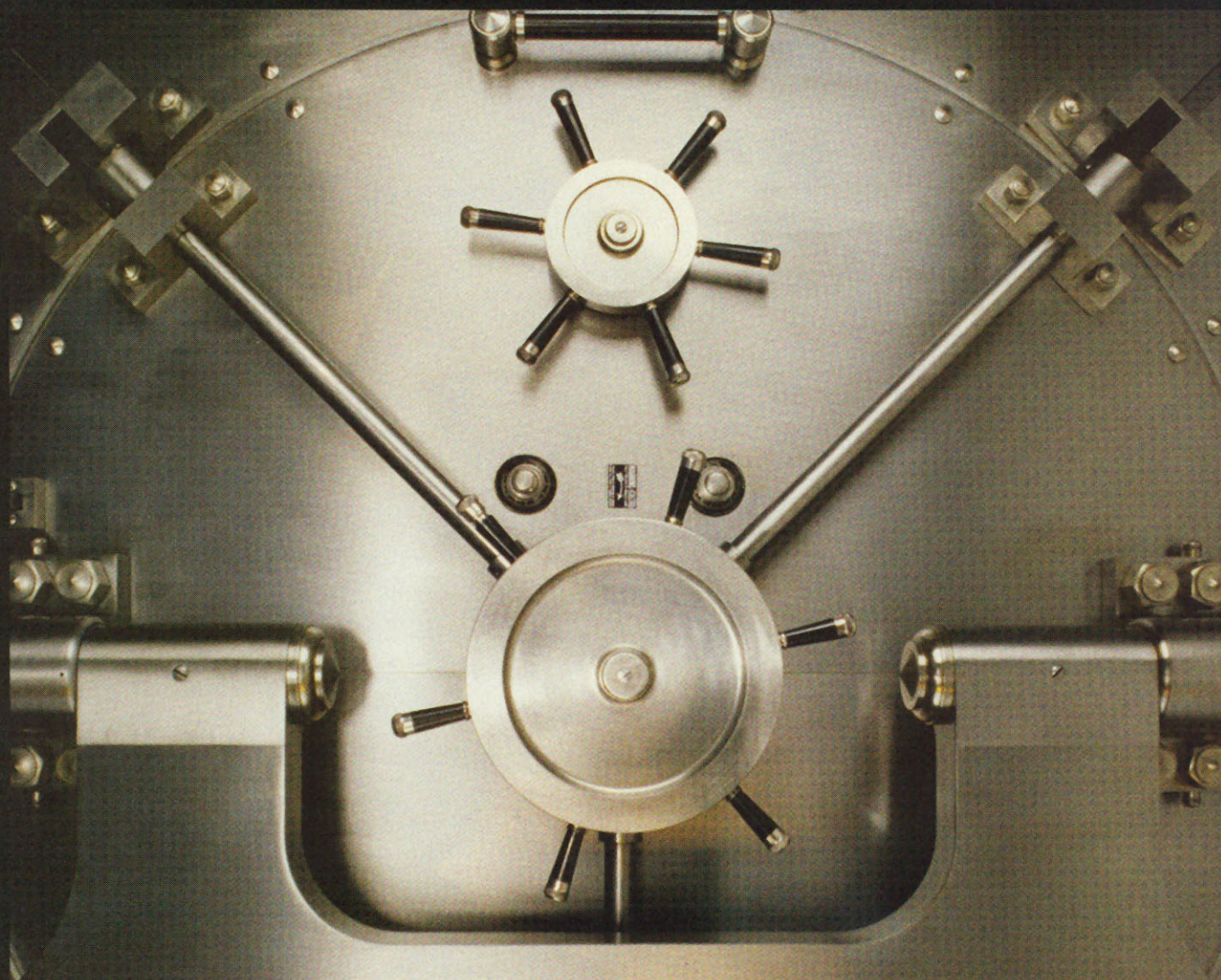


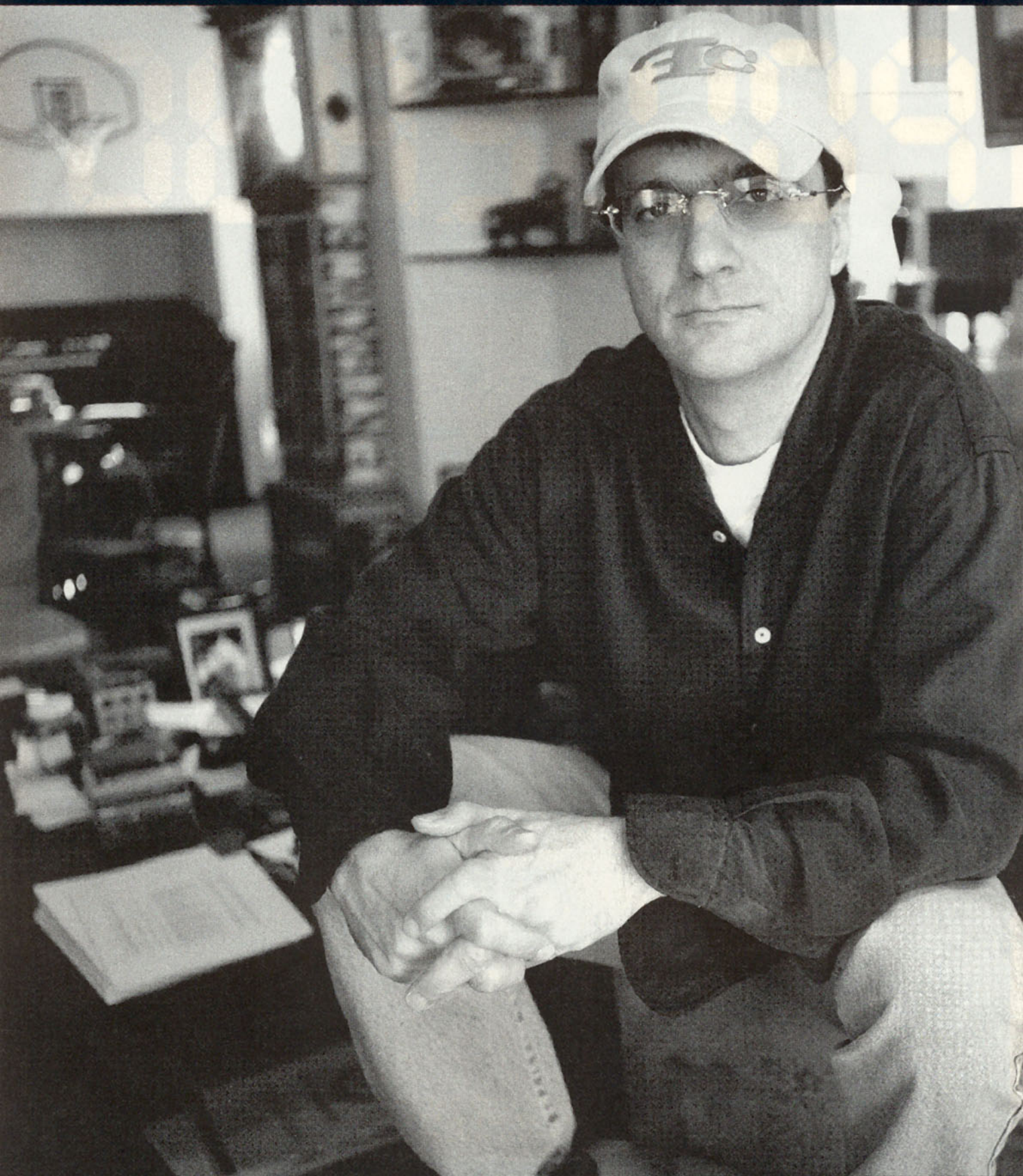
THE SOURCE HIP-HOP

POWER 30



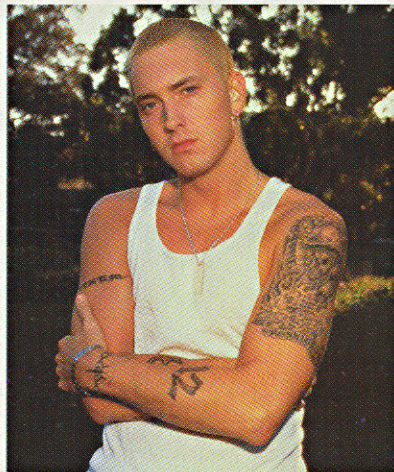
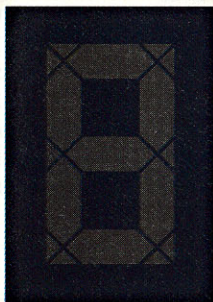
Power equals work over time. Any high school physics student can tell you that. But that simple equation has real applications to the Hip-Hop music industry. If you're not prepared to work for the duration and maintain what you achieve, don't bother. Power is not guaranteed. Just ask anyone who lived through the summer's northeast blackout. This year, a lot of people who thought they had the game on lock were caught slipping and new brands (or old ones with new faces) dominated. Peep the list. The Power 30 recognizes those who didn't take power for granted and worked to find that new winning combination instead of playing it safe.

**SECURED BY JERRY L. BARROW WITH REPORTING BY TOMIKA ANDERSON,
N. JAMIYLA CHISOLM, HILLARY CROSBY, IMANI DAWSON, THOMAS GOLIANOPOULOS,
MILES MARSHALL LEWIS, LETISHA MARRERO AND SEAN LEWIS SHARP**



INTERSCOPE

JIMMY IOVINE, CHAIRMAN OF INTERSCOPE/GEFFEN A&M/MCA/DREAMWORKS;
EMINEM, CEO OF SHADY RECORDS; DR. DRE, CEO OF AFTERMATH RECORDS

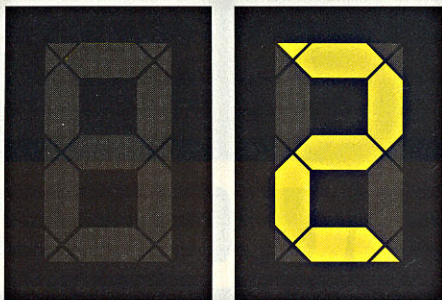


KEYS TO SUCCESS: With MCA folding into Geffen A&M and the recent purchase of Dreamworks Records, Jimmy Iovine and Interscope consolidated a tremendous amount of power and clout, edging close to monopoly in the Hip-Hop industry. Riding his two prize race-horses, Eminem and 50 Cent, who collectively sold close to 15 million albums in the last year, Iovine directly oversees the largest artist roster in Hip-Hop. Parent company Universal

Music Group also owns Universal and Def Jam Records (Nos. 5 and 11 respectively in this year's Power 30), giving it control of more than 60 percent of all Hip-Hop music sales; and sources say Iovine is angling to move into a position controlling all labels under the UMG umbrella. While the money is piling up (reportedly Eminem himself personally took home \$27 million after taxes last

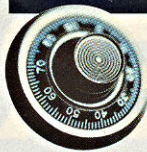
year), critics argue that Interscope and Eminem are leading Hip-Hop down a dangerous path for the culture, similar to the impact of Elvis on the death of African American contributions and participation in rock 'n' roll. [Ed.'s note: This topic will be discussed in detail next month in *THE SOURCE*'s continuing Special Report on the State of Emergency in Hip-Hop.]

THE HEIST: Interscope controls the vaults to much of Tupac Shakur's work. *Better Dayz* had moved 1,503,771 units at press time, and the soundtrack to the biopic *Tupac: Resurrection* features an Eminem-produced controversial pairing of Tupac with the late Notorious B.I.G. on "Running (Dying To Live)," another example of Interscope's growing power by using of Tupac's legacy to position their current artists.



BET

STEPHEN HILL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MUSIC PROGRAMMING AND TALENT



WINNING COMBINATION: We can blame him for *The Student Center*, *Hits From the Street*, *106 & Park* and its remix *106 & Park: Prime*, but not for AJ's hair. Coming from radio as a program director, Stephen Hill now creates and oversees all shows, and still decides who gets video spins as BET's senior vice president of music programming and talent. Remember when reggae only got burn on *Caribbean Riddims*? Says Hill: "This year, BET was instrumental in setting off Sean Paul and the Dancehall craze, something that radio did not embrace." Through national exposure, BET gave America the opportunity to drop it like it's hot with regional artists like David Banner and Elephant Man. Hill maintains that BET's video spins were crucial in creating the historical moment in 2003 when all top-10 *Billboard* artists were African American. BET also made noise when *106 & Park* was first to air a recent meeting between Minister Louis Farrakhan and Ja Rule.

BREAKING THE BANK: The most highly watched of the three annual BET Awards in history raked in 5.5 million viewers, and they followed that success with *The Source Awards*, their second highest rated show this year.

KEYS TO SUCCESS: Giving the people what they want. And they want *Uncut!* On *106 & Park*, even Patti LaBelle revealed that she loves *Uncut*, as she whispered into AJ's ear that her favorite song is "What That Thang Smell Like" by Black Baby Jesus.



SEAN "P. DIDDY" COMBS

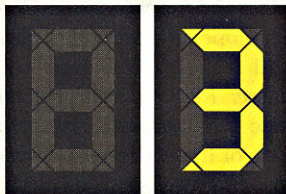
CEO OF BAD BOY WORLDWIDE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP



WINNING COMBINATION: Sean Combs had a grand 2003, and it began with a \$20 million distribution deal with Universal Records back in February. Bad Boy Records went on to have a successful campaign, fueled by the blockbuster returns from the *Bad Boys II Soundtrack* and Da Band's debut CD. He toyed with making a run to purchase the New York Knicks and also displayed his philanthropic side in 2003: Combs was outspoken during the call to reform New York's ghastly Rockefeller drug laws, and also visited South Africa to promote AIDS awareness. Then, in early November, Diddy raised \$2 million in donations for New York City's troubled public school system by completing the ING New York City Marathon, despite being hampered by severe tendonitis and a horrific Mohawk haircut. Next year, *Making the Band 3* will air on MTV and Bad Boy will release new albums from Black Rob, Diddy himself and a second posthumous album from the late great Notorious B.I.G.

BREAKING THE BANK: Combs sold an equity stake valued at \$100 million in Sean John to California supermarket mogul Ron Burkle.

THE HEIST: Diddy became every drill instructor and fraternity hazer's hero after he sent his freshmen fish out to Brooklyn on foot to bring him some cheesecake, cheesecake, cheesecake.





CLEAR CHANNEL

DOC WYNTER, VP OF URBAN PROGRAMMING

KEY TO SUCCESS: Last year, Doc Wynter, head of urban programming for the world's largest radio network, used his tremendous influence to educate his broad listener base. Clear Channel Radio featured a "National Radio Urban Town Hall Meeting," commemorating Black History with a panel of respected African American community leaders. As a concert venue powerhouse, Clear Channel's radio stations held hip-hop concerts across the country and hosted their annual Radio Music Awards in Las Vegas. The network's urban stations are consistently ranked in the top five for market share in musically trend-setting cities like New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. Wynter, who broke into radio as a B-ball playing college student, credits the open communication and resource sharing of his tight clique of national PDs for his unit's continued success.

THE UNLOCKING: Last year marked the expansion of Clear Channel's urban empire with new stations in Miami, Tampa, Hartford, Des Moines and Sin City, Las Vegas.

KEY ADVICE: "Opportunities present themselves all the time. If you're not prepared, they'll pass you by."

UNIVERSAL RECORDS

MEL LEWINTER, CHAIRMAN OF UNIVERSAL/MOTOWN GROUP; MONTE LIPMAN, PRESIDENT; KEDAR MASSENBURG, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF MOTOWN RECORDS



WINNING COMBINATION: There are many rooms in the Universal house and no one boards for free. "Everyone we had a deal with, their first records went gold or platinum," Monte Lipman declares proudly. Through joint ventures with Motown, P. Diddy's Bad Boy Entertainment, Cash Money, Nelly's Derrty Entertainment and Steve Rifkind's SRC, Universal has recognized and fostered hip hop's entrepreneurial spirit to good effect.

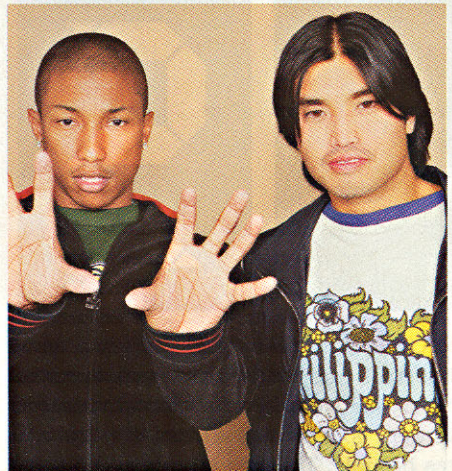
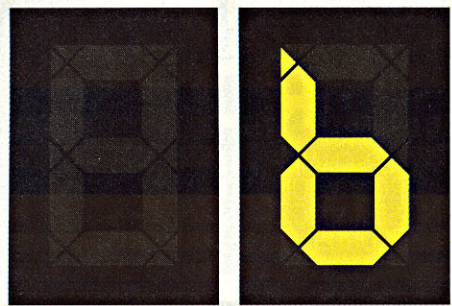
SECURITY CODE: According to Lewinter "Good working conditions, good relationships within our company make people happy and make



them enjoy coming to work." Translation: free Pimp Juice at the water cooler.

OPENING DOORS: After signing veterans like D-Block and Raekwon, Universal is banking on newbies Pitch Black. "They don't do all that bling-bling. They remind me of a Gang Starr," says Massenburg.

KEY ADVICE: "I'd be a fool if I had a foolproof method," says Lewinter.



THE NEPTUNES

PHARRELL WILLIAMS AND CHAD HUGO, PRODUCERS & CO-CEOS STAR TRAK ENTERTAINMENT; ROB WALKER, CO-CEO OF STAR TRAK ENTERTAINMENT

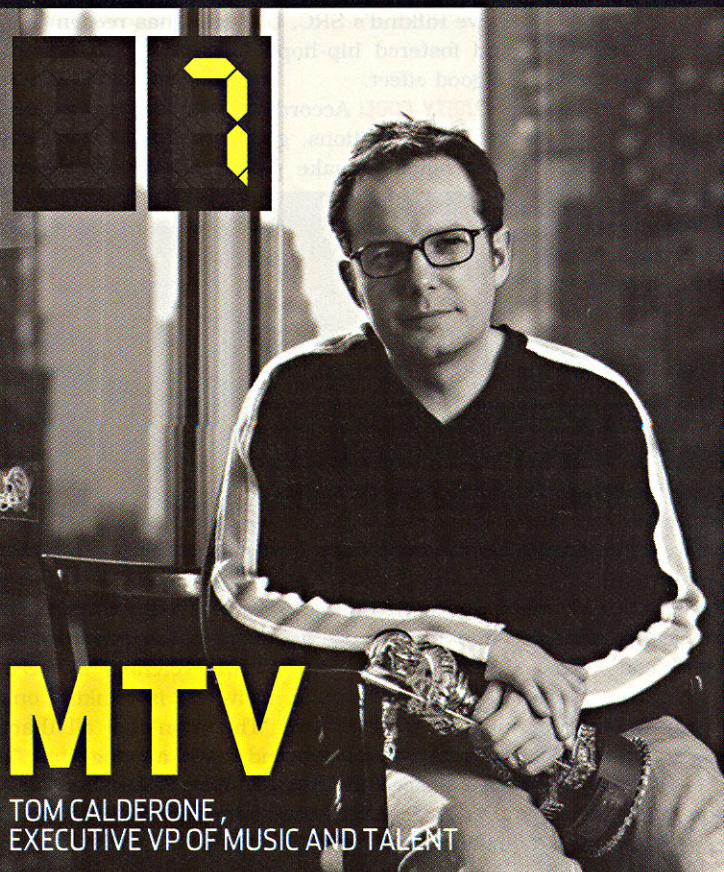
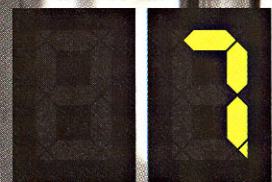
KEYS TO SUCCESS: The Neptunes had an inauspicious start to 2003 after having been slighted by the Grammys, but they rebounded by once again being responsible for a plethora of hits. Their continually unpredictable sound made and saved careers. Snoop's "Beautiful," Jay-Z's "Excuse Me Miss," and Common's "Come Close" were just a few tracks that got the Neptunes treatment. With their N.E.R.D. side-project gathering critical acclaim, *The Neptunes Present...Clones* took care of the gold plaques. And by featuring a crooning Pharrell, *Clones'* lead single "Frontin'" became the biggest song of the summer. Despite the song's success, Pharrell still shies away from the idea of himself as a lead singer. "I don't even consider myself a front man," he says. "I'm a producer man. I'm a beat maker." Next year The Clipse will

release their sophomore album *Hell Hath No Fury* ("We zoned much harder than before"), and there are new albums on deck from Fam-Lay, Roscoe P. Coldchain and N.E.R.D. "I love this music shit, and next year I have such venomous shit coming."

OPENING DOORS: Instead of repackaging retread artists, the Star Trak roster is filled with fresh faces like Roscoe P. Coldchain, Fam-Lay and the almost-platinum Clipse.

SECURITY CODE: "Switching it up is a pleasure," says Pharrell about keeping two paces ahead of copycat producers. "I love changing sounds.... Nothing is more exciting than the element of discovery."

BREAKING THE BANK: The Neptunes' compilation, *The Neptunes Present...Clones*, debuted at No. 1, and has sold close to 700,000 copies to date.



MTV

TOM CALDERONE,
EXECUTIVE VP OF MUSIC AND TALENT

KEYS TO SUCCESS: Tom Calderone may not look gangsta, but as MTV's executive vice president of music and talent, he can make you like Da Band. It's both personality and exposure that prompts civilians to cop a disc, and Calderone's responsible for each and every video shown on both MTV and MTV2. How serious is that? Sean Paul hosted MTV for one week and his record sales jumped 28 percent. But Calderone insists that it's more than just the videos: "It's also about putting a face to these artists to make them more of an MTV household name," he explains. Creating shows like a collaboration weekend with an artist like Busta provides another venue to showcase his talent.

When asked the collabo weekend's length: "It's still going on actually...."

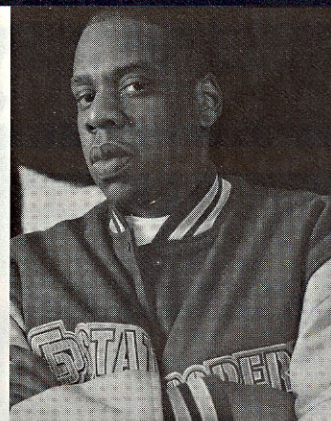
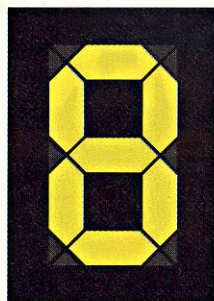
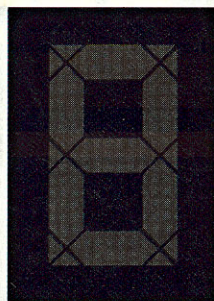
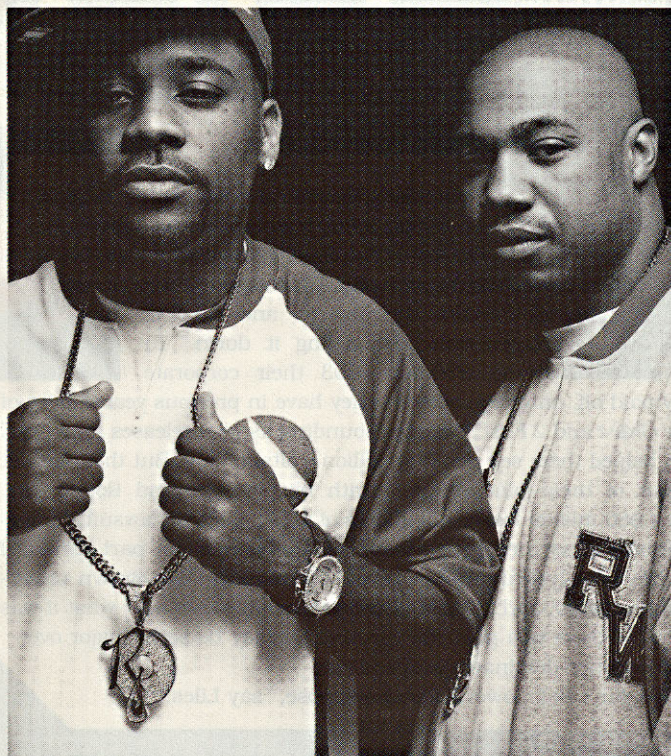
OPENING DOORS: "Find and champion new faces of Hip-Hop, no matter what vein they come from, whether it's dancehall, whether it's full-on Hip-Hop or in the R&B ballad lane.... We made the Roots buzzworthy."

THE HEIST: MTV2's nine-month-new Hip-Hop showcase, *Sucker Free Sundays* provides a place for artists to "come in and talk about their favorite music, host some shows and really show their personality for an entire day." How do you think Da Band will go gold?

IT'S ABOUT PUTTING A FACE TO THESE ARTISTS TO MAKE THEM AN MTV HOUSEHOLD NAME.

ROC-A-FELLA RECORDS

DAMON DASH, CEO; JAY-Z, COO;
KAREEM "BIGGS" BURKE, CEO



KEYS TO SUCCESS: "I have been working for this day by putting out many new artists," says Roc-A-Fella CEO Damon Dash about his preparation for Jay-Z's impending retirement. In 2003, Dash acquired more new players than George Steinbrenner, and successfully broke neophytes like Juelz Santana, the Young Gunz and Freeway. However, the Roc's franchise player had an equally eventful twelve months. Besides working on his much-anticipated swan song *The Black Album*, Jay opened the posh 40/40 Club, hit the road with 50 Cent on the Roc the Mic Tour, which he owned. "Roc the Mic was wildly successful and I look forward to bringing you Roc the Mic 2, coming next summer," says Jay. He later sold out Foot Lockers 'round the globe with his Reebok sneaker the "S. Carter." Rocawear raked in over \$250 million, and Dash continues to produce and direct films.

SECURITY CODE: "Jay's my brother," he says, but he admits to sparring in the boxing ring with him on just one occasion. "We didn't fight to hurt each other, we just both sweated," Dash says.

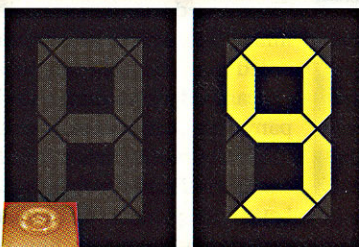
THE HEIST: Shocked the world by signing Ol' Dirty Bastard.

JERMAINE DUPRI

PRODUCER, CEO OF SO SO DEF & SENIOR VP OF BLACK MUSIC OF ARISTA RECORDS

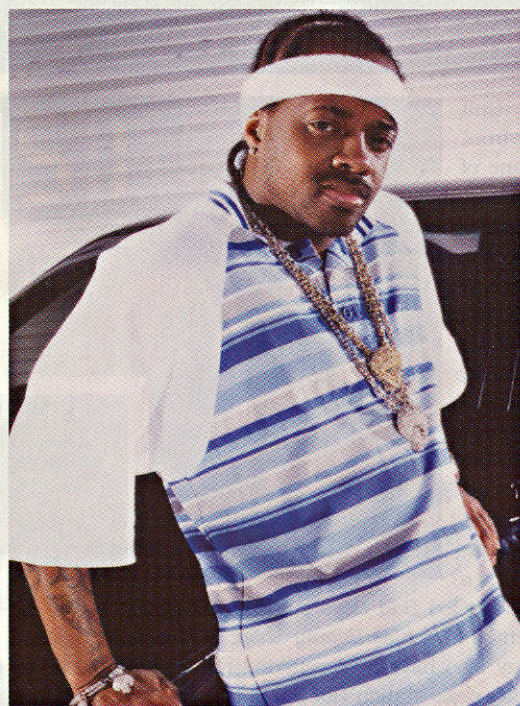
THE HEIST: After finding a new home for So So Def at Arista Records, Dupri's other biggest success was '03's burliest surprise: Bone Crusher, whose "Never Scared" busted down the Southern door of crunk, and then the YoungBloodz hit with "Damn." "You look at companies that have been in similar predicaments the past few years—switching partners in a joint venture—none of the deals that I'm aware of have happened in such a short period of time," says So So Def's senior VP, Free Maiden. Dupri also branched out West, scooping up Snoop's cuz Daz Dillinger. But J.D. also knows his comfort zone, nabbing the beleaguered 3LW, promising a predictable mainstream makeover. "That kiddie lane, I pretty much got that covered," he says.

OPENING DOORS: J.D. can clearly still pick a hit, even if he doesn't know what the hook's gon' be.



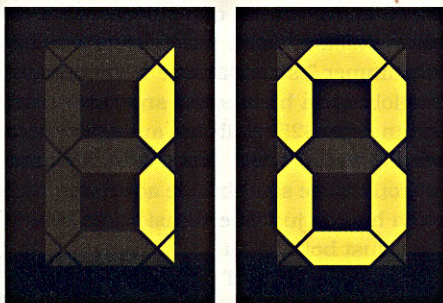
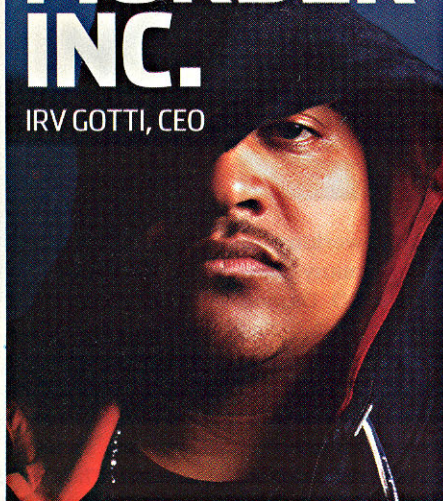
BANK STATEMENT:

"As an entrepreneur, you never really want to have a job or a boss. But this is different," Dupri rationalizes. "I do have a boss in L.A. Reid, but me and him are more like Kevin [Liles] and Lyor [Cohen]."



MURDER INC.

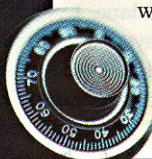
IRV GOTTI, CEO



KEYS TO SUCCESS: Despite a distracting beef and an investigation by the feds, Irv Gotti stayed on top of his hustle and managed to establish Ashanti as a premier R&B diva. Ashanti's sophomore album, *Chapter II*, sold 316,000 copies in its first week—about 10,000 more than Beyoncé did in her debut frame. In the meantime, Ja's *Blood in My Eye* and Ashanti's Christmas album should bolster the Inc.'s fourth quarter receipts, as should Gotti's production duties on American Idol Ruben Studdard's debut album. Next year, there will be new albums by Charli Baltimore, Black Child, Lloyd, Ashanti and Ja Rule. "I think everyone I sign is a star; I just have to find a way to make them that star," says Gotti.

FASHION STATEMENT AND UPCOMING HEIST: At this year's Source Awards, Gotti wore a "Free Shyne" T-shirt. "First and foremost, that's my man," says Gotti. "Secondly, business-wise, I would love to sign him. Who wouldn't?"

WINNING COMBINATION: Gotti's friend Joel Schumacher is still slated to direct Ja Rule and Ashanti in a remake of *Sparkle*.



DEF JAM

LYOR COHEN, CEO AND CHAIRMAN OF ISLAND DEF JAM; KEVIN LILES, PRESIDENT OF DEF JAM; AND RUSSELL SIMMONS, CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER OF DEF JAM MUSIC GROUP



WINNING COMBINATION:

"We have a triple punch," says Def Jam President Kevin Liles. "Russell is the visionary, I'm managing the process and Lyor is holding it down." In 2003 their corporate



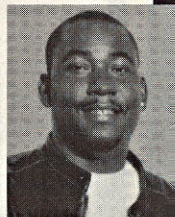
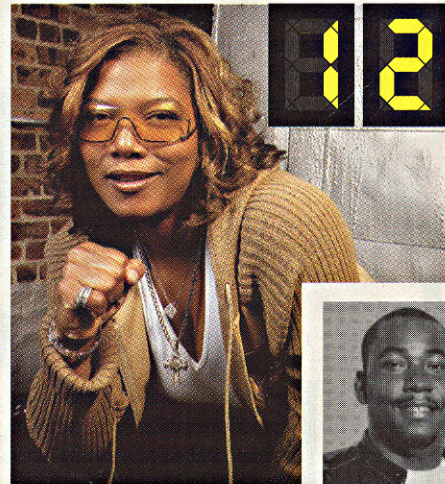
trifecta definitely paid off, only not as big as they have in previous years. Sales of the *Cradle 2 The Grave* and *2 Fast 2 Furious* soundtracks plus releases from DMX and Joe Budden helped them sell over 3.5 million units to date. But their biggest releases came out of their joint ventures with Murder Inc. and Roc-A-Fella. Hammered with a \$60 million loss at the hands of a TVT Records lawsuit, reports of widespread unhappiness thru their artist roster (evidenced in part thru Def Jam's severing ties with lyrical pugilist Keith Murray and Foxy Brown unceremoniously jumping ship), and a bottom line that simply is not near what it was in Def Jam's heyday, there is a good likelihood there may be some major overhauls looming at the once-dominant empire.

SECURITY CODE: "We don't flex power, we flex purpose," say Liles.

QUEEN LATIFAH

SHAKIM COMPERE, CO-FOUNDER, FLAVOR UNIT ENTERTAINMENT

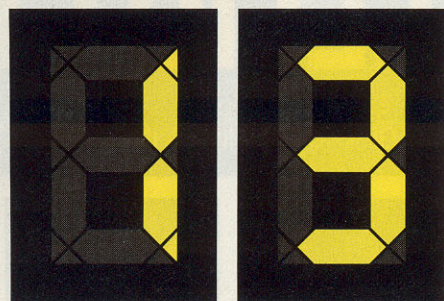
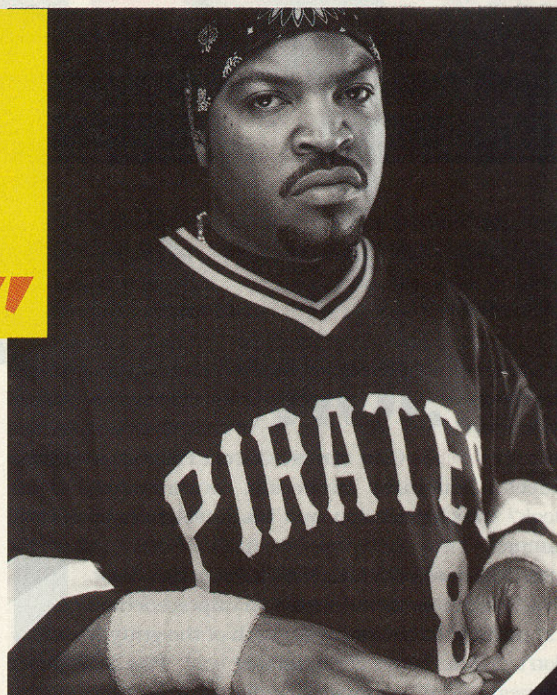
KEYS TO SUCCESS: While Flavor Unit was relatively quiet on the music front this year, Queen Latifah had one of the greatest years of any actress. She starred in two consecutive \$100 million grossing films and was nominated for an Academy Award for Chicago. Most important to the company was the success of the \$133 million grossing comedy *Bringing Down the House*, which Shakim and Latifah co-produced. "[*Bringing*] took us from a struggling film company and catapulted us to what I could have never imagined," says Shakim. Up next for the burgeoning film company are the action film *My Wife as a Gangster*, *Bad Girls*, an estrogen-fueled *Bad Boys* starring La and Jada Pinkett, and also the potential franchise *Beauty Shop*. Next year Latifah will drop a Hip-Hop album and may also have a reoccurring role in a TV series reportedly based on New York City radio station Hot 97FM.



ICE CUBE

RAPPER, ACTOR,
CEO OF CUBE VISION

**“I AIN’T
TRIPPIN’ ON
NO CARS, BUT
IT’S GONNA
HAVE WAY
MORE STYLE
THAN A GTO.”**



KEY TO SUCCESS: All the haters who criticized Ice Cube's early career for his acting the part of a gangsta MC—rhyming about selling drugs, killing enemies, and other things he's never

actually done—can't get enough of Cube as a silver-screen actor. Deeper still is that his power moves don't stop there: Cube produces some of his own Hollywood projects, including the *Friday* and *Barbershop* franchises.

And as if that wasn't enough, the nigga you loved to hate hasn't retired the mic, as Westside Connection's 2003 *Terrorist Threat* proved. Bow down.

THE HEIST: Replacing Vin Diesel in the lead role of XXX2 with a \$7 million payday, directed by Lee Tamahori (*Die Another Day*). The biker flick *Torque* arrives soon, on the heels of *Barbershop 2*. But as for the XXX car.... "I ain't trippin' on no cars, but it's gonna have way more style than a GTO."



ARISTA

L.A. REID, CEO AND PRESIDENT
OF ARISTA RECORDS

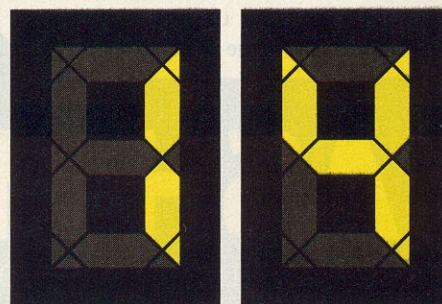


KEYS TO SUCCESS: Effectively filling the shoes of legendary music svengali Clive Davis, Arista President and CEO Antonio L.A. Reid currently guides the careers of some of the crunk-est names in the rap game: The Grammy-winning OutKast, YoungBloodz and Bone Crusher.

SECURITY CODE: Being hands-on during the recording process is the name of the game if you're L.A. Reid. Although stars like Pink and Blu Cantrell have famously complained about his daddy complex, it's because of his dedication that Arista has contributed to BMG's \$125 million bottom line.

BREAKING THE BANK: OutKast's most recent double-CD, *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*, is one of the highest-ranking hip-hop albums of the year, passing the four-times platinum mark in less than six weeks.

OPENING DOORS: Hot on the heels of Lil Jon, groups like the YoungBloodz represent the gold-fronted future of 808-driven Southern rap. Having scanned over 384, 539 copies of their sophomore disc, *Drankin' Patnaz*, in under two months, the Bloodz join mainstream labelmates like Pink and Avril Lavigne to create one of the tightest rosters around.





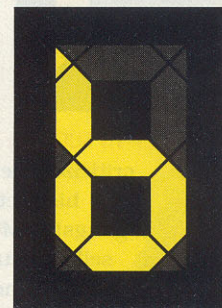
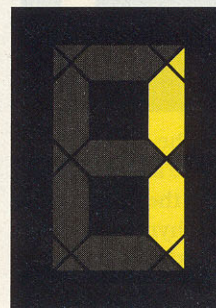
LIL JON

ARTIST, PRODUCER, CEO OF BME RECORDS

KEYS TO SUCCESS: Gold fronts? Check. Pimp cup? Check. Ear-drum shattering, riot-inducing hook? Check!!! Lil Jon and his Eastside Boyz rammed their way into the nation's musical consciousness with the album, *Kings of Crunk*. TVT's franchise player moved an unprecedented 1.4 million copies on the strength of the gritty "I don't give a..." the contrastingly cool "Play No Games" and the summer's undeniable anthem "Get Low." As a producer Lil Jon also laced YoungBloodz ("Damn") David Banner ("Might Getcha") and Bravehearts ("Quick to Back Down") making him the most in-demand beatsmith in the game right now.

MISSY ELLIOTT

ARTIST, PRODUCER, CEO OF THE GOLD MIND, INC.



WINNING COMBINATION: You can't lose working with Missy. With *Under Construction*, her stellar throwback album released at the end of '02, Elliott surfed the big Kahuna into 2003. By writing and producing R&B joints for Monica and Beyoncé and dueting with Wyclef, she's been crowned radio's most unlikely Homecoming Queen. But excuse me, Missy, another album? Damn. *This Is Not a Test*, released in November, continues her reign.

THE HEIST: Losing weight has its privileges: From hawking Vanilla Coke, to PSAs on domestic violence (*Break the Cycle*) to a movie cameo (*Honey*), Missy's a bonafide media maven. But the 32-year-old's biggest coup? The Gap ad. Hip-Hop's female court jester bumpin' with Madonna? Who'da thunk it? And she didn't even have to tongue her down.

BREAKING THE BANK: Since her 1997 hyped-up debut, she's been hitting us with visceral music videos, but for "Work It," Missy finally won her first MTV moon-man for Best Video. Oh yeah, winning a Grammy and going double platinum don't suck either.



CASH MONEY

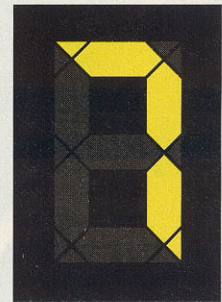
BRYAN "BABY" WILLIAMS AND RONALD "SLIM" WILLIAMS, CO-CEOS



WINNING COMBINATION: Since Universal re-signed their distribution deal, Baby's *BirdMan* was certified gold and Big Tymers' *Hood Rich* placed #1 on *Billboard* and *SoundScan* charts their first week out, going on to sell 1,076,052 copies. Cash Money Films is planning to release five movies this year, including the screen version to Teri Woods's baller novel, *True to the Game*, along with the highly anticipated return of Juvenile and Lil' Wayne. New acts Mikkey, Gilly and Boo & Gotti got next. And on top of all that, while filming their R. Kelly/Cash Money-penned *Eye Contact* feature, the *Best of Both Worlds Part 2* will drop simultaneously. "I'm gonna ride with R," Baby affirms, "and this album's gonna be crazy."

LOCKOUT: "We wanna get up in Hollywood, but they ain't gonna let us get in there," says Slim. But wouldn't a remake of Hitchcock's *The Birds* be crazy?

BANK STATEMENT: Baby says, "If we weren't this way, we'd be eating cookies."



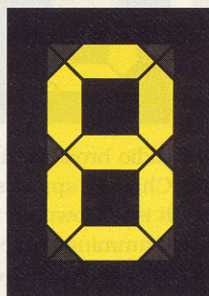
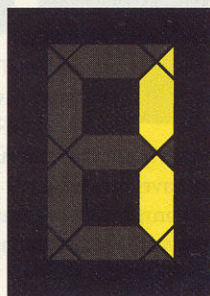
WINNING COMBINATION: If it seems like Snoop Dogg is marking territory everywhere, he is. His guest appearances on everyone's albums from T.I. to Chingy and Luda helped galvanize Snoop's omnipresence in '03. Cruising Brazilian honeys with Pharrell in "Beautiful," he showed his, um, softer side. Then he bitch-slapped everyone senseless on 50's "P.I.M.P."

THE HEIST: Snoop has parlayed his permed pimp-osity into its own quixotic brand: Girls Gone Wild, Doggystyle, Doggy Fizzle Televizzle and action figure dolls. Hell, you can even be the Doggfather with a joystick and an Xbox in *True Crime: Streets of L.A.* But two words will stand alone in '04: Huggy Bear. Snoop takes on the role, starring in the film adaptation of *Starsky & Hutch*.

BREAKING THE BANK: His seventh album, *Paid Tha Cost To Be Da Boss* was certified platinum.

SNOOP DOGG

ARTIST, CEO OF DOGGY STYLE RECORDS

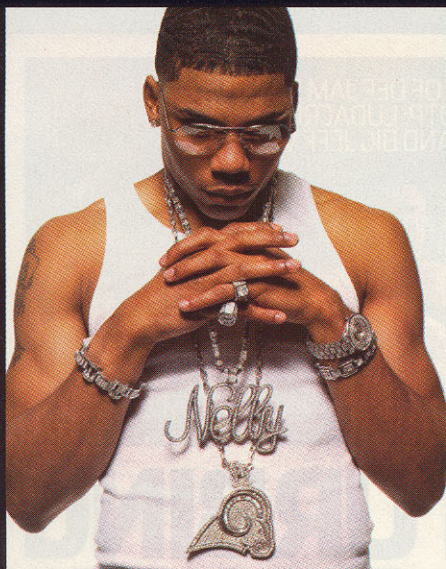
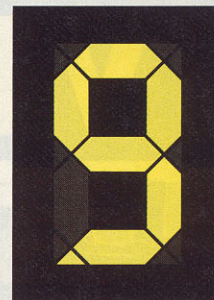


NELLY

ARTIST, CEO OF DERRTY ENT.;
COUNTRY "CUDDALOVE", CEO OF
FO'REAL ENTERTAINMENT

KEY TO SUCCESS: On the strength of the multiplatinum *Nellyville*, (and a swig of Pimp Juice) Nelly went on an award tour. Buoyed by "Dilemma" "Hot in Herre," and "Air Force 1's" he took two Grammys, six Billboard's, two MTV's and two Source awards back to St. Louis with him. Just when we thought Mr. El would give someone else a chance, he and his St. Lunatic protégée Murphy Lee teamed up with P. Diddy for the #1 song, "Shake Ya Tailfeather." Ever the philanthropist, Nelly sold 1,000 limited edition Air Derrty Nikes for his 4 Sho 4 Kids foundation.

WINNING COMBINATION: Nelly and Universal partnered to create Derrty Entertainment in which his first artist, Murphy Lee, went gold with his solo debut *Murphy's Law*.

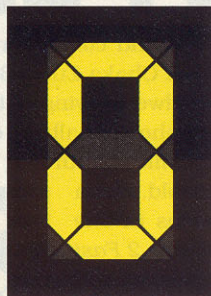


ATLANTIC / VP RECORDS

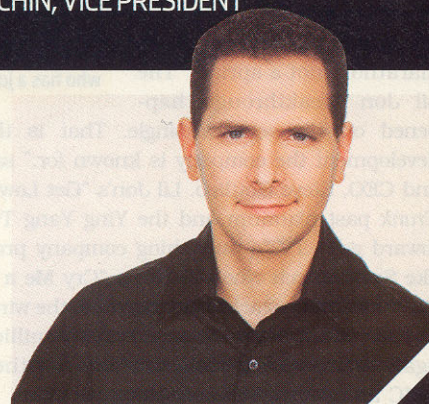
CRAIG KALLMAN, CO-PRESIDENT OF ATLANTIC RECORDS; CHRIS CHIN,
PRESIDENT OF VP RECORDS; RANDY CHIN, VICE PRESIDENT
OF MARKETING VP RECORDS

than five million copies worldwide. On the home front he clubbed us over our heads with Lil' Kim's "Magic Stick" and made us feel right at home with the latest release from the Nappy Roots.

WINNING COMBINATION: Who knew that DJing alongside VP Records' Murray Elias in the early '80s would pay? Of the phenomenal Stateside success of Sean Paul, Wayne Wonder and Elephant Man Kallman says proudly, "We've made history here."



KEYS TO SUCCESS: With the help of VP Records' Chin brothers, Atlantic's Craig Kallman kicked off an international dance-hall explosion with Sean Paul. Second only to 50 Cent, Mr. Sean "Dutty Rock" Paul is the top-selling artist of the year, at more





RADIO ONE

MARY CATHERINE SNEED, COO;
ALFRED LIGGINS, CEO

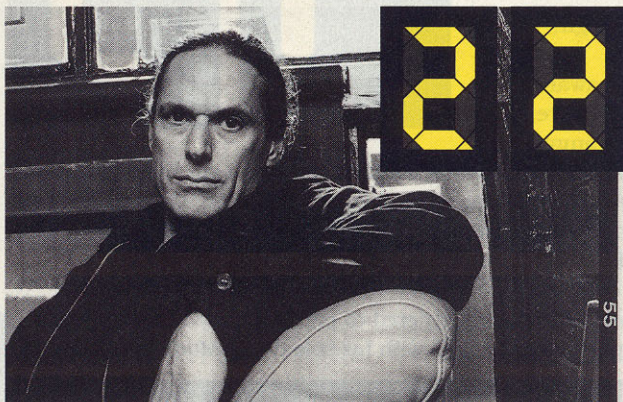
THE HEIST: With 66 stations nationwide (36 of which are in the top 20 urban radio markets), Radio One has established itself as the largest radio broadcasting company for the African American community. Even though Clear Channel appears to have the industry on lock, this 14-year-old company makes it clear it is as down for the competition as Nas and Jay were. And with 90 percent of their programming geared toward urban-formatted radio, other channels might want to step their game up—or fall back.

BREAKING THE BANK: With 12 million hungry listeners in 22 different states tuned in every week, they're not only surpassing expectations but shattering glass ceilings as well.

OPENING DOORS: Radio One launched a health awareness campaign for African Americans this past year and continually reach out to the community they serve.

TVT

STEVE GOTTlieb,
FOUNDER AND CEO



KEYS TO SUCCESS: As the largest independently owned and freestanding record label in the United States TVT treats the industry rat race like a marathon, not a sprint. "The Lil Jon breakthrough happened on his seventh single. That is the type of artist development the company is known for," says TVT's founder and CEO, Steve Gottlieb. Lil Jon's "Get Low" pushed *Kings of Crunk* past platinum and the Ying Yang Twins are creeping toward gold. TVT's publishing company profited from clients like Scott Storch who's work on "Cry Me a River," and "Clap Back" has them stacking money from the windows to the walls.

THE HEIST: TVT was awarded \$50 million in a lawsuit against Island Def Jam for blocking the release of a CMC album featuring Ja Rule.



BANK STATEMENT:

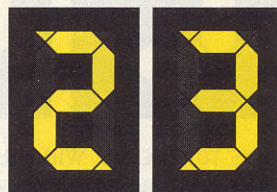
"It's a good time for independents," says Gottlieb. "Next year the big companies are gonna be wondering who has a job after they merge."

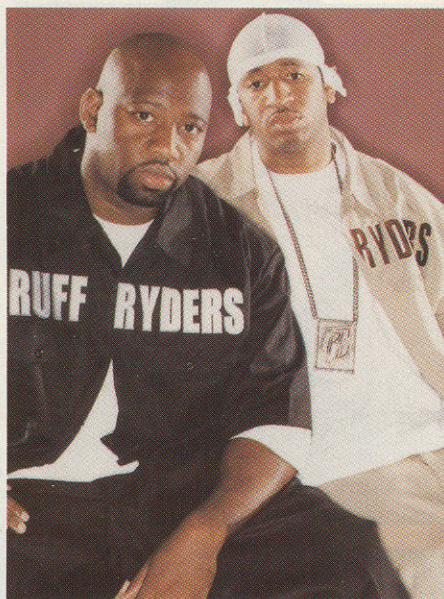
CHAKA ZULU, VP OF DEF JAM SOUTH
AND CO-CEO OF DTP; LUDACRIS, ARTIST,
CO-CEO OF DTP; AND BIG JEFF VP OF DTP



DISTURBING THA PEACE

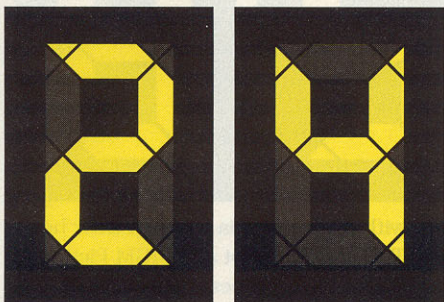
THE HEIST: The team behind comedic rapper Ludacris is no joke. DTP's triumvirate Chaka Zulu, Big Jeff and Luda have cashed in on the Midwest swing with Chingy's platinum debut. Luda's own sophomore album continued to climb up to triple platinum while *Disturbing Tha Peace's Golden Grain* was certified gold. Luda flexed his acting chops in *The Wash* and the summer's *2 Fast 2 Furious*. That flick's soundtrack has sold over 600,000 units on the strength of "Act a Fool" and Luda's *Chicken-N-Beer* debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard's* top 200. As a manager, Chaka is the most in-demand exec in the game and this ebony son's work for Def Jam South helped keep the parent company in the black.





RUFF RYDERS

DARRIN AND JOAQUIN DEAN, CO-CEOS

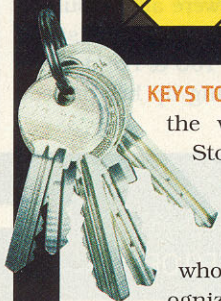
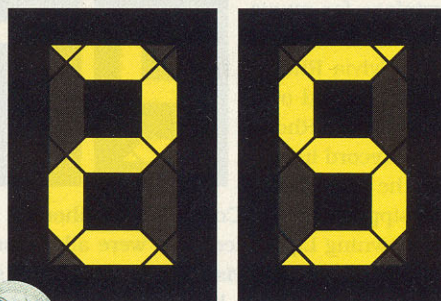


KEYS TO SUCCESS: 2003 was a year of growth and prosperity for the mighty Ruff Ryders family. DMX, their original big dog dropped his fifth consecutive No. 1 album *Grand Champion*, while Eve, their pit-bull in a skirt, got her own TV series on UPN. The video for Drag-On's first single "Put Your Drinks Down" garnered significant rotation, setting him up for a 2004 release. The first family of the streets also turned heads when they signed Jin, the quick witted Asian MC who dominated *106 & Park's* freestyle battle. His acquisition may prove to be a stroke of genius if the talented rapper is able to crack the vast, largely untapped Asian Hip-Hop market. "He's already done two or three hundred shows with no album," says Wah.

CHANGING THE LOCKS: In 2003, the Ruff Ryders camp left their longtime home at Interscope for Virgin Records

DJ CLUE

PRODUCER, CEO OF DESERT STORM, MTV VJ AND NYC'S HOT 97 DJ



KEYS TO SUCCESS: DJ Clue may be the very public face of Desert Storm, but it takes three men to run this budding operation. The triumvirate includes Ken Duro and Rich Skane, who, along with MTV's most recognizable VJ, expanded the burgeoning brand in 2003. Fabolous's new album, *Street Dreams* served as this

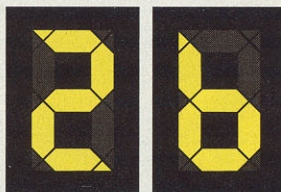
year's anchor, bring home a platinum plaque for the family. DJ Envy added his major label mixtape to the fray and Skane's artist Joe Budden had the dance floors focused with his self-titled Def Jam debut. After spittin' sweet nothings in Tamia's ear, Fabolous re-upped with "More Street Dreams Pt. 2."

CHANGING THE LOCKS: Desert Storm is currently in negotiations to move its platoon over to industry behemoth, Universal records.



PRIORITY/CAPITOL

WENDY GOLDSTEIN, SENIOR VP OF A&R; ANDREW SHACK, EXECUTIVE VP OF URBAN CAPITOL & PRIORITY; GEO BIVINS, VP OF URBAN PROMOTIONS



KEYS TO SUCCESS: Priority/Capitol's recipe for success can be found at the "Holladay Inn." In late 2002, they had their biggest hit with Snoop Dogg's platinum *Paid Tha Cost To Be Da Boss*. The newly merged label then hit the jackpot with Chingy, who enjoyed the most unforeseen platinum success since St. Louis native Nelly. This was due in part to the efforts of Geo Bivins, VP of Promotions who made a star of Big Pun at Loud Records. The new Westside Connection album *Terrorist Threats* should be a strong close for 2003 and lead into next year, where Priority/Capitol has new albums on deck by DTP affiliate I-20 and Chingy's group the Get it Boys. "Capitol hasn't had a hit since MC Hammer," says Goldstein, "and for us to come so strong, so quickly, it shows what a great team we are."

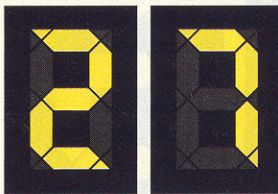
WINNING COMBINATION: "We partnered with DTP and that gave us a lot of credibility," says Goldstein.

ELEKTRA

SYLVIA RHONE, CHAIRWOMAN AND CEO OF ELEKTRA ENT. GROUP

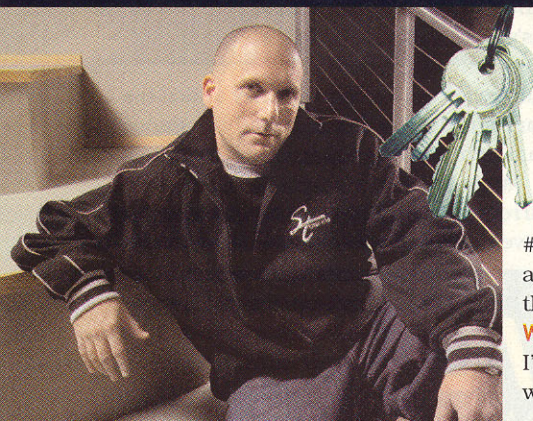
KEY TO SUCCESS: Amid a decaying marketplace for music sales last year, Elektra still made a strong finish with the guidance of highly respected industry vet Sylvia Rhone. By taking advantage of cross-promotion within and outside of Elektra's parent Time Warner corporation, Rhone kept Elektra flourishing in the midst of the record industry's 2003 downturn. Missy Elliott doing "the bump" with Madonna in Gap ads (when she wasn't sipping Vanilla Coke), Tamia phoning folks through Verizon Wireless, and Fabolous downing Lipton Iced Tea were all a result of Rhone's integrated brand-marketing strategy to raise the visibility of Elektra artists.

THE HEIST: Inking a deal with sexy girl-next-door (if you live on 106 & Park) Free. "We're really excited about the signing of Free and we are setting up her project now—it's a stellar project."



STEVE RIFKIND

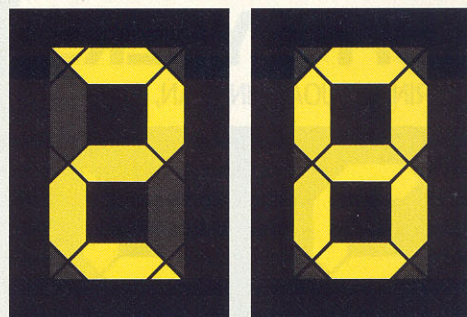
CEO OF SRC



KEY TO SUCCESS: Steve Rifkind is a survivor. After the collapse of Loud Records, the man who coined the term "street team," rebounded with a new label (Street Records Corporation AKA SRC) where the gold-selling David Banner was the first artist released, with *Mississippi* debuting as the #1 urban album in the country. In addition to

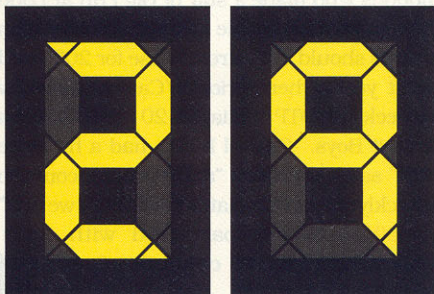
a film deal Rifkind also inked a marketing partnership with Mosaic Media. So with their help, the Steve Rifkind Company represents HBO, T-Mobile, The Athlete's Foot and MGM Pictures.

WINNING COMBINATION: "Going to Universal and coming in as an executive is something I've never done before. [They] give me the freedom to do what I do best. They just want to win."



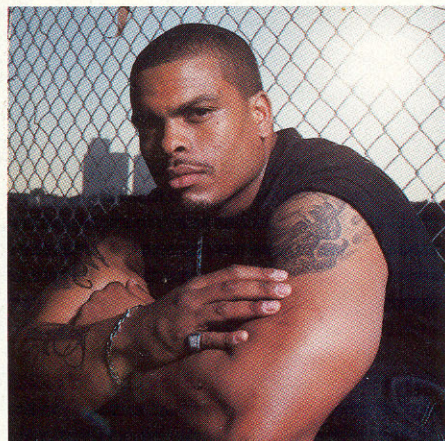
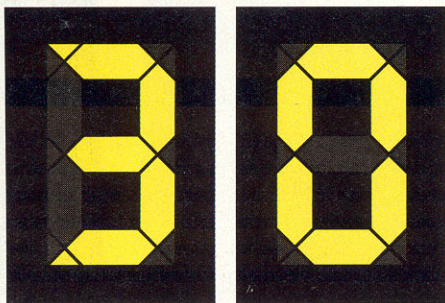
J. PRINCE

CEO OF RAP-A-LOT RECORDS
AND J. PRINCE ENTERTAINMENT



KEY TO SUCCESS: With the Dirty South ruling Hip-Hop with an iron fist in 2003, O.G. CEO J. Prince continued to make major contributions. Prince's franchise artist, Def Jam South president Scarface, dropped the long-awaited *Balls and My Word*, Yukmouth's *Godzilla* and Do or Die's *Pimpin' Ain't Dead*. Plus, ready for prime-time play, Z-Ro has signed to Rap-a-Lot's house of hits.

THE HEIST: At press time, Prince had single-handedly brokered the highly-anticipated fight between Roy Jones Jr. and Mike Tyson, scheduled to take place this year. "It's a Black-power thing," says Prince. "I did what nobody else can do."



BENNY BOOM

DIRECTOR, CEO OF GORILLA FLIX

KEY INGREDIENT: Free and AJ aren't the only reasons you tune into 106 and Park. This year the camera work of Director Benny Boom has helped define visuals for Hip-Hop videos. His impressive resume includes Lil Kim's "Jump Off" Ja Rule's "Clap Back" YoungBloodz "Damn" and the salacious "Shake Ya Tailfeather." Boom has been so prolific that the CVC rated him the No. 1 director in their prestigious listing. "I had 21 videos that charted," says Boom. "That's the most out of any video director—period." As CEO of Gorilla Flix, Benny and his partner Gerald Rawles are working on a gang documentary that will feature notables like Chicago's Larry Hoover. "It's like *F.E.D.S.* magazine on film," says Boom.

OPENING DOORS: Look for this former MC to come out of retirement on an upcoming album from newbies Gorilla Pimp. "I never got to the pros," says Boom. "I was the Rucker Park rapper, so I might have to drop something."

ONES TO WATCH



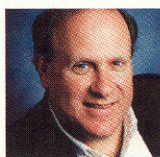
WENDY WILLIAMS & KEVIN HUNTER: Urban radio's original shock-jock rules NYC's afternoon-drive slot with her entertaining and frank gossip-fest, *The Wendy Williams Experience*. With the help of her manager and husband, Hunter, she continues to conquer airwaves, has signed on for a slew of VH-1 specials, is writing a second book and hopes to syndicate her radio show. Yet, what we're really waiting for is a Greatest Hits CD featuring her interviews with Whitney Houston and Erykah Badu.



TROY CARTER & J. ERVING: As Eve's managers, Troy Carter and J. Erving, co-CEOs of Erving Wonder Ent., have turned the pit bull in a skirt into a global icon through television, music and fashion. Eve's self-titled UPN show attracted even more viewers than President Bush's interview on Fox. Carter and Eve stay in the black with the clothing line Fetish, which generated \$18 million this year while anticipating \$50 million in 2004.



JIM JONES: After Cam's remarkable success in 2002, the Dip Set focused on launching teenage phenom Juelz Santana as their next franchise MC, with *Diplomatic Immunity* and *From Me to U*. Cam'Ron's *Purple Haze* drops in the first quarter of the new year, but the business extends beyond music. Other ventures include a cologne ("Oh Boy") and the launches of a marketing and promotional company and a clothing line. No word yet on whether pink will be the primary color for the spring collection.



ALAN GRUNBLATT & KOCH ENTERTAINMENT: As Koch Entertainment's executive vice president and president of In the Paint Records, Alan Grunblatt has made every day veterans' day in '03. In addition to distributing *Dysfunktional Family* soundtrack, Koch released albums from Hot Boys alums B.G. and Turk as well as Wu-Tang's *Inspectah Deck*. With a strong faith in independent artists, expect to see more from Koch and Grunblatt in '04.



CHARLES STONE III: As the mind behind the wildly popular Budweiser "Waaasup!" commercials and early videos for The Roots, Stone made his feature-film directorial debut with *Paid in Full*, which starred Cam'Ron, Mekhi Phifer and Wood Harris. He then directed the box-office hit *Drumline*, and is currently working on *Mr. 3000*, a baseball comedy starring Bernie Mac and Angela Bassett.



SCOTT STORCH: Starting out as the original keyboardist for The Roots, Storch is perhaps Hip-Hop's most underrated and unrecognizable producer. Storch has quietly manned the boards for the likes of Dr. Dre, Jay-Z and Missy Elliott, and has made noise recently with Ja Rule's "Clap Back." Storch's future looks brighter than ever, as he is currently hard at work on Dre's next (and reportedly final) solo album, *Detox*.



LIL' KIM & HILLARY WESTON, QUEEN BEE ENT.: This stiletto-heeled duo rode the success of *La Bella Mafia*'s platinum-plus sales to further establish Queen Bee in 2003. As VP of Queen Bee, Weston manages Kim and is also developing new acts like The Advakids and Lil' Shanice. Weston was instrumental in establishing Kim as more than just a rapper, as Kim's film résumé and entrepreneurial ventures are increasingly looking up.



E-CLASS & POE BOY ENTERTAINMENT: Eric "E-Class" Prince's Miami-based Poe Boy Entertainment made a splash with their flagship female artist Jackie-O. Her debut single, "Nookie (Real Good)," climbed the charts, while labelmate Cognito's album, *Tru Cognizance*, received critical acclaim. Poe Boy is also working on a clothing line, and its film division is preparing to release the film *The Other Side of the Bridge*.



ANTOINE CLARK & F.E.D.S. MAGAZINE: The reality-based magazine *F.E.D.S.* is created and distributed worldwide by the F.E.D.S. team. The magazine has become the fastest-selling urban lifestyle magazine on newsstands, Border bookstores and Tower Records. This year, *F.E.D.S.* has doubled in sales and advertising, locked down a film deal with Stan Lathan and Russell Simmons, won Martell's Rise Above Award, finished the first of a trilogy of books, and Antoine has become executive editor of *THE SOURCE*.