

# REMEDY

(Reuven ben Menachem)  
of Wu-Tang Clan



Returning from several trips to Israel, Remedy recorded a full length album featuring many of Israel's top artists, as well as other artists from around the world. The album is titled "Remedy Presents: New York to Israel" - Volume 1. Features on this album include Subliminal, Mooke, Shi 360, Dani Dean, Chulu, Silver Don, Boo Skills, RZA, Killah Priest and more. This album combines New York and Israeli Hip Hop into what will prove to be a custom and unique project with nothing but talent!!!



Remedy has performed all over the world and has been featured, highlighted, and seen alongside many of today's top hip-hop artists. Through Remedy's educational program, Jewish youth gain pride, a stronger Jewish identity, and a desire to visit Israel for themselves.

"Remedy speaks the truth, he speaks for justice and equality for his people" - RZA of the Wu Tang Clan  
"At last! Jewish rapper is The Genuine Article" - Forward

Jewish Hip Hop artist, Remedy, a Wu-Tang Clan affiliate best known for his landmark Rap song "Never Again", has begun an extraordinary program for Jewish youth throughout the world. The program brings Remedy's Jewish-themed lyrics, including his personal family account of loss in the Holocaust and his recent eye-opening experiences in Israel, to young people in search of a stronger Jewish identity. His self-penned song "Never Again", written as a tribute to the Holocaust victims and survivors, appears on Wu-Tang's "The Swarm" album in 1998 selling over one million copies world-wide and became a Jewish anthem.

Remedy has also performed in Paris, France - Munich, Berlin, Stuttgart, Erfurt, Birnberg, Friberg, Grossraton, Germany - Warsaw, Poland - Vienna, Austria - Tilburg -Amsterdam, Netherlands, Moscow, Russia - Tel Aviv, Bersheba, Jerusalem, Haifa, Elat, Israel - London, Leeds, Manchester, England in front of thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish spectators. Remedy also frequently speaks to young people about Holocaust awareness and education.



Remedy's program goes beyond a traditional performance. Between songs Remedy speaks about anti-Semitism, Jewish pride, Israel, and other topics relevant to today's Jewish youth. Remedy also opens the floor to discussions, during which students are free to share their thoughts and questions on issues facing the Jewish people today.



Jewish Artist Regional Touring Service



For information on Remedy, call J-ARTS at 773.550.1543 or email [info@j-arts.org](mailto:info@j-arts.org)

## "NEVER AGAIN" - By Remedy - (Reuven Ben-Menachem)

[Kiddush intro]

To all those races colors and creeds, every man bleeds,  
for the countless victims and all the families,  
of the murdered, tortured, enslaved raped, robbed and persecuted  
Never Again - to the men women and children  
who died in their struggle to live  
never to be forgotten -Reuven Ben-Menachem  
My own blood, dragged through the mud  
perished in my heart still cherished and loved  
stripped of our pride, everything we lived for  
families cried, there's no where to run to  
no where to hide, tossed to the side  
access denied, six million died for what?  
A mans shot dead in his back  
helpless women and children under constant attack  
for no reason, 'til the next season  
and we still bleedin', it's freezin'  
and men burn in hell some for squeezin'  
no hope for a Remedy, nothing to believe  
moving targets who walk with a star on their sleeve  
Forever marked with a number, tattooed to your body  
late night, eyes closed clutched my my shotty  
having visions, flashes of death camps and prisons  
no provisions, deceived by the devil's decisions  
Forced into a slave, death before dishonor  
for those men who were brave shot and sent to their grave  
can't awaken, it's too late everything's been taken  
I'm shaking, family, history, the makin'

[Chorus with Hatikva]

Never Again shall we march like sheep to the slaughter  
Never Again shall we sit and take orders  
stripped of our culture, robbed of our names  
raped of our freedom then thrown into the flames  
forced from our families, taken from our homes  
pulled from our G-d and everything we own-Never Again  
Never Again shall we march like sheep to the slaughter  
Never Again leave our sons and daughters  
stripped of our culture, robbed of our names  
raped of our freedom then thrown into the flames  
forced from our families, taken from our homes  
pulled from our G-d then burned of our bones  
Some fled through the rumors of wars  
but most left for dead, few escaped to the shores  
with just one loaf of bread, banished  
pulled in for questioning and vanished-never to be seen again

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I can't express the pain that was felt in the train  
to Auschwitz, tears poured down like rain  
naked face to face with the "master race", hatred,  
blood of David, my heart belongs to G-d and stays sacred  
Rabbis and priests, disabled individuals  
the poor, the scholars, all labeled common criminals  
mass extermination, total annihilation  
shipped into the ghetto then prepared for liquidation  
tortured and starved, innocent experiments  
stripped down, carved up or gassed to death  
The last hour, I smell the flowers  
flashbacks of family then sent to the showers  
powerless, undressed, women with babies clung tight to their chest  
crying, who would have guessed dying  
another life lost count the cost,  
another body gassed, burned and tossed in the Holocaust

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# Jewish Rapper Rocks Hillel at University of Central Florida

February 01, 2005

*Never again shall we march like sheep to the slaughter  
Never again shall we sit and take orders  
Stripped of our culture, Robbed of our name  
Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames  
Forced from our families, taken from our homes  
Moved from our God then burned of our bones  
Never again, never again*

These words were not lifted from a poetry anthology or a history textbook. They are the words of a new generation. They are the verses that form the chorus of a rap titled "Never Again" by Jewish hip-hop artist Remedy Ross.

Last week, Remedy, whose real name is Ross Filler, gave a free concert to 200 students at the University of Central Florida, rapping about such diverse topics as the Holocaust, the history of the Jewish people and 9/11. Hillel at UCF, in conjunction with Hip Hop Elements, UCF's student hip hop group, organized the campus-wide event, which was headlined by a local Jewish rapper who goes by the pseudonym of "Xodus Ph.D."



"I saw Remedy perform in Miami Beach at a synagogue, and I thought he would be good to bring to UCF to expose him and his message to the students on campus," said Alex Sigal, a sophomore who serves as a senator for UCF's Student Government Association. As a senator, Sigal was able to put a funding bill through the Senate, which paid for the event.

While Filler's medium may be perceived as rough around the edges, his intentions are largely educational. "I spread the message of Israel and Judaism. I think it's important in general for people to know their identity, where they are from, and the history of their people," Filler said. "A lot of people stereotype me right away and assume that I'm a gimmick or a joke."

But Filler is the real thing. He has collaborated many times with the infamous Wu-Tang Clan, a group that pioneered the genre of hardcore rap, beginning in the early 1990s. In fact, Filler admits that he is often referred to as "the white Jew from Wu-Tang." The rapper grew up in Staten Island, where he befriended original clan members Method Man, Inspectah Deck and Raekwon the Chef. Filler, a former street hustler with little interest in Judaism, rediscovered his roots as a young adult, leading him to pen his Holocaust-themed rap, "Never Again."

The song, which was originally released on the Wu-Tang Clan's 1998 album, "The Swarm," has received worldwide attention for bringing the Holocaust to the contemporary masses. "Pretty soon all the people who were directly involved in the Holocaust won't be around anymore, so it's up to the youth of today to keep the message alive," Filler said.

Eric Grynspan, a junior at UCF who attended the concert, agreed. "It was different. I've never seen anything like this on a college campus. He's got charisma," he said.

"This was a unique opportunity to show the diversity of the Jewish people," said Ben Sack, who organized the event with Sigal. "The concert exposed Judaism to a diverse group of students in a way than Hillel has been unable to do in the past." Sack, who serves as the president of Hillel at UCF, is also excited about Hillel's partnership with Hip Hop Elements, led by UCF student Luis Caraballo. Sack believes that the co-sponsorship will allow Hillel to reach a broader cross-section of both Jewish and non-Jewish students.

"Hillel is constantly trying to bring Judaism to the students, and I think we really hit the bullseye with this event," Sack said. "Standing backstage and listening to Remedy talk to a crowd filled with Hillel and Elements students about the importance of Israel is something I will not soon forget."

So what did this former street hustler hope to impart on his audience? "A strong identity and the wanting to visit Israel," he said.



## **Rhymes and Remembrance Wu-Tang affiliate Remedy builds a Holocaust memorial in verse**

*By Ari Levine*

Forget chicken soup, the Jews have a new Remedy--29-year-old Wu-Tang Clan affiliate Ross Filler a.k.a. Remedy Ross. What distinguishes Remedy from other rappers is his decision to make his Jewish identity central to his music and his rap persona.

Although not all of his songs deal specifically with Judaism, Remedy's connection to his people and identity is clear throughout his debut album *The Genuine Article*, released last spring. The album features the song "Reuven Ben Menachum" (Filler's Hebrew name) and his best-known song, the Holocaust memorial "Never Again."

But Judaism wasn't always a central part of Filler's life. Like many other young Jews, Filler wasn't interested in the lessons of Sunday school. It wasn't until he got older that he began to get back to his roots and heritage.

Filler was born and raised in Staten Island, New York City's fifth borough, made famous in the world of hip-hop by the Wu-Tang Clan. Influenced by the likes of Run DMC and the Beastie Boys, he became immersed in the world of hip-hop. His association with the Wu-Tang Clan began as a teen at Staten Island's New Dorp High School, where he befriended original clansmen Methodman, Inspectah Deck, and Raekwon the Chef.

Early on, Remedy's rhymes were filled with his thoughts on the world around him from his perspective as a street hustler trying to get by. Remedy's early release "Seen It All/Everything Is Real," which was released as a single, received warm responses.

Remedy also began to gradually reconnect with his Jewish heritage. "I started learning about Judaism and customs, and all the good stuff as I got older. I just started investigating on my own over the last seven years," he says. "As you get older you're like, 'What is all this Judaism stuff they don't teach in school?' I just wanted to know more, and began reading the Tanakh [the Jewish Bible]."

Remedy's own search for meaning in Judaism eventually led him to pen the powerful lyrics that became "Never Again," his breakthrough hit. Over samples that include the Friday night Kiddush taken from *Schindler's List*, and portions of the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikvah*, Remedy weaves a tale of suffering and ultimate survival. "Never Again/shall we walk like sheep to the slaughter/Never Again/shall we sit and take orders/stripped of our culture/robbed of our names/raped of our freedom/and thrown into the flames/forced from our families/taken from our homes/pulled from our God/then burned of our bones."

The song is deeply personal. It is based on his grandmother's stories of surviving the Holocaust. "My great uncle got shot in the back," says Remedy. "His family was taken to the camps, never to be seen again. My own blood went through this. Who made it. Who immigrated. Who didn't."

In 1997, "Never Again" appeared on *The Swarm*, a compilation album featuring up-and-coming soldiers from the ranks of the Wu-Tang army. The song is viewed by many as the album's highlight.

Since the release of *The Swarm*, Remedy has been embraced by Jewish communities around the world. On a now regular basis, Remedy travels to Hebrew schools, colleges, and even synagogues to perform his music and deliver his message of tolerance and remembrance. "I'm representing humanity," he says. "So even though I'm telling it through what happened to the Jews and our perspective, it happened to the blacks, it happened to every people. Everybody went through some type of struggle, slavery, or holocaust."

Remedy is now hard at work cultivating artists for his own label, Fifth Angel. His newest track, a work in progress, is entitled "Exodus" and begins with music from the soundtrack of the epic film of the same name commemorating the birth of the State of Israel. This spring, he is planning a trip to Israel in conjunction with the film's re-release.

While "Exodus" continues with Jewish themes, Remedy is not trying to recreate "Never Again." What he does hope to continue doing, however, is to keep creating music that is meaningful to him and his listeners: "I made a song that made people cry. That's better than making them jump in the stands and go nuts for you, if you can touch somebody's heart and make them cry."

*Ari Levine is a senior at the City University of New York's College of Staten Island.*



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## Rapper Remedy offers lessons in Jewish history, Holocaust

Island native has taken his message to audiences around the world

Staten Island Advance - Friday, September 23, 2005



“This is my hometown,” the rapper Remedy wondered yesterday during performance for College of Staten Island students. The Dongan Hills native who still makes his home here – in Eltingville – gave an energetic performance that even helped inform some of those who did take advantage of the free afternoon of entertainment.

Remedy, born Ross Filler, is making a name for himself around the globe with his unique Jewish rap. His “Never Again,” tells in graphic lyrics – although not expletive-laden – the story of the Holocaust. His “The Story of the Jews” covers the whole of Jewish history in about four minutes. For Dayna Block of New Springville, who sat in the front row for the show in the Center for the Arts’ Concert Hall, the show was fun and educational.

“I learned a lot of stuff I never knew,” she said. Her brother, Scott Block, is a Remedy fan and she was curious to see what he was all about.

The 32-year-old Remedy is a graduate of New Dorp High School, where he was friends with the rappers who would become the core of the super-group Wu Tang Clan. Although often described as a member of Wu Tang – and the Jewish Week dubbed him “the Wu Jew” – Remedy said he’s more of “an affiliate, like a family member.”

He recorded two CDs with Wu Tang and has two CDs of his own. A third, “Remedy Presents New York to Israel,” which he recorded in Israel with other Jewish rappers, should be released after the High Holidays.

“Hip-hop is basically taking over Israel right now,” he said. Remedy said his parents, Martin Filler, an attorney, and Ellen Kaufman, retired after a varied career, were originally aghast when he announced his intentions to become a rapper. But once record companies started showing interest, he said, they breathe easier knowing that he shouldn’t starve.

Judging from his touring schedule, he’s sampling cuisine all over the world. He’s performed in Germany, where he took audiences to task for the Holocaust, and in France, Austria, the Netherlands and Russia. He spent all last summer living in Tel Aviv and now has embarked on a program to reach college students.

He’s also taking part in a benefit next week in Virginia to raise money for hurricane relief efforts. “I don’t have a second job, you know,” he told the students. “This is basically what I do.”

Remedy shared the microphone yesterday with another Island rapper, JJ Pellegrino of Great Kills. “I’m trying to get the whole Italian thing out to hip-hop,” said the tattooed rapper who attended CSI “for one day” before immersing himself in rap. “I recommend you guys stay here and don’t get involved in rap music,” he said with a laugh.

But he might not get his wish, as three men from the audience took a stab at rapping. Jason Cohen of Rossville delivered a spirited rap that seemed to be all about him. Of Remedy’s performance he said, “It filled me in more about some things.

Remedy finished the hometown performance by giving away his CDs and having his picture taken with fans. “No matter where you go,” he said, “you know there’s no place like home.” And while the rapper with the Hebrew name of Reuven ben Menacham said he’s not particularly observant, he’s looking forward to spending Rosh Hashana with cousins on Long Island.

Remedy said he has no problem performing for non-Jewish audiences and welcomes the opportunity to educate them.

“My whole life is not based around talking to Jewish people,” he said. “Any human is going to listen to good music, and maybe they’ll hear something about Jews and Judaism they didn’t know before.

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## The Wu Jew

With an ever-more Jewish rap, S.I. hip-hopper Remedy is blazing a new path.

The Jewish Week  
SERVING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GREATER NEW YORK

Liel Leibovitz - Staff Writer

A new rap song making the rounds in New York's underground hip-hop scene begins in an uncommon way. Instead of booms and beeps, a piano appears, nimble and misleading. Then the beat joins in, and the piece is transformed into something new altogether, achieving musical mass with every note.

It's a song in the tradition of classic New York hip-hop, the kind made famous by the Wu Tang Clan a decade ago, white-knuckled, bare and very clever in the materials it chooses to sample. When the rapper begins to rhyme, however, that's when listeners prick up their ears.

"Now let's take a trip through history," he spits breathlessly, furiously, "around the time 3000 BCE / they asked me to teach and to bring you the news / going way way back to the story of the Jews." What follows is a torrent of text describing, in perfect syncopation and stark images, the history of the Jewish people from the biblical days to the present. The endeavor lasts less than four minutes.

"I love my land," the rapper repeats again and again, the land being Israel. "That's where I want to be." The man doing the rapping is Remedy, America's leading Jewish rapper. The song is "I Love My Land," on his soon-to-be-released third solo album on his Code Red label.

At 32, Remedy has recorded with the Wu Tang Clan, the Staten Island rap supergroup of which he is a member. He has managed to use his music to explore serious issues that are important to him, from the Holocaust to the Middle East peace process. He has built up a following and toured Israel and England.

With a career increasingly focused on playing for Jewish audiences, combining his performances with lectures on Mideast politics, Israel and Jewish culture, Remedy is emerging as an influential voice in the Jewish community. But unlike establishment Jewish leaders, this one wears a goatee, baggy pants and grabs his crotch.

Most important, however, he has made his mother proud. And that, he said, was far from a foregone conclusion. For years she watched with dismay as her son, nee Ross Filler, ran with the wrong crowd during high school on Staten Island, skipped school, sold drugs. He had little interest in following his siblings' footsteps to an Ivy League university, no passion for the white-collar lifestyle of his parents. What he loved was music.

Remedy began, like so many white teenagers in the 1980s, by listening to loud metal music, sliding the scale from Kiss to Iron Maiden to Ozzy Osbourne. But the boys he was befriending were listening to different music — Run DMC and LL Cool J and Afrika Bambaataa. Remedy was converted to hip-hop.

"Hip-hop is real music," he said this week by phone from London, where he was performing. "It represents reality. It's not pop; it's what's going on in the world. It's the struggles of the past and of today that our souls embrace."

The music soon became an obsession. "I would go around writing rhymes," Remedy said. "That's all I could think about. I wanted to become a rapper." The first thing he needed, he knew, was a persona, complete with a made-up name. Out came Reuven ben Menachem, his Hebrew name, and a few abbreviations later, Remedy was born. He began recording demos at North Shore Soundworks, the home of such rap luminaries as EPMD, Das EFX and Redman, in Commack, L.I.

Still, at least two things stood between Remedy and rap stardom: He was white and he was Jewish. "My representative went to a meeting with a record company, trying to sign me up," Remedy recalled. "He played them some of my tracks; they went wild. They loved it. They wanted to know who I was, so my rep says I was white. I didn't get the deal."

As was the strategy of that other white rapper, Eminem, Remedy chose not to run away from his ethnicity but instead magnify it. He started reading about his Jewish heritage, becoming particularly fascinated with the Holocaust.

"I read and I read," Remedy said. "I watched every movie I could find about it. I couldn't believe this actually went on and that it

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happened only a little more than 50 years ago. I couldn't understand why it happened." To further explore the topic, Remedy wrote "Never Again," his greatest hit to date. The song begins with sounds of Jewish men praying, sampling the main theme from "Schindler's List." Remedy's rap is fast and angry, the rhymes like barbs:

"Never again shall we march like sheep to the slaughter  
Never again shall we sit and take orders  
Stripped of our culture, Robbed of our name  
Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames."

"I cried with every line I wrote," he said. The song was Remedy's ticket into the ranks of serious rappers. It earned him an invitation to Universal Studios, where he performed two years ago in a Chanukah celebration alongside life-size puppets of the popular cartoon characters from "Rugrats."

More than anything, however, it was location that augmented his vocation. Remedy lived on Staten Island and went to school with Clifford Smith, Robert Diggs and Gary Grice — better known as Method Man, RZA and GZA, the creative forces behind the Wu Tang Clan.

He sent RZA, the producer and unofficial leader of the group, a tape of "Never Again." RZA was struck by the lyrics and by Remedy's sampling style, similar to his own sensibilities. Remedy was invited to join the Wu, and "Never Again" was included in the group's 1998 album "The Swarm," which, according to most available figures, sold more than a million copies. For members of the Wu, Remedy's Jewish identity was far from a hindrance. "Hip-hop is the voice of the oppressed," said Cappadonna, a member of the group. "The Jews suffered, they've been through it like the blacks."

With the Wu seal of approval, Remedy's career was ready to take off. He released two solo albums, the last of which was produced by RZA. As Remedy developed, so did his rapping style. He became more cerebral, more daring. He wrote a song exploring the intricacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and he confronted the crowd during a Wu concert in Germany.

"What year is this?" Remedy shouted on stage in a Munich nightclub. The crowd replied it was 2002. "Right," yelled Remedy, drenched in sweat. "And do you know what happened here in 1940?!" Silence. "I'm here for revenge, mother-----!!!" An awkward moment, then recognition.

"Never again!" the crowd chanted, thrilled at the thought of the hit Remedy was about to play. "Never again!" "I put this track on every album I make," he said recently. "Just so no one could say they can't find it."

For Remedy, this is what being a Jewish rapper is about. "If you're not expressing yourself and your Judaism and your love for your people through your music," he said, "then you're really not representing who you are."

Which is why, he added, there are no other Jewish rappers out there, discounting groups like the popular Beastie Boys and indie-rap darlings Non Phixion for either ignoring or lampooning their Jewish identity.

"I know a lot of so-called Jewish rappers that don't even mention their Judaism in their rap," Remedy said. "To me they're not Jewish rappers. I also don't support Jewish rap that mocks Judaism and being Jewish. It's nothing to joke about or laugh at. I don't support mocking our own people. I love my people."

That love took him to Israel, where he spent last summer collaborating with some of the country's fledgling rap stars. "I felt at home there," he said, "like everybody was real Jewish, like they were all real Jews, proud of who they were and not ashamed."

Coming back to the States, Remedy restructured his career. He said he's now more interested in playing for Jewish audiences on college campuses and organizations than he was in random gigs in clubs and bars, having performed for such groups as the Zionist Organization of America and Hillel. He and Lukas Brenowitz, his manager and friend, perform as a team, with Remedy rapping and Brenowitz, a former press officer at the Israeli Consulate in New York, talking about politics, society and culture. This, Remedy said, is what he truly enjoys doing.

"The connection with the crowd, with Jewish crowds, is just different," he said. Remedy also made an unusual choice concerning his next album, scheduled for release next month, releasing it in Israel instead of the United States. "The album will still be available here," he said. "People will still be able to buy it off the Internet. But I wanted it to be an Israeli hip-hop album to show that there's such a thing as Jewish hip-hop that's loud and proud."

## SCN finds 'Remedy' in Jewish rap artist

[November 16, 2001](#)

By [A.J. Magnuson](#)

The Holocaust was never something to rap about, Hebrew prayers never had a beat behind them and Jewish issues were never introduced to the hip-hop world until Reuven Ben-Menachem picked up a microphone.

Remedy, a Jewish rap artist introduced by the Wu-Tang family, will perform cuts from his new solo album, "Genuine Article," to the Stanford campus tomorrow at 8 p.m. in Kresge Auditorium. The event, hosted by the Stanford Concert Network and the Stanford Israel Alliance, will address issues of hate.

The rapper's trip to the West Coast comes at the invitation of Bay Area Jewish student groups responding to recent acts of anti-Semitism at San Francisco State University.

Remedy's fame in the rap world has come mainly under the guidance of the Wu-Tang Clan, who have let him rip it up on albums and underground tracks. But he secured his place in the hip-hop world by engaging the Jewish community with biting rhymes and angry beats.

His underlying themes in songs such as the lamenting "Never Again" — "Another life lost / count the cost / Another body gassed, burned and tossed / in the Holocaust," are intended to combat all hate. "I don't wanna be known for just being down for the Jews, I'm here to represent humanity," the rapper has said.

"It's awesome that he's educating through entertainment," said senior Rachael Neumann, the concert network's public relations official. "It's an anti-hate show, but it will be an amazing hip-hop performance."

Hip-hop fans will have more to look forward to tomorrow. Adding to the appeal of the show will be 4th Avenue Jones, a 10-piece hip-hop band from Los Angeles. The live band group has been signed by Interscope Records and will take the stage before Remedy. "Remedy is stoked to perform on the day of Big Game," said concert network director Jenny Quiroz, a senior. "We hope it will be sold out."

Seth Stephens, a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi, a Jewish fraternity supporting the party, said he anticipates a successful show. "What's a better way to bring the Stanford community together than a great show for a good cause in celebration of another Big Game victory?" he said.

Students can attend the show for \$5 with SUID.

# Hillel Sponsors Rap Concert

Oct 9, 2005 3:01 pm | by Kimberly Wedderburn

Remedy, the Jewish Wu Tang Clan affiliate, performed at Carnegie Mellon on Saturday, October 4 in Rangos. His concert was co-sponsored by Hillel JUC, AEPi, AEPi, Tartans for Israel, Panthers for Israel, SPIRIT, SALSA, Hasbara Fellowships, ZOA, and Chabad House on Campus.

Remedy, the Staten Island native, brought fellow New York rappers Lounging Lo, Killah Priest, and JoJo Pelegrino (JJP), as well as their DJ, Finan, and his overseas manager Lucas Brenowitz. The six-person collection has strong bonds with each other that they express through both laughter and support for each other's work. As a white Jewish man in the rap world, Remedy is a minority and is often judged by his religion and race before he is judged by his skills as a rapper and producer. However, he said that this does not bother him.

"I don't get mad at people just seeing me as 'the Jewish guy.' If that's how they want to perceive me, they can do that. And I mean, you can tell that I'm Jewish because if I go from the side and see my nose," joked Remedy. "No, I'm just kidding. When I was at the Puerto Rican Day Parade, people thought I was Puerto Rican, so you never know. My faith is very important to me, so that's why I rap about it. But I rap about other things too, like being a white boy from Staten Island."

The pro-Israel, socially-conscious rapper does not consider himself to be the most devout Jew. "I'm not completely kosher," he confessed. "I mean, I don't eat pork but I *will* eat a cheeseburger." Nonetheless, Hillel organizations decided to bring Remedy to campus because of his pro-Israel lyrics.

"We were trying to figure out a way to bring someone pro-Israel," said Deirdre Downhoff, a University of Pittsburgh sophomore. "We decided that Remedy was the best way to reach a lot of people and unify all of the organizations." The group of rappers has performed around the world and is particularly influenced by their trips to Israel. "Going to Israel, going to historical sites. We performed to all-Jewish audiences," said Killah Priest. "It was sick." When Killah Priest was asked if his faith was as important as Remedy's, Remedy interrupted and asked, "Have you ever heard any of his lyrics? Man, this guy is deep."

The performance itself attracted a modest crowd, which made for an intimate interaction with the performers. The majority of the crowd was not familiar with Remedy's music, but went to the show out of curiosity. "I've never heard of him, but I'm a fan of the Wu Tang," said CIT first-year Paul Jones. "I'd assume a Jewish rapper is not very good, but at least up to par. I knew CMU wouldn't get Method Man or someone like that."

Killah Priest and Remedy addressed more serious topics. Their performance was more low-key with intense lyrics. Killah amazed the audience with his continuous a cappella verse that addressed the Catholic Church pedophilia scandal and other religious topics without taking a breath. His quiet and laid-back demeanor comes through his performances, which compliments the many levels of his lyrics. The audience was not distracted by stage antics and could really listen to his lyrics and appreciate the message he got across.

When Remedy began his set, he repeated that he "represents the real hip hop," and he did just that during his performance. Remedy performed a few songs, including "The Book of Life" and "Never Again." The chorus of "The Book of Life" reminded listeners to "Stop, look, listen, read. Think, feel, move, breathe." "Never Again," his most famous song and what he considers his best work so far, is an account of the Holocaust.

"It took me like three weeks to actually write that song," said Remedy. "I did extensive research. I read books, talked to actual survivors. That's how I found out my great uncle got shot in the back, I found out who made it and who didn't in my own family. It's amazing that it happened only 60 years ago. Not just for Jews, but for all of humanity. I've seen grown men cry because of that song, it's powerful." Remedy was very interactive and alternated between the front of the stage, standing on the speakers, and running through the crowd. He repeated the phrase "My name is Remedy, I represent humanity and my nationality is reality."

After his performance of "Never Again," the concert took on a lighter turn. Remedy gave out free CDs, brought female audience members on stage to dance, and let the audience perform. Ohav Shomrony-Cohen, a sophomore from Capa High School, had the opportunity to perform in front of one of his favorite rappers. "I came for my love for hip-hop and Wu Tang," said Shomrony-Cohen. "Remedy is one of my greatest influences. He ain't trying to appeal to anyone. He has a message. Performing with him on stage, that was hot. I'm going to remember this forever."

Jewish Artist Regional Touring Service



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## Remedy comes to Rangos: Member of Wu-Tang discusses musical inspiration and experiences

“I represent real hip-hop” a short, bulky white man said, dressed in grey sweats and a Kangol cap. In a music industry where image is everything and labels all too often define popular artists, Remedy, a white Jewish rapper from Staten Island, New York ‘ stormed Rangos Ballroom Saturday night with hopes of breaking down stereotypes that plague not only the music business, but many aspects of modern society.

Before performing to a half-filled Rangos Ballroom Saturday night, Wu-Tang Clan affiliate Remedy and his troupe of rappers and producers stopped off at the Hillel Jewish University Center to speak with reporters from Carnegie Mellon University, University of Pittsburgh, and other organizations in the area.

Remedy, a proud supporter of Judaism, often travels to Jewish day camps, Hebrew schools, and college campuses to promote his message of peace across all religions, nationalities, and races. In 2003, he had the opportunity to travel to Israel with fellow rapper Killah Priest, with whom Remedy shared the bill on Saturday night.

From the beginning, Saturday night’s concert was all about cross-cultural understanding and acceptance. Before a single note was played, Lucas Brenowitz ‘ Remedy’s manager ‘ spoke for 10 minutes about diversity in Israel. ‘The second language in Israel is actually Arabic, followed by Russian,’ Brenowitz said. ‘It’s a much more diverse place than people think.’ In fact, Israel was one of the first countries to have a female Prime Minister. Brenowitz emphasized the group’s desire to bring diversity and acceptance, prevalent in Israel’s culture, to America and the rest of the world.

Before Remedy took the stage, Lowngualo, JJ Pellegrino, and Killah Priest all performed several songs, each one with his own unique style. Lowngualo took the stage with an aggressive attack, jumping on stage monitors and running through the crowd while shouting, ‘Code Red, lock ‘n’ load!’ JJ Pellegrino, dressed in blue warm-ups and a wifebeater, was more elegant in his performance, frequently stopping mid-song, either to fix levels or get the audience involved. Killah Priest, dressed in black with a hood over his head, slowly strolled on stage with a mysterious air that added to the sentimentality of his lyrics.

‘My nationality is humanity, I represent reality,’ Remedy shouted as he stormed the stage. Unlike other famous Jewish musicians such as Matisyahu, Remedy’s outer appearance revealed little about his religious affiliation. Remedy sported a red Budweiser racing jacket and baggy blue jeans. Instead of using ‘diamond rings and material things,’ Remedy relied strictly on his lyrics to deliver his message of peace and unity. ‘Keep your ears and eyes open,’ Remedy warned before breaking into ‘Book of Life.’ Promoting outreach and understanding, all four rappers chanted, ‘Stop, look, listen, read, think, feel, move, breathe!’

Remedy then broke into his most famous number, ‘Never Again,’ which was written in response to the atrocities committed in the Holocaust. ‘To the men, women, and children who died and struggled to live, never to be forgotten... never again,’ he chanted as he sat on a stool, passionately pounding out lyrics about his rich heritage that was once ‘tortured, slaved, raped, robbed, and persecuted.’

The fact that Remedy cites the Beastie Boys and Run DMC at Madison Square Garden in New York as his favorite concert should not come as a surprise. The Beastie Boys is a group of three Caucasian Jews from Brooklyn, while Run DMC was made up of three African-American men from Queens. The unity of the two bands in the same concert was a groundbreaking statement of acceptance.

In his interview at the Hillel JUC, Remedy put a strong emphasis on staying away from major record labels. Being on a big label is ‘all about the almighty dollar,’ Remedy said. ‘Things with true meaning are now meaningless.... It’s like selling your soul.’ Remedy’s views on the record industry go hand in hand with his positive message of being true to yourself and those around you: ‘Hip-hop is about who and what you are. I put who and what I am into my music.’

Saturday night’s concert ended with students and members of the community gathering up on stage to sing, dance, rap, and even eat brownies that were made for Killah Priest’s birthday. If the positive vibes and great music didn’t make the concert a fabulous experience, the brownies certainly did.



## Remedy Interview

Remedy first made his presence felt in the Hip-Hop world in 1998 with "Never Again," a graphic song about the holocaust that was featured on the Wu-Tang Killa Bees The Swarm Volume One album. "I'm known to make people cry," he notes, realizing the power of his song every time another person hear it.

"Just from the testimony I've gotten from the people who've heard it and not just from Jews, from black kids who say it's their favorite song on the album. Some kid from LA called me the other day and told me he felt chills the first time he heard "Never Again."

The song launched Remedy into the public eye as the Jewish member of Wu-Tang. The irony of it all is that he didn't even expect the song to make the album. "I just made the song because I was researching things," he explains "learning about my own identity and my roots. I didn't even know RZA was going to put it on the album. I didn't know every day of the rest of my life was going to be based on "Never Again," but if I die tomorrow I'm good with that."

While "Never Again" was a huge hit it was released seven years ago, and recently Remedy's been fielding some other questions about his career. "I see people and they say 'Rem you still rappin' and I say c'mon what else would I be doin? I know how to do other shit?" Not only has the New York native been releasing albums independently, he's ready to release a mixtape for the streets, a mixtape he says may shock some listeners. "You won't hear one word about being Jewish," Remedy says of the project, "some people can't get ahold of that like 'this is the guy that represents us?' But there are different sides to me." For those looking for a Remedy album with a more Jewish influence they need not worry, he's also just completed a new song called "I Love My Land" which gives listeners "5,000 years of Jewish history in one song, four minutes," and is putting the finishing touches on an album recorded completely in Israel with a roster made up entirely of Israeli artists.

According to Remedy the process of creating his Israeli album was "one of the sickest things I've ever done. I went to Israel and lived there for three months last summer." While some may be hesitant to make such a trip Remedy notes "if you've never went to Israel and watched CNN you'd never go, but then you got to Israel and it's nothing like that." He continued, adding "it's like a whole 'nother world out there, people aren't so superficial and fake. The land itself is amazing and I went and recorded an album with all Israeli artists, I'm tryin to finish it now and get it out. Everybody should go, the feeling you get when you're in Israel is like nowhere else in the world. They respect me, they got a lot of love for me. They heard "Never Again" in Israel five, six years ago and they know I represent New York and real Hip-Hop so they respect the angle I'm coming from."

In America, however, Remedy feels people's perceptions of Hip-Hop and what it should be have been twisted and altered into something negative rather than positive. "Corporate America took Hip-Hop and ran with it," he explains "you got a bunch of suits running Hip-Hop now. I like the late 80's and the early 90's where they hadn't engulfed it really." Of course he does see some of the good things that have come from some of the corporate money, saying "without the major backing Hip-Hop wouldn't be on your TV, you wouldn't be hearing jingles on McDonald's commercials and in essence that's great for Hip-Hop, but maybe if they were doing the same thing for real artists and artists who said something I would have respect for it." Right now he feels most of the money being infused into Hip-Hop is acting as a cancer rather than as a growth hormone. "They're killing America with Hip-Hop, they have kids talking about the whisper song. They're misleading future generations with Hip-Hop. They're making it cool to be a loser." He continued, adding "there's so much garbage out there, the top artists of today are saying nothing in their songs. I'm embarrassed for the state of Hip-Hop right now." Remedy holds out some hope for the culture, however, noting "they say life's a cycle so maybe the real individuals will come back."

Real individuals are hard to come by, and not just in Hip-Hop, in life in general. After doing some rough math in his head Remedy feels that "you got 85% of America that just goes for whatever, they work nine to five, pay their bills and keep the machine turning. Then you have 10% of America that knows the truth but they try to exploit it. Then you have the 5% that knows the truth tries to teach it." Remedy feels he fits into that final five percent saying "I came with the Code Red album and tried to save the world but it didn't work, nobody cares."

Some of those who fall into the category of those who don't care might come as a shock to some. "The Jewish label owners don't really look out for other Jews," he explains, "I thought Steve Rifkind, Lyor Cohen would look out for me, instead they turned their back on me." While there are quite a few Jewish people in power in the Hip-Hop world, Remedy feels separate from a lot of them saying "I'm a little different, I acknowledge my Judaism. Hip-Hop is supposed to be the realest form of expression, to me I'm Jewish, I am what I am, for me not to express that would be to making things up. Your lyrics and yourself as an artist is what you are and how you got to where you at. That all stems from history, if you don't know your past how you gonna know your future."

Jewish Artist Regional Touring Service



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## Wu Tang member offers 'Remedy'



Hillel has probably covered most of the traditional means of promoting Judaism on campus. And while it probably would not associate the Wu Tang Clan with its everyday mission, Wednesday that is exactly what Hillel did.

The religious organization brought Remedy, a Jewish rapper affiliated with the Wu Tang Clan, to perform in the Scrounge, blending Judaism with Hip-hop. "This is part of a program I do, called Remedy-Israel," Remedy said after the show. "We promote Israel and Judaism through Hip-hop and music. I've been going to colleges all over the country."

Remedy rapped about Judaism as well as humanity in general. He performed his Holocaust-themed song, "Never Again," which was released on Wu Tang's 1998 best-selling album "The Swarm." "Never Again" portrays Remedy's message with chilling lyrics about a horrific time period in Jewish history.

"Stripped of our culture / Robbed of our name (never again) / Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames (never again) / Forced from our families, taken from our homes (never again) / Moved from our God and burned of our bones."

When Remedy was in his '20s, he searched for his Jewish identity and reached out to his grandmother for assistance, he said. She explained what life was like during the Holocaust and she inspired him to do the research and figure out how something so catastrophic could happen only 65 years ago.

"When I wrote it ["Never Again"], I didn't know Wu-Tang was gonna use it," the 33-year-old Remedy said. "I wrote it for me and my people. People tell me it's a great song all the time and I say 'listen, it's only the truth.'"

Remedy also rapped about life in the 21st century, the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and gave a comprehensive review of the history of the Jews. "It's the 21st century, the world is changing fast," Remedy rapped, instead of speaking, in his interview. "We are in a constant state of alert so keep your ears and eyes open. We live in a society where we are judged by our material wealth. The TV ruins our youth, our educational systems fail and disease cannot be stopped. Enemies are friends and friends become enemies and I am the Remedy."

Senior Amanda Kaletsky, programming chairwoman for Hillel, opened for Remedy with four of her own songs. She said Hillel tries to do one large event each semester that will attract both Jews and non-Jews. When they found out about Remedy and how he advocates trips to Israel, they knew it would be a good fit.

"There were clearly kids here that are not our normal crowd and they had a great time," Kaletsky said. "They were really diggin' it and I think that was really cool that they can respond to both the secular stuff and the stuff he had to say about Israel. That means a lot to us to have that broad audience."

Remedy went to high school in Staten Island with several members of the Wu Tang Clan. He said there are only nine official members in the clan and he is more of an affiliate, or a family member of the group.

"I don't just represent Judaism or Hip-hop," Remedy said. "I consider myself a worldly man who expresses his opinions on a whole bunch of different issues."



## Remedy Ross by: Caroline Westbrook

Over the past few years, Remedy (aka Remedy Ross) has established himself as one of the most talented, credible Jewish rappers around. Born Ross Filer in Staten Island, New York, Remedy is best-known for collaborating with the rap group Wu-Tang Clan, who featured his Holocaust-themed track Never Again on their best-selling 1998 album *The Swarm*. The track has also featured on Remedy's two albums *The Genuine Article* and *Code Red*. SJ's Caroline Westbrook talked to Remedy about his music and career to date, his plans to come to the UK, and why he believes that "there are no other Jewish rappers"

### **Tell us about where and when you first got into rapping.**

I used to talk to the plants when I was a young boy and the plants would grow real fast, so I realised it must be something I'm saying. And then I couldn't really sing too well, but I had a good way of formulating my words together, so I just became an MC and started rapping. I grew up at an interracial high school, we played football and rap music was the main thing "rap music and football, so I just became involved with that. I was into all types of music really, rap wasn't always my thing, but it just developed into that.

### **How did your collaboration with rap group Wu-Tang Clan come about?**

We grew up in the same place, Staten Island, I went to high school with a couple of guys from the Wu-Tang, we've known each other for years. They say real recognises real, and we all kind of represent something, we don't rap about nothing, we have issues we like to talk about and bring to the attention of the world. We call it reality rap, we don't just rap about anything, we rap about reality, and what's really going on. Unfortunately hip-hop music has been kind of taken over nowadays by commercial rap and the big dollar rules everything, so that real rap is much harder to find and accept. With Wu-Tang, that's what it's all about, we try to represent the truth, and try to promote the truth and let people come to it, and not let it stand for nothing. If it stands for nothing you're already dead.

### **You've done a track with Wu-Tang, haven't you?**

Never Again, which was on a Wu-Tang album which sold about a million copies in 1998 I believe. Never Again is my theme song, I put that on every album I do, just so no-one can say "I can never find that song", I put it on every album I do so that it's spread out and you have to be able to find that song.

### **What's your feeling about other Jewish rappers who seem to rap for a gimmick?**

There are no other Jewish rappers. People tell me that all the time "oh, I understand there's a bunch of Jewish rappers". To me, rap is the most real form of expression and form of art when it comes to music, so if you're not expressing yourself and your Judaism and your people's struggles through your music then really you're not representing who you are. So to me you can't be a Jewish rapper unless you're speaking of the trials and tribulations that you and your people have gone through. I know a lot of so-called Jewish rappers that don't even mention their Judaism in their rap. To me they're not Jewish rappers, they're whatever. I don't support Jewish rap that mocks Judaism and being Jewish, because it's nothing to joke about and it's nothing to laugh about, it's reality, this is what we are, this is a people man. To mock our own people I can't support any of those rap! pers. You can't mock Judaism and being Jewish.

### **The difference between you and what some other Jewish rappers do is that you're much more real about it!**

Yeah, because it's a real thing. Reality is real, the world is real, you can't just mock Judaism and being Jewish. I've made songs that make grown men cry, I've made Rabbis cry with Never Again. I just do what's real and what's real to me, and what I feel the world needs to know, and what humanity in general needs to know as a whole.

### **So how hard is it for you as a Jewish rapper to get respect from the Jewish community? Do they expect you to be a gimmick act?**

No, actually, Jews throughout the world have reached out to me ever since they heard Never Again, and I've done concerts in Moscow, Russia, 10-12 cities in Germany from Munich to Berlin and Stuttgart, I've done Amsterdam, Paris, just based on Never Again and Jews around the world. Like I said, there's no mockery about it. When you deal with the Remedy, you're dealing with a Jewish man who identifies himself as that, and that's what you're getting from me. I try to educate the kids, or whoever I'm trying to reach, in Judaism and I try to promote Israel as well.

### **What sort of support have you had from your family with the music?**

Funny you should say that! When I started they weren't too supportive, they thought "oh everyone's trying to be a rapper, you'll never make it, this and that", and then they saw these record companies offering me a few hundred thousand dollars trying to sign me, and my dad sat back and said, "Wow Ross, you must be a commodity, you're a real act", and then they started getting back on my team, and we've been making moves together ever since.

*Jewish Artist Regional Touring Service*



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The record industry isn't something to play with either, it's based on people who don't know anything or have anything, and then the deals they give out really aren't deals. I know artists who have gold and platinum records who have no money. I couldn't sign to one of those major labels, I had to do it independently because they want to own everything. I make songs like Never Again for me and my people and then they want to own it, it's not fair.

**Which of your Jewish peers would you like to collaborate with?**

I've already recorded a bunch of songs with Subliminal, who is the biggest rapper in Israel, I've recorded about seven songs with him. I'm trying to do a song with this Israeli girl called Sarit Hadad, who's very respected in Israel, great singer as well. Most of the Jews I'm looking at collaborating with are actually residing in Israel. I'm actually working on a Jewish theme album right now, an album based on Jewish themes.

**Can you tell us what to expect from that?**

Sure, I'll have a remix of Never Again on there, I just did a song about the guy who assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, and all types of Jewish themes, everything's about a concept, Judaism and Israel, and it's going to be a pro-album, very positive.

**Do you have plans to be in the UK at all?**

I'm planning to come to the UK in September, to play about 30 shows. I'm ready to go abroad around September and show the world what I'm doing.

**And finally, tell us about Never Again.**

Growing up in America, when I was going to high school, everybody knew about the Holocaust but you didn't really have Jewish education. So when I was searching for my identity, searching for my roots in my mid-twenties, I reached out to my grandmother - she was 95, she just passed a few years ago and she explained to me who made it over and who didn't make it over, and that my great uncle was shot and killed and his family was taken to the camps, and I just did as much research as possible to find out what exactly was going on. If you look at history this only happened about 60 years ago and we've been tracking history for thousands of years. So to me it was amazing that mankind would let something like this happen -how could they let this happen? So I did research, and I sat and cried several times when I wrote it, and I took my time to make it right, but I didn't know that Wu-Tang were going to use it, I wrote it for me and my people. People tell me it's a great song all the time and I say "listen, it's only the truth".

## **Wu-Tang Clan.**

Though he won his fame rapping with the likes of RZA, Method Man, Raekwon the Chef, Ghostface Killah, and Ol' Dirty Bastard, Ross Filler is keeping different company this week. Filler – far better known as Remedy, sole Jewish member of top American rap group The Wu-Tang Clan – is in Israel this week as a member of a birthright israel follow-up mission, Oranim Ambassadors, to learn more about Israel advocacy. It's not his first trip to Israel, but it's a far different from his visit last summer, in which Remedy and fellow Wu-Tang clansman Killah Priest (a.k.a. Walter Reed) did a concert tour here playing sold-out shows at clubs in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

"Since last year's trip, I've been gathering my thoughts and I decided to really get committed to Judaism and to Israel," says the 32-year-old MC, who was joined at the Neveh Ilan Resort Hotel just outside of Jerusalem on Wednesday by the 30-member group of 18-to-27-year-old Jews from the US and Canada.

Remedy, like most of the African-American members of the Wu-Tang Clan, grew up in Staten Island, New York. He says he was raised in a traditional Jewish home until his parents divorced when he was eight. "Once my parents got divorced, I had a bar mitzva, but did I really know [what that meant]? I always knew Israel was here, but did I really know?"

Already writing songs and poems as a child, Remedy started taken his rhyming skills to the stage at local shows while attending New Dorp High School with other future Wu-Tang members. In 1992 he met Wu-Tang leader RZA (Robert Diggs) at a local recording studio. Impressed with Remedy's lyrical and production abilities, RZA took him on as a collaborator just as the Wu-Tang Clan emerged as one of the most popular and revolutionary rap groups of the 1990s.

It wasn't just their music – which exposed the violent crime, drugs, and poverty of Staten Island's rougher neighborhoods. Wu-Tang also blazed new commercial concepts for rappers by spinning off money-making sidelines, such as a clothing line, Wu-Wear, and a series of collaborative albums with outside rap artists.

Remedy was also making a name for himself with a trademark song about the Holocaust, "Never Again," featured on Wu-Tang's 1998 Gold album, Wu-Tang Killer Bee, The Swarm.

"When I released 'Never Again' six years ago, I didn't really know what Zionism was about," he says. "I knew some customs and traditions of Judaism, but I didn't really follow it and wasn't involved with it. But, since I came to Israel I have been trying to study and learn as much as I can. It's one of my continuing missions to learn more and more about Judaism, and I would definitely say that I have become an even bigger Zionist."

Momo Lifshitz, CEO of Oranim, took notice of Remedy during the concert tour last summer and invited him to participate in the Ambassadors trip; he jumped at the opportunity to return. The Ambassadors program is for Oranim birthright israel alumni who become active in Jewish issues, and convince five-to-10 peers to sign up for birthright israel trips through the Oranim tour provider.