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*The Leading Ladies of Popular Music:  
An Assessment of Lyrical Content*

Julie Miller

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University Honors Thesis

## Forward

There is a story of women in music history, similar to that of women in work, women in the family or women in society. This is a woman's story of oppression and silencing not unlike many of its predecessors. In modern elementary school music classes, of the ones that are left, the teacher usually fails to mention why women are almost entirely left out when they study classical music. It is a matter of what is left unsaid. I studied classical piano as a child for thirteen years and until I got to college I never once thought about why *all* of the composers I mimicked were men. From the very beginning of what we call modern music, there were rules and restrictions placed upon what women may and may not do with their musical talent.

Within modern music in Europe, women were included in musical education and were allowed to practice their talents. That did seem to be as far as it went however, "Though wealthy or titled women during the early modern period were expected to be able to read music, to sing, to dance, and to play at least one instrument, they were also expected to limit their music making to home or court," (Pendle 61). This was as far as their training went, no technical theory or composition was included. Their ability to participate in the musical world was merely a reflection of their refined family and place in society. As to be expected there were women of every class and kind humming tunes to work to, and to lull their babies to sleep. Music lives inside every and any gender or race, so it would only be inevitable that it would evolve in women as well. Everyone deserves a strong self-respecting song to sing.

This is why as a little girl I played the classical piano tunes written only by the men of Europe's past. So as a child I had basically no female role models in the world of

classical music. During my elementary school education, music was my favorite class to attend. For assignments we had to do brief biographies (reports) on classical composers who were always men: Mozart, Beethoven, Handel, Bizet, and alike. As soon as my family got cable television I flipped on MTV to look for a woman and I haven't really turned it off since. Janet Jackson appeared first thing wearing tight jeans and a bra-like tank top as she danced down the beach singing "Love Would Never Do (Without You)."

I've been entranced by popular music ever since that very day, but maybe that's why I quit my own music. I could never be a perfectly sculpted figure, with long hair and big doe eyes as well as one to be able to belt out my musical talent. I often wonder as Britney Spears dances on television barely clothed, or as Mariah Carey sings about dying without her man, how this country's young women are mentally effected. After thirteen years of playing the piano, two years of voice lessons, two years of guitar lessons, and three years of silence I have again recently picked up my passion. Last June I picked up an instrument you'll see almost no woman playing on MTV: a violin.

Often times lyrics bring a lot of personal significance and public following to a specific song. Many others and I would argue that musical melodies and beats are also a largely attractive feature of a song, but they really don't represent a message or an artist. It's words and actions that have meaning in our society, and words (lyrics) are used almost universally in current popular music. There is no actual evidence or proof that a song's lyrics may influence behavior or attitudes, however "...the public seems to have the perception that popular songs differentially affect behavior, dependent on lyrical message," (Ballard 484). In order to discover the *potentially* damaging lyrical content of popular music for women, I chose to analyze ten songs. These ten songs (see Appendix A for lyrics analyzed) are performed and possibly written by female artists. They have been chosen at random from the current (November 2001) top thirty of the Billboard chart's "Hot 100 singles/airplay."

Not all of my choices for music and analyzation techniques were always quite apparent. Once I knew I had decided to analyze lyrical content in terms of female performers, I knew that it would be both challenging and difficult to operationally define the aspects of the music that I may have been trying to identify. I have always kept in mind what things have bothered me as I have listened to popular music, but I knew I had to be careful to be able to fit these things into neatly defined categories. This became a little bit easier once I had decided on what songs I was actually going to end up using, but that was a difficult task all in itself.

I debated about choosing music from my compact disc collection, but I knew that wouldn't be representative of what the general public listens to in terms of popular music. I also thought about choosing the music from the nightly countdown of a local pop music

radio station, but that would only be representative of our local listening area. Finally I decided on a random sample from the Billboard charts music website. This would yield results of on average what the entire country was listening to in terms of popular music. It was also very hard to stay away from analyzing the content of some of the male artists' lyrics. Often we find them degrading women by calling them "bitches" or the ever-popular "hoes." I decided however to focus only on what types of examples female artists are setting other women and the young impressionable girls of today's modern society. Perhaps these artists are even being influenced to present their work in a specific manner in order to be successful in the male dominated music business.

I carefully analyzed these songs in terms of some more specific questions and issues. I chose to look at what is the woman's (performer's) role within the song. Examples of this may be that of a friend, a lover, a sister, a co-worker and so on. Hand in hand with the woman's role goes the idea of how these women relate to the opposite sex with their message. You could say that the singer is acting as a dominant character, a subservient individual, or that of an equal individual to that of a male perspective. I also thought it may be interesting to count how many times the words "baby" and "boy" were used in any of the songs. They seemed to catch my eye as being used quite often. I also looked at how many of the songs addressed the issue of love and emotions, as well as which ones discussed issues of sex and women's sexuality. Finally I wanted to try to discover if any of these songs contained messages about serious issues for women, or positive messages. By this I mean women's issues such as domestic violence, inequality, or just plain productive life experiences besides love or their personal sexuality.

These women play a few different roles throughout these songs as they tell us their story. For example I wanted to see if these women relate to the audience as a lover or girlfriend, a friend, a mother, whatever their societal label may be. Only one of the songs I chose left the woman with her new song "Get This Party Started," (see Appendix for all lyrics) as the leader of the party, which happens to be the female artist who calls herself Pink (ironically a color associated with the gender identity of baby girls). "Everybody's dancin' and they're dancin' for me, I'm your operator, you can call anytime, I'll be your connection to the party line." She successfully plays the part of the fun-loving friend, but does so without having to face a single challenge or obstacle during her evening of drinking and dancing. A breakthrough artist name Blu Cantrell has recently come upon the music scene telling us the saga of her revenge on her cheating lover with her single "Hit 'Em Up." "Hey Ladies when your man wanna get buckwild, Just go back and hit 'em style, Put your hands on his cash and spend it to the last dime, For all the hard times." She has clearly placed herself in the position of someone who only knew how to be some immoral man's lover or possibly wife, so the best way she knows to get back at him is to spend all his cash. But is this what we want to teach America's young women? That if your man is cheatin' just make sure you get yourself to the nearest department store and run up his credit card bill? I think that there are surely a million and one better ways to handle this situation while remaining a sound and an ethical adult.

Within this country's top thirty songs by female artists we've managed to discover the fun-loving friend, and the scorned lover, but what about the independent woman? The lead singer of the group City High is a woman constantly accompanied by

her two rapping sidekick male counter parts. The group's most recent single features her as the song's center piece as she lets us know how she classifies herself, "And I don't trust a lot of men, I'm independent, I ain't like some other woman." She makes it very simple for her listeners, she's an independent woman who will ultimately get what she wants from life and relationships. I have uncovered three very different types of women in only ten different songs.

It's also very important as we examine the songstress's lyrical role as we examine how they relate to the opposite sex. I found that the women of these tunes related to men mostly in terms of their own sexuality. The recently deceased Aaliyah uses her most recent top forty hit, "Rock the Boat," to tell a boy how she most enjoys sexual relations with him, as she appears to portray herself as a dominant figure in a sexual situation. By this I mean she is telling him how to perform sexually with her by letting him know when to "Change positions" and when to "Stroke it for me." The singer known as simply Shakira has recently made her first English crossover (from Spanish) album successfully without forgetting any of the sexual stereotypes. In her newest song "Whenever, Wherever," she tells her "baby" that she's so in love with him she'd follow him anywhere and is sure to let him know "I'm at your feet." I would see her in a very submissive role, which leaves the woman as the one who follows the man to accommodate his life and aspirations no matter how they may interfere with her own. "Not surprisingly, the media typically portray stereotyped romances. Women are likely to be less powerful and more passive (Hedley, 1994)," (Matlin 153). To top it all off Britney Spears sets back every woman about twenty years with her recent chart topping hit "I'm a Slave 4 U." I think that the title of this song pretty much says it all with this one, but I will elaborate. One of



my favorite lines from this song, "I really wanna do what ya want me to," hands over all her decision making ability as she begs her dance partner to tell her what he wants because nothing would make her happier than to fulfill his every wish. I must also note at this point that I have seen Ms. Spears participate in various interviews on MTV and entertainment television shows in the past few months and she is always very proud to announce her part in the composition of this song. Oh Britney, Britney, Britney.

I see that more often than not, the woman ends up being the one who's being dominated and submissive. These songs do not seem very reminiscent of the Spice Girls singing group, which hailed to us from England in the mid nineties with their anthems of "Girl Power." I think that sadly the bottom line is that no one wants to hear about the powerful woman right now. Everyone wants to have a strong man who knows how to give them really good sex, doesn't cheat, and can dance. Reversing the gender of many of these songs would probably be highly entertaining. For example to have a man sing a song that would portray the role of a submissive, sensual lover could potentially be hilarious!

Next I counted the number of times the words "baby" and "boy" were used. I noticed that as I closely examine the lyrics these were words used often to refer to a male counterpart or lover. This is interesting because both words would denote, being young and immature, usually unable to care for one's self. Babies are almost completely helpless, and little boys need guidance and regular care in everyday life. The word "baby" is used fifteen times throughout all ten songs to refer to a member of the opposite sex endearingly. The word "boy" is used five times in the same manner. The word man is also used often, but not as a term of endearment. As I mentioned earlier Blu Cantrell

tells us about her cheating lover, who is referred to as a *man*. Missy Elliot uses her lyrics to call out for a *man* that can last her longer than a minute. What this is insinuating I'm not even going to get into, but once she calls for stamina she is sure to use the word man to refer to her lover instead of "boy" or "baby."

Sex and sexuality often go hand in hand with the idea of love and emotions. The theme of sexuality resonated throughout almost every single one of the songs I analyzed, but emotions were left out quite often. Alicia Keys is a very confused girl who in her new song "Fallin'" cannot make up her mind about the man in her life, "I keep on fallin' in and out of love with you, Sometimes I love ya, Sometimes you make me feel blue." Why can't this woman decide once and for all what is best for herself? It's good that we see some emotions included here, and I understand that this song may be about the turmoil often associated with love relationships at times, but she makes herself out to be helpless in the presence of this person's love. This woman's emotions are displayed as gone astray and out of control.

Aaliyah clearly conveys a sexual message along with Missy Elliot and Britney Spears, but emotions and love are all but forgotten in these three songs. I can see this situation conveying to young girls that sexual relations without any emotional or personal ties are ok anytime, anywhere and anyplace. I would guess that it's safe to say that many young American women have experimented with a one-night stand, but should performers encourage such behavior in a time of the rampant spread of STD's and AIDS? That is a moral question we must all examine. When the issue of a romantic relationship does arise like that in Shakira's song, it is often portrayed in a manner unfavorable to

women, as I already mentioned this singer was ready to follow her man wherever he may go.

It would be uplifting and encouraging to come across a song with lyrics that embody a strong and independent woman. Within all ten of these current hits, the only song of this sort was one by the female rapper known as Eve. She uses her self-composed lyrics to let her audience that she's not going anywhere anytime soon, and that she's proud of the musical career she has developed (without manipulating her sexuality), "Take a lot more than you to get rid of me, You see I do what they can't do, I just do me, Ain't no stress when it comes to stage, You get what you see." Eve has also spoken out through her music about saddening issues such as domestic violence and women's oppression. Her resonating air of self-confidence has earned her the title of a "Pit Bull in a skirt." Why, because she speaks her mind freely as a man would? One may only speculate the many sources that could have spouted this title she carries. Salient issues for women do include domestic violence, women's personalities, and productive examples of womanhood. I think it may take a very talented artist to be able to include such important feminist issues in a chart topping hit song.

I do realize that the Billboard charts change often and that wonderful feminist songs do sometimes rise into this prestigious musical rank. I have managed to collect some of those very songs within my music collection and I find myself playing them proudly (see Appendix B for positive lyrics). Madonna's recent single "What it Feels Like (For a Girl)" was accompanied by a music video that was subsequently banned from MTV and VH1. I was so excited by some the questions that the song asks, "Do you know what it feels like in this world, For a girl?" that I was eager to see what she may

have done for a video. I had to download this piece of visual/musical art off of the internet in order to see it, and let me tell you I was shocked by what unfolded on my computer screen. You have to see it to believe it; I'll just leave it at that. Another female artist that broke through this past summer (2001) was India Arie, with her hit "Video." This is a song about how thin unrealistic women in music videos make her feel and how she has come to terms with her own body and it's uniqueness.

If you really think about the words to the songs that you or your young daughter, sister, or student hum along to on the radio you may be surprised. When I was in high school I thought that women with beautiful voices that sang of their sexuality and material gains were the epitome of the female being. Now I know much better and artists such as Madonna and India Arie are the ones I tend to take more seriously. I have discovered just how much women are bombarded by current release singles with messages of physical appearance, subordinant behaviors, and negative messages about female sexuality.

Don't get me wrong, I am pretty much in love with most current music despite its lyrics, but I have learned to filter out what matters to me and what merely remains "just a silly song." Many of this society's young women are not encouraged to learn about the true potential of their gender, so they may be very negatively affected by certain lyrics. I was surprised at how many current hits refer to women in a subservient role, relating to the opposite sex only in terms of their sexuality. As if that weren't bad enough, a lot of the sexual encounters mentioned are not tied to a serious relationship or deeply attached emotions. Besides female emotions, even harder to come by is the account of the positive female experience. Many of these artists could use their lyrical content to

portray the experience of being a woman in a positive light, but the bottom line is that many don't.

I know during my adolescent years I was very uncomfortable with my body and my personal identity, so I was constantly asking myself if the women who sang my favorite songs had the right ideas about life. Because guess what? I was nothing like them, as much as I tried to be. I think that I have learned how important it is to be critical of your surrounding media and how it relates to your own real life, but most young women do not realize this fact. My results have led me to wonder whether classes such as the Psychology of Women would benefit girls at a younger age so they could grow up learning to be more critical of mixed media such as music. It is a very powerful and sometimes fun thing to have sexual appeal, but we must teach young girls that the women who sing their favorite songs are made up of much more than just that.

## Part Two: An Assessment of Public Presentation

Nearly everybody has heard the saying “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

Possibly just as important as the songs they sing are the public pictures displayed as the representation of the artist. Besides album covers and magazine covers these female role models appear on music videos, television shows, music award programs, and sold out concert tours. Examining all of these public appearances would require extensive (although interesting) and meticulous analysis. For this reason I have chosen to focus solely on public photos of the ten artists scrutinized in the first section. These photographs (See Appendix C for Photographs analyzed) include several album covers from the album bearing the song analyzed, one magazine cover, and a couple Internet site photos.

It is never easy to judge the content of a photograph and its message. After all the photograph cannot come to life to tell me what the artist may have been trying to portray. As with the first section my analysis I knew that it would also be important to operationally define some of the things I would be looking for within these pictures. Choosing the photos was a far simpler task than choosing the lyrics had been. I knew that it would be effective to match up a picture of the singers I had already discussed, rather than choosing random ones of other popular artists.

First I decided to state the artist’s position in the picture, and what perhaps this may represent. Some examples may be whether the woman is standing, sitting, leaning, or lying down. Another important point to consider is how much of her body has been captured by the camera shutter. Is it a facial close up, or a full body shot? How much of the woman’s body that is shown may be a reflection of what the photographer or advertising manager wants the public to see. Facial expression was the next endeavor I

sought to explore. Did I see smiles, blank stares, frowns, or come hither looks? These are things that could tell us a lot about a person's seriousness, mood, or feelings.

Besides these positional representations I also examined the minor details of the artist's physical presentation as well. One of the most apparent questions would be what is the woman wearing or not wearing for her photo shoot and what parts of her body are exposed. This is an issue that comes up quite often in popular music, usually brought up by parents and caretakers of young girls admiring these super star women. The lack of clothing material is usually what becomes a problem. Another physical detail that caught my eye was the hairstyle of each woman. I was curious to find out how many had their hair down, pinned up, or cut off. I easily discovered an apparent phenomenon in this area. One last small detail is the inclusion of facial make-up and jewelry. These accessories could be viewed as unnecessary but enhancing in the same like. All of these questions can help us to break down the meaning behind each photo, so finally I decided to deduce what types of issues these pictures stress as important for American women.

The singer's position in each picture could possibly say many things about how they represent themselves. The artist known as Shakira has recently released an album cover that reveals little, but says so much. She appears to be holding herself in an awkward position that would lead the viewer to believe she is leaning upon something supportive. Pink's new album cover reveals her lying on her side on a makeshift brick ledge. She uses one arm to support her head, while resting the other one in front of her. I will admit that in all the photos I used it is not quite apparent whether or not the subject is sitting or standing. In Britney Spears's recent cover of Rolling Stone Magazine she is sitting on a dock while leaning forward using her arms to support herself. "So What?"

you ask, what does this implicate for women? “The research confirms that women are frequently shown lying down or bent at an angle, whereas men are posed to look more dignified,” (Matlin 48). A recording artist’s album cover must be seen as one of their greatest forms of advertising for that particular album. We will never know the exact causes for these demeaning poses, but one might conclude that men were the photographers, or a male dominated society has caused women to desire to be photographed in this way.

After analyzing position I went on to designate how much of the woman’s body has been captured for the photograph. More often we will find that women are photographed full bodied, while men will be photographed from the neck up. Surprisingly only two of the photographs I analyzed showed full-bodied shots of the ten artists in questions, and six of them went from slightly below the waist to waist and up. Missy Elliot is a beautiful and talented artist, but you will never see her wearing anything less than long pants and long sleeved tops. She may be what society determines as slightly overweight, so it does not surprise me that her album cover reveals only a headshot. Album covers can be seen as a form of advertisement, and in this case of advertisement perhaps they were looking to demphasize one of her less desirable features such as her weight. Another singer that faces scrutiny regarding one of her body parts is Jennifer Lopez. Countless times the media has focused on the size of her rear end (for lack of a better word). Her album cover also focuses on her head and face, so perhaps we should ask ourselves if one of her specific body parts is also being conveniently left out. “In magazines, images of overweight women are rarely seen,” (Matlin 47).



Facial expression seemed to come into play as well and can give many tell-tale signs about a woman's mood or personality. Only two of the lady's photographs could have been stretched to represent a smile. In American culture a smile represents a welcoming message and a happy mood. This was a message I did not encounter often in my studies. The remaining eight pictures showed the women with their lips parted ever so slightly, the mouths neutral or limp, and their eyes squinted minutely as if asking a question. All these things come together to produce what we call in America, a sexual look or a "come hither" stare.

Direct eye contact is an expression valued in our culture and something that occurred more than I would have expected in these photos. It means for Americans that you feel confident and powerful. In this instance I would define eye contact as being a straightforward look into the camera. Jennifer Lopez's new album cover portrayed to me a very strong stare. She looks straight into the camera lens and furrows her brow in seriousness. Her lips are not parted and her teeth do not show. Missy Elliot fails to address the camera with her eyes. She is looking off to the side, fixated on something we cannot see or know about, so it appears to be a blank hollow expression.

Every day the famous female artists get a little bit younger, and wear a little less clothing. This is an issue of constant debate and scrutiny by parents, community leaders, and teachers. In no way should a woman be judged by the clothing she wears, but we must face the fact that it does happen. Are these women posing in pictures in bra tops with their midriffs bare, setting the wrong example for American's young impressionable teenage girls? Last month's issue of Rolling Stone magazine donned a cover laden with a very scantily clothed Britney Spears. Wearing only a bra top, Miss Spears is sitting on a

dock as I stated earlier and is leaning forward squeezing her arms together to support herself. Just recently I saw her comment about this photo in the E! Entertainment network. She laughed as she pointed out that her breast size had been enhanced with the aid of computers. She then invited the television viewer to “look see, they’re obviously not that big.” I was particularly blown away at this point because not only were fifty percent of her breasts being revealed, but also on top of that they weren’t even hers. I won’t even embark upon the issue of the stomach being bare as well.

On her debut album cover seventeen year old Alicia Keys may be wearing a full length leather coat, but that doesn’t mean she wasn’t able to reveal plenty. Her cropped blouse reveals almost her entire stomach stretching up to her rib cage, and also plunges at the neckline allowing the top of her breasts to protrude out crudely. I have personally observed a change in the way that younger girls are dressing, but is it a result of these role models? The reasons why adolescent girls are wearing less each day may vary from person to person, but having these scantily clad women paraded in front of them each day is bound to have an effect on their choice of clothing when they visit the mall.

Long lustrous locks seem to be prevalent in most of the photos I analyzed, but there were just a few exceptions to the rule. Blu Cantrell showed us her long blond flowing locks, but Eve’s album cover leaves it all to the imagination. She is seen wearing a white head wrap cover all of her hair, and even the in the silhouette photo of her in the background shows her wearing a wide brimmed hat. Alicia Keys also wears a hat on her album cover, but unlike Eve she allows some of her braids to hang out. This would say that our society finds women with long smooth, straight hair to be most attractive. Only one of the artists had short hair, and that was Missy Elliot.

Long hair and skimpy clothes exist in most of these pictures, but sometimes a final touch to the perfect look, may often times be accessories. On magazine covers and television ads women sport pounds of earrings, diamonds, necklaces and piercings that are costly and valuable. Eight of the ten women wore earrings, Shakira has her ears covered so I could draw no conclusions and one photograph was not clear enough for me to be able to tell. Five of the women wore necklaces, and three had rings on. These pieces of jewelry are not something that every average American woman can afford. Now I know that in no way can I efficiently assess the monetary value of the jewelry worn by each woman in her respective photo. Some of it may very well be costume jewelry, but even Cubic Zirconias can be costly. Accessories are in no way necessary to complete a woman's beauty, but I've come to understand how women do tend to use them to compliment their personal style.

I would be extremely interested in learning more about how the advertising industry uses female sexuality and body image to promote sales. An album cover was what I used in most instances, and an album cover is perhaps some of the best advertisement for album sales. "...Advertisements, you'll also notice that the women are more likely than the men to serve a decorative function." (Matlin 47). It's hard to believe what a sexual basis the majority of advertising feeds upon.

I think that women serve a very token purpose in popular media and especially in visual representation. If this is the dynamic of most advertising and public presentation involving women then I am appalled and shocked by what I have found within these pages. It's hard for women to acknowledge that this is how they are being used by a male dominated society. Many will counter comment that they have harnessed their

sexuality in order to use it to their advantage. In fact I've heard Britney Spears use this argument several times. If this was true that means that we as female creatures are being valued by the opposite sex not because of our intelligence or accomplishments, but because of our physical bodies.

These photos are pretty to look at, but with an unrealistic eye. We must remember that stylists choose clothing and accessories, make-up artists perfect facial features, and computers enhance less than satisfactory body parts. Several years ago Jenny McCarthy (a Playboy veteran, and MTV star) appeared on the Rosie O'Donnell show to let young girls know how much of the popular media is fake. She pointed out instances of when her body had been technologically enhanced, and when camera tricks were used to make her look better. I have never forgotten this enlightening interview, and for the first time as a teenager Jenny helped me to feel a little bit better about myself. Despite being educated though, it still hurts to know you'll never look like pictures on the front of your CD covers.

# Appendix A

Contents:

Lyrics to the ten songs analyzed, as listed alphabetically by artist.

Aaliyah "Rock the Boat"

Boy, you know  
You make me float  
Boy, you really get me high  
I feel like I'm on dope  
'Cause you, you  
Serve me on a regular  
Boy, beat the tide  
Let's stroke  
Before he drifted me deeper  
Now he really holds me close  
Let's take this over boy, now

I want you to

CHORUS:


Rock the boat  
Rock the boat  
Rock the boat  
Rock the boat  
Work the middle  
Work the middle  
Work the middle  
Work the middle  
Change positions  
Do positions  
Do positions  
Do positions  
Stroke it for me  
Stroke it for me  
Stroke it for me  
Stroke it for me

Ooh, baby  
I love your stroke  
'Cause you, 'cause you  
Get me where I'm going  
I ain't trying to get revoked

'Cause I believe, I believe  
You know just  
What you doing, now  
Baby, now we can coast  
Let's don't give in a hurry  
That's too slow  
Go ahead and put  
That thang in overdrive

Repeat chorus

Stroke it for me  
Hmm, stroke it baby  
Stroke it baby  
Hmm, work it baby  
Work it baby



Ooh, stroke it  
There is something  
I want you to do

I want you to use yourself  
Like you never  
Ever used it before  
Now explore my body  
Until you reach the shore  
You'll be calling  
Calling for me

Repeat chorus thrice

Rock the boat  
Rock the boat  
Rock the boat  
Rock the boat

Blu Cantrell "Hit Em Up (Oopps!)"

While he was scheming  
I was beamin' in the Beamer  
Just beamin'  
Can't believe that  
I caught my man cheatin'  
So I found another way  
To make him pay for it all  
So I went  
To Neiman-Marcus  
On a shopping spree  
And on the way  
I grabbed Soley and Mia  
And as the cash box rang  
I thought everything away

(Oops)

There goes the dreams  
We used to say

(Oops)

There goes the time  
We spent away

(Oops)

There goes the love I had  
But you cheated on me  
And that's worth that now

(Oops)

There goes the house  
We made a home

(Oops)

There goes you'll never  
Leave me alone  
For all the lies you told  
This is what you owe

Hey Ladies

When your man  
Wanna get buckwild  
Just go back and  
Hit 'em up style  
Put your hands on his cash  
And spend it to the last dime  
For all the hard times

Oh

When you go then  
Everything goes  
From the crib to the ride  
And the clothes  
So you better let him know that  
If he messed up  
You gotta hit 'em up

While he was braggin'



I was coming down the hill  
And just draggin'  
All his pictures and his  
Clothes in the bag and  
Sold everything else till  
There was just nothin' left

And I paid  
All the bills about  
A month too late  
It's a shame we have  
To play these games  
The love we had  
Just fades away, away

(Oops)

There goes the dreams  
We used to say

(Oops)

There goes the time  
We spent away

(Oops)

There goes the love I had  
But you cheated on me  
And that's worth that now  
(Oops)

There goes the house  
We made a home

(Oops)

There goes you'll never  
Leave me alone  
For all the lies you told  
This is what you owe

Hey Ladies

When your man  
Wanna get buckwild  
Just go back and  
Hit 'em up style  
Put your hands on his cash  
And spend it to the last dime  
For all the hard times

Oh

When you go then  
Everything goes  
From the crib to the  
Ride and the clothes  
So you better let him know that  
If he messed up  
You gotta hit 'em up  
(Repeat)

All of the dreams you sold  
Left me out in the cold  
What happened to the days  
When we used to

Trust each other  
And all of the things I sold  
Will take you until you get old  
To get 'em back without me  
'Cause it might be better  
Than money or sex

Hey Ladies  
When your man  
Wanna get buckwild  
Just go back and  
Hit 'em up style  
Put your hands  
On his cash  
And spend it  
To the last dime  
For all the hard times  
Oh

When you go then  
Everything goes  
From the crib to the  
Ride and the clothes  
So you better  
Let him know that  
If he messed up you  
Gotta hit 'em up

City High "Caramel"

You can say I'm plain Jane, but it's not the same  
I ain't in to big names, but I like nice things  
I watch boxing matches and uh football games  
I wouldn't mind being an actress, but I love to sing  
I like going out, talking walks and stuff  
I don't round that many girls cause they talk too much  
I enjoy quiet nights at home cause I'm next to ya  
Though I'm ain't a virgin that don't mean I'm having sex with ya

Anywhere I go I spot it  
And anything I want I got it  
5'5 with brown eyes  
Smile like the sunrise

Anywhere I go I spot it  
And anything I want I got it  
5'5 with brown eyes  
Smile like the sunrise

Baby look me in the eyes  
And tell me ya  
I'm the kinda girl you like  
I'm feeling you  
Cause sweetie you're my kinda guy  
Thinking about you and I  
I wanna run with this  
All night long  
And if you want me we can keep this going

Let me tell you I'm the type that's strong  
And I don't trust a lot of men I'm independent I'm ain't like some other woman


Anywhere I go I spot it  
And anything I want I got it  
5'5 with brown eyes  
Smile like the sunrise

Anywhere I go I spot it  
And anything I want I got it  
5'5 with brown eyes  
Smile like the sunrise

And I keep and I keep my mind  
Baby girl don't you know you're a star  
We could take a little trip to mi casa  
Spend the night popping cris in the hot tub  
See I ain't never seen no girl like you  
Every sexy little thing you do  
5'5' brown eyes with your thick thighs  
Every time I see your smile its got me hypnotized

Singing in Spanish

Anywhere I go I spot it



And anything I want I got it  
5'5 with brown eyes  
Smile like the sunrise 4x  
5'5 with brown eyes  
sun like the sunrise  
2x

Missy Elliot featuring Ludakris "One Minute Man"

Ooh, I don't want, I don't need  
I can't stand no minute man  
I don't want no minute man  
Ooh, here's your chance  
Be a man, take my hand  
Understand  
I don't want no minute man  
Oh, oh, uh, ooh  
Oh, oh  
Oh, oh, uh, ooh  
Oh, oh

Boy I'ma make you love me  
Make you want me  
And I'ma give you  
Some attention, tonight  
Now follow my intuitions  
What you're wishin  
See I'ma keep you all night  
For a long time  
Just start countin the ways

CHORUS:

Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want  
No one minute man  
Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want  
No one minute man  
Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want  
No one minute man  
Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want, no

Tonight I'ma give it to you  
Throw it to you  
I want you to come prepared  
Oh yeah (Oh yes)  
Boy it's been a long time  
A crazy long time  
And I don't want no minute man  
And that's real  
Give it to me some more

Repeat chorus

(Ludacris;)

Yeah, uh, uh  
It's time to set yo' clock back

'Bout as long as you can  
I stop daylight and Ludacris  
The maintenance man  
Get your oil changed  
I check fluids and transmission  
You one minute fools,  
You wonder why y'all missin

On the back of milk cartons  
And there's no reward  
No regards, close but it's no cigar  
A hard head make a soft as\*  
But a hard dick make the sex last  
I jump in pools and  
Make a big splash  
Water overflowin  
So get your head right  
It's all in yo' mind punk  
So keep your head tight  
Enough with tips and  
Advice and thangs  
I'm big dog, havin women  
Seein stripes and thangs  
They go to sleep, start snorin  
Countin sheep and shit  
They so wet, that they body  
Start to leak and shit  
Just 'cause I'm an all-nighter  
Shoot all fire  
Ludacris, balance  
And rotate all tires


(Missy Elliott:)

Ooh, I don't want, I don't need  
I can't stand no minute man  
I don't want no minute man  
Ooh, here's your chance  
Be a man take my hand  
Understand  
I don't want no minute man

Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want  
No one minute man

Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want  
No one minute man

Break me off  
Show me what you got  
'Cause I don't want  
No one minute man



Break, break me off  
Break, break me off  
Break, break me off  
Show me what you got

Break me off  
Show me what you got  
Break me off  
Show me what you got  
Break me off  
Show me what you got  
Break me off  
Break, break me off

Eve Featuring Gwen Stefani "Blow Ya Mind"

Uh, uh, uh, huh  
Yo, yo  
Drop your glasses, shake your asses  
Face screwed up like you having hot flashes  
Which one, pick one, this one, classic  
Red from blonde, yeah bitch I'm drastic  
Why this, why that, lips stop askin  
Listen to me baby, relax and start passin  
Expressway, hair back, weavin through the traffic  
This one strong should be labeled as a hazard  
Some of y'all niggas hot, sike I'm gassin  
Clowns I spot em and I can't stop laughin  
Easy come, easy go, E-V gon' be lastin  
Jealousy, let it go, results could be tragic  
Some of y'all aint writin well, too concerned with fashion  
None of you aint gizell, cat walk and imagine  
Alotta y'all Hollywood, drama, passed it  
Cut bitch, camera off, real shit, blast it

CHORUS: Gwen Stefani  
And if I had to give you up  
It's only been a year  
Now I got my foot through the door  
And I aint goin nowhere  
It took awhile to get me in  
And I'm gonna take my time  
Don't fight that good shit in your ear  
Now let me blow ya mind

[Eve]  
They wanna bank up, crank up  
?It's been a week?  
Shank up, haters wanna come after me  
You aint a ganster, prankster, too much to eat  
Snakes in my path wanna smile ?after me

Now while you grittin your teeth  
Frustration baby you gotta breathe

ake alot more that you to get rid of me  
You see I do what they can't do, I just do me  
Aint no stress when it comes to stage, get what you see  
Meet me in the lab, pen and pad, don't believe  
Huh, sixteens mine, create my own lines  
Love for my wordplay that's hard to find  
Sophomore, I aint scared, one of a kind  
All I do is contemplate ways to make your fans mine  
Eyes bloodshot, stressin, chills up your spine  
Huh, sick to your stomach wishin I wrote your lines

CHORUS

[Eve]  
Let your bones crack



Your back pop, I can't stop  
Excitement, glock shots from your stash box  
Fuck it, thugged out, I respect the cash route  
Locked down, blastin, sets while I mash out  
Yeah nigga, mash out, D-R-E  
Back track, think back, E-V-E  
Do you like that (oooooh), you got to I know you  
Had you in a trance first glance from the floor too  
Don't believe I'll show you, take you with me  
Turn you on, pension gone, give you relief  
Put your trust in a bomb when you listen to me  
?Dancin much, get it all? now I'm complete, uh huh  
Still stallion, brick house, pile it on  
Ryde or Die, bitch, double R, can't crawl  
Beware, cuz I crush anything I land on  
Me here, aint no mistake nigga it was planned on

CHORUS

Alicia Keys "Fallin"

I keep on fallin' in  
And out love with you  
Sometimes I love ya  
Sometimes you make me  
Feel blue  
Sometimes I feel good  
At times I feel used  
I feel you darlin'  
Makes me so confused

CHORUS:  
I keep on fallin'  
In and out  
Of love with you  
I never loved someone  
The way that I loved you

Oh, oh  
I never felt this way

How do you give me  
So much pleasure  
And cause me  
So much pain?  
Yeah yeah  
'Cause when I think  
I've takin' more  
Than would a fool  
I start fallin'  
Back in love with you

Repeat chorus

Oh baby

I, I, I, I fallin' (2x)  
Fall, fall, fall  
Fall

Repeat chorus to

Jennifer Lopez Featuring Ja Rule "I'm Real"

(What's my motherfuckin' name?)  
R-U-L-E  
(Blowin' back on this Mary Jane, I'm analyzin' the game)  
And the game done chose me  
(To bring pain to pussy niggaz and pussy hoes, it's one in the same)  
Ever since you told me  
(There's only room for two, I've been makin' less room for you)  
Now only God can hold me  
(Hug me, love me, judge me, the only Man that help is above me, holla)

I met so many men and  
It's like their all the same  
My appetite for lovin'  
Is now my hunger pain

And when I'm feelin' sexy  
Who's gonna come for me  
My only problem is  
Their insecurity

1 - [Jennifer Lopez] (Ja Rule)  
(Tired of bein' alone) Yeah, yeah  
(See you arguin' on the phone) Yeah, yeah  
(Are you tellin' all your friends) Yeah, yeah  
(That your nigga don't understand) My love

2 - [Jennifer Lopez] (Ja Rule)  
Cause I'm real  
(The way you walk, the way you move, the way you talk)  
Cause I'm real  
(The way you stare, the way you look, your style, your hair)  
Cause I'm real  
(The way you smile, the way you smell, it drives me wild)  
Cause I'm real  
And I can't go on without you

[Ja Rule]

Girl, I've been thinkin' bout this relationship  
And I wanna know is this as good as it gets  
Cause we've been through the worst times and the best times  
But it was our time, even if it was part-time  
My baby lookin' at me, smilin' at me, laughin' like we wasn't happy  
But not knowin', ever growin' and we're gettin' married  
Hard lovin' and straight thuggin'  
Bitch, I ain't doin' this shit for nuttin'  
I'm here to get it poppin', hoppin, let's ride up in the Benz  
Hair blowin' in the wind, sun glistenin' off my skin, hey  
I'm nasty, heh, you know me  
But you still don't fuck with your baby

Repeat 2

[Jennifer Lopez]

Now people lovin' me and hatin' me, treatin' me ungratefully  
But not knowin' that they ain't makin' or breakin' me  
My life I live it to the limit and I love it  
Now I can breathe again, baby, now I can breathe again

Now people screamin' what the deal with you and so and so  
I tell them niggas, mind their biz, but they don't hear me though  
Cause I live my life to the limit and I love it  
Now I could breathe again, baby, now I could breathe again

Repeat 1

Repeat 2 till end

Pink "Get This Party Started"

I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started

Get this party started on a Saturday night  
Everybody's waitin' for me to arrive  
Sendin' out the message to all of my friends  
We'll be lookin' flashy in my Mercedes Benz  
I got lotsa style, got my gold diamond rings  
I can go for miles if you know what I mean  
I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started

Pumpin up the volume, breakin down' to the beat  
Cruisin' through the west side  
We'll be checkin' the scene  
Boulevard is freakin' as I'm comin' up fast  
I'll be burnin' rubber, you'll be kissin' my a\*\*  
Pull up to the bumper, get out of the car  
License plate says Stunner #1 Superstar

I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started

I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
Get this party started

Makin' my connection as I enter the room  
Everybody's chillin' as I set up the groove  
Pumpin' up the volume with this brand new beat  
Everybody's dancin' and their dancin' for me  
I'm your operator, you can call anytime  
I'll be your connection to the party line

I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
I'm comin' up so you better you better get this party started  
Get this party started  
Get this party started right now  
Get this party started  
Get this party started  
Get this party started right now

Shakira "Whenever, Wherever"

Lucky you were born that far away  
So we could both make fun of distance  
Lucky that I love a foreign land for  
The lucky fact of your existence  
Baby I would climb the Andes solely  
To count the freckles on your body  
Never could imagine there were only  
So many ways to love somebody

Le ro lo le lo le  
Le ro lo le lo le  
Can't you see...I'm at your feet

Whenever, Wherever  
We're meant to be together  
I'll be there and you'll be near  
And that's the deal my dear

There over, Here under  
You'll never have to wonder


We can always play by ear  
But that's the deal my dear

Lucky that my lips not only mumble  
they spill kisses like a fountain  
Lucky that my breasts are small and humble  
So you don't confuse them with mountains  
Lucky I have strong legs like my mother  
To run for cover when i need it  
And these two eyes are for no other  
The day you leave will cry a river

Le ro lo le lo le  
Le ro lo le lo le

At your feet...I'm at your feet

Whenever, Wherever  
We're meant to be together  
I'll be there and you'll be near  
And that's the deal my dear  
There over, Here under  
You'll never have to wonder



We can always play by ear  
But that's the deal my dear

Le ro lo le lo le  
Le ro lo le lo le

We can fly, say it again

Le ro lo le lo le lo le

Tell me one more time  
That you're there  
Lost in my eyes

Whenever, wherever  
We're meant to be together  
I'll be there and you'll be near  
And that's the deal my dear  
There over, Here under  
You've got me head over heels  
There's nothing left to fear  
If you really feel the way I feel

Whenever, wherever  
We're meant to be together  
I'll be there and you'll be near  
And that's the deal my dear  
You're over, you're under  
You've got me head over heels  
There's nothing left to fear  
If you really feel the way I feel

Britney Spears "I'm a Slave 4 U"

I know I may be young, but I've got feelings too.  
And I need to do what I feel like doing.  
So let me go and just listen.

All you people look at me like I'm a little girl.  
Well did you ever think it be okay for me to step into this world.

Always saying little girl don't step into the club.  
Well I'm just tryin' to find out why cause dancing's what I love.

Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOA)  
Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOOOA)(Do you like it)  
Get it get it, get it get it (OOOHHHH)(This feels good)

I know I may come off quiet, I may come off shy.  
But I feel like talking, feel like dancing when I see this guy.

What's practical is logical. What the hell, who cares?  
All I know is I'm so happy when you're dancing there.

I'm a slave for you. I cannot hold it; I cannot control it.  
I'm a slave for you. I won't deny it; I'm not trying to hide it.

Baby, don't you wanna, dance upon me,  
(I just wanna dance next to you)  
To another time and place.  
Baby, don't you wanna, dance upon me,  
(Are you ready)  
Leaving behind my name, my age.  
(Lets go)

(Like that)  
(You like it)  
(Now watch me)

Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOA)  
Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOOOA)

Get it get it, get it get it (OOOHHHH)  
[Panting]

I really wanna dance, tonight with you.  
(I just can't help myself)  
I really wanna do what you want me to.  
(I just feel I let myself go)

I really wanna dance, tonight with you.  
(Wanna see you move)  
I really wanna do what you want me to.  
(Uh Uh Uh)

Baby, don't you wanna, dance upon me,



(I just wanna dance next to you)  
To another time and place.  
Baby, don't you wanna, dance upon me,  
(Are you ready)  
Leaving behind my name, my age.

I'm a slave for you. (Take that) I cannot hold it; I cannot control it.  
I'm a slave (It just feels right) for you. (It just feels good)  
I won't deny it; I'm not trying to hide it. (Baby)

Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOA)  
Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOOOA)  
Get it get it, get it get it (OOOHHHH)  
[Panting]

Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOA)  
Get it get it, get it get it (WHOOOOOA)  
Get it get it, get it get it (OOOHHHH)  
[Panting]

I'm a slave for you. (Here we go now)  
I cannot hold it; I cannot control it.  
I'm a slave for you. (Here we go) I won't deny it, (Yeah)  
I'm not trying to hide it.

(Like that)

## Appendix B

Contents:

Lyrics to “positive songs” as listed alphabetically by artist.

Inida Arie "Video"

Sometimes I shave my legs and sometimes I don't  
Sometimes I comb my hair and sometimes I won't  
Depend on how the wind blows I might even paint my toes  
It really just depends on whatever feels good in my soul

I'm not the average girl from your video  
and I ain't built like a supermodel  
But, I Learned to love myself unconditionally  
Because I am a queen

I'm not the average girl from your video  
My worth is not determined by the price of my clothes  
No matter what I'm wearing I will always be India Aria

When I look in the mirror the only one there is me  
Every freckle on my face is where it's supposed to be  
And I know our creator didn't make no mistakes on me  
My feet, my thighs, my lips, my eyes I'm lovin' what I see

I'm not the average girl from your video  
and I ain't built like a supermodel  
But, I Learned to love myself unconditionally  
Because I am a queen

I'm not the average girl from your video  
My worth is not determined by the price of my clothes  
No matter what I'm wearing I will always be India Aria

Am I less of a lady If I don't wear panty hoes?  
My mama said ain't what she wears but, what she knows  
But, I've drawn a conclusion, it's all an illusion confusions the name of the game  
A misconception, a vast deception  
Something's gotta change

Don't be offended this is all my opinion  
ain't nothing that I'm sayin law  
This is a true confession of a life learned lesson I was sent here to share wit ya'll  
So get in where you fit in go on and shine  
Free your mind, now's the time  
Put your salt on the shelf  
Go head and love yourself  
Cuz everything's gonna be all right

I'm not the average girl from your video  
and I ain't built like a supermodel  
But, I Learned to love myself unconditionally  
Because I am a queen

I'm not the average girl from your video  
My worth is not determined by the price of my clothes  
No matter what I'm wearing I will always be India Aria

Keep your fancy drinks and your expensive minks  
I don't need that to have a good time  
Keep your expensive car and your Caviar

All I need is my guitar  
Keep your krystyle and your pistol  
I'd rather have a pretty piece of Crystal  
Don't need your silicon I got my own  
What God gave me is just fine

I'm not the average girl from your video  
and I ain't built like a supermodel  
But, I Learned to love myself unconditionally  
Because I am a queen  
I'm not the average girl from your video  
My worth is not determined by the price of my clothes  
No matter what I'm wearing I will always be India Aria

Madonna "What it Feels Like"

(Spoken:)

Girls can wear jeans  
And cut their hair short  
Wear shirts and boots  
'Cause it's OK to be a boy  
But for a boy to look like a girl is degrading  
'Cause you think that being a girl is degrading  
But secretly you'd love to know what it's like  
Wouldn't you  
What it feels like for a girl

Silky smooth  
Lips as sweet as candy, baby  
Tight blue jeans  
Skin that shows in patches

Strong inside but you don't know it  
Good little girls they never show it  
When you open up your mouth to speak  
Could you be a little weak

Do you know what it feels like for a girl  
Do you know what it feels like in this world  
For a girl

Hair that twirls on finger tips so gently, baby

Hands that rest on jutting hips repenting

Hurt that's not supposed to show  
And tears that fall when no one knows  
When you're trying hard to be your best  
Could you be a little less

Do you know what it feels like for a girl  
Do you know what it feels like in this world  
What it feels like for a girl

Strong inside but you don't know it  
Good little girls they never show it  
When you open up your mouth to speak  
Could you be a little weak

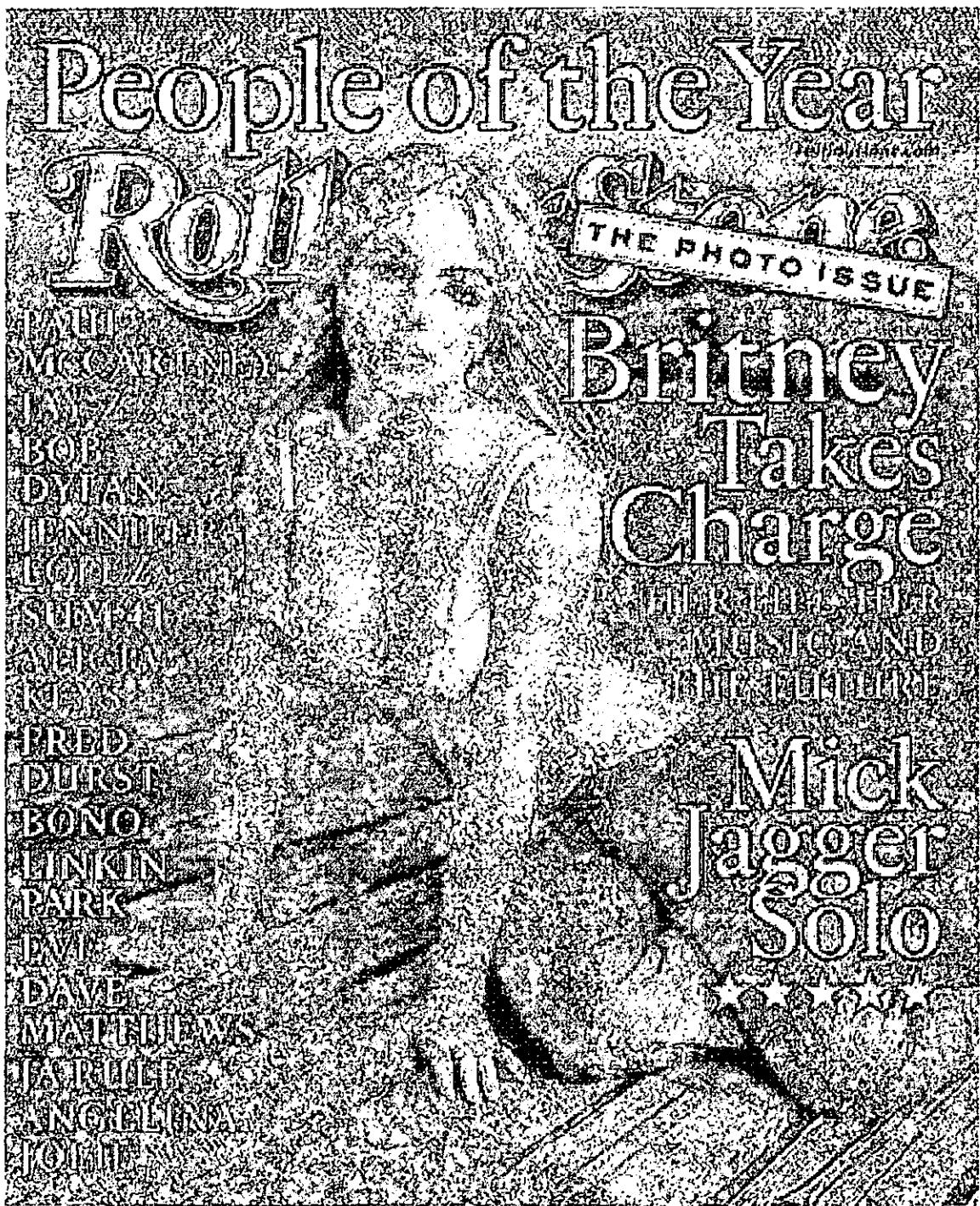
Do you know what it feels like for a girl  
Do you know what it feels like in this world  
For a girl

In this world  
Do you know  
Do you know  
Do you know what it feels like for a girl  
What it feels like in this world

## Appendix C

Contents:

Photographs of the ten female singers analyzed in part one:



# People of the Year

## Rolling Stone

THE PHOTO ISSUE

### Britney Takes Charge

THE REAL HER  
MUSIC AND  
THE CULTURE

### Mick Jagger Solo

★★★★★

- MADONNA
- MCCARTNEY
- IAN DURY
- BOB DYLAN
- JENNIFER LOPEZ
- SUM 41
- NEILON KEYS
- FRED DURST
- BONO
- LINKIN PARK
- DAVE NAVRO
- DAVE NAVRO
- MATTHEWS
- JARVIS
- ANGELINA
- JOHN

Britney Spears

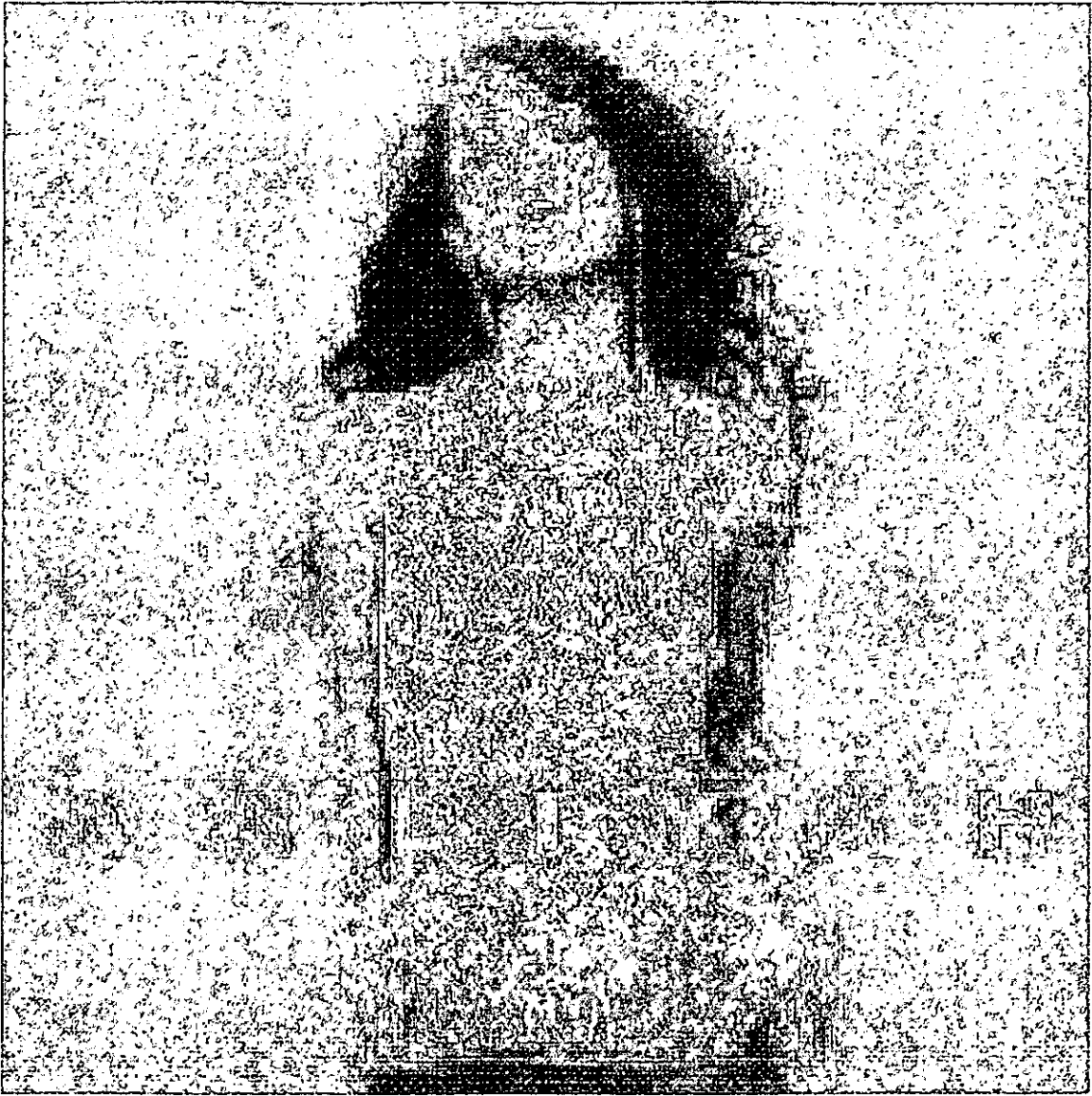


Jennifer Lopez





Missy Elliot



Aaliyah



Blu Cantrell



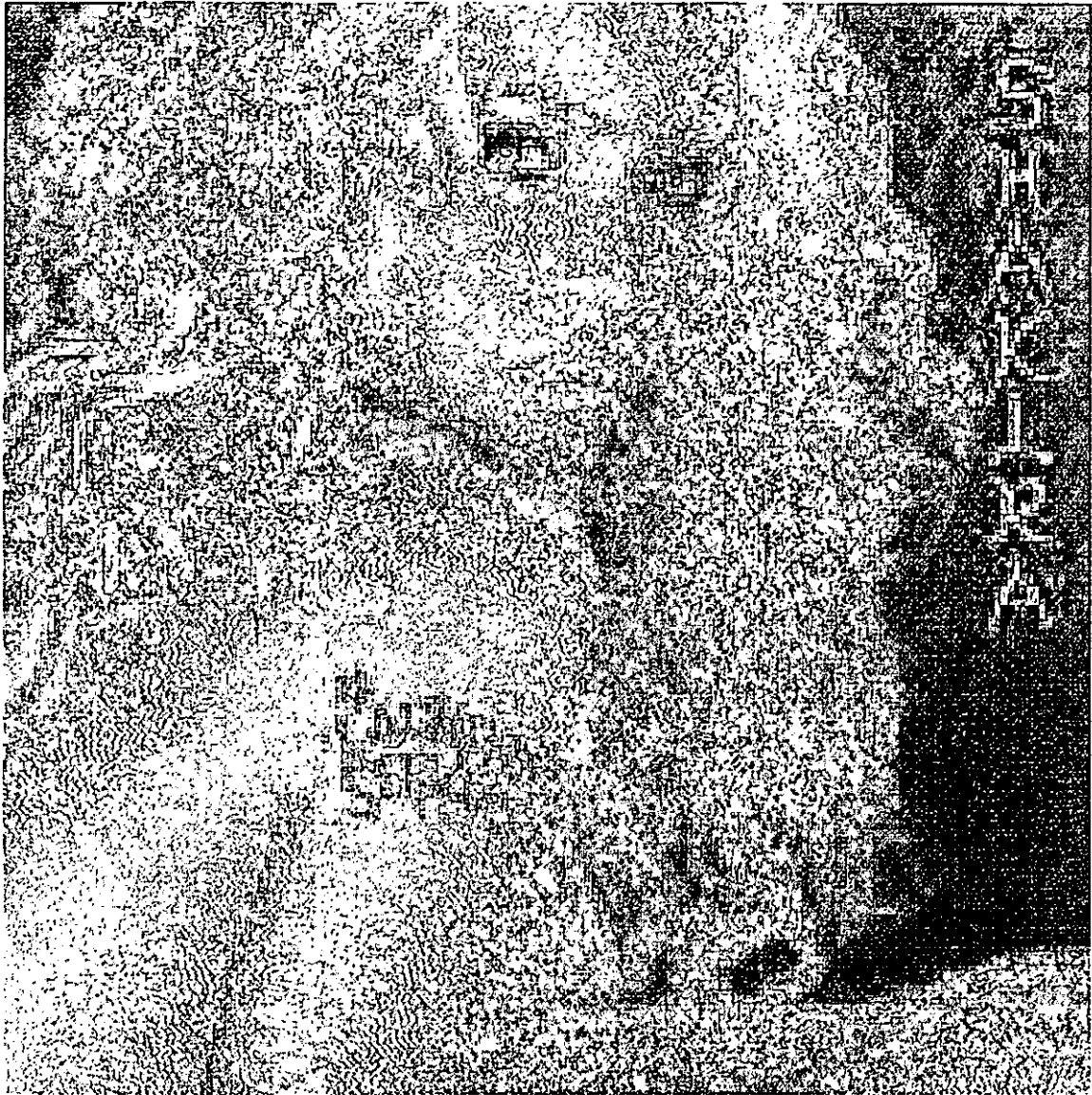
City High



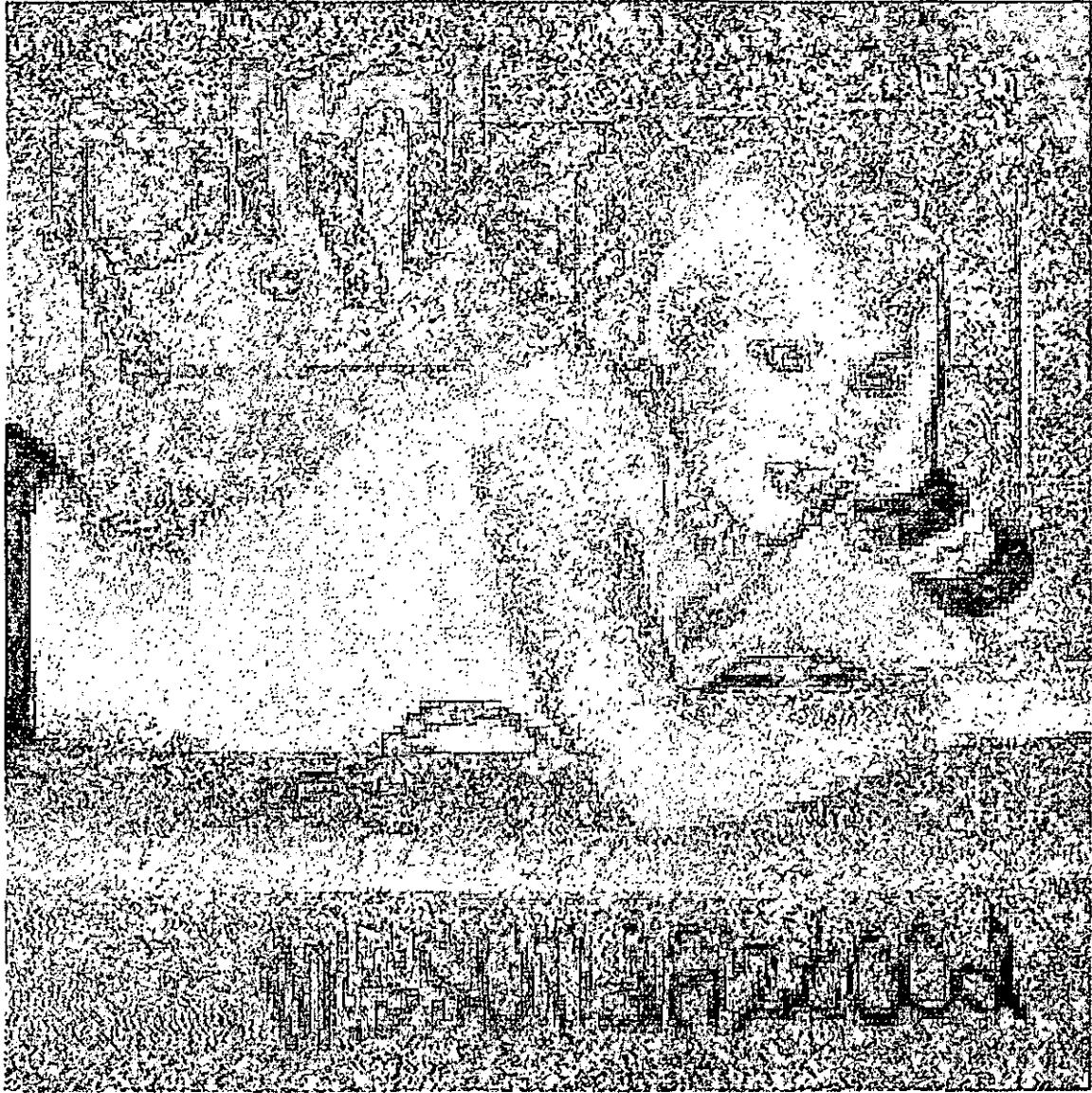
Alicia Keys



Eve



Shakira



Pink



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