

# RECORD REPORT

## SCARFACE THE FIX

DEF JAM SOUTH

PRODUCTION: Kanye West, China Black, Nashiem Myrick, Nottz, Mike Dean, artist

WORDS BY JERRY L. BARROW



**D**o gangstas go to heaven? From his earliest days as a Geto Boy, Scarface has been equally preoccupied with the body and spirit. From the cryptic "Mind Playin' Tricks On Me" and "Seen a Man Cry" to the more recent "Sorry 4 What?" from *The Last of a Dying Breed*, Brad Jordan has consistently shown that his rhyme book is a stairway to both Heaven and Hell. But with no less than 10 references to God and the afterlife on *The Fix*, his seventh studio endeavor, Scarface is aggressively looking for a detour on the gangsta's road to perdition.

Despite holding three platinum and three gold albums, Face maintains an estranged relationship with America's mainstream. But with a superb cross-section of hip-hop's best producers, singers and MCs riding shotgun, *The Fix* is an undeniable balance



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of street consciousness and mass appeal.

The title for this album is more than a dope-game synonym. It's a statement about how Face methodically stitches a hemorrhaging rap game one heart-wrenching couplet at a time. To paraphrase Cedric "the Entertainer," Scarface is a "grown-ass man" and heeds the lessons he's learned over his existence. The lead track, "Safe," says it best: "So listen up, my niggas/ And I ain't tryin' to preach/ I'm just tellin' it from my side 'cause I'm in the streets...."

In the spirit of Italian poet Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, Face keeps the lyrics on this album in three distinct planes of thought: a drug-laced Hell on Earth; a contemplative Purgatory where he muses on the life he's lead; and, of course, the eternal bliss of Paradise. He appeases long-time Scarface fans with killer cuts like "In Cold Blood." Over a lilting piano sample courtesy of Gladys Knight, Face proves that there is no honor among thieves—and drug pushers—as he dupes a dealer he's working for out of his supply. "Called a nigga on the phone/ I just got knocked and the cops is askin' about you/ Come get me out/ He never showed/ So fuck him and the money that I owed." Even when he's stealing from another dealer, Face is testing his heart.

The gangsta boogie continues on "I Ain't the One" featuring W.C. and "Guess Who's Back" featuring Jay-Z and Beanie Sigel. Over Kanye West's pounding keys and interlaced strings, Jigga and Beanie Mac bookend Face's declaration of financial independence: "From the womb to the tomb/ A hot pot of joy and a spoon/ Tryin' to make me \$40,000 and move...." Beyond being "infectious," this track is downright terminal.

## RATINGS

👍👍👍👍👍	A HIP-HOP CLASSIC
👍👍👍👍	SUPERIOR
👍👍👍👍	SLAMMIN'- DEFINITE SATISFACTION
👍👍👍	DOPE
👍👍👍	GOOD, WORTH CHECKING OUT
👍👍	AVERAGE
👍	NEEDS WORK
👎	TOTALLY WACK

The album pivots on tracks like the more reflective "In Between Us" which pairs angelic moans and plucky chords with a stripped-down and vulnerable Nas who steers the song like a suicidal conductor: "Circumstances are like my first fight/ I lost it/ Was swingin'/ My arms buggin'/ Adrenaline pumpin'/ Oh shit, this little nigga's thuggin'...." Uncle Face let's the young'un ride on this one but comes back on "Sellout" with his own thug speak: "I been in fist fights with niggas twice my size/ Got an incredible record, 27 and five/ And the five losses I got, I had to redeem 'em/ So he had to fight me every time I seen 'em." Though he painstakingly details his struggles with vices and men, it's Face's battle for his soul that is the most compelling. On songs like the Kelly Price-assisted "What Can I Do?" Face crafts sermons for street disciples who spray paint altars to pay tribute to saints in the 'hood. Kirk Franklin he is not. However, as Faith Evans masterfully intones the hook to

## FAT TAPES

**"IN BETWEEN US"**  
SCARFACE W/ NAS  
DEF JAM SOUTH

**"THUG HOLIDAY"**  
TRICK DADDY W/ LATOCHA  
SCOTT  
SLIP-N-SLIDE/ ATLANTIC

**"BOUT IT, 'BOUT IT 2"**  
CAM'RON W/ MASTER P  
& JIM JONES  
ROC-A-FELLA

**"AND WE"**  
P. DIDDY, FOXY BROWN,  
BLACK ROB, CRAIG MACK,  
G. DEP & KAINE  
BAD BOY

**"B R RIGHT"**  
TRINA W/ LUDACRIS  
SLIP N SLIDE

**"PIMP SLAP"**  
SNOOP DOGG  
DOGGY STYLE/ MCA

**"SAVIORZ DAY"**  
SUNZ OF MAN W/  
GHOSTFACE KILLAH  
D3

**"RAP NAME"**  
OBIE TRICE  
SHADY/ INTERSCOPE

**"ACT LIKE YOU KNOW ME"**  
SHADE SHEIST W/  
FABOLOUS & KNOX-TURN'L  
MCA

**"SAY MY NAME"**  
XZIBIT W/ EMINEM  
COLUMBIA

**"EVERYBODY WANNA"**  
BENZINO W/ JADAKISS  
ELEKTRA

**"AUTOMATIC" (REMIX)**  
E-40 W/ NOREAGA,  
LOON & W.C.  
JIVE

**"THE ROC"**  
MEMPHIS BLEEK  
ROC-A-FELLA

**"ON"**  
LARGE PROFESSOR  
W/ BUSTA RHYMES  
MATADOR