

From rapper to reporter

Fat Joe is set to take the mike — as P.R. parade anchorman

By MERCEDES SANCHEZ

BRONX rapper Fat Joe will have *everybody* leaning back this year at the New York Puerto Rican Day Parade.

FOX5 and My9 officials will announce this week that the Boricua rhymer will co-host the parade special with anchors Ernie Anastos and Brenda Blackmon.

The Terror Squad leader is set to put on a reporter's hat for the day, interviewing celebrities and politicians, and providing commentary.

"It's so hard to translate the energy of being there live, but I'm going to try my best to have everyone who's at home watching feel like they are really a part of the event and show them what it's like to be a proud Puerto Rican," says the rapper born Jose Antonio Cartagena.

Joe, who says he has been to more than 20 parades, is

the first hip-hop artist to be given the opportunity to sit in as a reporter for a parade special. In fact, the telecast is a first for FOX5 and My9.

"Fat Joe will bring a really fresh perspective on pop culture today," says Ray Blanco, the parade special's executive producer. "I think it's going to be fun to have him and our anchors. Can you imagine politicians like Senator Hillary Clinton and Mayor Bloomberg being interviewed by Fat Joe?"

If Joe is nervous about the gig, he's not admitting it.

"Not at all," he says. "I want to interview everybody from Mayor Bloomberg to Marc Anthony, who's one of my idols, to the little baton girl from the South Bronx to get her take on what it's like to be part of this..."

This is the first in a series of surprises that FOX5 and My9 have planned for the four-hour telecast of this year's parade, which

will take place on Sunday, June 11, on Fifth Avenue. FOX5 and My9, which are owned by News Corp., the parent company of The Post, made history last month by snagging from NBC exclusive rights to telecast one of the city's most popular out-

door events.

According to officials, Joe — who is also the parade's New York Godfather — will march between 44th and 68th streets and board the anchor booth at 11:30 a.m. where he's expected to perform and interview a num-

ber of not-yet-revealed celebrity guests.

This year's parade is expected to be watched by nearly two million spectators and will host a slew of A-List Puerto Rican celebrities, including the Grand Marshal, Spanish Harlem's own Marc Anthony.

Boricua groups from the island, across the fifty states

and as far away as Hawaii and Alaska are also expected to travel to the city to participate.

And for the third year in a row, the New York Post's Tempo will host a float with surprise celebrity guest.

Sunday, June 11, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., FOX5. Then 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. on My9.



Anthony J. Casati

Fat Joe will provide parade insights on FOX5 and My9.