



time, Gaga would often get into trouble at school for wearing inappropriately low-cut shirts, which reportedly earned her the high school nickname “Big Boobs McGee.”

After feeling uninspired by her rock-singer direction, Fusari said he decided to re-invent Gaga as a dance-pop artist and encouraged her to ditch her leggings and sweatshirt look in favor of something flashier. So Gaga began studying how to be a


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After graduation, she briefly attended New York University, but feeling she was more advanced than the other students, she dropped out during her second semester to pursue her dreams of rock stardom. Her dad agreed to pay her rent for a year if she promised to go back to school if things didn’t work out. “I left my entire family, got the cheapest apartment I could find, and ate sh-- until somebody would listen,” she told the magazine of her early days. An EP of ballads as the Stefani Germanotta Band soon followed, with a dedicated fanbase of 15-20 people showing up at her shows.

A week before her one-year deal with Dad was up, Gaga performed on a bill with Wendy Starland, who introduced Germanotta to producer Rob Fusari, an early collaborator who recently filed a \$30.5 million lawsuit against Gaga over claims he hasn’t been properly compensated for the work he did establishing the Gaga sound and persona.

star by reading a biography of Prince, shopping at American Apparel, reading the new age-y self-help bible “The Secret” and cutting her skirts shorter and shorter until they basically disappeared.

A short-lived, \$850,000 deal with the Island Def Jam label followed in 2006, after which she went back to square one and performing in small New York venues and go-go dancing at the club Planos while wearing a bikini and fingerless gloves and opening for the band that is now her opening act, Semi-Precious Weapons. By the spring of 2007 she auditioned for Interscope boss Jimmy Iovine, who signed her, and after a makeover that resulted in her signature blonde hair and space-age-disco-diva look, the Gaga we now in 2010 was born.

“I believe that everyone can do what I’m doing,” she said as things were starting to heat up. “Everyone can access the parts of themselves that are great. I’m just a girl from New York City who decided to do this, after all. Rule the world! What’s life worth living if you don’t rule it?” 

**You go, GaGa!**