



SUPA SOUL-JA

RONIE LOUIJENE

*Kanye West said it best: You don't like blacks.
'Cause if you did the next day you woulda sent some snacks
Instead of sending troops down there packing gats, shooting at blacks just
for trying to take a water pack.*

Those are the kind of lyrics Ronie Louijene wants to record, the type of music he envisioned doing when he picked up a microphone four years ago.

"This is what I want to feed them with, but you give them a whole album of this and they like: 'What the hell this is?'" said Louijene, who lives west of Lake Worth.

A mixtape DJ with two booths in West Palm Beach's 45th Street Flea Market, Louijene, 28, began rapping partly out of boredom. He'd compiled mixes of other artists' work and wondered if he could create original tracks.

"I was just curious to see how far I could take it, and it just grew into love," he said. "[But] I don't freestyle. I'm not that cat."

A tall man with shoulder-length dreadlocks and a deep voice, Louijene describes himself as soulful, which is partly where the name Supa Soul-ja comes from.

Music was not Louijene's first career choice. After graduating from Lake Worth High School, he tried college but realized that school was not for him. He got his hands dirty as a "street pharmacist" but said he got out of the game before bullets or bars claimed him.

"The man upstairs said, 'That's not the route I want for you because there are consequences if you do it long enough,'" Louijene said.

In 1999, a friend approached him about opening a booth at the flea market, he said.

Born to Haitian parents, Louijene moved to Palm Beach County and says as a child he suffered from a culture complex, something he hopes his infant son never has to contend with.

"Back in the day, I was hesitant to admit I was Haitian," he said. "Back in the days ... one of the jokes was all Haitians eat cat. It was rough on us."

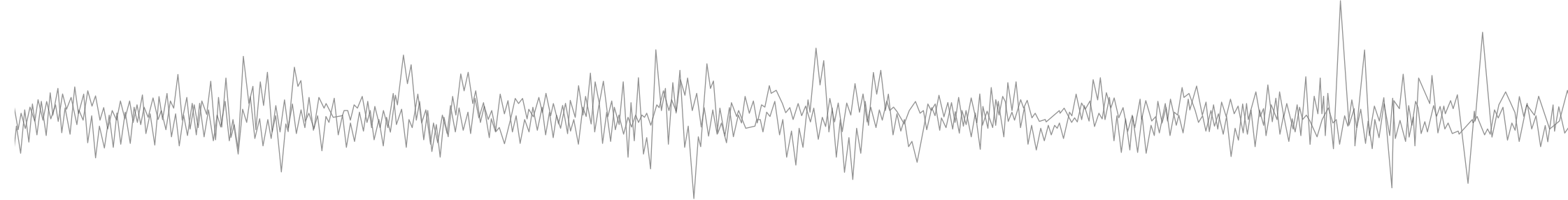
Things changed in high school when he became more comfortable in his own skin. Those growing pains now influence his music.



FAMILY MOMENT: Ronie Louijene spends time with his son. "My family and the way I was brought up is a major influence on my music," Louijene says.



AT THE SHOP: Louijene, facing the camera at right, talks with a customer at one of the two booths he owns at a flea market in West Palm Beach. Louijene said sales of DVDs and CDs help finance his music career.



LEAVING A LEGACY: Bruna sits alone in a makeshift recording studio — the bathroom of an Oakland Park apartment — before a recording session. "If you're doing something where you can get out there and everybody can hear you, you're supposed to have something that can vibe with their life," says Bruna, "even when you're dead and gone."

