

My Story: G.I.P.

Stephen Norman Gipson (artistically known as G.I.P.) was born on March 14, 1966, in Harlem, New York. He was raised by his single mother, Gloria J. Gipson, and his grandmother.

In his teens, G.I.P.'s family moved to Washington, D.C., where he graduated from high school in 1984. Two years later, he joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany.

During his service, G.I.P. embraced the German culture. Learning the language took time, but with the help of the great German friends he made, he eventually became fluent. These people became an essential part of his life and support system later on.

On November 18, 1988, G.I.P. was involved in a traumatizing accident that would forever change his life. While stationed in Bamberg, Germany, he was riding his motorcycle on the way to see Anja, his girlfriend at the time. As he got onto the Autobahn Highway, he slid on a sheet of black ice at high speed. The front tire of his motorcycle hit the guard rail head-on, launching him into the air. The last thing he remembers was coming down on his head and arm.

After being rushed to the hospital, G.I.P. was declared brain dead for eight days. Doctors told his mother and family that he would remain in a vegetative state on life support for the rest of his life. His mother and grandmother, being God-fearing women, called on their church to pray. On the ninth day after his accident, a true miracle happened, perplexing the doctors—he woke up, and all life support systems were removed.

G.I.P.'s path to recovery was long and challenging, drawing strength from the support of his family and his faith. No longer able to serve his country after the accident, he was honorably discharged from the military at age 23 and moved back to the U.S. to continue his recovery. During this time, he attended many therapy sessions and received the medical care he needed.

In May 1989, his beloved girlfriend Anja became his wife. Four years later, the pair returned to Germany, where they would spend the next seven years. During that time, G.I.P. formed the rock band Strangescape, in which he was the lead vocalist, songwriter, and guitarist. He stayed busy by working many private events, Irish pubs, and clubs.

The accident took its toll on G.I.P.'s life. In addition to facing challenges in his marriage, he struggled with impairments in his day-to-day functions. He was slow to move and respond and had some cognitive challenges in reading and writing.

Nevertheless, G.I.P. pursued joy relentlessly. One of the happiest days of his life was in 2000 when his son, Samuel Norman Gipson, was born. The following years continued to be uplifting and offered many blessings. For one, he began to dream again after years of never having dreams or goals in life.

In 2007, G.I.P. and Anja divorced. Despite their separation, they remained best friends and dedicated themselves to raising their son together.

Early Years

After living in Harlem for a few years, G.I.P.'s family moved to Teaneck, New Jersey. This is where he made his favorite childhood memories, having been raised in a Christian home with good family values.

Even though G.I.P. was raised in a loving home, he experienced his share of heartbreak growing up. The emptiness in his soul later served as inspiration to be the best father he could be to his son.

He did not have a father figure to look up to and was distant from his grandmother on his father's side. He figured she did not want a relationship with him because she was white. To this day, he hopes to reconnect with her.

G.I.P. has only seen his biological father three times in his life, but his influence has always been present. The last time the two spoke on the phone, his father played the guitar for him. G.I.P. then realized that this is where his love for music came from, even though this side of him was never nurtured.

While G.I.P.'s musical gifts have always been a part of him, he got started during his high school years. His friend, Cole Quinn, taught him to play the guitar, and in return, G.I.P. taught him how to play basketball.

After the accident, G.I.P.'s love for music was reborn. It was as if something woke up in him that he didn't know he had, and he started writing songs. When his wife Anja told him he was a songwriter, G.I.P. responded, "Me? A songwriter? Yeah, right!"

Nevertheless, he kept writing what came to his heart and mind, channeling many feelings and life experiences. He turned his pain into something positive and light, hoping to help others make sense of the heartbreaks and experiences we all go through in life.

G.I.P. has a devoted reverence for God, inspired by his upbringing, which influences his songs. All his songs have positive lyrics that any age and generation can enjoy. From giving G.I.P. the gift of his life back after the accident to being a part of his music, God has touched every part of G.I.P.'s life.

Going Forward and Creative Process

In 2019, G.I.P. decided it was time to bring his songs and music to life. He set out to record his first EP at the Hands In Motion Music Production Recording Studio in Brandon, Florida, with Grammy® and Latin Grammy Award® Winning Pianist, Producer, Arranger, and Composer Lannie Battistini.

His first EP, titled "Take Me," was released worldwide on March 27, 2020, just 12 days after the Covid shutdown. This album featured all his original songs. G.I.P. never imagined that his dream of becoming an independent recording artist would come true, even in the midst of one of the

worst times in world history, but it did. Between 2022 and 2023, G.I.P. went back into the studio and released four other original songs: "I've Learned My Lesson Well" (released 7/23/2022), "Tell Me What to Do" (released 8/20/22), "Wandered Away" (released 2/24/2023), and "I've Got This" (released 4/28/2023).

The unusual thing about his songwriting for this first album was that he was dreaming in German. Then one day, while bathing, a song came to him as he was crying out to God. He heard the words "TAKE ME," and he was instantly moved to write. The melodies were stuck in his head constantly. All his other original songs came pretty much the same way—they just popped into his head.

After the accident, G.I.P. reasoned that “Obviously, it was not my time to die, and my life as I knew it, although it would change forever, was not over yet.” His stage name (meaning “Get In Position”) reflects what he had to do after his accident to reinvent his life.

Currently, G.I.P. resides in the Tampa Bay area. His accident changed him, and he will forever stick to his philosophy: “I never really get mad, ‘cause life is too short, and I believe everyone has a plan for their lives and All Lives Matter!”