



ICE-T ... HIP HOP PIONEER

By Jennifer Swift

TAPOUT: Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk with me.

ICE-T: No problem, Jennifer.

TAPOUT: We know you're a huge MMA fan and have been for many years. When would you say you first became a fan?

ICE-T: I think ever since it started man. I go all the way back to Tank Abbott and back in the days of Shamrock and then getting into it. I just liked it from the beginning, you know. I did martial arts while I was coming up. I did kempo in high school and boxed in the Army. So you know I'm into the fight sport. I knew it was going to take off right when it started.

TAPOUT: How long did you serve in the Army?

ICE-T: Four years.

TAPOUT: Out of all the live fights you have attended, what was your most memorable fight you've seen?

ICE-T: I mean honestly, I think the craziest fight I can think of is the most recent one with Anderson Silva, when he kicked the dude in the face. When he kicked Belfort in the face with that front kick. I was ready for a real big fight and it was just over so quick. It was such a precision kick; it just lets you know that anyone can get it at any time in that sport.

TAPOUT: Word out is he learned it from Steven Seagal.

ICE-T: Yeah, come on! I don't know what Steve Seagal taught him. He might have told him to try it. Come on, Silva got that kick since he was a baby probably. So he just had to land it.

TAPOUT: Who is your favorite MMA fighter of all time?

ICE-T: Oh wow! You got good questions! Favorite fight ... I would say Chuck Liddell, The Ice Man. You know, because we share the name! [laughs] I always liked Chuck, you know. Chuck would really knock you out. Chuck had an ill overhand right knockout punch that when you saw it coming, if it landed, you went down. I would always love it when he fought Tito Ortiz. I'm a fan of Tito too, but Chuck will always beat his ass. I love 'em.

TAPOUT: The sport is evolving more and more each year. Do you feel that MMA will reach the success level of the NFL, NBA, or MLB?

ICE-T: Yes, I definitely think it will reach that success.



I mean, the only thing I think that might be bad about it is that there are so many fights and so many divisions. It's really hard to keep up with all the fighters, you know? You don't know who's who and there are so many different divisions. I think if they wing it down and you start having a few less fights, they can have bigger build-ups. It will get bigger and more powerful because the money is still not there for the fighters, but I don't think anything can stop it.

TAPOUT: Some fighters are starting to cross over to acting. If you were to present an award for best fighter turned actor, who would you award?

ICE-T: The best fighter turned actor. I think I would say Randy Couture. I saw him in *The Expendables*. He seems like he could pull it off. He's got actor traits. Rampage has actor written all over him. He is definitely a charac-



ter. So is Forrest Griffin. He actually came on *SVU* and did a part on there. He was a good actor too.

TAPOUT: What was it like working with Forrest Griffin on *SVU*?

ICE-T: He is very cool. He's very mellow and very humble. I mean to me, Forrest Griffin reminds me of Gomer Pyle. I call him Big Gomer. It looks like he would have some big overalls with big straw in his mouth and just try and knock you out. So he reminds me of Big Gomer.

TAPOUT: Yeah, he has a lot of heart and never gives up.

ICE-T: Yeah, Yeah ... he's a fighter. He's a big guy and he's got big hands. You could look at him and be like, "Okay, he's gonna be a problem!"

ICE-T: I don't train right now. Well, you know I'm a stand-up fighter. You know what I'm sayin'? When you go into jiu-jitsu, you got to be very limber. I broke my pelvis in a car accident, so I'm not very limber at all. You could turn my foot like an inch and I'm tapping out.

TAPOUT: Dude!

ICE-T: (Laughs)

TAPOUT: We heard at one time that you were seriously thinking about stepping into the cage. Was this true or just a rumor?

ICE-T: No, I'm not stepping into the cage. I would step in the cage with somebody I could beat they ass. Not stepping in the cage with no professional mixed martial artist. These guys fight all day long. Nah, I'm not stepping in the cage. You have to train for that and I'm



TAPOUT: Do you watch *The Ultimate Fighter*, and if so, what do you think of coaches Junior Dos Santos and Brock Lesnar?

ICE-T: Brock Lesnar is interesting, you know. He proved his point. He came from the WWE-type fighting which everybody says is fake. But he came over there and kicked some people's ass. I'm like dude, these guys are big and they're dangerous. I don't wanna fight any of those guys. So I'm proud of Brock for being able to step into MMA and do his thing. As for Dos Santos, I can't really get him because he doesn't really talk that much. At the end of the season, they always fight each other so that's always something good to look forward to.

TAPOUT: In some of your movies and TV shows, you have showcased some martial arts techniques. What do you train in right now and what style suits you best.

not training like that right now. Nah, I'll meet you in the club and beat ya ass in the club.

TAPOUT: If you were to step into the cage with another well-known celebrity, who would it be?

ICE-T: Uh, that's a hard one. I don't have any celebrity drama.

TAPOUT: What would your walk-out song be?

ICE-T: Probably *There Goes The Neighborhood* and some Body Count.

TAPOUT: You were an unlockable character in the UFC Tapout XBOX videogame in 2002. How did that come about?

ICE-T: Well, I've been in a lot of videogames. They found out I was a fan of the UFC and they called me. They came over, took pictures of me, and rendered me into the videogame. It's fun. I'm a gamer so it's good to be in it.

TAPOUT: *While growing up, who were some of your musical influences?*

ICE-T: When I was growing up, I was listening to everything. From Jimi Hendrix to Parliament to James Brown, you know? Lots of influences. I remember when I was growing up, there was no rap music.

TAPOUT: *How is rap different now compared to when it started?*



ICE-T: Right now, rap is pop, you know. They are saying whatever is popular. You know, I miss the soul. I miss the Public Enemy's and the KRS1's, but I think it has the chance to go back and become more poignant and more important.

TAPOUT: *Being a pioneer in the rap game, what advice do you have for rappers/artists out there just getting into the game?*

ICE-T: Go lyrical and try to deal with topics. Don't just rap about the club. Think about topics of life. You know, so that people could get into your life. Don't lose the lyrical part of it. Just because some people are doing it stupid and silly doesn't mean you have to. Be good. Be better than the next man.

TAPOUT: *How did you cross over from music to acting?*

ICE-T: I was making records. I had put out the *Original Gangstas* album and they had asked me if I wanted to be in a movie called *New Jack City*. I was scared to death. And it worked. That first movie gave me options to do more and more movies. Movies led to the television role I'm on now. I've been on *Law and Order: SVU* for 12 years now.

TAPOUT: *Do you enjoy working on SVU?*

ICE-T: It's a good job. I didn't know it was gonna be this big when I got on it. It's been a good job. It's been a nice, long ride. I love it!

TAPOUT: *You have a new book that recently came out; what is the name of it?*

ICE-T: It came out last week. It's called *ICE-T: A MEMOIR OF GANGSTER LIFE AND REDEMPTION - FROM SOUTH CENTRAL TO HOLLYWOOD*.

TAPOUT: *Is this book similar to your first book or different?*

ICE-T: Nah, it's a little different. It's more about, you know, as a mature man-like retrospect reflecting back on all the different things I went through to get to this point. It's a very inspirational book, but not preaching.

TAPOUT: *Your filming a new reality show with Coco. When does it air?*

ICE-T: Yeah, we are shooting a show right now called *Ice Loves Coco*. It airs June 12th on E after *Keeping up with the Kardashians* at 10:30. The show's great; it's fun, it's entertaining, and it's different. It's not drama.

TAPOUT: *There are so many reality shows out there. How is your reality show different?*

ICE-T: Well, if you look at reality shows today, you will think there is not a happy woman on earth. So this is a show that will show you can have a functional relationship. You can do things; you can make things happen; and there doesn't have to be all that bullshit and drama.

TAPOUT: *The biggest news in recent history was the death of Osama bin Laden. What are your thoughts on him finally being brought to justice?*

ICE-T: It's closure, you know. I was in New York when



the Twin Towers were struck, so I know that everybody here kinda has a real close connection to that tragedy. The fact that they finally caught him. I mean, it's crazy that somebody could be that wanted for 10 years and we couldn't catch him. It kinda made us feel like, well ... really, what are we doing if we can't catch him? But you know, my hat goes off to the people who did it. Information will release slowly. It's a good thing. Now maybe we can start to bring some of the troops home.

TAPOUT: *Thank you so much, Ice. Is there anything else you would like to let our readers know?*

ICE-T: You know, I Twitter and you Twitter with it, so follow me on Twitter @Finallevel and Coco's is @cocosworld, and that's where you go for day to day updates on our life.

