

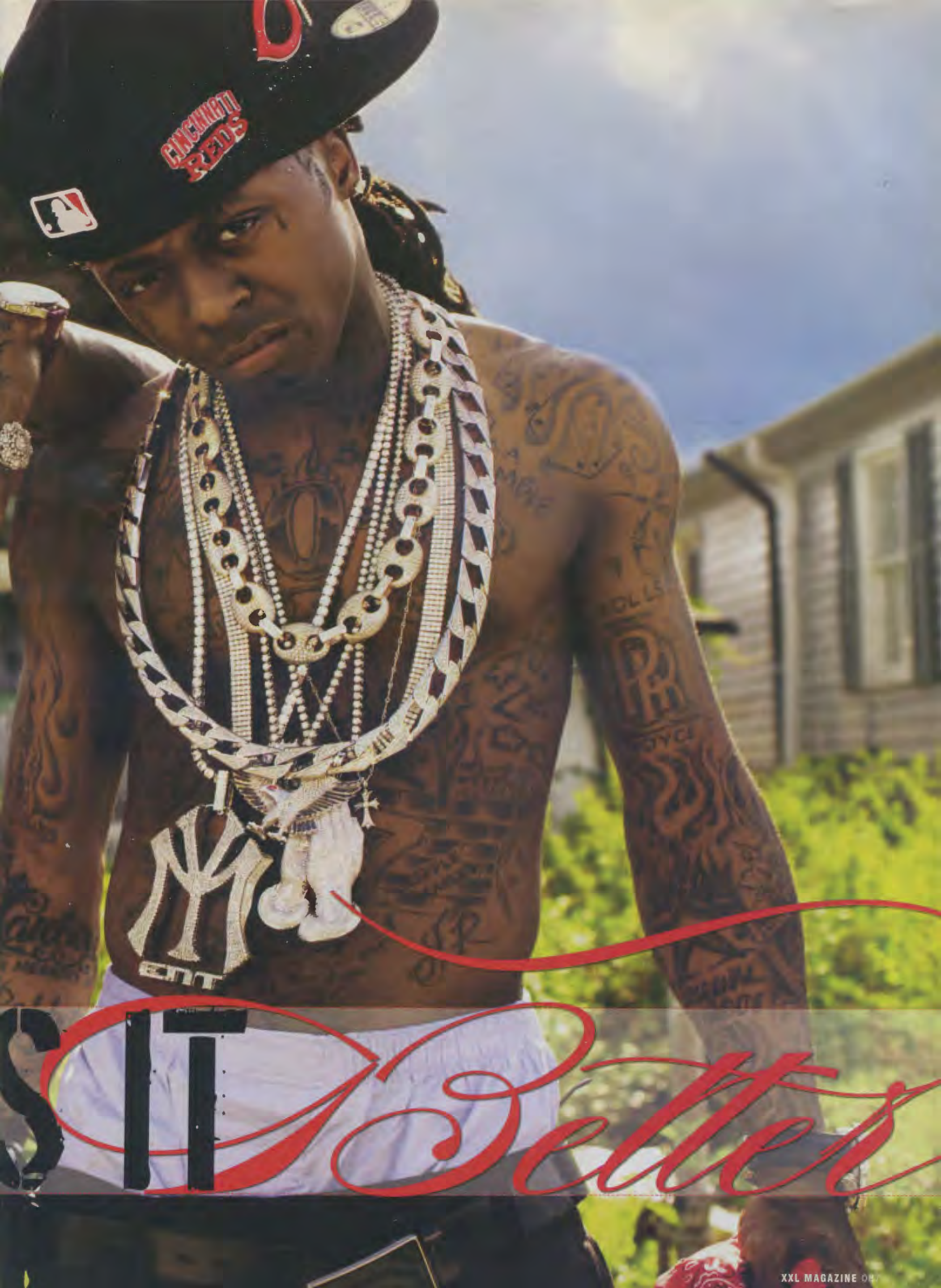


XXL HAS BEEN COVERING THE CASH MONEY MILLIONAIRES SINCE THEY FIRST CAME INTO THE GAME. SO WHO BETTER TO CELEBRATE THE MAG'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH THAN BABY AND WAYNE.

**INTERVIEW >>>
VANESSA SATTEN**

**IMAGES >>>
JONATHAN MANNION**

NOBODY DOE



STIPPLET



The pictures we took yesterday were monumental," Bryan "Baby" Williams, co-CEO of Cash Money Records, says while sitting on Lil Wayne's tour bus on a rainy July day in the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel parking lot. "I never done no shit like that, as far as being exposed to the world. What we showed was our pain, our gain, our losses, our loyalty. I think that's the most prominent pictures you could ever put on that muthafucka." Wayne, busy rolling up a blunt while pacing the tour bus, agrees: "A picture speaks a thousand words. I think that one speaks loudest."

Birdman and Weezy F. Baby are talking about the cover of *XXL*'s 10th anniversary issue, shot in the N.O. on the very streets that Baby was raised: Valence and Magnolia. In fact, it's the exact same spot that CM's first *XXL* cover (of nine covers) was shot back in April 1999. But despite the location, there's a major difference between the old photo and the 21st-century version: Only two of the five original Cash Money stars are featured.

Since CMR exploded on the national hip-hop scene in 1998, the company has had a roller-coaster ride of a journey, selling over 43 million albums while also suffering through departures of the label's two biggest artists—Juvenile and B.G.—and, later, Turk and Mannie Fresh, after well-documented financial disputes. But business hardships and losing artists and friends never stopped Baby and Wayne from progressing. And the bond between the two has grown stronger over the years, as they've built their father-son relationship and themselves as artists and businessmen.

Today, Baby and Wayne sit on the tour bus changed men. Wayne is now the star of Cash Money Records, and with his fast-growing musical catalogue and beastly skills on the mic, the self-proclaimed "best rapper alive" has cultivated himself into the most popular artist in today's hip-hop landscape. Weezy's also taken on the job of president of Cash Money and CEO of Young Money Entertainment, his label through CM. His dedicated grind has helped put the company at hip-hop's forefront, and his sixth solo album, *Tha Carter 3*, is anticipated by heads everywhere. Big boss Baby hasn't been slacking, either. After some talk of retirement, his third album, *5★G* (Five Star General), is scheduled to drop this October.

In honor of our 10th anniversary, Baby and Wayne sat with *XXL* to talk about their progress and regrets, the ladies, the drugs, the accolades and what they mean to hip-hop.

It's been almost 10 years since Cash Money signed with Universal, but you were around for seven years before then.

When you first signed the major deal, did you have any idea what to expect?

Baby: I thought we were too big [to be] independent, and it was time for growth. I didn't really know what to expect, but I knew that they was able to get us a vision that we never had. I knew we could go scramble in the streets, because that's how we made our music—through the streets and just grinding out ourselves. So I wanted them to just give us radio and TV exposure, because I thought they was good at that. I always like to study the game, and I was watching what they were doing with Suave House at the time.

Over the years, Cash Money has gone through several rosters. Wayne, was the departure of your more successful label mates, like B.G. and Juvenile, a blessing in disguise for your career?

Wayne: That would be for the people to say. I can tell you how I felt when it happened. I felt responsible. I lost my father when I was 14, and he left me with the house mortgage, and I had to step up, and I was my mama's husband at 14. So replacing B.G., Juvenile, Turk and Mannie Fresh was easy.

In the past, you have said that you knew you had to step up and take control at that point. How do you teach yourself to get better and to step into that place?

"I DON'T LISTEN TO NOBODY'S STUFF. I WOULDN'T LIE. I DON'T LISTEN TO NOBODY'S STUFF."

Lil Wayne

Wayne: Repetition is the father of learning. Remember that... It was no pressure. Baby and Slim never came to me like, "Wayne, this happened, so..." We never had no meeting like, "They left, now it's on you." No. We just started doing it. "I got y'all. Don't worry about nothing. We good. I'm better than all them."

What can you tell us about your album, *Tha Carter 3*?

Wayne: 2008, baby, here we come. *Carter 3!* Gotta make 'em wait. Gotta make 'em want you... I never go in the studio and say, "We recording this." I just say, "*Carter 3*," on the beginning of the song if it's a *Carter 3* song. I record every day, every chance I can. That's why you hear me on everybody else's song, because they know Wayne's in the studio—just send him an e-mail, and he'll do it. I record every day. I got like a billion songs. Any day we choose, we can make an album.

In the beginning, Cash Money was all in-house. The artists didn't really collaborate with other artists...

Wayne: Niggas was mean.

Then everything switched, and now you both do...

Baby: I never really felt like that. Niggas did what they did, but we was moving a lot, too. So niggas was playin' they part in that, too. But young'n really broke that ice, and broke it out of the whole realm of even thinking like that.

Why was it important for you to do that, start working with so many people?

Wayne: Before I answer that, I could say that the way we work at Cash Money, the way they had us, as far as not working with everybody, kept you in tune to what you doing to get yourself better. We surrounded ourselves with us. All day. And it wasn't about, we ain't like you, we just too on us. That got me like that now. I don't listen to nobody's stuff. I wouldn't lie. I don't listen to nobody's stuff.

What about listening to the songs that you're on? You're gonna listen to the other rappers' verses, or no?

Wayne: Yeah. I don't mean like that. What I meant is, I don't buy your album. As far as the radio and your single, I'll sing it word for word. You wouldn't even know I knew that part. But I'm not gonna buy your album, and I'm not expecting you to buy mine. Do your thing, and I'ma do mine.

So have you been in the studio with all these people you're working with, or have your verses just been e-mailed around?

Wayne: E-mailed around. It's only because it's a difference with asking Lil Wayne to get on your song. He gon' say... He gonna say, "Send it." He gonna say, "Send it right now." He gonna send it right back. That's different. Instead of asking, "Can I get?" and then have a meeting, you gotta set it up. It's like, "My e-mail is such and such, what's yours?" And I send it right back.





"F&#*KIN' WITH JUNIOR JUST BROUGHT A WHOLE NEW EXCITEMENT TO ME, A WHOLE NEW SPARK." —Baby

Do you feel like Cash Money has always been on top of the game? Because it seems like the label has kind of struggled at times.
Wayne: We're not on top of *the* game—we're on top of *our* game. And we've always been on top of *our* game. It ain't even about being on top of the game.

So, Wayne, right about now, there are new Wayne songs and freestyles like every week. You say you record nonstop. How do you decide what goes out? Are you the one leaking it?

Wayne: My Web site, YoungMoneyEnt—I actually submit a new song so they can just download almost every week. You can do your best, all your security methods or whatever to control it, but you can't control a leak. I hear people's stuff that get leaked, and nobody be knowing that that's they album, because they just not into it. But for something of mine to get out there—"Oh my God, we got *Tha Carter 3!*"

To know they that excited about a song makes me keep doing my thing. To me, you gotta be better than your last. So I be looking like: "Oh, them songs. I ain't want them to come out, anyway. They old to me. It is what it is."

Wayne, you've never had a big, multiplatinum album, yet it seems like you're treated like you have achieved that success. Do you think it's interesting that you're being looked at on that level, without getting there?

Wayne: Um...I mean. [Pauses] What his name? Grant Hill ain't got no shot title? Charles Barkley ain't got no... Like, you could just be great. I'd rather just be great. The world's too different right now for record sales... It ain't even about that no more. Come on. The people on the radio all day ain't selling a million copies. And the people that is selling a million copies is, who? Who's going five, six million? Nobody. The songs that's

poppin'... Like, hip-hop right now... People ain't got time to go buy no album. They got the Internet. "I just like that song, download that." But what you do is, you get your business right, to where you download that, I'm gonna get something from that. That's how you do. That's how I do.

Baby, last time I spoke with you, you were retiring. Now you've got a new album, 5★G, coming out. What happened?

Wayne: Somebody about to print a new dollar or something, and he got excited. [Laughs]
Baby: I mean... [Laughs] [Wayne's] brought a whole new excitement to me with this shit. Then, after losing my sister and all that shit... I ain't never into folding. I got my life on this shit, ya heard me? And fuckin' with Junior just brought a whole new excitement to me, a whole new spark. Going on tour and just fuckin' with him just brought a whole 'nother... Like, man, I'm in this bitch!



"WE'RE NOT ON
TOP OF THE
GAME—WE'RE
ON TOP OF
OUR GAME.
AND WE'VE
ALWAYS BEEN
ON TOP OF
OUR GAME."

*Lil
Wayne*

What should we expect from it?

Baby: Just me, my soul. Like Wayne said, it's a whole new feeling, so we coming across in a different way. And I feel it's going to be more my inner being, plus what I do, too—I'm a stunner forever. You gonna get more of the chest more from the soul. Shit we gone through, what we vision and what we hittin'.

Wayne: I think it's going to be interesting, 'cause this album... Like when he finished his first solo album, it was in the midst of all the bullshit, and we wasn't too sure about nothing at the time. But right now, it's like, the people

already know. They see Wayne doing everything. "Them Cash Money boys good. Them boys straight. They ain't worry 'bout..." They don't know how he feel... People that probably thought we needed them, they gon' hear it and be like: "They really real. They really moved on. And Stunna, look at him, he ain't gotta get on a record and say, 'I moved on.'" Stand in front of the camera, and you'll see. We did the photo shoot [for the cover of this issue] without the other people that was on the cover of that day [the April '99 issue of XXL]. We've moved on.

Is it different now that Wayne is president...

of Cash Money and has Young Money Entertainment also? How does that work?

How do you decide who goes on what label?

Wayne: What I do is, if I see an artist or something I like or whatever, I determine where would that artist be bigger, where would his success come from the most. Would he be better over at Cash Money, or would he be better at Young Money? At Young Money, it's a personal thing. At Young Money, I don't want it to be nothing, nothing like before. It's gon' be totally different, because totally different makes a whole lot more money. Cash Money



is Cash Money, and we are a category, and we are a very well-loved category. So if you have that in you, then I think you can make the Cash Money bigger and better, [and] that's when you need to go over there. It's simple. It's just one big tree—it don't matter.

Is there any truth to the story that you wanted to go to Jay-Z at one point but Baby kept you from going by giving you Young Money?

Wayne: No. The truth of it was I wanted to go. Jay and Baby told me to go. Baby told me, "Go see what he talking about." And we was going to work that out. That was the whole misunderstanding, the whole thing it was gonna have to be... "Baby and them have to be in this." So things didn't work out. But Young Money, that was coming regardless.

It seems like you feel Jay passed the torch to you. What's the thing with Jay? Is there a comparison you feel? Do you want to supersede him?

Wayne: I think he would love to know that I want to do better than him. I want to be better than him, of course.

Have you had any controversy or drama over your calling yourself the best rapper alive?

Wayne: All I'm saying is, you can say "best rapper..." I mean, what I'm saying is that... Me saying that, I think, is showing how I felt about, no homo, about his craft and what he do. [What I'm saying is] those people saying they're the kings of rock was Run-DMC. There's the king—that's T.I. They got the hustler—that's Rick Ross. What I'm saying is, I coulda came wit', "I'm the best hustler alive," or "I'm the best king," or "I'm the king of rock." Naw. Jay said he the *best rapper* alive. I'm gon' say that. That's who I want to be better than. That who I wanna be like, but then better than. That's who I think is the best. Why I'm not gon' shoot at that? That's what I want. [Jokingly] He'll tell you I am.

You just won the BET Viewers' Choice Award at the BET Awards. How was that for you?

Wayne: Men lie, women lie, fans don't.

Baby: Believe that. [Laughs]

Wayne: Men lie, woman lie, numbers don't.

Baby: Believe that. [Laughs]

Wayne: The Viewers' Choice is all fans. You know, everybody thought I was gettin' that Hip-Hop [Award], but that went to show you that... The fans don't get to pick that, right? Oh, so the fans pick Wayne for the Viewers'

**"I SMOKE
WEED AND
DRINK SYRUP
ALL DAY, TO
TELL YOU
THE TRUTH."**

*Lil
Wayne*



EASYSNEAKERS.com
As Easy As It Gets

**Rarest and
cheapest
sneakers on the
internet**



**Rarest sneakers
for the cheapest
prices online!**



FROM LEFT: CASH MONEY'S ALL STAR, BABY AND BRISCO, YOUNG MONEY'S LIL WAYNE, MACK MAINE AND T STREET

**"I MADE
MISTAKES IN
THE BEGINNING,
FEEL ME? BUT
YOU CAN'T CRY
OVER SPILLED
MILK. YOU TAKE
THE LICKIN',
YOU KEEP ON
TICKIN'."**

Baby

Choice mean we love him. You gotta understand they categorize awards, like, "You are the best male R&B artist." Then there's another, "the best male hip-hop..." Viewers' Choice got its own category: Viewers' Choice. What you like about them? Viewers' Choice of his

dress or Viewers' Choice of his skill? No, Viewers' Choice. Feel me?

That's what made it a whole lot bigger than anything. You didn't carry and walk out with that category. "He's the best, he beat..." No. Uh-uh. I took home the Viewers' Choice. I don't know, they just feel me. I ain't got to rap. I didn't take home the Hip-Hop [Award], so I don't know what they felt me for. He took home the Viewers' Choice!

There's been a lot of talk about drugs in your rhymes. What's your take on...

Wayne: I'm a rock star.

You're a rock star?

Wayne: I grew up... I loved fuckin' Tommy Lee and all that, Kid Rock and all that. I love it, but I'm intelligent, so, you know, I do what I do. I feel like nothing can control me. I'm too mind-strong, anyway, too headstrong, anyway, and I'm too caught up in myself to let myself slip. And then I was told by somebody before, like, "Keep doing drug songs." I was told by people that did drugs. I'm talking about older people, like who probably done this 20 years ago. That dude told me, He said, "I ain't done whatever it was in a long time, but you don't write, you don't get on your song and say, 'I'm high, I'm smoking this, and we in the car.' No, you actually give us the... You bring it back. You make us feel like we on that again, and it don't make us feel like we want to go get that. But I feel like, if I ever want the feeling, I gotta pop that song in..." He's like, "Don't never stop the drug songs." So I went back in time, and I looked at some of the people, some of the greatest artists—some of they best songs is about drugs. You got to know how to talk about it. Drugs is a part of life, I don't care where you from. You know, I can't get on a record and say I'm selling them. I'm too

rich, ya know what I mean? So I tell you what it is. Tell you how to do it. Tell you how it feels. I like the song to be the drug. I don't think you could possibly do what I do on that shit. And my song, that's your ecstasy pill. Pop that. Ya know what I mean? Creative.

Creative.

Wayne: I smoke weed and drink syrup all day, to tell you the truth.

There's been a lot of talk about you guys and the ladies.

Wayne: I'm single! I'm single. You can talk to me about it. Lil Wayne is single.

You and Trina? No?

Wayne: No. That's a very, very beautiful woman, but no. No, I am single. Holla at me!

What's up with you and Superhead? She's

on the cover of the new *King* magazine and is talking about some stuff between the two of you.

Wayne: Who you talking about, Karrine? **Yeah, Karrine.**

Wayne: That's my people, man. She cool as hell. That's my people. I respect her. I respect a woman who know how to make her money. And the way she make it, if you don't respect her, you crazy. She did it like... I mean, she... As a man from the hood, you get caught up in poverty, and you have to sell drugs or do whatever you got to do, and then being able to rap about it and make people understand you, feel you, what've you done and what you've done and sold, whatever's supposed to be bad or wrong, that's what she did.

Switching gears, do people still give you a hard time about the two of you kissing? Do you feel weird at all?

Wayne: Nah. That's my fuckin' daddy!
Baby: Believe that.

Wayne: That's my pops, and the same niggas that be trippin', soon as we meet they girlfriends, the first thing they want is a fuckin' kiss. **When you look back at what Cash Money was throughout the years, do you regret anything? Miss anything?**

Baby: I don't regret nothing. That's life, feel me? In my younger days...

Wayne: Life's too short to regret.

Baby: I made mistakes in the beginning, feel me? But you can't cry over spilled milk. You take the lickin', you keep on tickin'. I took so many blows, to where, you know, my heart is numb to whatever it is in my life. I ain't got no heart no more. So it's like, fuck it.

Is that bad or good?

Baby: I mean, for me, it is what it is, but the way I might be, you know, for me, I don't give a fuck. It's my life. It's how I'm going to live it. I've done lost too many people to give a fuck. I love my family. I put my life out for that. Besides that, fuck 'em.

XXL is celebrating our 10th anniversary, and it's been a big deal for us.

You're gearing up for Cash Money's 10th anniversary. Have anything planned?

Wayne: Can I tell you the best thing to happen to me?

Yes.

Wayne: The best thing for us, to me, was going to Club Privé in Miami, at an [early] 10th-year anniversary party. And Puff Daddy, he grabbed the mic, and soon as he grabbed the mic, the DJ start spinning "Last Night." [Puff] was like: "Nah, cut that shit off. That ain't what I came to do. I came here to let y'all know that..." I don't remember... Shit, I smoke too much, but when I do that, mean I ain't gon' never forget it. He said, "We here to celebrate the 10-year anniversary for Cash Money." And he's like: "Ten years. Some niggas can't do a 10-year bid in jail. Some niggas can't be 10 years in the same place. Some of y'all ain't been doing *nothing* for 10 years. They been making money for 10 years. Give it up for them brothers." Then he said: "Lil Wayne is the coolest. Lil Wayne is the coolest." He kept saying that. "I love him. He's the coolest guy in rap." Then he ended it with, "Lil Wayne is the best rapper alive." That meant the most to me out of anything. He was with Notorious B.I.G., the best rapper that's not alive. Feel me? For him to say I'm the best rapper alive, fuck the rest of these niggas.

Baby: Then he whisper in my ear. He say, "Homie, ain't nothing but two other people that ever did that." He said: "Me and Jay-Z. You amongst them elite three... You're a fuckin' icon." ♠



RECORD, MIX, AND PRODUCE YOUR MUSIC

© 2007 Full Sail Inc. All rights reserved.

SCHOOL OF RECORDING ARTS

800.226.7625

3300 University Boulevard • Winter Park, FL 32792

DEGREES IN **COMPUTER ANIMATION** > **DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN**
ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > **FILM** > **GAME DEVELOPMENT**
MUSIC BUSINESS > **RECORDING ARTS** > **SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING**



fullsail.com

Financial aid available to those who qualify • Career development assistance • Accredited School, ACCSCT