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## Marcus Davenport

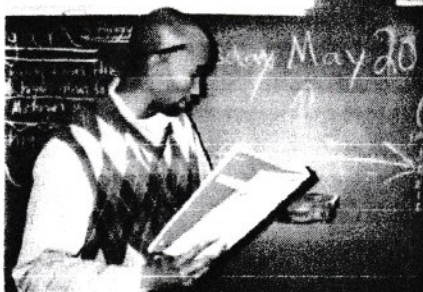
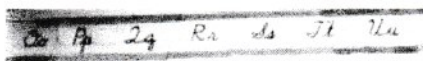
From the classroom to the big screen, the driving force behind Big Thangs Productions has success in his sights

By Lester Holmes  
Special to Metromix  
October 12, 2008

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If a picture is worth a thousand words, to Marcus G. Davenport the price to create a nationally-acclaimed documentary is much higher.

"I spent \$40,000 of my own money to make my dreams come true. I have no choice but to be a success," says Davenport a 30-year-old educator living in Detroit who received national attention in 2003 for his hit documentary "Flint Star" that exposes the harsh realities of life in inner-city Flint through the eyes of professional, college, scholastic and "street ball" basketball stars who call the area home.

The "Uncut DVD" version of the documentary has been featured in ESPNTueHoop.com and the Murder

Dog magazine.

Five years later, Davenport through his independent film and entertainment brand Big Thangs Productions, is filming again, this time focusing on the on the field and off the field aspects of life in the National Football League as part of his newest project entitled "Life in the League."

Metromix recently had an opportunity to talk with the Grand Rapids' native, who was recently named as one of Michigan's rising young film talents by the movie industry insider publication Metromodemia.com, to discuss his thoughts on film, his next project and what inspires him to pick up a camera.

### What is your motivation and inspiration for making films?

My first motivation is my mother and father. I was blessed to have both of them in an age when most kids don't have a father at home. My pops just had open-heart surgery and my mother will need a kidney transplant soon.

Teaching pays the bills, but it can only pay so much. (Davenport is currently a teacher in the Southfield Public School system and has also taught middle school for Detroit Public Schools.)

That's why I started my company to one day take care of them. This is why I refuse to quit no matter how dark a situation gets. I must provide them with a better life.

My (other) inspiration is the truth. I am inspired by telling realistic and cutting-edge stories. I have to give you what you can't get on TV on a regular basis.

### What type of stories and people do you want to expose to the masses through your films?

I feel like Michigan is still untapped as a place for film. I want to produce a film in every single city that I have lived in growing up. Moving around so much as a child forced me to really be observant at all times. Every Michigan city has its own untold story in my eyes. I look forward to bringing these stories to life.

### How has your career as an educator helped you to become a better filmmaker?

Being an educator is the best thing in my life. When you work with kids in urban environments you are constantly in an unpredictable and challenging environment.

This reality forces you to always be quick on your toes and innovative at all times. I happen to work with some

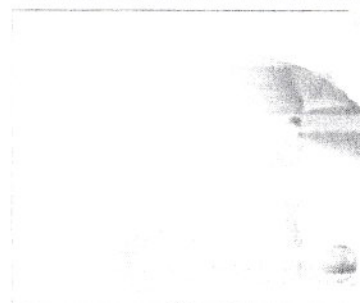
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of the most creative people on the planet. Kids in the inner city are forced to be creative for survival. I feed off of that energy, inspire them to learn by any means, and they unknowingly recharge my creative battery daily.

**How do you balance your creativity as a filmmaker with being the CEO of Big Thangs Productions Inc.?**

There is no balance. This is my life. I am driven by success. All I think about is pushing my business to the limits when I am not teaching. I depleted any savings that I had and maxed out every single credit card in order to film/produce/edit/ market/distribute "Flint Star."

This is why, after so many years, "Flint Star" is still to be featured and written about across the globe. I hustle with this everyday of my life. This is my hobby and extracurricular activities.

**You are currently working on a documentary film on the National Football League. What messages do you hope to convey about professional athletes through your film?**

"Life in the League" will be another cutting-edge view of the world of professional sports.

This film will be a great improvement from my first film that was created with a very small budget. This film will look at some of the aspects of NFL life from off-the-field issues, pressures of financial success, escaping poor environments, steroids, gay athletes and the stigma they face, being a target for robbery and violence, racism and the unity of sports and the highs and lows of the NFL experience.

This film will be created with my cousin and former NFL athlete (Detroit Lions' defensive tackle) Damian Gregory. His story alone is quite interesting. I have been exposed to a great deal about the NFL experience through being around my cousin during his NFL years. As always, I will give you a perspective that you cannot receive from Fox Sports, ESPN, or NBC.

**Are there any lessons you learned from "Flint Star" that you are carrying to help you with "Life in the League"?**

Yes. First, films are crazy expensive! Dreams do not pay bills. You can easily go broke and lose your shirt in this business. I have learned how to function on very little sleep, food, and fun.

**What is next for you as a filmmaker and Big Thangs Productions Inc.?**

I have written a comedy based out of Detroit called "Money in The Ghetto." The film went by the name "Hood Rich" for many years but I think that we will scrap that title. The film is a reality-based comedy about a young college student living in the city of Detroit.

The film explores today's desire for instant financial gratification, the rap era's infatuation with the drug trade, and the constant money mismanagement that plagues the residents of the ghetto.

**Do you have any words of advice or encouragement for fellow independent Michigan filmmakers?**

Believe in yourself and never give up. You have to be willing to make your vision a reality at all cost. Of course, my friends think I am a total nut for working so hard, but dreams cost money and film equipment isn't cheap. I am determined to do whatever I have to do to finance equipment to make my next film much better than the first. Don't be afraid to be considered crazy.

To learn more about "Flint Star" or Big Thangs Productions please visit [www.flintstarmovie.com](http://www.flintstarmovie.com) or [www.bigthangsproductions.com](http://www.bigthangsproductions.com)

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