

THE CURRENT

M A G A Z I N E DOCUMENTING THE CULTURE AS IT HAPPENS

ISSUE 005

THE TEA

WHO'S TRENDING

CURRENT SPORTS

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STREET STORIES

WHAT THEY MISSED

BOSS MOVES /
HUSTLE TO BUSINESS

MILWAUKEE REMEMBERS

FUNNY \$MONEY

THE WORKHORSE WHO HELD
THE SCENE TOGETHER

THE VOICE. THE WORK. THE LEGACY.

INSIDE ISSUE 005

Milwaukee artists, builders and culture in motion

THE MILWAUKEE ISSUE

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Milwaukee is not waiting to be discovered

THE CURRENT POSITION

THE CITY IS ALREADY WORKING

Issue 005 honors the people who turn Milwaukee culture into a living system.

Milwaukee is often described as a city on the verge of a creative breakthrough. That language misses what is already happening. The work is not waiting for permission. It is being recorded in neighborhood studios, taught in classrooms, painted across public walls, carried through small businesses and shared by creators who understand that a local audience can become a global one.

Funny \$Money represents the spirit of this issue because his value was larger than a single record. He showed up, collaborated, released music and helped the scene keep moving when attention shifted elsewhere. Calling him a workhorse recognizes the labor behind the image: the repeated sessions, relationships, ideas and appearances that make a culture feel connected.

The remaining stories follow that same standard. Myaap turns viral motion into disciplined output. Jacob Misiorowski converts extraordinary velocity into responsibility. Marquise Mays uses film as community care. Jazii Kelly, Jackie Droese, Tia Richardson and Imani Raiyne each demonstrate that creativity becomes durable when it is connected to ownership, teaching, service or a customer relationship.

DOCUMENT THE WORK WHILE IT IS HAPPENING

A tribute should do more than mark a loss. It should preserve the method, name the collaborators, protect the archive and make the next person understand what the artist contributed while he was here. That is the responsibility of this edition—and the permanent mission of THE CURRENT MAGAZINE.

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COVER STORY

Funny \$Money: the workhorse

MILWAUKEE REMEMBERS

THE WORKHORSE WHO HELD THE SCENE TOGETHER

Quentene Williams gave Milwaukee rap more than records. He gave the movement continuity.



FUNNY \$MONEY / ROCKY BALBOA VIDEO

THE WORK WAS THE REPUTATION

Milwaukee did not lose only a rapper. It lost one of the men who helped the room stay connected. Funny \$Money, born Quentene Williams, became essential by doing the least glamorous part of building a movement: he kept working. He recorded, collaborated, appeared beside other artists and released music at the pace required to keep a young scene from losing its momentum.

The title workhorse fits because his impact cannot be measured by one viral moment. His presence ran through songs with Sme Taxfree, Chicken P, Superthrowed Fay Fay and other voices shaping Milwaukee's modern rap identity. He functioned as connective tissue—somebody whose consistency made separate artists feel like part of the same cultural period.

A SOUND WITH ITS OWN ADDRESS

Funny \$Money's records carried slick punchlines, conversational confidence and an ear for the emotional pull of R&B.; On 'Rocky Balboa,' producer Crowned Stevo placed distorted soul and longing underneath a performance still committed to hustle. That tension made the record vivid: tenderness could live in the beat while determination controlled the words.

He sounded like Milwaukee because he did not sand away the city's humor, pressure or cadence to make the work easier for outsiders. The personality was part of the music, but the discipline beneath it is what gave the personality somewhere to land.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

THE VOICE DREW ATTENTION. THE WORK HELD THE SCENE TOGETHER.

SOURCES: Pitchfork; official 'Rocky Balboa' video; Funny \$Money releases and collaborations.

COVER STORY

Funny \$Money: the voice, the work, the legacy

THE CATALOG REMAINS

THE VOICE. THE WORK. THE LEGACY.

The music preserves a life—and gives Milwaukee a responsibility to protect its own history.



FUNNY \$MONEY / OFFICIAL ARTIST PROFILE

HE CHOSE TO TAKE THE MUSIC SERIOUSLY

Williams spoke openly about the point when rap changed from an interest into a decision. While incarcerated, he watched Milwaukee artists Larry Bird and Gwapo Chapo create visible momentum. Their progress turned possibility into evidence. When he returned home, he understood that authenticity and lived experience could become an artistic position instead of remaining an untold history.

That decision produced a catalog with personality and purpose. The 2022 project *Don't Talk 2 Much* included 'Rocky Balboa,' while 2024's *I Got the Hook Up Vol. 1: Big Bucks No Whammies* nodded toward No Limit's mixtape-minded abundance. The homage also described his role: reliable, prolific and comfortable carrying the scene through quieter stretches.

A TRIBUTE MUST PRESERVE THE METHOD

Funny \$Money died at 33 after he and 21-year-old Dequaiseon Evans were found fatally shot in Milwaukee. The loss belongs first to their families and loved ones. Public remembrance must therefore resist turning a complete person into one tragic sentence.

Milwaukee's responsibility is larger than condolence. Preserve the sessions. Credit the producers and camera operators. Archive the interviews. Keep the catalog available. Tell younger artists that movements are not built only by the first person to break nationally; they are held together by people whose daily work makes a scene possible.

THE NETWORK IS PART OF THE LEGACY

Every record also carries the labor of people whose names may never reach the headline. Producers created the emotional floor beneath his voice. Videographers translated Milwaukee's movement into images. Engineers preserved performances that began as ideas in a room. Collaborators expanded the catalog by trusting Funny \$Money to add his character to theirs. A complete tribute names that network because the network explains how the work traveled.

The city can honor that ecosystem by treating local music as cultural property worth maintaining. Radio archives, oral histories, organized video credits, preserved cover art and accessible streaming metadata may sound administrative, but they determine what future listeners can find. Memory becomes reliable when somebody builds a system around it.

The image on the cover recognizes a performer. The pages behind it recognize the labor. Quentene Williams leaves a voice in the records, a map in the collaborations and a standard in the consistency. That is how the workhorse becomes part of the city's permanent story.

**PLACE YOUR AD
HERE**

THE HEADLINE MARKS THE LOSS. THE CATALOG PRESERVES THE LIFE.

SOURCES: Pitchfork; WISN 12 News; Kid L Podcast; official release information.

THE TEA

Milwaukee hip-hop gains national exposure

THE CITY'S SOUND TRAVELS

MILWAUKEE MOVES WITH ITS OWN IDENTITY

Lowend rhythm, dance, humor and collaboration are carrying a local language beyond the city.



SUNNY LOU AND 414BIGFRANK / SHEPHERD EXPRESS

THE SOUND WAS BUILT BEFORE THE SPOTLIGHT

Milwaukee rap did not appear when national publications began paying attention. Producers, DJs, artists and neighborhood audiences had been refining the Lowend sound for years: hard claps, bass-heavy movement, dance and personality that made a record feel inseparable from the room where it was first played.

TikTok widened the route, but the culture supplied the material. Milwaukee dances gave the music a visual language; local video crews made personality visible; collectives such as SmackinTown and companies such as Run Along Forever created repeated opportunities to record, perform and circulate the work.

THE DIFFERENCE IS STAYING HOME

A new development is that artists can gain attention without immediately abandoning the city that produced them. 414BigFrank, Chicken P, Certified Trapper, Lakeyah, Myaap and others represent different parts of the same shift: Milwaukee is becoming an identity audiences recognize rather than a location artists must explain away.

The challenge now is infrastructure. Playlists, venues, management, publishing, performance fees and local media must grow at the same speed as the attention. A sound can trend without building wealth. A scene becomes durable when the people who made the language participate in the value it creates.



MARKETING • PROMOTIONS • BRAND STRATEGY

THE INTERNET EXPANDED THE REACH. MILWAUKEE CREATED THE LANGUAGE.

SOURCES: Shepherd Express; Milwaukee Record; Pitchfork; local artist and producer interviews.

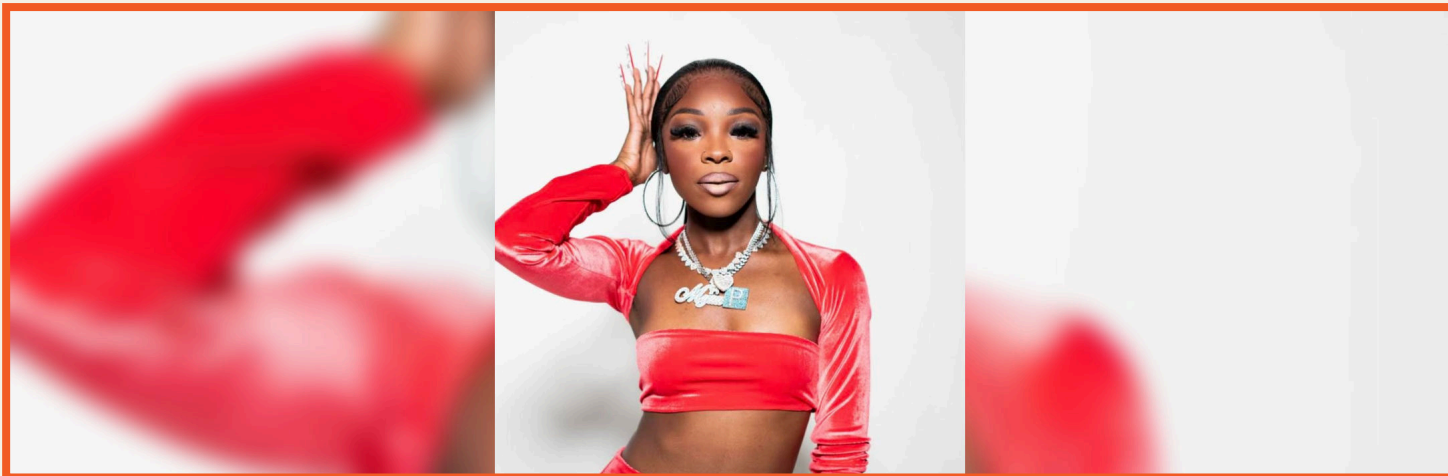
WHO'S TRENDING

Myaap turns motion into position

THE NEXT MILWAUKEE VOICE

MOTION BECOMES A CAREER

Myaap moved from short-form discovery to touring, streaming and a recognizable Milwaukee sound.



MYAAP / OFFICIAL SOUNDCLOUD PROFILE

THE MOMENT MOVED FAST

Amaiya Spain, known as Myaap, entered Milwaukee rap with the kind of acceleration social media can create but cannot sustain by itself. "Party Crackin'" connected online, her following grew quickly and a teenage artist was soon moving through a 19-city tour instead of simply watching numbers rise on a screen.

The deeper story is work rate. Studio engineers who watched the early sessions described an artist who arrived prepared and recorded efficiently. Collaborations with Chicken P and visuals from TeeGlazedIt connected her to Milwaukee's creative network while keeping the presentation rooted in the city.

THE NEXT STEP IS CONTROL

Virality makes discovery possible; ownership makes a career possible. Myaap's next phase depends on protecting the relationship with her audience through consistent releases, live performance, direct communication and a visual identity that can mature without becoming generic.

The opportunity reaches beyond one platform. Touring data can identify strong markets. Merchandise can make supporters visible. Longer interviews can give the personality room to develop. A catalog can turn an energetic first impression into a reason to return.

Milwaukee's new generation is learning in public. Myaap's advantage is that she has already shown she can move quickly. The lasting position will come from knowing which parts of that motion she controls.



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THE TREND OPENS THE DOOR. THE SYSTEM KEEPS THE CAREER MOVING.

SOURCES: TMJ4 Milwaukee; official artist profiles; Spotify and touring information.

CURRENT SPORTS

Jacob Misiowski leads the Brewers

MILWAUKEE'S NEW ACE

VELOCITY WITH RESPONSIBILITY

The arm draws attention. The preparation, recovery and command determine what Milwaukee can build around it.



JACOB MISIOWSKI / MILWAUKEE BREWERS

THE FASTBALL CHANGES THE ROOM

Jacob Misiowski's velocity is immediate theater. At 6-foot-7, the Brewers right-hander releases triple-digit fastballs from an angle hitters rarely see, and the radar readings can dominate the conversation before the inning is finished. The more important development is that the power is becoming a complete starting-pitcher identity.

In 2026, Misiowski has paired elite strikeout production with run prevention strong enough to place him in the National League's top pitching conversation. A recent duel with veteran Chris Sale showed the difference between promise and responsibility: six scoreless innings, traffic managed and a narrow game protected.

THE ORGANIZATION MUST PROTECT THE ASSET

The Brewers have reason to dream and reason to remain disciplined. Earlier arm fatigue required precaution and reinforced the cost of extraordinary velocity. Milwaukee's competitive advantage has long depended on developing talent carefully, using information well and resisting the pressure to spend tomorrow's health for one dramatic night.

An ace changes more than every fifth game. He gives the bullpen structure, changes a postseason series and creates belief inside a small-market organization that must convert development into contention. Misiowski has the arm to become that figure. Durability, command and recovery will decide how long the role belongs to him.



MENTAL WELLNESS • ADVOCACY • PREVENTION

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THE RADAR GUN CREATES THE HEADLINE. DURABILITY CREATES THE ERA.

SOURCES: MLB.com; Reuters game reporting; Milwaukee Brewers; Baseball Savant.

BEHIND THE GAME

Marquise Mays films Black Milwaukee

THE CAMERA AS COMMUNITY CARE

THE CITY LOOKS BACK AT ITSELF

Marquise Mays uses documentary film to preserve Black Midwestern life from inside the community.



MARQUISE MAYS / UWM PECK SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

THE FRAME IS NOT NEUTRAL

Marquise Mays approaches filmmaking as both artistic practice and community care. That position changes where the camera stands. Black Milwaukee is not treated as scenery for an outsider's explanation; it becomes a community capable of naming its own tenderness, danger, humor, memory and contradiction.

His short documentary The Heartland examines the relationship Black children have with Milwaukee while confronting the barriers the city places around them. Black Strings follows the Black String Triage Ensemble as its musicians perform at crime scenes in the immediate aftermath of gun violence.

THE FILMMAKER ALSO BUILDS FILMMAKERS

Mays teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, placing production knowledge beside the next generation of artists. That combination matters in a city where stories can be plentiful while equipment, mentorship, distribution and institutional access remain uneven.

His forthcoming project Monikers, developed with ITVS and PBS Digital Studios, examines the power of nicknames in Black communities. The subject appears small until the camera reveals what a nickname can contain: family history, protection, humor, reputation and the right to define someone on familiar terms.

Behind every finished film is infrastructure—trust, time, funding, editing and a place for the work to be seen. Mays is building that infrastructure while making the images.

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FILM • SERIES • DOCUMENTARIES

THE CAMERA DOES MORE THAN RECORD THE CITY. IT RETURNS THE CITY TO ITSELF.

SOURCES: UWM Peck School of the Arts; Firelight Media; PBS Digital Studios; official film materials.

CURRENT BEAUTY

Jazii Kelly builds SPIL Kosmetics

FROM PASSION TO PRODUCT

THE GLOSS BECOMES A BUSINESS

A childhood love of makeup becomes a Milwaukee beauty brand built through creativity and customer trust.



JAZII KELLY / PHOTO COURTESY OF SPIL KOSMETICS

THE PRODUCT STARTED WITH CURIOSITY

Jazii Kelly's relationship with makeup began long before SPIL Kosmetics had packaging, customers or a business plan. An early fascination with color and self-expression became a skill, and the skill eventually became a Milwaukee-based lip gloss brand with a clear founder at the center.

That sequence matters. Beauty businesses often look effortless after the branding is finished, but the real work is operational: formulas, suppliers, containers, inventory, content, shipping and the steady process of listening to what customers use again.

CUSTOMER CONNECTION IS THE ADVANTAGE

SPIL can compete by remaining close to the person buying the product. A founder-led company hears the question behind the sale: which shade feels wearable, which texture lasts, what price makes repeat purchase realistic and what story makes the customer feel represented instead of targeted.

Kelly's next opportunity is to convert early loyalty into a system. Hero products should be easy to identify. Content should teach as well as sell. Pop-ups can produce feedback, while e-commerce turns that feedback into measurable repeat business.

Black beauty has always generated culture. The boss move is building companies that keep part of the value. SPIL Kosmetics is still growing, which makes this the right time to document the foundation instead of waiting until the work looks inevitable.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

THE COLOR CREATES THE FIRST LOOK. CUSTOMER TRUST BUILDS THE BRAND.

SOURCES: Shepherd Express; SPIL Kosmetics official materials; founder profile.

MODELS MAKING MOVES

Jackie Droese makes secondhand style visible

MILWAUKEE THRIFT INFLUENCE**SECONDHAND BECOMES FIRST CHOICE**

Jackie Droese turns personal style, resale knowledge and local discovery into a growing creator platform.



JACKIE DROESE / MILWAUKEE MAGAZINE

STYLE BECOMES A POINT OF VIEW

Jackie Droese built @thriftlikeagirl around a simple but expandable idea: the best outfit does not have to begin with a new purchase. By showing the search, the surprise and the styling decision, she turns secondhand shopping into content that is useful, personal and unmistakably connected to Milwaukee.

Her audience has grown beyond 80,000 followers, with individual videos reaching well past 100,000 views. Partnerships with Summerfest and a vintage drop with Urban Outfitters demonstrate what happens when a consistent local point of view becomes valuable to larger platforms.

THE CREATOR IS ALSO A CURATOR

Thrifting content works because taste becomes the service. The creator filters an overwhelming marketplace, teaches viewers how to see potential and gives an old garment a new context. That process is closer to editing than shopping.

The next level is ownership. Events, resale drops, affiliate relationships, styling services and a direct subscriber list can turn borrowed social reach into a business with multiple lanes. The audience should know not only what Droese found, but where to find her when an algorithm does not deliver the post.

Models making moves is not only about walking a runway. It is about controlling the frame, the recommendation and the value created by a recognizable eye.

**PLACE YOUR AD
HERE**

THE ITEM MAY BE SECONDHAND. THE POINT OF VIEW IS ORIGINAL.

SOURCES: Milwaukee Magazine; @thriftlikeagirl; Urban Outfitters partnership information.

STREET STORIES

Tia Richardson paints with Milwaukee

THE WALL BECOMES A MEETING PLACE

THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENTERS THE MURAL

More than 50 collaborative works show how public art can turn listening into shared ownership.



TIA RICHARDSON / MILWAUKEE NNS, CATCHLIGHT LOCAL

THE COMMUNITY IS PART OF THE PROCESS

Tia Richardson does not arrive with a finished answer and ask a neighborhood to approve it. Through Cosmic Butterfly Design, she begins by listening. Residents, students and community partners identify what they want the wall to hold, then help shape the imagery and, often, the painting itself.

After more than two decades and over 50 collaborative murals across Milwaukee, the method has become as important as the finished color. A public artwork can create connection before the first brush touches the wall because the conversation gives people permission to imagine their environment differently.

PUBLIC ART CAN BECOME PUBLIC MEMORY

Richardson describes art as a tool for healing and self-expression. That purpose is visible in projects built with young people and residents who rarely control the images occupying their streets. Participation changes the relationship: the mural is not something installed near them; it is something carrying part of them.

The business of community art still requires professional structure. Budgets, permissions, materials, facilitation, insurance, timelines and maintenance determine whether a powerful idea becomes a durable public asset.

Milwaukee's walls tell stories about who receives investment and who gets remembered. Richardson's work makes the neighborhood an author instead of a backdrop.

**PLACE YOUR AD
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THE WALL HOLDS THE COLOR. THE COMMUNITY HOLDS THE MEANING.

SOURCES: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service; MATC; Baird Center; Cosmic Butterfly Design.

WHAT THEY MISSED

Backspin finds Milwaukee's first hip-hop song

THE ARCHIVE WAS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

WHO MADE THE FIRST RECORD?

Radio Milwaukee's search reveals why a city's music history cannot be reduced to one easy answer.



A-TACK RECORD / RADIO MILWAUKEE BACKSPIN

FIRST DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU COUNT

The search for Milwaukee's first hip-hop song sounds like a question a database should settle. Radio Milwaukee's Backspin found the opposite. Does first mean the earliest rap recorded, the first song pressed to vinyl, the first track remembered by the scene or the record that created lasting influence? Each definition changes the answer.

Hosts Justin Barney and Tyrone Miller, known as DJ Bizzon, spoke with MCs, DJs, musicians and entrepreneurs who were present as Milwaukee absorbed and reshaped a new culture. Their six-part investigation moved through The Majestics, Marvell Love, A-Tack and the future impact of Speech and Arrested Development.

THE MISSING ARCHIVE CHANGES THE STORY

Records disappear when nobody catalogs them. Credits are forgotten. A song can influence an entire room without reaching a chart. The people who remember may never have been interviewed, and the physical copy may sit in a basement until someone understands what it contains.

That is why preservation matters to the present generation. Funny \$Money's videos, sessions and collaborations should not require a future detective story to be taken seriously. Milwaukee can build the archive now—artist by artist, producer by producer, neighborhood by neighborhood.

What they missed is not only an old song. It is the lesson that cultural history belongs to whoever does the work of preserving it.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

A CITY LOSES ITS FIRST CHAPTER WHEN NOBODY SAVES THE RECEIPTS.

SOURCES: Radio Milwaukee's Backspin podcast and listening guide; Milwaukee music archives.

BOSS MOVES / HUSTLE TO BUSINESS

Imani Raiyne builds Kreative Fruitz

ART, WELLNESS AND ENTERPRISE

A HEALTHY IDEA BECOMES INFRASTRUCTURE

Imani Raiyne turns fruit carving, family memory and nutrition education into a Milwaukee business.



IMANI RAIYNE / MILWAUKEE NNS, CATCHLIGHT LOCAL

THE BUSINESS BEGAN WITH FAMILY

Imani Raiyne learned fruit art at home from her mother, Gina, after lupus changed the structure of their lives. Homeschooling combined nutrition with creativity, and a practical lesson became a form of connection. After her mother's death, preparing a fruit display for her father's retirement returned Raiyne to that shared language.

Kreative Fruitz grew from that moment into catering, custom arrangements and hands-on workshops designed to make healthy eating feel inviting rather than punitive. The product is visually impressive, but the business idea reaches further: food can become art, education and conversation in the same experience.

PURPOSE STILL NEEDS A SYSTEM

Mission-driven companies survive when the mission is supported by repeatable operations. Packages, event pricing, food safety, scheduling, ingredient costs and partnerships determine how many people the idea can serve without exhausting its founder.

Raiyne can expand through schools, wellness programs, corporate events and community organizations that need engaging ways to discuss nutrition. Workshops create revenue and transfer the skill; catering creates visibility; the founder story creates emotional connection.

GROWTH SHOULD STAY CLOSE TO THE MISSION

Expansion does not require turning a personal practice into a generic wellness product. The strongest partnerships will pay for the full experience: the carving, the teaching, the family story and the invitation to see healthy food differently. Clear packages can protect that value while making it easier for schools and organizations to understand what they are buying.

The strongest boss move is not separating purpose from profit. It is designing a company where revenue makes the purpose easier to deliver, measure and continue.

WHEN THE PURPOSE HAS A SYSTEM, THE IMPACT CAN KEEP GROWING.

SOURCES: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service; Kreative Fruitz; Mindful Mondays MKE.

RICARDA AMOR TEQUILA



"JUST A BETTER
TASTE OF LIFE"

**REMEMBER TO
DRINK LIKE A BOSS**





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