

THE CURRENT

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

ISSUE 006



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PUBLISHING • PAYMENT • RESPECT
BOOSIE BADAZZ VS ROD WAVE

LONG JOURNEY
UNFINISHED
BUSINESS

WHEN INFLUENCE, OWNERSHIP AND RESPECT COLLIDE.

INSIDE ISSUE 006

Street culture, ownership and the price of influence

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The music travels. The paperwork, payment and respect must travel with it.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

The streets remember who created the language

THE CURRENT POSITION

RESPECT HAS TO REACH THE PAPERWORK

Issue 006 follows the distance between cultural influence and business control.

A record can begin in one neighborhood and live in another generation. That is one of hip-hop's powers. The same journey can also create a dispute when admiration, sampling, publishing and payment are treated as if they mean the same thing. They do not. Love can inspire the record. Permission and compensation determine whether everybody's work is respected.

The renewed conflict between Boosie BadAzz and Rod Wave is bigger than two artists arguing online. Boosie hears his writing, history and publishing moving through another catalog. Rod says the references are a salute to music that helped shape him. Both positions reveal something real, but only clear agreements can turn that shared history into finished business.

The rest of this issue stays close to the street. Cardi B brings a major production back onto a Brooklyn block. BunnaB turns East Atlanta personality into momentum. Moses Itauma reaches for heavyweight history before most fighters reach their prime. Jasmine Sanders and Achieng Agutu control beauty and fashion images on their own terms. Milwaukee's Black Arts Fest and Bronzeville business market prove the culture still needs real places to gather.

THE CULTURE DESERVES RECEIPTS

THE CURRENT was built to document more than a moment. We want the voice, the work, the ownership and the people behind the image. Influence becomes legacy when credit is accurate, payment is fair and the next generation can trace where the language came from.



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COVER STORY

Boosie BadAzz and Rod Wave reopen the sample dispute

PUBLISHING • PAYMENT • RESPECT

LONG JOURNEY, UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A song built to honor an influence became a public lesson in what happens when admiration and ownership do not arrive together.



BOOSIE BADAZZ + ROD WAVE / XXL MEDIA COMPOSITE

THE RECORD CARRIES TWO HISTORIES

Rod Wave's 2023 song Long Journey reaches back to the Boosie BadAzz and Webbie record of the same name. The connection makes musical sense. Both artists built loyal audiences by turning pain, survival and memory into records that feel personal enough to belong to the listener. Rod has described his use of Boosie's work as showing love to an artist who helped shape him.

Boosie hears another side of that connection. He says the writing and publishing attached to his catalog have been used repeatedly without the compensation he believes is due. When Rod revisited the disagreement during an August 2026 Club Shay Shay interview, the old conflict returned to social media almost immediately.

SHOWING LOVE IS NOT THE SAME AS CLEARING A SAMPLE

Hip-hop has always spoken through reference. A melody, phrase or vocal memory can connect generations in seconds. But once a reference becomes part of a commercial release, the business has to identify the owners, negotiate permission and define how money and credit will be divided.

That process is not disrespectful to the culture. It is how the people who created the original language remain connected to the value their work keeps producing. A salute can be sincere while the paperwork is still incomplete.

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THE SAMPLE CREATES THE CONNECTION. THE CLEARANCE CREATES RESPECT.

SOURCES: XXL, Aug. 27, 2026; Club Shay Shay interview; iHeart reporting; official artist statements.

COVER STORY

Influence becomes business when the catalog keeps earning

THE PRICE IS BIGGER THAN ONE SONG

RESPECT NEEDS A NUMBER

Boosie and Rod Wave are arguing about money, but the deeper issue is who controls the value of memory once it becomes a new hit.



BOOSIE BADAZZ + ROD WAVE / XXL MEDIA COMPOSITE

A CATALOG IS A WORKING ASSET

To the audience, an old song is a memory. To its writers and publishers, it is also an asset that can generate income through streams, performances, television, film, advertising and new recordings. That is why a dispute that sounds personal online can carry a much larger financial meaning behind the screen.

Rod has said he offered Boosie \$100,000 to settle the issue; reports say Boosie sought more. Those numbers should be understood as claims made during an active public disagreement, not a completed deal. No social-media clip can substitute for the contracts that identify exactly what was used, who owns it and what a fair license requires.

THE INTERNET REWARDS THE ARGUMENT

Public conflict creates engagement quickly. Each response becomes content, and the audience chooses sides before it sees a publishing split sheet or clearance request. That attention may raise the temperature while making resolution harder. The street understands pride, but a catalog needs precision.

THE NEXT GENERATION IS WATCHING

Younger artists should not learn that sampling is forbidden. They should learn that history has owners. Older artists should not have to choose between being honored and being paid. The strongest outcome allows a new record to carry an old feeling while the original creators share in the new value.

Boosie and Rod Wave represent two generations that speak a similar emotional language. Finishing the business would not weaken that connection. It would prove that influence, ownership and respect can occupy the same record.

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THE CULTURE CAN SHARE THE MEMORY WITHOUT ERASING THE OWNER.

SOURCES: XXL; Club Shay Shay; iHeart; Complex; U.S. Copyright Office sampling guidance.

THE TEA

Cardi B brings a major video back to the block

BROOKLYN BECOMES THE SET

THE STREET IS STILL THE BIGGEST STAGE

The 'AH HA' video turns neighborhood movement, fashion and attitude into a citywide celebration.



CARDI B / ATLANTIC RECORDS VIDEO STILL

THE PRODUCTION FEELS EXPENSIVE. THE ENERGY FEELS FAMILIAR.

Cardi B's 'AH HA' video arrives with the scale of a major-label production but keeps returning to the places where her charisma makes the most sense: the street, the salon, the bikes, the dancers and the crowd. Brooklyn is not background decoration. The neighborhood supplies the movement that makes the video feel alive.

The visual language is loud on purpose. Fashion changes fast, the camera keeps moving and the block becomes a runway without losing its edge. A cameo from Kash Doll extends the sense that the video is a gathering, not a sealed celebrity performance.

THE BLOCK KNOWS HOW TO DIRECT ATTENTION

Hip-hop videos have always turned ordinary locations into cultural landmarks. A storefront, hydrant, stoop or motorcycle line can carry more identity than a blank soundstage because people already understand the social life inside the frame.

Cardi's advantage is that she can make spectacle feel local. The money is visible, but so is the humor, body language and neighborhood confidence that introduced her. The tea is simple: global reach still depends on a street that knows how to move when the camera arrives.

**MARKETING • PROMOTIONS • BRAND STRATEGY****THE BUDGET BUILDS THE VIDEO. THE BLOCK GIVES IT A SOUL.**

SOURCES: People, Aug. 28, 2026; Atlantic Records; official music video.

WHO'S TRENDING

BunnaB carries East Atlanta into her own season

THE VOICE CUTS THROUGH

SUMMER STAYS OUTSIDE

Personality, hooks and a neighborhood-ready delivery are turning BunnaB from a viral name into a developing catalog.



BUNNAB / 'BUNNA SUMMA' OFFICIAL COVER ART

THE SONG ARRIVED WITH A PLACE ATTACHED

BunnaB's breakout did not sound designed by committee. 'Bunna Summa' carried the loose, competitive energy of Atlanta in warm weather: quick talk, easy confidence and a hook built to move through cars, parties and short-form clips without losing its street address.

The East Atlanta rapper made her commercial debut in 2023 and broke wider in 2025. By 2026, she appeared among Complex's rappers to watch, with an audience large enough to prove the first wave was more than one seasonal moment.

VIRAL ATTENTION HAS TO BECOME REPETITION

The next test is catalog. A viral record introduces the personality; follow-up songs have to show whether the voice can survive new tempos, subjects and seasons. BunnaB's bright delivery and singsong taunts give her a recognizable tool. Discipline will determine how many different records that tool can build.

Trending is not the same as established. That is exactly why the moment matters. The street hears the signal before the industry finishes writing the biography.



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THE VIRAL CLIP OPENS THE WINDOW. THE CATALOG KEEPS THE VIEW.

SOURCES: Complex, '26 Rappers to Watch in 2026'; Apple Music; official BunnaB profiles.

CURRENT SPORTS

Moses Itauma reaches for heavyweight history

TWENTY-ONE WITH A TITLE IN FRONT OF HIM

THE PRESSURE ARRIVES EARLY

An unbeaten young heavyweight enters the hardest test of his career with history close enough to touch.



MOSES ITAUMA + FILIP HRGOVIC / PRESS CONFERENCE

THE RECORD CREATED THE OPPORTUNITY

Moses Itauma enters the vacant IBF heavyweight title fight at 14-0, with ten straight knockouts and the possibility of becoming boxing's second-youngest heavyweight champion after Mike Tyson. The comparison creates a headline. Filip Hrgovic creates the actual test.

At 34, Hrgovic brings professional rounds, Olympic experience and only one defeat. The age gap makes the fight look like arrival against resistance: one man trying to claim the future, the other refusing to become the name used to introduce it.

THE WEIGH-IN MADE THE PRESSURE PHYSICAL

The final confrontation turned heated when Itauma shoved Hrgovic from the stage and Hrgovic answered with a slap before security separated them. That moment sells the event, but it also raises the cost of losing control. Heavyweight fights can change with one mistake before or after the bell.

Itauma's real assignment is not to imitate Tyson. It is to stay composed long enough to prove his own speed, defense and power against a man prepared to extend him. History is available, but the belt only recognizes the work completed that night.



MENTAL WELLNESS • ADVOCACY • PREVENTION

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THE HYPE COUNTS THE YEARS. THE RING COUNTS THE ROUNDS.

SOURCES: Reuters, Aug. 28, 2026; Sky Sports; Queensberry Promotions.

BEHIND THE GAME

Hip-hop confronts artificial voices and borrowed identity

THE MACHINE ENTERS THE BOOTH

WHO OWNS THE VOICE?

AI can imitate tone, accelerate production and blur authorship—the exact lines hip-hop cannot afford to leave undefined.



FENIX FLEXIN / MYMIXTAPEZ FEATURE IMAGE

THE TOOL IS ALREADY INSIDE THE MUSIC

In 2026, the AI debate stopped being theoretical. Artists including Tyga and Fenix Flexin acknowledged using artificial intelligence in released music, while other major voices argued that the technology undermines human artistry or exploits the identity musicians spent years building.

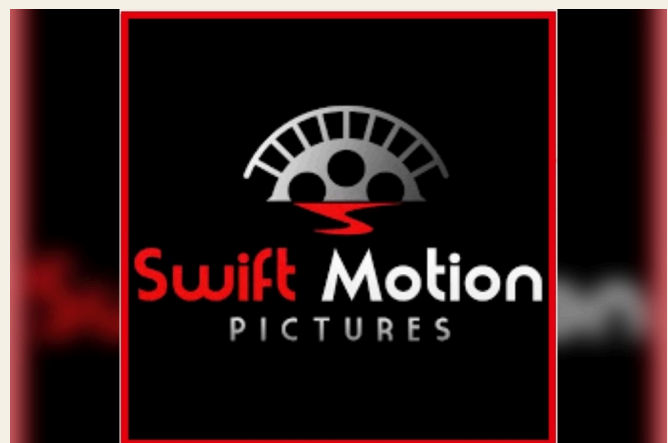
Hip-hop is especially exposed because the voice carries biography. Accent, pain, slang, breath and timing tell the listener where an artist comes from. A machine that can reproduce those signals can create something that sounds culturally specific without living any of the life inside it.

EFFICIENCY IS NOT AUTHORSHIP

AI may help clean audio, organize sessions or test ideas. The danger begins when a generated voice is presented as a person, when training material is taken without permission or when labels and platforms cannot explain who created what.

Behind the game, contracts have to catch up. Artists need control over voice replicas, disclosure when synthetic performance is used and compensation when catalogs train commercial systems. The street already knows what happens when somebody borrows the style and forgets the source.

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A MACHINE CAN COPY THE SOUND. IT CANNOT CLAIM THE LIFE BEHIND IT.

SOURCES: Complex, Aug. 26, 2026; official artist statements; U.S. Copyright Office AI reports.

CURRENT BEAUTY

Jasmine Sanders returns to the water in control

BEAUTY OF THE WEEK

GOLDEN CONFIDENCE LASTS

Jasmine Sanders turns swimsuit modeling into a long-running visual signature built on presence, range and self-possession.



JASMINE SANDERS / YU TSAI, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED SWIMSUIT

THE CAMERA RECOGNIZES CERTAINTY

Jasmine Sanders has spent years proving that beauty is more than one perfect image. Known as Golden Barbie, she entered the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit family in 2019, later became a cover model and joined the magazine's 60th-anniversary class of legends.

Her return for the 2026 issue placed her in Fort Myers, Florida, adding another chapter to a portfolio that has moved through Costa Rica, Bali, Belize and Bermuda. The locations change. Her control of the frame remains.

LONGEVITY IS THE REAL BEAUTY STORY

The culture has always understood Sanders's mix of glamour and approachability. Swimsuit imagery celebrates the body, but the lasting appeal comes from confidence that does not ask permission. She can look polished without looking distant and sensual without surrendering authorship of the image.

CURRENT BEAUTY honors adult women of the culture who understand the lens and bring a complete identity into it. Sanders has made that understanding a career.

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THE SWIMSUIT FRAMES THE BODY. CONFIDENCE OWNS THE IMAGE.

SOURCES: Sports Illustrated Swimsuit; official Jasmine Sanders profiles and interviews.

MODELS MAKING MOVES

Achieng Agutu turns confidence into global position

FROM OPEN CASTING TO GLOBAL CAMPAIGN

CONFIDENCE BECOMES A BUSINESS

Achieng Agutu brings Kenyan identity, body confidence and deliberate style into a modeling career that keeps expanding.



ACHIENG AGUTU / YU TSAI, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED SWIMSUIT

THE OPEN DOOR BECAME A RUNWAY

Achieng Agutu entered the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit world by co-winning the 2023 Swim Search open casting call. Her rookie feature arrived in 2024, followed by Bermuda in 2025 and Botswana in 2026. Three consecutive years turned an opportunity into a recognizable position.

The Kenyan-born model has been called the Confidence Queen because her public identity does not separate beauty from voice. She brings enthusiasm, dark-skin representation and cultural pride into spaces that once treated those qualities as exceptions.

STYLE CAN CARRY THE PLACE WITH IT

For the 2026 launch, Agutu's styling drew directly from Botswana—zebra patterns, cowhide texture and exposed silhouettes interpreted through glamour. That choice kept the shoot from becoming anonymous luxury. The place remained present inside the image.

The move is larger than posing. Panels, campaigns and public speaking turn modeling experience into authority. Agutu is building a career where confidence is not a slogan placed under a photograph; it is the product connecting the work.

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THE CASTING CREATED ACCESS. IDENTITY MADE THE POSITION MEMORABLE.

SOURCES: Sports Illustrated Swimsuit, May 2026; official Achieng Agutu profiles.

STREET STORIES

Black Arts Fest MKE keeps culture in public

THE RAIN DID NOT CLEAR THE GROUNDS

THE CULTURE STAYS OUTSIDE

Music, visual art, food and African goods kept moving through a wet Milwaukee festival day.



BLACK ARTS FEST MKE / JAKE DALE, MILWAUKEE NNS

A FESTIVAL IS A TEMPORARY NEIGHBORHOOD

Rain changed the schedule at Black Arts Fest MKE, but it did not erase the gathering. Performers took the stage, artists showed their work and vendors filled the grounds with food, clothing, jewelry, hats, baskets and goods connected to African and African American identity.

The value of a cultural festival is larger than entertainment. It gives small businesses a customer base for the day, gives artists a public wall without needing a gallery and gives families a place where Black expression is the center rather than a side program.

PUBLIC SPACE BECOMES CULTURAL MEMORY

Milwaukee's culture is often documented after the room closes. A festival lets the city see the work while it is still moving. The audience can meet the maker, hear the musician and buy directly from the vendor whose name would otherwise be hidden behind an online post.

Street stories need real streets, parks and stages. The internet can extend the image, but the community becomes visible to itself when people occupy the same ground.

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THE WEATHER CHANGED THE DAY. THE COMMUNITY KEPT THE MEANING.

SOURCES: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service, Aug. 5, 2026; Black Arts Fest MKE.

WHAT THEY MISSED

The 2016 XXL Freshman class changed the decade

TEN YEARS AFTER THE COVER

THE BET AGED INTO HISTORY

One photograph placed ten uncertain futures together; the next decade proved how many directions hip-hop could take.



2016 XXL FRESHMAN CLASS / TRAVIS SHINN, XXL

THE COVER CAPTURED RAP BEFORE THE ANSWERS

The 2016 XXL Freshman class brought together 21 Savage, Kodak Black, Lil Uzi Vert, G Herbo, Denzel Curry, Lil Yachty, Anderson .Paak, Lil Dicky, Dave East and Desiigner. At the time, the image was a prediction. Ten years later, it reads like a map of the sounds, careers and contradictions that shaped modern rap.

The famous cypher mattered because the personalities were not polished into one style. Uzi's looseness, Kodak's melody, 21's restraint, Yachty's color and Denzel's intensity occupied the same room without pretending the future had only one voice.

THE INTERNET TURNED THE TEST INTO AN ARCHIVE

Fans did not only see a magazine cover. They watched freestyles, cyphers and behind-the-scenes clips repeatedly, turning selection day into permanent cultural evidence. Success, controversy, reinvention and disappearance all became visible against the first image.

What they missed was how valuable the uncertainty would become. The class worked because it documented artists before consensus settled around them. Street magazines matter most when they are willing to recognize the signal while the rest of the industry is still arguing about the noise.

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THE COVER MADE A PREDICTION. THE DECADE SUPPLIED THE RECEIPTS.

SOURCES: XXL documentary and archive, Aug. 20, 2026; official artist discographies.

BOSS MOVES / HUSTLE TO BUSINESS

Lilo Allen rebuilds the marketplace in Bronzeville

BLACK BUSINESS RETURNS TO THE BLOCK

THE MARKET IS PART OF THE MEMORY

Papyrus & Charms and America's Black Holocaust Museum create recurring space for Milwaukee entrepreneurs to meet customers directly.



LILO ALLEN / TERRENCE SIMS, SHEPHERD EXPRESS

THE LOCATION CARRIES BUSINESS HISTORY

Milwaukee's Black Business Market placed local art, clothing, food and skincare inside historic Bronzeville, a neighborhood once known for a dense concentration of Black-owned businesses. The location made the event more than a vendor fair. It connected today's sellers to a business district the city must remember and rebuild.

Lilo Allen, owner of Papyrus & Charms, partnered with America's Black Holocaust Museum to organize the market. Her goal was direct: give people a chance to see what Milwaukee makes and give entrepreneurs a place to sell where Black business history is already present.

A POP-UP CAN BECOME INFRASTRUCTURE

One market creates a sales day. Repeated markets create customer habits, shared promotion and relationships among vendors. Allen and the museum continue collaborating around Black Business Month, Women's History Month and Kwanzaa, turning seasonal gatherings into a recurring platform.

The boss move is not waiting for every business to afford its own storefront before the city takes it seriously. A well-organized market pools foot traffic and visibility so smaller brands can test products, collect customers and grow in public.

THE VENDOR MAKES THE PRODUCT. THE MARKET MAKES THE CUSTOMER ROUTE.

SOURCES: CBS 58, Aug. 2026; America's Black Holocaust Museum; Papyrus & Charms.

RICARDA AMOR TEQUILA



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