

How Danielle Bregoli (AKA the 'Cash Me Outside' Girl) Turned Viral Infamy Into a Million-Dollar Career

She went from minor Dr. Phil guest to highly successful rapper and influencer.

July 31, 2019 7 min read

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When Danielle Bregoli went on *Dr. Phil* in September of 2016, she was “car-stealing, knife-wielding, twerking 13-year-old,” and her mother simply couldn’t deal with her anymore. The episode was a moment of infamy, giving rise to the viral “Cash Me Ousside” meme. Afterward, Danielle left the show to go to rehab, with high hopes to turn it all around. But, like with any troubled teen, the odds were stacked heavily against her.

Just three years later, Danielle clearly has. At just 16 years of age, she has several hit songs under the pseudonym “Bhad Bhabie,” millions of dollars in endorsement deals, over 16 million followers on Instagram, and a career that’s still going up. Regardless of how you look at it, her story sounds like a pipedream; few would believe that her viral infamy would be anything more than that, much less yield a highly successful career as an artist and influencer.

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But her success was no fluke, and to get behind the scenes and learn about how Bhad Bhabie came to be, I had to chat with

Adam Kluger and Dan Roof, the music managers that signed her on day zero, when she had absolutely no music experience. They guided her through what seems like impossible growth looking back, and remarkably, their blueprint makes it sound easy.

Leverage virality

After Dr. Phil, Bhad Bhabie became an overnight sensation. At this point, a lot of people knew who she was, but there was a problem: she didn't have a good way to leverage her newfound audience. But just seven months after Dr. Phil aired, she had a hit song ("These Heaux") under her belt. At the time of this writing, it has over 80 million views on YouTube. This paved the way for Atlantic Records to sign her. To me, those were a well-calculated seven months.

Kluger sees it more simply: "The only calculated thing in those seven months was our strategy to keep her actively in headlines." He adds, "Most of that was her doing, whether good or bad. She's a wild one."

Bhad Bhabie's way of staying relevant would be difficult to replicate, but Kluger's core point is valid. The difference between a fad and a sustainable career lies in staying relevant. Though Bhad Bhabie needed time to develop into an artist, she needed to stay relevant for long enough to put out music. She couldn't let Dr. Phil be her legacy.

Be consistent

Staying relevant in the media bought Bhad Bhabie seven months to put out her first song, but having one popular song didn't prove that she could make it as an artist. She needed to be consistent to show that the viewership on her first song didn't just result from her viral infamy.

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So she put out more songs. After success with “These Heaux,” Bhad Bhabie released two remixes and two hit singles within a month. But even bigger picture, she “didn’t have any major gaps where something significant hasn’t been going on,” Kluger said. As Bhad Bhabie continued to make rounds in the media and put out popular music, she slowly but surely began to solidify her reputation as an artist. And she stayed relevant.

At this point, her career started to take shape, but I’d wager to say most people still saw her as the “Cash Me Outside” girl, not a serious artist. She needed to rebrand to get where she wanted to be.

Take an authentic approach to rebranding

Bhad Bhabie had a lot of work to do when it came to rebranding. Fortunately, her authenticity, a quality Kluger said stood out to him when he signed her, paid huge dividends here.

He told me: “What you’ve seen is just her own personal growth. She’s 16 years old. I signed her when she was 13. Anyone that has lived through those years knows a lot of maturing occurs, and a lot of mistakes take place during these ages.”

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Through her YouTube channel, Bhad Bhabie gave her audience an insight into who she was outside of being a rapper. Although reaction videos and “Musical.ly Roasts” didn’t directly impact Bhad Bhabie’s music career, they “showed her personality and sense of humor,” Roof told me. They showed that she had grown since she was on Dr. Phil and was actually pretty likable. But YouTube couldn’t be Bhad Bhabie’s only content distribution channel.

Build a robust audience on social media

And it wasn't; she hit the nail on the head when it came to Instagram and Twitter too. To date, she has amassed nearly 17 million followers on Instagram and over 500,000 followers on Twitter. When I asked Roof about Bhad Bhabie's incredible social media growth, he told me: "being so young and so unfiltered and so brash made her an excellent fit for social media."

For artists, their fans define their careers. And so, being able to engage frequently with large numbers of fans at a time over social media helps build traction in-between music drops and shows. Roof adds, "Gatekeepers can keep you out of certain things but having millions in your own audience makes a lot of that less impactful."

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With millions of followers across a variety of social channels, Bhad Bhabie had flexibility. Music videos helped promote her music on YouTube, while Twitter hyped up her music prior to releases. Instagram? Well, it allowed her to connect with her fans on a more personal level.

Monetize your following

What the influencer age has shown is that a huge following doesn't always yield the ability to monetize. But for Bhad Bhabie, her young audience is in high demand for brands. Positioning herself as a young and growing artist, she has been the ideal endorsement target for several large brands.

"She's probably the most famous 16 year old in the world and does massive numbers on socials. More importantly, people are

generally interested in everything she does, whether they like her or not,” Kluger told me. “For an edgy brand, she’s the golden goose.”

Just less than two months ago, Bhad Bhabie secured a whopping \$900,000 endorsement deal with CopyCat Makeup. On a smaller scale, she can make, on average, \$40,000 per post. Combined with several brand deals, they have been her leading revenue stream, ahead of both YouTube revenue and touring, Kluger tells me. For Bhad Bhabie, improving as an artist has come first. And as she continued to grow her following, being able to monetize has made all the difference.

Entrepreneurs can take a page out of Bhad Bhabie’s playbook too. From a branding perspective, being consistent and intentional are essential to sustainable growth. Moreover, the way she grew and monetized her following is similar to growing a user-base and monetizing it. Lastly, though it would be a stretch to say that an entrepreneur can come back from any bad PR, Bhad Bhabie demonstrates that there *is* a right way to handle it. Altogether, her story exemplifies the idea that with diligence and calculation, anything is possible.

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