

SEVENTH ISSUE | 2023 | EXCLUSIVE COVER

UNDERGRND

BATTLE OF THE BANDS



Strange Case & Sitting on Stacy



COLLECTOR'S ISSUE
4/5



The 805's hottest two bands share an unusual clash of friendship and rivalry.

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CREDITS CREDITS CREDIT!

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SEVENTH ISSUE | 2023 | SCENES COLLIDE: PART TWO

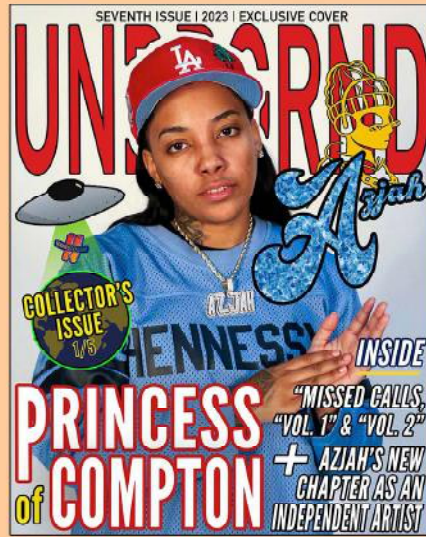
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EXCLUSIVE COVERS

COLLECT THEM ALL!



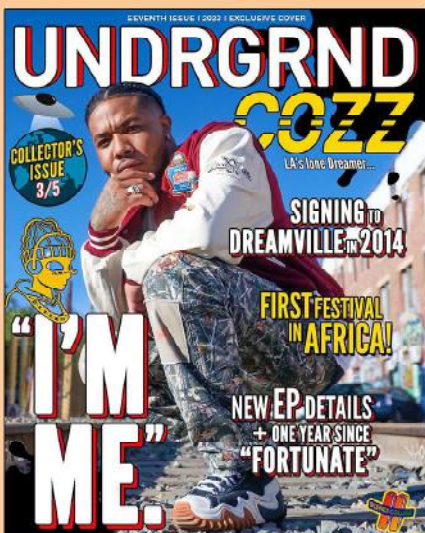
MAIN COVER
SCENES COLLIDE: PART 2



AZJAH
EXCLUSIVE COVER 1/5



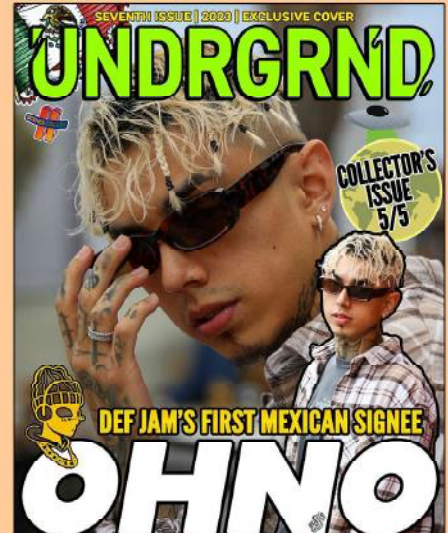
GARREN
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SITTING ON STACY & STRANGE CASE
EXCLUSIVE COVER 4/5



OHNO
EXCLUSIVE COVER 5/5

Lucky number seven...

This time of year is our favorite time to drop a magazine. Spring in Southern California is unbeatable, and the music scene always has an extra kick to it as everyone prepares their summer releases, shows, merch drops — whatever. Spring 2023 on the *UNDRGRND* front brings us Issue 7: “Scenes Collide: Part 2,” a sequel to arguably our most successful issue ever: Issue 3, “Scenes Collide.”

But this time around, we put together a whole ‘nother level of range and variety to those featured in the pages that follow. Our Main Cover hosts representatives of Atlanta, The 805, Bakersfield, The Valley, and The High Desert. It also showcases a tattoo artist (shoutout **Ruben**) and a rap manager (shoutout **Gyrvin**) — the first two non-artists ever featured on an *UNDRGRND Magazine* cover.



Not to sound like we all that (yet), but we also had the privilege of working with some real industry heavy-hitters for our Issue 7 Exclusive Cover run.

Los Angeles’ own **Cozz**, who signed to J. Cole’s prestigious Dreamville label in 2014, is certainly the biggest artist who’s came and f*cked with the *UNDRGRND Universe* so far to date — appreciate you big time, fam. **Azjah**, the city-proclaimed “Princess of Compton,” and **Garren**, the three-time Grammy-nominated musical mad-genius, also blessed us with Exclusive Cover appearances. And we are beyond proud to have **OHNO**, Def Jam’s new spanish pop/rap superstar, and 805 indie rock celebrities, **Sitting on Stacy & Strange Case**, rounding out our Issue 7 lineup.

Spring is a signal to put the whip into sport mode, and that’s what we tried to do on this issue. Your local music scene is about to hit a peak in activity, wherever you live. So get strategic, and think about how you can contribute to it.

If you’re an artist, release something this summer (please!). If you’re a non-artist like most, go out to an event and support an underground talent putting themselves out there for their dream. It’ll be fun, you’ll meet people you won’t regret meeting, and you’ll be showing love to something that needs it.

Welcome to lucky number seven,

Andrew Mason

Michael Pofsky

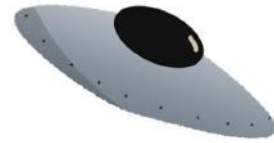


Photo by William Carlos/@williamcarlosproductions



@undrgrndmag_



@undrgrndmagazine



UNDRGRND MAGAZINE



undrgrndmagazinecontact@gmail.com

"sunsets" out now



simi valley's @hallieromero

HALLIE



MAD JOE

MP³
AUDIO

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

ALBUM OUT NOW



1. And then we pray...
2. Overtime/m.o.n
(feat. EXXGA)
3. New Realm
4. Blum Raised
(feat. MARS THE MARIJAN)
5. Put a Bullet...
6. To my Brain
7. Blocca Hot
(feat. FOSTER)
8. Half the man i used to be
9. Really Do
(feat. SCATHE)
10. Long Live Ohsi



MAD JOE

@97CLASSIK



AARON

“Everyone’s gonna be there when you **pop that bottle**, but not everyone’s gonna be there to **carry your casket**.”

GOV'T NAME: Aaron Castoreña

STAGE NAME: Aaron California

BORN: Vallejo, Calif.

RAISED IN: San Luis Obispo County

BIRTHDAY: March 18th, 1989 (Pisces)

HEIGHT: 5-foot-9

YEARS MAKING MUSIC: 18

OTHER OCCUPATION: Technical Support, Customer Service

HIGH SCHOOL: Pacific Beach Continuation

COLLEGE: Cuesta Community

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Ice Cube, Nipsey Hussle, Mac Miller, Logic

NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT: Opening for Dizzy Wright at The Siren in Morro Bay

DREAM FEATURE: Joyner Lucas

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CALIFORNIA

HOBBIES OUTSIDE OF MUSIC: Drawing, tattoos, hanging with family, videogames

FAV MOVIE: *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

FAV TV SHOW: Black Mirror

FAV RESTAURANT: Kuma Sushi

GO-TO PROD/ENG: Jay Reilly

FAV RECORDING STUDIO: Studio Eden

CURRENTLY ON REPEAT: My November 2022 release "Stay," a song dedicated to my son, Ezra



SMORGASBURG FOOD MARKET:

"I come out to L.A. from Los Osos [a 4-hour distance] as much as I can. My wife has a lot of family out here. There is so much to do and we're both big foodies. One of our favorite things to do is go to this place called 'Smorgasburg.' My wife's cousin, Emerald, told us about it."

STARTED IN THE BAY AREA:

"I was born in Vallejo, in The Bay Area. Home of Mac Dre, E-40, where we go dumb. I lived there until I was about 13, when I moved to West Sacramento for a little over a year. Then I got sent to San Luis Obispo County when I was 16, and I've been there ever since. But I moved back to Vallejo for one year, moved back to SLO, even moved to Red Lodge, Montana — that's where I got my stage name. And my son was actually born in Melbourne, Florida."

STAGE NAME:

"My real last name is Castoreña. I'm Mexican — not a lot of Mexican people in Red Lodge, Montana. On top of that, my style and how I carry myself is very Californian. I walked into a bar and the bartender threw ice at me like, 'What are you wearing?' They said I looked like I had come from California, and they couldn't pronounce my last name, so they just called me 'Aaron California,' and I felt like it fit. Previous to that, I went by 'Kid Voo' [like 'Voodoo'], but it just felt more natural to go by something closer to my real name."

OG CENTRAL COAST MUSIC SCENE:

"I was like 16-17, getting into bars with my homies. The 'Public Defendaz,' '40oz. Freaks,' and more were opening up for bigger artists at the local venue. That's where I got introduced to a lot of these cats, and where I started developing a drinking problem, I guess. I didn't care if you were Dr. Suess, I was that annoying kid pestering you to rap battle until you just battled me. That's kind of how I got introduced to the rap scene."

TOAST TO BEATING ADDICTION:

"The song that I released in March 2022 ['My Ways'] was about my battle with addiction. At the rate I was going, it would have killed me if I didn't stop. There're not enough people of notoriety who take the time to say, 'It's okay to NOT drink. Don't kill yourself trying to be cool.' I haven't had one sip in four years."

DROPPING ONE SONG A MONTH:

"It's easier for me as an independent artist to market singles. I have a lot of respect for people's time, and I like for people to respect my time. I'm not gonna ask you to give me 30 minutes of your day — if you just heard about me, half an hour is kind of a big commitment. It's a lot easier to ask for two, three minutes. But if people would like to hear an album from me, then I got a lot of ideas."

A ONE MAN BAND:

"I probably have like four keyboards at home. I've been playing the guitar since I was 11. I've got too many guitars, especially according to my wife. The biggest problem with drums is the noise, even though I've tried to find ways to set up an electric drum set that don't make too much noise and bother my wife and son. Right now, my storage is full of music equipment and things I wish I could get back to."

MOST PAINFUL TATTOO:

"My throat. It was about 4 hours and the last 45 minutes I was shaking so bad the table was rattling. My pain tolerance and my stamina was solid, but three hours in, the tattoo artist took a smoke break. She was gone for like 45 minutes and I feel like that was just enough time for the swelling to kick in."



RUGGO

GOV'T NAME: R. Sheerer

STAGE NAME: Ruggo

BORN: Mission Hills, Calif.

RAISED IN: Sylmar &
San Fernando, Calif.

BIRTHDAY: July 20th, 2002
(Cancer)

HEIGHT: 5-foot-9

YEARS MAKING MUSIC: 7

OTHER OCCUPATION:

Producer, clothing line
owner, Doordash &
Postmates, previously in
fast food industry

HIGH SCHOOL: Granada Hills

COLLEGE: College of the
Canyons ("for one day")

MUSIC INFLUENCES:

Isaiah Rashad, Nipsey Hussle,
Kendrick Lamar, J. Cole,
("and Bay Area music too")

NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT:

Opening up for D Smoke in
Ventura

HOBBIES OUTSIDE OF MUSIC:

Soccer, gardening, travelling

FAVORITE MOVIE:

"All Spider-Man movies"

FAVORITE TV SHOW:

Avatar: The Last Airbender

FAVORITE RESTAURANTS:

Tacos Mi Rincón Tapatio (Sylmar)

GO-TO PRODS: MyGuyMars,
Python P, SmoovJAG,
"and YouTube.com"

GO-TO ENG: Syphon,

Cristal "VVS" Viramontes

FAVORITE RECORDING

STUDIO: The Wrecking Spot

CURRENTLY ON REPEAT:

Kendrick Lamar "Mr. Morale &
the Big Steppers"

"Me and my dad, we've learned a lot together."



POST 9/11 BABY:

"I was born in Mission Hills, across the street from the San Fernando Mission. I was born in 2002, so I'm 20 years old right now. 9/11 the world changed and then I came."

MUSICAL INSPIRATIONS:

"I've listened to Nipsey since 6th grade. I grew up listening to his music in the car. I also do have big homies from The 818 that I look up to, such as J-Ro and Tha Alkaholiks."

STOPPING TRAFFIC AT THE MILK ROOM:

"First and foremost, we had a blast. We stopped oncoming traffic, had a bunch of people walking by — everyone saw what happened out there. It was a cool little turn out man, very intangible vibe. Everyone was dope and had good energy."

CONFIDENCE ON STAGE:

"Constantly having rehearsals is what boosts your confidence the most. Where you're able to be like, 'Ok, this is just that what I did on rehearsal day.' Then consistently doing it over and over it kinda just becomes something natural."

WORKING WITH AIRPLANE JAMES:

"That's my guy. My engineer was his engineer, and I just remember seeing him at things that I was poppin' out to. I gave his music a listen, and I really liked it. He's putting out a message that's very positive. I decided to hit him up one day, he came into the studio, and knocked the verse out. The engineer hooked it up, so shoutout Cristal VVS."

THE VALLEY & LA:

"A lot of us just need to connect more and there needs to be a lot more mutual respect between the two areas. At the end of the day it's all just music being made."

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON:

"My dad was making music since before I was even born. He has a lot of prior knowledge, just trying to come up in a different era before the Internet. We been learning this entire time."

SWIFT RECORDS:

"It's just us — me and my dad. It started with him and we made it real, reimagined, established, throughout the last couple of years. It's a very in-house thing, but it's very serious. We've been putting music out, we have people who listen to it, and we have good connections."

LINUS — LP (2022):

"The project is called *LINUS*, inspired by the dude from *Peanuts*. Linus, the know it all. I grew up watching it with my granny, memories I have with her before she passed away. When I reflect on my life, I connect with him."

2023 GOALS:

"Look out for a lot of new music, as far as compilations and collaborations. Now that I've said my peace with my albums, it's time drop some music with people we've worked with in the past, even family members. On top of that, dropping more videos. My biggest one right now is for a song called "Never Know."



THROUGH THE LENS



PHOTOS AND FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS BY BRIAN TICAS / @SHOTSBYTICAS AND INMAR BONILLA / @MUSTYLAB.

On the first weekend of March 2023, Rolling Loud came to Inglewood, the fifth time the legendary hip-hop festival has made a stop in Southern California. The event spanned three days, and took place around Inglewood's So-Fi Stadium, on turf officially called the Hollywood Park Grounds.

As always, Rolling Loud offered a vast lineup of mainstream rap stars — Playboi Carti, Travis Scott, Future, Lil Uzi Vert, Don Toliver — you get the point. While there was discourse online over Rolling Loud not showcasing enough Los Angeles (specifically, Inglewood) talent at this year's event, those in attendance still had the chance to see Rucci, Kalan.FrFr, RJMrLA, O.T. Genesis, among other locals.

Brian Ticas, *UNDRGRND Magazine's* Director of Photography, was on-site and in the midst of the action all weekend long. It's our pleasure to show you just some of the awesome photos that Brian, and his cousin, Inmar Bonilla, snapped at Rolling Loud California 2023.

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INGLEWOOD
HOLLYWOOD PARK GROUNDS
ADJACENT TO SOFI STADIUM

Rolling Loud
CALIFORNIA

MARCH 3-5
SOCAL 2023
ROLLINGLOUD.COM

FRIDAY MARCH 3

PLAYBOI CARTI

KODAK BLACK • TYGA • TRIPPIE REDD • DABABY • SAWEETIE • FIVIO FOREIGN • SOULJA BOY • BONES
NARDO WICK • RICH THE KID • BLUEFACE • KEN CARSON • DESTROY LONELY • XAVIER WULF • AB
KAMAIYAH • TAY MONEY • BIG SCARR • FREDDIE DREDD • EDDY BAKER • BK THERULA • SSGKOBE
YVINGCHRIS • KALFY THE PLUG • ZHARI • HOMICIDE GANG • SID SHYME • LEBRA JULIE • CUUHRAG
CAN & CHINA • KILL JASPER • DROWN MILI • SKODI • MAROUS CLAE

SATURDAY MARCH 4

TRAVIS SCOTT

LIL BABY • DON TOLIVER • 2 CHAINZ • KEVIN GATES • LIL YACHTY • CITY GIRLS • AMINE • CHIEF KEEF
YOUNG NUDY • LARRY JUNE • BIA • POUYA • CURRENSY • MONEY MAN • NOCAP • RJMRLA • SHORDE SHORDE
LANCEY FOLK • FAT NICK • DUKEDEUCE • DANNY TOWERS • VORY • RUBI ROSE • ROBB BANKS • SPACEGHOSTPURP • KATCY
KASHDAMI • BABY STONE GORILLAS • EEM TRIPLIN • DIGITAL NAS • STRICK • GLOSS UP • MELLOW RACKZ
HIGHWAY • SU'LAM • ROCCO • HOOSH • BARELY LEGAL • 500RAXX • TOKIN

SUNDAY MARCH 5

FUTURE

LIL UZI VERT • TORY LANEZ • POLO G • MONEYBAGS YO • SKI MASK THE SLUMP GOD • LIL TECCA • OHGEESEY • SHECK WES
CENTRAL CEE • KALAN.FRFR • COI LERAY • TOOSH • SHENSEEA • BABYTRON • ICE SPICE • O.T. GENESIS • TRAE THE TRUTH
BLUERUCKSLAN • RAMIREZ • NIGHT LOVELL • REAL BOSTON RICHIE • D. SAVAGE • JASIAH • G PERICO • RUCI • TANA • JELELL
GEM • OKAY THE MAGE • MASK • MU USAMA • HARPER • BIG BOSS YETTE • ALLYVAL • BAD NEIGHBORS
NANA • CLIP • BELIS • CASH CEBAIN • CHOW LEE • ZZZ • A. CHARLES • BILLYRACKX

WITH SPECIAL GUEST
LIL WAYNE
SOUNDS BY MIKE DEAN, SCHEME, & FIVE VENOMS

ROLLING LOUD



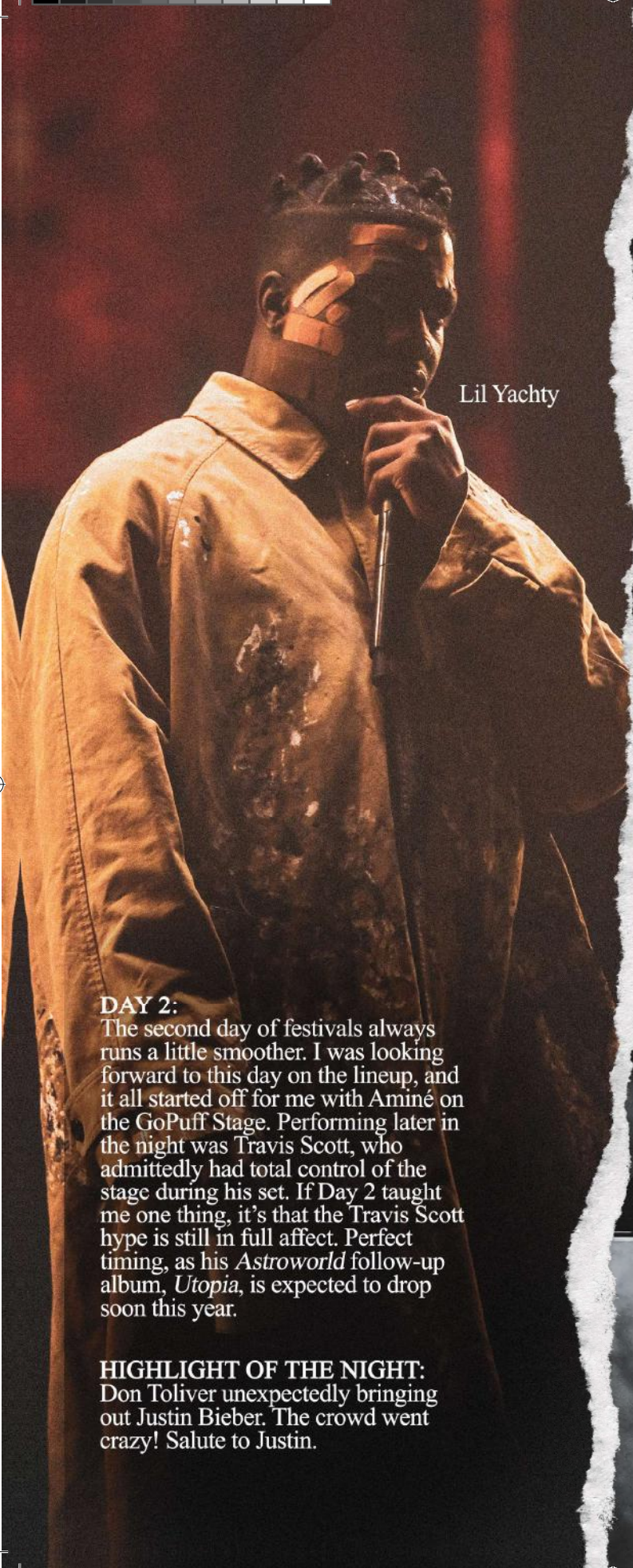
DAY 1:

Rolling Loud California this year was a hectic experience, and it all started on Friday — the first day of the festival. There were a ton of people, crowding the parking lot and main entrance as everyone filtered into the grounds. The beginning hours are the “calm before the storm,” as everyone’s trying to find their way in and get a feel for the layout of the event grounds.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE NIGHT:

Playboi Carti coming back out and performing “Location” from his 2017 self-titled album, *Playboi Carti*.





Lil Yachty



Lil Wayne

DAY 2:

The second day of festivals always runs a little smoother. I was looking forward to this day on the lineup, and it all started off for me with Aminé on the GoPuff Stage. Performing later in the night was Travis Scott, who admittedly had total control of the stage during his set. If Day 2 taught me one thing, it's that the Travis Scott hype is still in full affect. Perfect timing, as his *Astroworld* follow-up album, *Utopia*, is expected to drop soon this year.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE NIGHT:

Don Toliver unexpectedly bringing out Justin Bieber. The crowd went crazy! Salute to Justin.

DAY 3:

My final day of Rolling Loud began with Inglewood-native, Rucci, on the Main Stage. The Mackk&Co rapper performed hits like “Get The Strap” (feat. Shoreline Mafia), and even one of my personal favorites, “Function in the Hood” (feat. AzChike). Sunday also welcomed Kalan.FrFr, Ramirez and Night Lovell of the Grey Five Nine (G*59) record label, and ended with Future performing hit after hit for an hour straight.

Night Lovell

Rucci

HIGHLIGHT OF THE NIGHT:

Lil Yachty performing his January 2023 album, *Let's Start Here* for the first time on the Rolling Loud stage. He played “the BLACK seminole.” and “drive ME crazy!” But he also made sure classic Lil Boat bangers like “Broccoli” and “iSpy” were not missing from his set.

KAVEL

FROM THE D TO THE A

KAVEL is a new resident of Anaheim, California, bringing with him a Michigan flare to Southern California's underground hip-hop scene. The rapper & singer is from the west side of Detroit, where he lived until moving to East Lansing to attend Michigan State University.

A year ago, with a degree in Cinematography & Film in his back pocket, he made the move to Anaheim with aspirations as an independent artist. He has a playful presence behind a mic and is excellent in front of a camera. He preaches optimism and positive thinking in his music, and has proven he can put together coherent roll outs and music video drops.

Kavel finds himself in a region with a completely different style of hip-hop than his native Detroit's.

But both *UNDRGRND* and Kavel think that being away from "The Mitten" will work as an advantage for him. His delivery and lyrics don't have the full Detroit grimminess that we're used to with recent mainstream acts — think Tee Grizzley, 42 Dugg, Peezy, Babyface Ray.

Instead, Kavel now has the opportunity to mix more seamlessly into the cadence-driven hip-hop lanes that LA offers — think Kalan.FrFr, Blxst, Kyle Banks, Big \$wift. If he can lead with his contagious energy and charisma, an EP this summer and frequent show bookings could prove big for Kavel as he makes noise in his new home's underground community.





From top left to bottom right: @ohno, @garren, @azjah, & @roadrunrz.bricks for ROADRUNRZ. Photos by Brian Ticas/@shotsbyticas. Taken in Oct. 2022 at the UNDRGRND Issue 7 Photoshoot Day.



AZJAH

INDEPENDENT REPORT

NEARLY FIVE YEARS AFTER "TIME FOR IT," AZJAH STARTS A NEW JOURNEY AS AN INDEPENDENT ARTIST

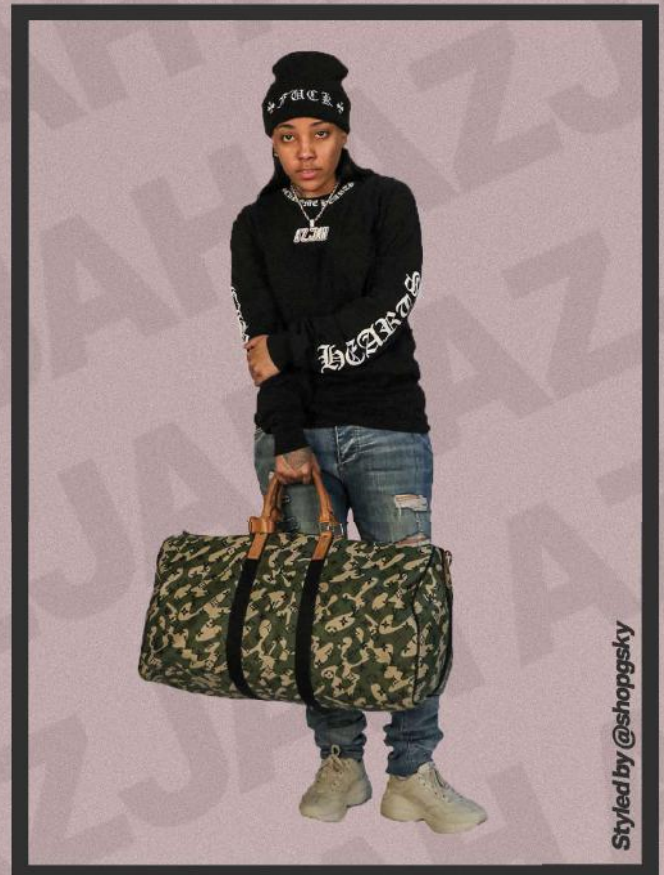
by Miss Dixon/@theemissdixon_

Amongst those cementing their voice in the new generation of LA, we find Azjah, a.k.a. "The Princess of Compton." After her Oct. 2018 single, "Time For It" (off her debut project, *Princess Diaries*), Azjah saw considerable attention and a warm embrace from a city that isn't always so quick to show love. Azjah's tailored auto-tuned hooks & melodies were validated further one year later, when Los Angeles' Kalan.FrFr & Baltimore's Shordie Shordie hopped on the remix, with a music video sitting at 7.4M views as of March 2023.

"I think I opened up for almost everybody [in Los Angeles]" Azjah recalls from her time pushing "Time For It." "The younger LA generation, we had it going. There was a show every month."

Keeping momentum has never been an issue for Azjah. She's released a multitude of loosies, collaborations, and two well-received projects — *1:03 AM* & *Missed Calls, Vol 1* — since her debut moment. In *Missed Calls, Vol. 1* (Oct. 2022), Azjah reveals a deeper layer of herself to us. She opens up about love and relationships, her career and hustle, and the constant balance of it all.

Once seen as somewhat of the "little sister" of the late 2010's underground LA wave, Azjah's ability to connect with her audience has allowed her to stand the test of time compared to many of her peers.



Styled by @shopngsky



Formerly under EMPIRE, Azjah is officially now an independent artist. Azjah's dropped some of her most consistent work since leaving the major, proving that sometimes the best bet is on yourself. She tells *UNDRGRND Magazine* that a *Missed Calls, Vol 2* is already in the making, but we should expect an "intermission tape" to hold us over in the meantime.

"I'm just excited for y'all to hear the missing piece to the puzzle," Azjah says about her upcoming sequel project. "I want to put together a short film to go with it, so you can feel what it's like growing up in Compton."

Azjah has also announced the 2023 "Azjah and Friends," her second annual headlining concert. The showcase is scheduled for Friday, April 21st at The Echo on Sunset Blvd. If this round two is anything like the first, we can

expect a packed crowd and some impressive guest performers.

Azjah notes that at this point in her career, she aims to find a balance between her trademark West Coast sound, and her non-LA style music. She continues to drop traditional LA tracks, like "G Funk" (feat. 1500 or Nothin), and "Boujie" (feat. Siete7x). But Azjah admits that in the grand scheme of things, she prefers to remain a geographically ambiguous artist.

"A lot of people tell me, 'You don't sound like you're from LA,'" she says. "When I go to Atlanta, when I go to New York, they tell me, 'I didn't know you were from LA.' And I want it to be like that."

Connect with Azjah on Instagram @azjah_, and come check her out at The Echo on April 21st for "Azjah and Friends 2."

"YOU NEVER KNOW HOW IT IS UNTIL YOU GET IN THAT MOMENT. BUT WHEN IT ALL PLAYS OUT, ALL THAT STRESS, IS FOR THIS MOMENT RIGHT HERE."



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East Hollywood



Melrose Hill

@melrosehill

Be!

BornVet

MELROSE
HILL

kingswell out now



ESEE



VALUE



A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT WITH @LARRYLAVELL

EP OUT NOW

@esee.certified ♥ Las Vegas, NV



@lotusvalentinevisuals

YGDREAMZ

GOV'T NAME: Christopher Soriano

STAGE NAME: YG Dreamz

BORN: Apple Valley, Calif.

RAISED IN: Victorville / Hesperia, Calif.

BIRTHDAY: January 17th, 1993

HEIGHT: 5-foot-6

YEARS MAKING MUSIC: 3

OTHER OCCUPATION: Warehouse worker,
running my own merch lines

HIGH SCHOOL: Hesperia

COLLEGE: Victor Valley (majored in Computer
Integrated Design and Graphics, switched to English)

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Lil Wayne, Tupac

NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT: Opening for
O.T. Genasis & R3Mr-LA at The Novo in 2020

"WE HAVE A STORY TO TELL
WE WANT TO LET THE
WORLD KNOW WHAT
WE'RE GOING THROUGH"



DREAM COLLAB:

Lil Wayne

OTHER HOBBIES:

Basketball

FAVORITE MOVIE:

Scarface (1983)

FAVORITE TV SHOW:

Ancient Aliens

FAVORITE RESTAURANT:

Kalaveras

GO-TO PROD & ENG:

Sav Did It

FAVORITE

RECORDING STUDIO:

Sav Studios

CURRENTLY ON REPEAT:

YG Dreamz "ALL EYES ON VEE"





CULTURE IN THE HIGH DESERT:

"There's actually a lot of culture that people don't know about. For example, where I was at — Old Town Victorville — a lot of Mexican Americans migrated there in the early 60s and 70s. You can look at the addresses on the sidewalks, and they have little Mexican flags next to them. In certain areas, there's a lot of rich history here."

INSPIRATIONS GROWING UP:

"Lil Wayne and Tupac of course. Biggie. Also some of the newer artists like this dude from Chicago, Montana of 300. There's Brotha Lynch Hung. Look, everybody was listening to "Locc 2 da Brain" — ask anyone who went to junior high or high school out here. Even some East Coast artists like Big L, Immortal Technique, Nems. That's where the punch lines come from."

LINKING UP WITH PLAYDEVILLE:

"I was curious to see who this guy was because he was making noise but I hadn't really seen him around like that. The first time we linked up was at Buffalo Wild Wings and came a little aggressive, I'm not gonna lie. But he showed up by himself, and I was like, 'Okay, I can respect that.' I can always respect a man regardless of whether you gang bang or not. If you're a man at the end of the day, I respect that."

BEING A FATHER & ARTIST:

"I've worked six days a week, 12-hour shifts, and still tried to cater to my kids. I still had shows, studio sessions, and video shoots to attend. I was even going to college at one point trying to get an associate's degree in English. It was hard trying to balance all that because kids require a lot of attention. But you just got to do your best at the end of the day. There's no right way to do something, just the best way that you can do it."

FAVORITE SONG OF YOUR OWN:

"I'm gonna say more than one. 'Slidin' on the 15,' because that was my first one that I actually felt comfortable with. 'Nothin' Nice,' because it's at like a million views right now on YouTube — it's me and Playdeville on that song. There's also 'Shut Up' at like 20k views right now too. Make sure ya'll check me out on streaming platforms."



INSTAGRAM VS YOUTUBE:

"YouTube is where it's at and I hate it because sometimes I'll get 300 likes on Instagram and then like 30 likes on YouTube. I need everyone to go to YouTube because that's where the money at. Shout out to everybody that supports. Even if you're hating, shout out to you. It's still a view. I love all y'all at the end of the day because I'm gonna live my life regardless."

OTHER HIGH DESERT ARTISTS:

"My boy Massive Vee a.k.a. Big Massive. We grew up together, he's a dope artist. Shout out to Playdeville of course, and the lil' homie, Lil Stretch from Adelanto. Shoutout to everybody who is dope, willing to work and is real. But I check people's backgrounds before I work with them, for sure."

DO YOUR KIDS LISTEN TO YOUR MUSIC?:

"Some songs. And when I go a little viral, they're like, 'You know your song hit 20k views!' They're the ones that notice. They'll promote me and tell people about me and everything is cool. It's my best team. That's everything. Like, the fact that they're proud of that. It's cool."

PUTTING VICTORVILLE ON THE MAP:

"It's a growing market, a growing area. A lot of people here have ties to LA, ties to the Inland Empire, even Vegas. People come from all over to live in this area because it's one of the cheaper areas to live in compared to everywhere else, and we're still close to LA. There's a lot of celebrities and artists that come from Victorville — whether they claim it or not. But there's real people here, and we're just tryna show our section. Victorville, Victor Valley, you know, The High Desert in general."

PREACH IT 2 EM' CHRIS!

"AS A
PRODUCER,
YOU NEED TO
NETWORK,
YOU NEED TO
EXPAND"

GOV'T NAME: Christian Pascua

STAGE NAME: Preach It 2 Em' Chris!

BORN: Ventura, Calif.

RAISED IN: Oxnard, Calif.

BIRTHDAY: June 6, 1999

HEIGHT: 5-foot-8

YEARS MAKING MUSIC: 2

OTHER OCCUPATION: Student

HIGH SCHOOL: Oxnard

COLLEGE: UC Davis (double major in Sociology & Econ)

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Blxst, Miguel, "my dad, Edwin"

NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT: Landing a placement with Lil Seeto & Blueface ("Internet Shooter (Remix)")

DREAM COLLAB: Blxst or Bruno Mars

OTHER HOBBIES: Shooting pool, basketball

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: L & L Hawaiian BBQ (Oxnard)

GO TO PRODUCER: Myself

GO TO ENGINEER: Mind Off

GO TO RECORDING STUDIO: Record X Studios

CURRENTLY ON REPEAT: Preach It 2 Em' Chris! "Olay!"

MUSIC IN THE FAMILY:

"Both my mom and dad are musically inclined, and the most interesting thing is they're not musically trained either."

THE NORCAL SOUND:

"I did a lot of RnB stuff back in high school, but it's transferred over to hip-hop for sure. I don't rap but I make beats for people that do. I got into hip-hop specifically in The Bay Area & NorCal sound — you know Sacramento & Stockton type beats. They were making music I'd never heard before."

PRODUCING "INTERNET SHOOTER" FOR LIL SEETO & BLUEFACE:

"First of all, shoutout to my co-producer who did his thing. His name is 'its Arnold' his tag is 'Hey Arnold' as you hear in the beginning of the song. It was actually off of a YouTube beat. I know Lil Seeto's manager and they just messaged us both and were like, 'Hey, we like this beat, we wanna use it for 'Internet Shooter.'" The rest is history. Pretty sure it eclipsed over 10 million streams."

BUILDING CONNECTIONS:

"Right now I have a lot in the works with Los Angeles artists, Oxnard artists, 805 artists. It's just kinda tough because I lived by Sac for four years, going up to college. My connections were better up there, and those things take time to cultivate. You can't just make relationships with people right away. You need to work with them for a good amount of time before you can really make something special."

TRADING LOOPS WITH OTHER PRODUCERS:

"I think it was earlier this year I started doing things like loop packs. Sending them out to producers to see what they could do with it. Sending out your melodies to other producers is just a great way to network. There're a lot of opportunities in terms of marketing, getting it placed or getting it sold. There are so many different genres of music — you have things like different drums or chord progressions, time signatures. So when you collaborate together, just imagine what you can make."

MEETING & BEING MANAGED BY POFSKY:

"I met him at The Collection in Oxnard at the Nashville Hot Chicken place, Burnin' Mouth. We met in line there. I just came from a video shoot and Pofsky overheard us and you know — Pofsky's my manager now so we have a really good relationship. He's a great guy, and that dude surprises me every time I'm with him. Like just the things he's doing behind the scenes. The things we have set for the future and the things that we've already done. I'm like, 'How the heck did you get that to happen? I would have never been able to do that,' type thing."

HOW TO CAPITALIZE AFTER A BIG WIN:

"There's two things. Number one, keep doing what you were doing before. You have this momentum going and there's no reason for you to take your foot off the acceleration. If I were to quit now, I wouldn't be able to sustain the opportunities that I have. It's the same thing as maintaining a relationship with your friends. You could have a great relationship, then you stop trying, and that's the end of the relationship. Same with your career or business. With my niche in production, I need to keep putting stuff out. If I stop now, that's it for me. Second, working smart in this industry. Be business savvy, know how to read contracts and the economics behind selling beats."

BEING NAMED A TOP 2022 PRODUCER BY THIZZLER:

"That was crazy. I woke up to it like, 'What the heck? What is this, this is crazy.' It was an accumulation of what I've done in the past. I was making like four to five Bay Area beats per day, so I guess my work piled up to that for sure."



DECIFER

GOV'T NAME: Moris Orellana

STAGE NAME: Decifer

BORN: Sun Valley, Calif.

RAISED IN: Canoga Park, Calif.

BIRTHDAY: January 14th, 1991

HEIGHT: 5-foot-11

YEARS MAKING MUSIC: 10+

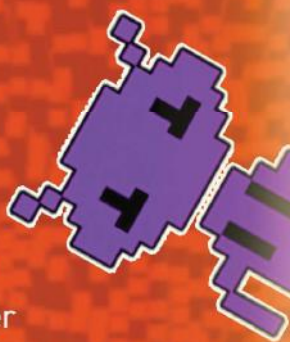
OTHER OCCUPATION: Medical Assistant

HIGH SCHOOL: Grover Cleveland Charter

COLLEGE: Kaplan College

MUSIC INFLUENCES: Drakeo the Ruler, 03 Greedo, Young Dolph, NoCap, YoungBoy Never Broke Again, Fuerza Regida

NOTABLE MUSIC MOMENT: My song "Prius" being featured on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon"



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DREAM COLLAB: Drake

OTHER HOBBIES:

Hanging out with my daughters, going to the park, hitting gym

FAVORITE MOVIE: *Paid in Full* (2002)

FAVORITE TV SHOW: *The Office*

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: New York Chicken & Gyro in Canoga Park

GO TO PRODS: B.B.Productions, G. Maestro, Ivvn, Meeko & Omega

GO TO ENG: Marvs Productions

FAVORITE RECORDING STUDIO: My home studio

CURRENTLY ON REPEAT: Peezy "Hustler Vs. Scammer"

SIN FILLED VALLEY ALBUM (2022):

"I don't want to call my album 'San Fernando Valley,' but I've done a lot of sins out here — a lot of people can relate to that. That was my whole concept after my accident. Like, 'Man I got to work, I got to get in album mode and drop something.' I sit on a lot of music, but I think it's my best work that I have out right now."

SIN FILLED VALLEY COVER ART:

"Some dude from Russia DM'd me like, 'I do covers.' I don't trust some of those people, but then I started looking at his stuff and saw he was legit. And then he had this deal, so I hopped on it. I told him my idea, what I wanted — me in the cyber city wearing red, in the glasses. It was just unique."

22GFAY FEATURE:

"I found out about 22gfay through Cypress [Moreno]. He posted 22gfay, and I was like, 'Dude, this kid is sick. I gotta tap in.' Then Cypress had a private event for one of his album releases. I popped out and that's where I met gfay. I talked to him, and it was cool. He has an official fanbase, and that's what made me work with him. I want to have a fanbase like that, too. I dropped the song on August 18th (8-1-8). It's like 'Valley Day,' '8-1-8 Day.' It's a very special day."

THE VALLEY VS. LA:

"It's always people from LA, they're like, 'Y'all never been through what we been through.' It's true though — it's more politics [out there]. I have homies from South Central who always tell me, 'Y'all soft.' But we're in the same county, and we make the biggest county in LA. A lot of shit goes down in The Valley. I've seen a lot of shit. I've been through a lot of shit, especially in Canoga Park. It's fucking crazy."

GRAFFITI CULTURE:

"I was doing graffiti for years. I started right out of middle school. At first, I was just fucking around, blackbooks, you know, just tagging. Then I got more serious right out of high school. I'd sneak out of my mom's house and just go tagging on billboards all on Ventura Blvd. I love the adrenaline, and it's a big culture. Once you're in that and you get that respect, it's just cool. But obviously the haters come with it too."

SELF-TAUGHT GRAFFIC DESIGNER:

"I taught myself that shit, too. I got an iPad, got Adobe Premiere Pro and Procreate. I've done my own cover arts. I get creative, and I like to have my own shit, my own content. I don't like to rely on people. That's how I jumped into making beats...I just hated waiting on beats."

DROPPING MERCH:

"My next step is to learn the clothing and merch now. That's the only thing I haven't really touched on. I've done the beats, the production, the cover arts, obviously the raps. I've dropped some merch in the past. I've gone to the swap meet and got a custom shirt that I made. People liked it, they liked my ideas which was cool."

2023 MINDSET:

"I usually plan shit out, but I'm just letting things flow right now. But I do want to drop more music, more music videos, more features, and do more stuff like this — more interviews and content. That's my goal right now."

"The Valley has to come up, but there's a lot of work to be done first."





Graffiti-style art by Issue 7 Cover Artist, Decifer.





Photo by Sam Dearborn/@sammydearborn





Top left & right: Cozz runs his first UNDRGRND interview & photoshoot. Bottom: Ken & Bailey of the Kiosk Boys pose with Cozz, Andrew Mason, & Pofsky. Photos taken by Brian Ticas/@shotsbyticas on October 18th, 2022 in Downtown Los Angeles.





Top left & right: @ohno and Andrew Mason. Bottom: @azjah_ poses for UNDRGRND after being styled by @shopgsky. Photos by Brian Ticas/@shotsbyticas on October 22nd, 2022 in Los Angeles.



Cozz

by Noah Soria

Cozz is simply an artist you can't box in. From his debut studio album, *Cozz & Effect*, dropped in 2014 shortly after signing to J. Cole's Dreamville imprint. To his *Fortunate* EP, released in 2021, the Los Angeles native has been giving the rap game different flows and cadences for damn near a decade. In an era of traffic rap and ratchet music, Cozz represents the city in a different way, while still maintaining his hometown root.

Born Cody Osagie, the Libra is both a LA icon, and a favorite within Dreamville lore. On the label's 2019 Grammy-nominated collab project, *Revenge of the Dreamers III*, Cozz is the center of "Lambo Truck" (with REASON & Childish Major), a hit track and one of the tape's most creative songs. But it's been a long, tumultuous journey for Cozz, who sat down to reflect on the early stages of his career.

"Just as a human being, I went through a whole lot of life experiences, from being a teenager to an adult," Cozz says. "And musically, I was still new. I started rapping at 16, and when I dropped my debut, I was 20."

The phrase "sink or swim" applies perfectly to Cozz's career. Two months after the release of *Cozz & Effect*, J. Cole's 2014 *Forest Hills Drive* hit the market, selling 353k first week and catapulting Dreamville and all who claimed it into the music industry mega-mainstream. Less than a year after inking the deal, it was now Cozz's time to live up to the expectations.

"I didn't have too much time to develop as an artist," he says. "I didn't really know who I was as an artist. A lot of mistakes I made had to be in front of everybody, I was thrown to the sharks, per se. I had to learn while developing on a major scale."

Cozz is gearing up for an impactful 2023. He tells *UNDRGRND Magazine* that he's switching up his approach to releasing music, recognizing that his fans want more from him.

"To be honest with you, I got enough music to drop five, six albums," he says. "I think the next part of my growth, the next part of my career, and my own personal vendetta, is to just drop shit, instead of waiting two years."

He also confirmed the release of his long-awaited upcoming joint project with Top Dawg Entertainment (TDE) signee and fellow LA native, REASON. Needless to say, we can expect both versatility and consistency from Cozz throughout the remainder of the year.

"I'm showing people that I can expand from boom bap rap. I'm making real records on this shit, you feel me?" Cozz says. "I want to show I'm an artist. If I want to last in this shit, I want to show I can do everything."



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