

Watch: Kendrick Lamar & SZA luther Visual

Watch Kendrick Lamar and SZA in the video for “luther.” The rapper and singer pay tribute to Luther Vandross and Cheryl Lynn’s “If This World Were Mine” by holding their partners close. Director Karena Evans made sure to convey the feeling of two lovers so deep into each other that no one else in the world exists. Their collaboration has become the contemporary version of Nas and Lauryn Hill’s “If I Ruled The World.” Lamar’s song and a documentary that came out earlier this year have put Luther Vandross back into the spotlight 20 years after his passing. Lamar and SZA are co-headlining the Grand National Tour that kicks off this weekend (April 19) in Minneapolis.

Media Questions Of The Week



NEW YORK DISK JOCKEY WILLIAM B. WILLIAMS SHOWS WHAT SPURS THE PAYOLA—THE HOT COMPETITION OF THE 8,000 RECORDS A DEEJAY RECEIVES EACH YEAR

Gimme, Gimme, Gimme on the old PAYOLA

As probers turn from TV to radio, clear evidence of disk jockey bribery crops up

With the facts of TV-quiz corruption firmly fixed, evidence has begun to turn up of wholesale corruption in radio—among the entertainers who dominate that field today, the disk jockeys. The U.S. was becoming familiar with a new word, "payola," trade jargon for bribes to promote certain records over the air. The Harris subcommittee in Washington considered public hearings on payola in December. Preliminary investigation indicated that there was plenty for the probers to dig up—and so does the lively slang prevalent among the disk jockeys themselves (right).

The climate for deejay corruption is created by the enormous output of popular records. Many more are produced than can be played

over the air—and moreover, as New York's William B. Williams (above) says, "If a disk jockey had to listen to all these records, he'd go to the kookie house."

Bribes in cash or goods are paid by music publishers to plug a song in all its recorded versions, by record companies to boost their own disks and by record distributors to promote the makes they handle. Besides the deejays, others in a radio station who can influence music selection are paid.

Many disk jockeys like Williams, who makes \$65,000 a year, do not have to rely on payola. But on the following pages *LIFE* shows how payola does work, in stories by a disk jockey (pp. 46, 47) and a record executive (p. 48).

DEEJAY SLANG GLOSSARY

Dead Presidents—\$20 bills with Andrew Jackson portrait, \$50s with Ulysses Grant portrait, etc. used in payoffs
Bread—the cash involved in payola
Schlockmeister—a master at accumulating the schlock, or loot
Freebie—plug for a record given without payola
Charts—hit record lists in music trade magazines
Happening—a record making the charts
Breaking—a record moving up on charts
Ride—to play a record repeatedly
Hyping a platter—overselling a record
Bomb—a terrible record

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Does Drake's [lawsuit](#) against Universal Music accusing them of using bots and payola to boost streams for Kendrick Lamar's "Not Like Us" have merit?



Credit: Ben P L

Can Victor Willis of the Village People successfully sue anyone who calls [“Y.M.C.A.”](#) a gay anthem?

Kendrick Lamar Releases GNX + Video For Squabble Up



Kendrick Lamar surprised fans and released the mostly unannounced *GNX* album. His sixth studio album comes just months before his much-talked-about Super Bowl show. It's been

13 years since his *Section.80* debut, and today he is an icon dealing with usual life issues and the burdens of success. *GNX* is the first album released on his PNG Lang label after leaving Top Dawg Entertainment and Interscope. He kicks off the album, which is named after a Buick model, with “wacced out murals,” reporting on haters and how he dismisses them over horns and sirens, made for an epic drama. Lamar sets the tone and then raps about rappers with fake identities, his upcoming Super Bowl performance, love, success, and of course, the feud with Drake that led “Not Like Us” to become the biggest single of 2024.

Everything is not about being a weary rap king though; “Squabble Up” flips Debbie Deb’s freestyle classic, “When I Hear Music,” to become a twerk-worthy anthem. Sza is one of the guests, and she joins Lamar for the R&B duet “luther,” which is a tribute to the late crooner Luther Vandross and ’80s soul siren Cheryl Lynn. Lamar picks up where Mary J. Blige and Method Man’s “All I Need” and Nas and Lauryn Hill’s “If I Ruled the World” left off. The responsibilities of being a rap king and the attending accolades (Pulitzer, platinum status, and plenty of money), won’t change the fact that *GNX* sounds like there is still a mountain or two left for him to climb. “Man at the Garden” could be his take on Phil Collins’ “In the Air Tonight” with its melodramatic and almost suspenseful atmosphere. Lamar demands more recognition and luxury lifestyle signifiers, signaling a hunger to reach another level of status in the Western world. Fans are still obsessing over the Drake thing, especially now that the Canadian rapper filed a lawsuit against the record label for allegedly using Payola to make Lamar’s “Not Like Us” a hit. *GNX*’s release comes at the perfect time because it will be promoted on one of the biggest stages in the world at the game next year. Additionally, it reminds everyone that Lamar stands out as one of the most competent and creative voices of his generation, not just as the guy who beat Drake in a battle.

Media Questions Of The Week

In 'Gladiator II,' Denzel Washington plays a dashing powerbroker named Macrinus.

"He is a very wealthy man," says director Ridley Scott says. "He's beautiful. He drives a golden Ferrari. I got him a gold-plated chariot." <https://t.co/0f35SnZIPEpic.twitter.com/5FdMpWuCpt>

– VANITY FAIR (@VanityFair) [July 3, 2024](#)

How much will Denzel Washington's role as Macrinus in Ridley Scott's *Gladiator 2* stick to history, and will it be one of the year's biggest movies?

Will Kendrick Lamar's video for "Not Like Us" take home the MTV Video Music Award for Video Of The Year?