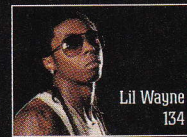


# CRITICAL BEATDOWN

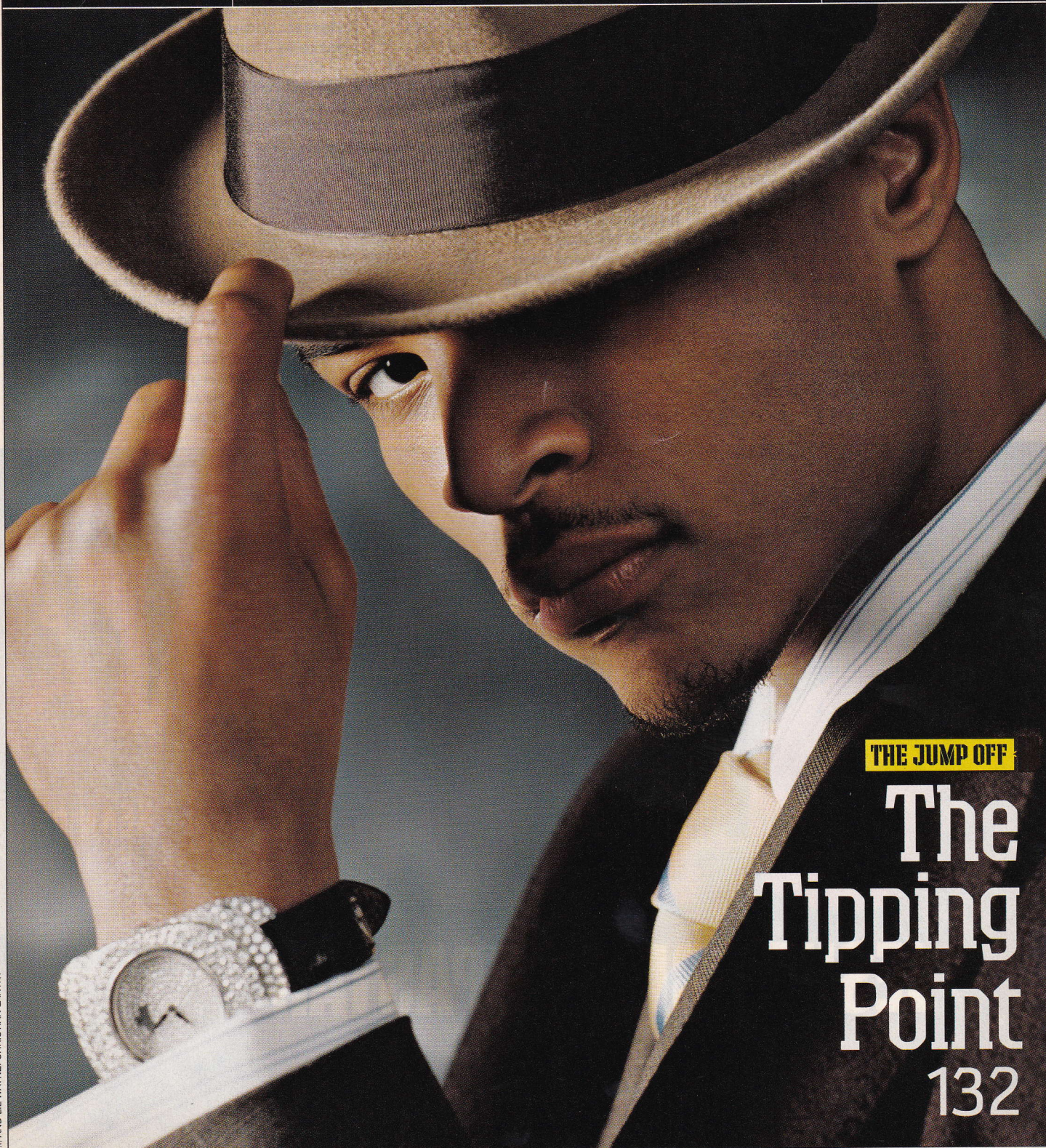


2006 *Love/Hate*

THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS REVIEWS

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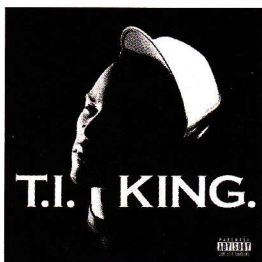
**THE JUMP OFF**

**T.I.**

**King**

Grand Hustle/Atlantic

S M L **XL** **XXL**



**LOVE:** He told you so, didn't he? For the past few years, T.I. kept running off at the mouth, saying how he was the King of the South. Yet, no one believed him—that is, 'til now. In one of

the worst-selling years in recent rap history, the Atlanta native's *King* somehow managed to be the only hip-hop album to drop in '06 that made it to the promised land of platinum (1.5 million, to be exact). Yeah, Lil Wayne officially hit the million mark this calendar year, too, but he had a head start with *The Carter II*'s December '05 release. But enough about Weezy. You can see pg.134 for his Love/Hate recap. This is T.I.'s moment. This is T.I.'s year. This is T.I.'s royal coronation.

Coming out the gate strong with just under 522,000 units sold in the first week, Tip undoubtedly wore the hip-hop crown for '06.

The trap star even raised his Hollywood stock with his film debut, *ATL*, which opened at No. 3 at the box office. At the epicenter of all this media hype was his anthemic lead single, "What You Know." Oozing with confidence, T.I. pops his collar all over DJ Toomp's synthesized soundbed, proclaiming, "Ya label got got/(Ay!) 'Cause you are not hot/(Ay!) I got the top spot/(Ay!) And it will not stop."

His royal highness scored even bigger with the Khao-produced smash "Why You Wanna." Backed by a sample of Crystal Waters' 1991 hit "Gypsy Woman (She's Homeless)," the King moistens the ladies' panties with his silver-tongued delivery, before giving another nod to the fairer sex on "Hello." Once his coochie-catering quota is filled, T.I. takes it back in da streets, as Just Blaze supplies the gasoline for the in-your-face riot starter "I'm Talkin' to You."

Cocksure flair also permeates cuts like "Ride Wit Me" and "I'm Straight," but where Tip truly wins is with his Jamie Foxx collabo "Live in the Sky." Producer Keith Mack's somber keys provide Mr. Harris with the perfect platform to make the song cry with gripping honesty ("Got four kids, the smiles on their faces/Mean more to me than

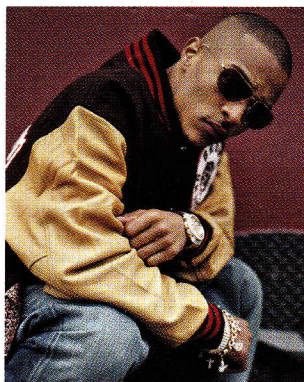
my crown and my bracelet/Take that away from me and my life is buck naked").

**HATE:** The only time T.I. should feel exposed is when he wanders too far outside his comfort zone. Although Swizz Beatz scores another hi-octane booty shaker for "Get It," the track's shrill horns and raucous percussion work overpower Tip's laid-back flow. The result is less-than-regal lines, like, "Got that guacamole/Holey moley, you don't know me." Another flub is the atrocious "Stand Up Guy." Layered with spacey video game effects and warbled drums, the up-tempo track sounds like a musical experiment gone wrong.

Clearly, T.I. managed to do *something* right. With constant advances in downloading technology and increasingly weak material in the marketplace giving music lovers less incentive

to buy CDs, Tip still convinced more than 1.5 million people to part with their lunch money and get down with *King*. Maybe it was the joint promotion of his album and movie. Wait, that didn't work for OutKast. Perhaps it was the numerous radio spins his first single received. Wait, that didn't help Chingy's sales much. More than likely it was just making the right album at the right time and believing in the power of four simple words, like, "I told you so."

—ANSLEM SAMUEL



CHRISTIAN LANTIER



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