernandez**, A New York Bronx native of Dominican descent, was diagnosed with vitiligo. Raised by a single mother, Maritza Marquez alongside two brothers Danny and Dario, Angel grew up fatherless as a result of the incarceration of Orlando Fernandez, Angel's biological father, on December 3rd, 1983, exactly one month before Angel's birth. This will just mark the beginning of a series of obstacles in "Young Angel"'s life.

For "Young Angel," there was no hurdle hard enough that he could not handle. He kept his head up high and his mind on his goal to become a music artist that will capture the world through his creativity and smile. From the tender age of 11, Angel began writing and arranging his own music, showcasing, and winning top spots in various talent shows as a rapper/singer throughout New York City.

In 2001, Angel encountered his first break when GRAMMY winning producer Stevie J, set his eyes on the young talent and offered him his first record Deal. Angel's luck went further when Stevie J adopted him, making him part of his growing natural family. As a child, Angel's idols were Michael Jackson and Ralph McDaniels with his show Video Music Box; and at age 15, Jackie Jackson of **The Jackson 5**, signed Angel to his 1st record deal, followed by a 2nd record deal with MLB athlete Brain Hunter's Illest Entertainment, almost 8 years later. Subsequently, the project "**Stevie J presents Angel I love haters**" was released, which featured music icons such as Rick Ross and Pharrell, to name a few. Angel summed this string of success as "**The Godflow**."

After many successful years in the music industry and now a father of 4-year-old son Dylan, Angel relocated in Miami while awaiting another record deal. Not long after the move to Miami, Angel began to notice changes in his pigmentation, which he attributed to excessive sun exposure, bad diet and stress. "*Life would truly begin*" were the words Angel uttered as the doctor announced the diagnosis: vitiligo.

The lack of understanding of his condition drove Angel in a cloud of confusion, depression, and a complete withdrawal from everything in his life. In his darkest moments, he repeatedly found himself looking in the mirror and crying out to God: "*all these spots on my face, why me? What's the purpose of having all the relationships and contacts if I can no longer be an Artist?!*" It was clear that his former record deals were based not only on his talent alone, but also on his appearance, which now was changing in an unrecognizable way. After much internal turmoil and coming to terms with what life has become, Angel once again redirected his attention to new goals: becoming a music producer like his father Stevie J. He reminisced his conversation with Jackie Jackson, Michael Jackson's older brother, where the latter asked him: "*What do you want to be when you grow up?*" The vibrant answer he gave back in 2001 resonated in his mind like Florida lighting: "*a Superstar! A record executive just like you*". Angel realized that his calling from the start has never changed; he was meant to be a superstar regardless of any curveball that life throws at him, including vitiligo.

It became clear for Angel that his life and new beginning was no longer about “him.” He had a mission, that of breaking the barriers of difference based on physical appearance, and fostering self-acceptance for anyone facing similar challenges. He has taken on a leadership role in enhancing, connecting, upgrading, uplifting, spreading love and moving societal acceptance forward by being of service versus being served. As a mentor, Angel is demonstrating his ability to attain greater heights by developing artists, producing classic albums such as “**Drillmatic**,” establishing companies such as **A&R Consulting** for major labels, creating and designing **INDRA Umbrellas** brand, managing platinum selling producers like Cassius Clay Beats, Ben Jayne, and being the face of change as the **Ambassador of Massé**, a public charity that provides aid, support and education for individuals with albinism and vitiligo.

When asked what his future plans look like, Angel responded: *“show me someone who says that they have a plan and I’ll show you God laughing. It’s out of your control, the only thing you can control are your thoughts and actions or lack thereof. You cannot control anything or anybody but yourself. See, vitiligo happens and slowly the ego dies, selfishness dies, me-me-me mentality dies, and a selfless man of honor was born. I have lived with two different skin colors in one lifetime, at the same time. Skin color doesn’t define you, black and white are legal statuses, nothing to do with complexion.”*

It is quite clear that Angel is one of the greatest creators of his time and is just getting started.

Stay tuned!