

Mississippi
Alberta
North Portland

METRO

Vancouver
East County
Beaverton

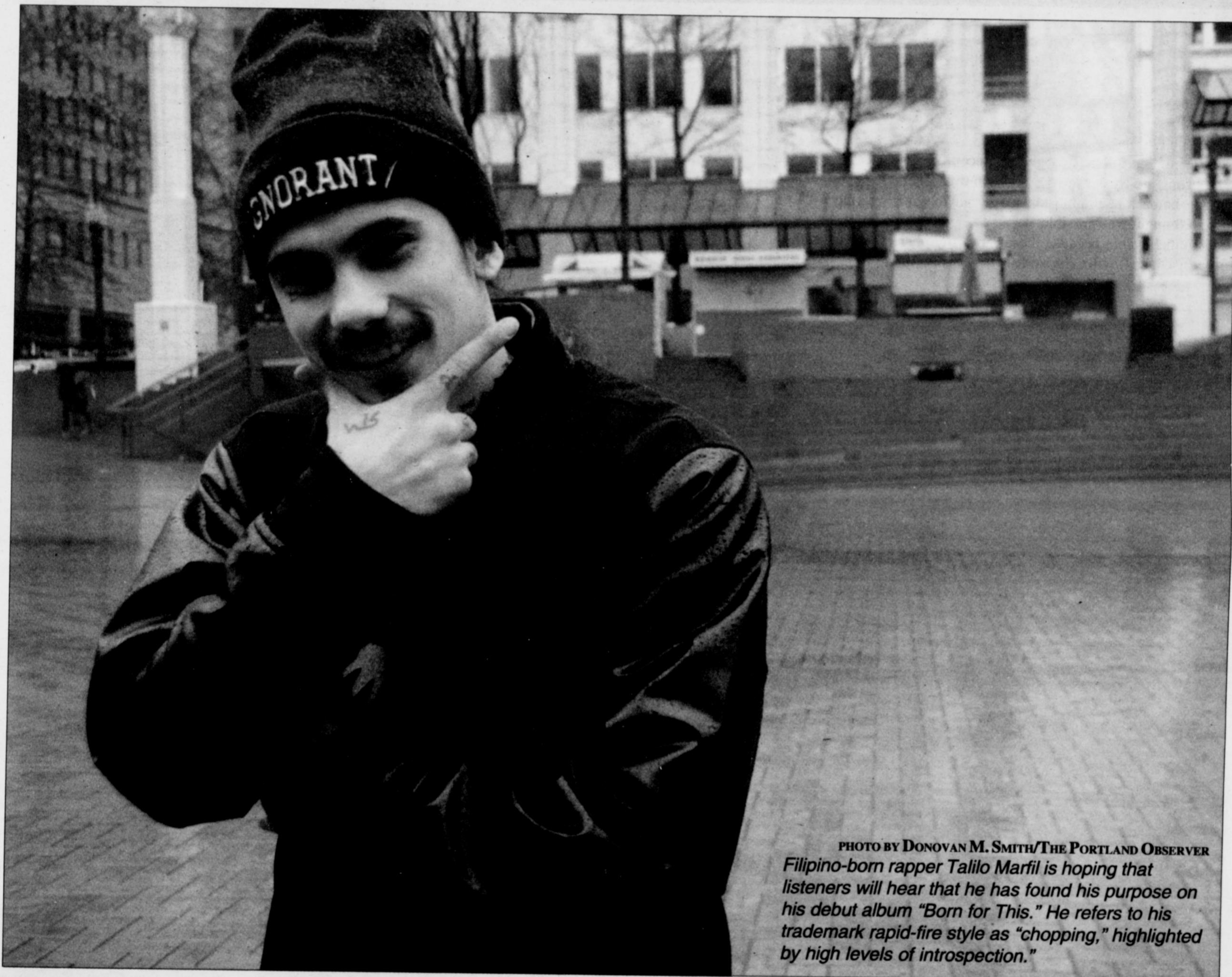


PHOTO BY DONOVAN M. SMITH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Filipino-born rapper Talilo Marfil is hoping that listeners will hear that he has found his purpose on his debut album "Born for This." He refers to his trademark rapid-fire style as "chopping," highlighted by high levels of introspection.

Born For This

Rhymesayer spits purpose through the microphone

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

On Dec. 30, 1989, Talilo Marfil came into this world without a tattoo, significantly less hair, and perhaps if you ask him, missing something even more vital: a microphone.

Now 23, the Filipino-born Portland rap-artist digitally released his debut album "Born for This" fittingly on his birthday last December.

The album is highlighted by his trademark rapid-fire style of rapping he refers to as "chopping," but between the diction are often high levels of introspection.

"I feel like the concept came from me observing the world, and seeing that a lot of people don't know what they're living for, and nobody has no purpose," he says, "I found mine if

the music."

"They lockin' us in a coffin before we even departed/ They trappin' up on the block and I'm wondering what is real/You can see we ain't different/Heart, got a soul, got a mind but I know that I don't feel whole," he raps on his opening track "Conception".

Lyrics like these are not hard to come by on Born For This, and back-dropped by Talilo's own background it is easier to make sense of them. After being kicked out of school in California as a teen, he migrated up to Portland. In the Rose City, he found himself heavily entangled in the gang life, selling drugs as a means of survival, with a tendency towards "hot-headedness" as he calls it.

"I wanted to be a gangster growing up. I wanted to have

that power, I wanted to feel that worth. After going after that lifestyle and trying to feel that self-worth in that, I found that the consequences weren't worth it," he says.

The ultimate consequence was a several-year prison stint. It was here that would make a promise to himself to begin taking rap seriously.

Part of that promise also was that he'd get on a track with Northwest favorite Luck-One, and that he did on one of the album's standout tracks. "Can't Take That Away" finds the two detailing their spiritual pride despite being in a system they felt largely ignored their humanity.

"You can talk about your lifestyle in a negative way or a

continued ▼ on page 13