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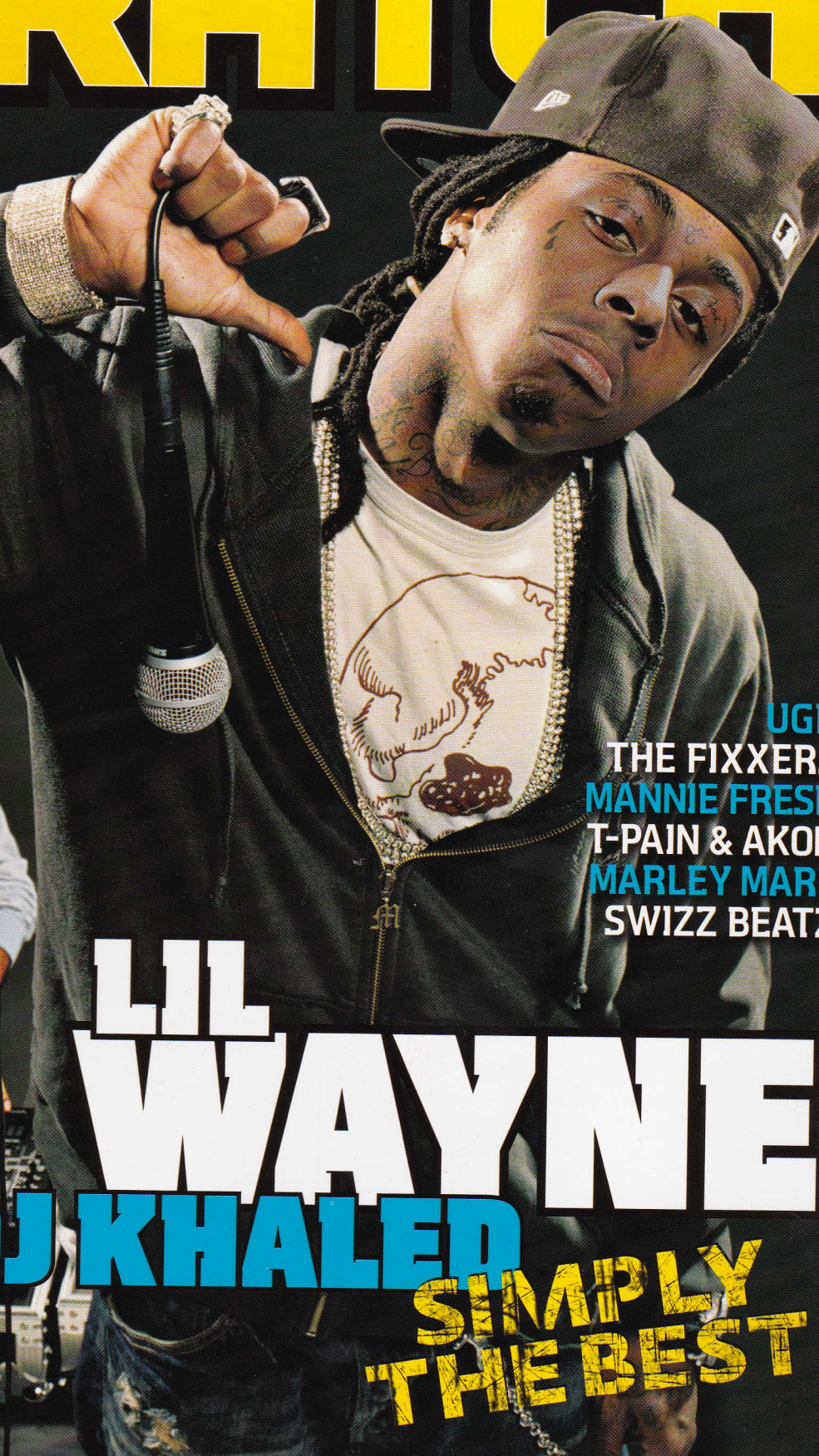
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BEST THANG SMOKIN'

LIL WAYNE answers rumors about playing the guitar, remaking an OutKast classic and why *Tha Carter 3* won't drop until 2008.

interview Anslem Samuel
photography Pamela Littky

SCRATCH You actually appear on DJ Khaled's *We The Best* album four times. How come you got so much burn?

LIL WAYNE 'Cause he's smart. I'm a moneymaker, I'm a go-getta, plus everything I say kinda sounds a little alright. So niggas is like, "We gonna get him four times—fuck that." I even got a solo joint on there called "Let's Talk It Over." I did that song only for Khaled. That's my dude.

How'd you guys become so tight? I been working with him as long as I been in Miami, but what I never knew was [I met] Khaled when I first got my deal and I was 11 years old. They had this neighborhood record store called Odyssey in my 'hood—Hollygrove, where I'm from—and they would have a DJ in there set up cuttin' music, so anytime you walked in there it was like it was going down and Khaled was actually the DJ. That was when I was 11 years old, nigga, so I *been* knew Khaled.

Who are you working with on the production end for *Tha Carter 3*? I really can't tell you, like, I really don't know because my album is so far from coming out. That's not even the situation to be talkin' about 'cause I probably won't drop my shit until 2008.

Wasn't it supposed to drop this year? Why'd you decide to push it back? I got some advice from one of my big brothers in the game and he told me the best thing to do when you're hot, or even if you think you're hot—and I think I'm hot—you're not supposed to keep giving them you. You gotta make them really want you. Make 'em desperate. I know if I wait 'til 2008, they gon' go bananas!

Can you at least confirm rumors about you working with Kanye and Dr. Dre? It's no rumor. Kanye gave me some music and, of course, I did those. He gave me a gang of music, but two of them is guaranteed knockout punches. And I'm working with Dre—I'm writing something with Dre.

So the stuff with Dre is for *Detox* and not for your album? I'm getting music from him for mine, too—I ain't crazy. I ain't about to charge him no price but I'm 'bout to charge him in songs. He gotta pay me in beats.

Mannie Fresh has also been saying you guys reunited. Yeah, I got back with Mannie Fresh, man. Me and Mannie did like three records. We got the same lawyers, so we cleared things up. I just told him I needed some music and he brought it through.

Do we have to wait 'til 2008 to hear Wayne and Mannie back together?

Actually the three songs I done [with Mannie] is for my label Young Money. We have a compilation album coming out after Currency's album. Currency's album is the introduction to Young Money and then after that we gotta album coming called *Heyyyyyy*. So the three Mannie Fresh songs is most likely going on that album or probably one on Currency's album or something like that. The names of the songs that we done already is called "Morning" with a Shirley Murdock sample on it and then we got "Girls Gone Wild" and "I Got It."

You've been playing the guitar for a little while now. Any chance we might hear a Lil Wayne guitar solo some time soon?

I've already done it. I'm featured on the new Enrique Iglesias single, "Push Up On It." I played the guitar on that song. I also played on my artist Currency the Hot Spitter's first song, "Staring at the World." So I've already recorded and laid the guitar down [on tracks]. I'm on tour right now and I've played the guitar at every show, so I'm good. So the question isn't, "Am I gonna start puttin' the guitar in the music?" I've already done it. Enrique Iglesias, homie. Holla at your boy!

Enrique Iglesias doesn't seem like your typical running mate. How'd you link up with him?

'Cause I'm cold, my nigga! That's how we hooked up. When you cold, everybody gon' hook up with you. When you good at what you do, it don't matter if it's Whitney Houston, it don't matter if it's Yung Joc, it don't matter if it's Lil Bow Wow to Enrique Iglesias. It's gon' happen if you good. If you good, they gon' call you. Nah, but real talk, shout out to my man Steve Morales—that's one of the producers who worked on my album and he did the beat for that song and he recommended for me to be on there.

There was also a rumor that you were trying to remake "Jazzy Belle" by OutKast. I already did it. The producer of that record is Jim Jonsin, and the song is called "PMW." It's crazy and when it comes out I think everybody gon' love it. They gon' look at me different. I'll probably get an actress after that.

What's the vision behind the song? Is it a remix? Nah, it's not a "Jazzy Belle" remix, it's just the beat from "Jazzy Belle" and what I'm talking about on there is... Oh my *God!* Just remember that title: "PMW."

What do you want people to remember about you when you finally call it quits? That all my music was good. That's all, dawg. I ain't in it to wanna prove this and that. I'm making words rhyme and that's that. I just wanna prove that I'm the best at that. ●

↑↑ I ain't about to charge [Dr. Dre] no price, but I'm 'bout to charge him in songs. He gotta pay me in beats. ↓↓