

THE

MAGAZINE

DOCUMENTING THE CULTURE
AS IT HAPPENS

CURRENT

- THE TEA
 - WHO'S TRENDING
 - CURRENT SPORTS
 - BEHIND THE GAME
 - CURRENT BEAUTY
 - MODELS MAKING MOVES
 - STREET STORIES
 - WHAT THEY MISSED
 - BOSS MOVES
- HUSTLE TO
BUSINESS

THE
CURRENT
Who's Got Next?

90% HUSTLE
10% SLEEP

BLOOD, SWEAT & YEARS
KB "THEPLAYMAKER" BARRELL

\$9.99 September 2026



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THE CURRENT

FROM THE PUBLISHER

FROM THE PUBLISHER

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

WE'RE NOT CHASING THE CULTURE. WE'RE DOCUMENTING IT.

THE CURRENT captures the conversation in real time without losing the context, the people or the truth behind the post.

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Social media moves fast. A story can become a headline, a meme and yesterday's news before the full truth has a chance to breathe. THE CURRENT exists to slow the moment down just enough to document it right. We will cover entertainment, music, sports, beauty, business, neighborhood stories and the conversations everybody is already having. The difference is perspective. We know the streets are not a costume, entrepreneurship is not just a caption, and influence is more than follower count. Our pages will be bold, visual and entertaining, but the foundation will remain credibility. Rumor will be labeled as rumor.

Allegations will be attributed. People will have an opportunity to respond. Our goal is not to manufacture clout. Our goal is to record the culture while it is still alive, complicated and moving. This concept issue is the opening play - a blueprint for a magazine where viral energy meets old-school editorial discipline.

THE POST IS THE MOMENT. THE STORY IS THE LEGACY.

THE COVER STORY

BLOOD, SWEAT & YEARS

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For nearly three decades, KB ThePlaymaker Barrell has worked where culture becomes movement - in the streets, behind the campaigns and inside the rooms where attention turns into opportunity.

**THE WORK CAME FIRST.
THE CREDIT CAME LATER.**

WORDS: THE CURRENT EDITORIAL TEAM

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF KB THEPLAYMAKER



BEFORE THE INDUSTRY KNEW HIS NAME

THE FOUNDATION

Long before dashboards measured impressions, the work was counted in handshakes, flyers, phone calls and records moved from person to person.



Milwaukee gave KB Barrell his first education in influence. The neighborhood taught him that people support what they recognize, trust and repeatedly see. That understanding came before the title, before the platform and before the name ThePlaymaker carried weight. It was direct marketing in its purest form: know the audience, respect the relationship and be present enough for the message to stick. By the mid-1990s, that discipline had become a profession. Barrell's work with Tone Struck Records and Sheppard/Lane Records placed him inside campaigns connected to DJ Quik, Suga Free, DJ Battlecat, Kokane, Madd Nation and the late Mausberg. There were no shortcuts. Every market required local knowledge. Every release demanded repetition. Every relationship had to be maintained after the promotional moment ended. Barrell credits the projects he helped promote since 1996 with

album sales. The number is significant, but the method behind it is the real story: distribution, visibility and human contact moving together.

THE INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS



STAN SHEPPARD



LEE FORD

Tone Struck Records / Sheppard-Lane Records

THE ORIGINAL ANALYTICS

REACH

Who physically saw it?

FREQUENCY

How often did they see it?

TRUST

Who delivered the message?

ACTION

Did the audience
move?

THE CURRENT

COVER STORY

COVER STORY

THE STREET TEAM YEARS

TOUCH THE
PAVEMENT

Street promotion was never random labor. It was market intelligence. A promoter learned which stores mattered, which DJs broke records, which neighborhoods moved first and which conversations could not be manufactured from an office. Barrell carried that knowledge from campaign to campaign. The names changed, the cities changed and the budgets changed, but the operational discipline stayed the same: visibility, repetition, relationships and follow-through. The photographs on this page document present-day fieldwork. They are not presented as images from the 1990s. They show that the principle remains active - the streets still validate what the internet amplifies.



CURRENT FIELDWORK / METHOD ROOTED IN THE 1990s



Grassroots campaign execution remains part of ThePlaymaker's operating system.

THE CURRENT

COVER STORY

COVER STORY

THE PRICE OF THE DREAM

WHAT THE WORK COST

A long career is measured by more than wins. It is also measured by the birthdays missed, relationships strained, miles driven and years when the belief was stronger than the bank account. Music can feel like another relationship - demanding time, loyalty and attention before it gives anything back. Barrell's story does not remove that cost from the record. The sacrifice is part of the record. Durability meant staying committed without becoming blind to what the journey required from the people around him. It meant learning that ambition needs structure, communication and a reason larger than applause.

**IF YOU CHOOSE THIS MUSIC,
UNDERSTAND THE PRICE.**

THEPLAYMAKER



THE CURRENT

COVER STORY

COVER STORY

FROM BEHIND THE SCENES TO BUILDING THE PLATFORM

THE REAL. THE TRUTH. THE CULTURE

Code Red became the point where experience turned into infrastructure. After years of helping other artists and companies control attention, Barrell created a platform designed to preserve full stories in the speaker's own voice. The interviews are not built around the quickest clip. They are built around context, accountability and legacy. Hosting placed ThePlaymaker in front of the camera, but the instincts remained the same: prepare, listen, recognize what matters and make sure the audience sees the complete picture.



CODE RED / THE PLATFORM BECOMES THE RECORD



THE CURRENT

COVER STORY

COVER STORY

OWNERSHIP IS THE ENDGAME

THE NEXT PLAY

The long game changed when ownership became the standard. Platforms are rented. Relationships, infrastructure and legacy can be owned. ThePlaymaker LLC, Code Red and now THE CURRENT represent a shift from supporting other people's systems to building permanent assets. Ownership did not make the work easier. It made the work honest. Every interview, campaign, product and printed page can now contribute to an archive that remains connected to its source. THE CURRENT is the next play: a magazine built to document culture as it happens while preserving the discipline that moved culture before social media existed.

**MY OWN COMPANY.
MY OWN PLATFORM.
MY OWN AUDIENCE.
MY OWN INFRASTRUCTURE.**



KB ThePlaymaker Barrell, building the next chapter.

THE CURRENT

THE TEA

THE TEA

VERIFIED ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

THE TEA

THREE STORIES MOVING HIP-HOP

Court developments, a health update and a legacy celebration - sourced before publication.

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COURT + MUSIC / DEVELOPING

THE CASE & THE ALBUM

Federal authorities charged Pooh Shiesty, BIG30 and seven others in April in an alleged Dallas studio kidnapping and robbery. A judge ordered Shiesty detained pending trial. As the case proceeds, 1017 Global released his 16-track album *All Eyes on Shiest* on August 7. All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

PHOTO: 1017 GLOBAL / IHEART



CONFIRMED HEALTH UPDATE

PRAYERS UP FOR P

Quality Control Music confirmed August 21 that co-founder Pierre 'P' Thomas is alive, hospitalized and receiving medical care after a medical emergency. The company requested privacy for Thomas and his family. No official recovery timetable was announced.

PHOTO: EMPOWER ATLANTA MAGAZINE



LEGACY WATCH

HARD CORE GOES SYMPHONIC

Lil' Kim will celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Hard Core* with a one-night orchestral performance at Brooklyn's Kings Theatre on November 19. The Queen Bee will be joined by Thee Phantom & The illharmonic Orchestra for her first orchestral performance.

ARTWORK: LIL' KIM / GPK ENTERTAINMENT

JUICY DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN RECKLESS.

REPORTING: DOJ / AP / IHEART / QC STATEMENT VIA PEOPLE / OFFICIAL LIL' KIM ANNOUNCEMENT. FACT-CHECKED AUGUST 22, 2026.

THE CURRENT

TRENDING NOW

TRENDING NOW

CULTURE MOVING IN REAL TIME

WHO'S TRENDING

Three names turning attention into music, media and on-screen momentum.

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MUSIC + ACTING

KAMILLION
IN HERE

Jacksonville rapper, singer, songwriter and actress KaMillion keeps expanding the brand. Her 2026 single In Here featuring C LOC adds new music to a career built through viral records, songwriting and television, including a starring role in Rap Sh!t.

PHOTO: APPLE MUSIC ARTIST PROFILE



CREATOR + STREAMER

ITSBIGMIKETIME
2 MILLION STRONG

ItsBigMikeTime built a following of more than two million through connected comedy skits, viral moments and live interaction. The Milwaukee creator is also a writer, producer and Tubi actor - proving that social reach can become a broader entertainment platform.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ITSBIGMIKETIME



FILM + TELEVISION

AYE KO
NEXT UP ON TUBI

Kertis Ayeko Owens is building momentum across independent urban drama and crime projects. Known online as Aye Ko, his recent credits include Out of Darkness, The Dirty C and All About a Check 2 - positioning him as a face to watch.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF AYE KO

VIRAL IS THE OPENING. THE BRAND IS THE BUSINESS.

OWN THE AUDIENCE / PACKAGE THE STORY / PROTECT THE MOMENT / BUILD THE SYSTEM

**STYLE. STUDY. DIRECTION.**

FASHION / LIFESTYLE / PURPOSE

BEAUTY WITH A PLAN

KAYLYN SABRINA

@KAYLYN.SABRINAA / ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Atlanta-based creator Kaylyn Sabrina connects fashion, lifestyle and purpose. Her platform documents personal style alongside her Pre-PA studies and future career in healthcare. The combination gives her content a clear point of difference: beauty with direction.

THE NEW MODEL

A creator can hold more than one ambition.

Kaylyn's evolving brand connects self-expression, academic achievement and a future in healthcare without treating any part of the story as an afterthought.



CREATOR / PRE-PA STUDENT / FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE

THE CURRENT

CURRENT INFLUENCE

CURRENT INFLUENCE

INFLUENCE MOVES

THE FEED MEETS THE FIGHT

Two fighters built for different eras show how personality, access and audience now move beside the action inside the ring.

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**DEEN THE GREAT**

CREATOR / INFLUENCER BOXER

VIRAL CLIPS TO MAIN EVENTS

Deen the Great represents the generation that built an audience before asking the old system for permission. Short-form content, livestream access and a fearless online personality turned attention into a fight brand. Now the Tampa-born creator is scheduled to face Olympic champion Henry Cejudo in Miami on September 26 - a crossover event that shows how digital influence can create real-world demand.

**ADRIEN BRONER**

CHAMPION / MEDIA PERSONALITY

CHAMPION TO MEDIA PLATFORM

Adrien 'The Problem' Broner earned world titles in four weight divisions and built a public identity that traveled far beyond boxing. His unfiltered personality made every interview, press conference and post part of the attraction. In the streaming era, Broner's ability to command attention gives a new generation of creators a direct link to established fight culture.

THE TAKEAWAY TODAY'S FIGHTER IS ALSO A CHANNEL, A COMMUNITY AND A BUSINESS.

REPORTING: PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS / MMA FIGHTING / MISFITS BOXING

THE CURRENT

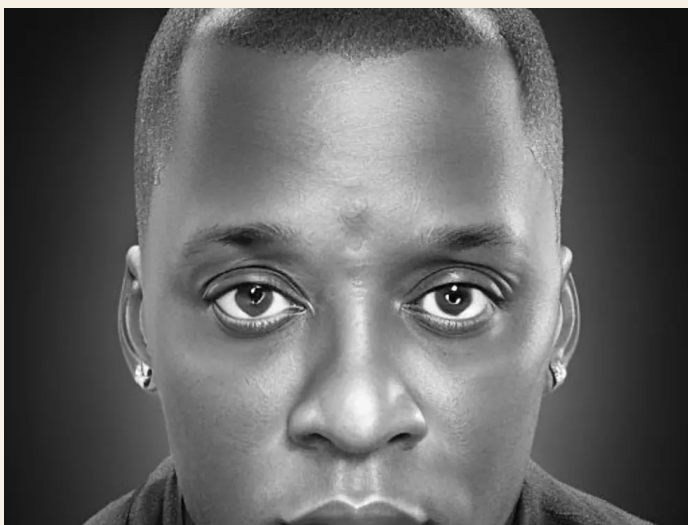
BOSS MOVES

BOSS MOVES

HUSTLE TO BUSINESS

THE BUSINESS OF ATTENTION

One built a nationwide DJ network. One turned a livestream into a campus. Both show that influence becomes valuable when it becomes infrastructure.

**TONY NEAL**

FOUNDER & CEO / THE CORE DJS

BUILT THE DJ NETWORK

Tony Neal founded The Core DJs in 2003 with a clear mission: organize, educate and empower the people who helped records move. What began as a DJ coalition expanded into an international network and an industry retreat where DJs, artists, labels and executives could build relationships directly. Neal's lasting business lesson is simple - when overlooked professionals organize, their collective influence becomes leverage.

**KAI CENAT**

FOUNDER / STREAMER UNIVERSITY

CONTENT BECOMES CURRICULUM

Kai Cenat converted livestream reach into a creator-development platform. Streamer University debuted at the University of Akron in 2025, bringing selected creators together for classes, collaboration and nonstop content. Its 2026 return showed the concept could operate beyond a single viral weekend. Cenat did more than host an event - he built an owned format around access, education and community.

OWN THE NETWORK. OWN THE IDEA. OWN THE NEXT MOVE.

REPORTING: THE CORE DJS / UNIVERSITY OF AKRON / PEOPLE

THE CURRENT

IN THE STREETS

IN THE STREETS

MILWAUKEE / CHICAGO / CLEVELAND

THE WORK BETWEEN THE HEADLINES

Real community work happens before the cameras arrive and continues after the attention moves on.



DESILYNN G. SMITH

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / UGHI

HEALING STARTS AT HOME

Desilynn G. Smith leads Uniting Garden Homes Inc. with a neighborhood-first approach to mental wellness, substance-misuse education and violence prevention. UGHI connects advocacy, crisis interruption and community resources to help families navigate pressure before it becomes tragedy. The work begins with trust and stays rooted in Garden Homes.



CHICAGO CRED

CREATE REAL ECONOMIC DESTINY

PEOPLE ARE THE SOLUTION

Chicago CRED works with people most at risk of shooting or being shot. Its model combines street outreach, therapy, life coaching, education, employment and long-term support. The operating belief is direct: the individuals closest to violence are not the problem - they are central to the solution.



ARTIS LEE / NORA



RECOVERY IS INFRASTRUCTURE

NORA provides culturally relevant chemical-dependency treatment and recovery support for youth, adults and families across Northeast Ohio. Services include outpatient care, recovery housing, medication-assisted treatment, peer support and prevention. Artis Lee represents the human side of a mission built around dignity, stability and lasting change.

THE STRONGEST STORIES ARE THE ONES STILL DOING THE WORK.

REPORTING: UGHI / CHICAGO CRED / NORTHERN OHIO RECOVERY ASSOCIATION

THE REAL • THE TRUTH • THE CULTURE



"WHERE THE REAL STORIES GET TOLD WITH NO FILTER"

RAW CONVERSATIONS. UNFILTERED PERSPECTIVES. DOCUMENTING THE CULTURE IN REAL TIME.

THIS IS NOT CONTENT. THIS IS DOCUMENTATION.

CODE RED delivers unfiltered, in-depth interviews with artists, entrepreneurs and real voices from the culture. No scripts. No polish. Just truth.

Built on authenticity and executed with purpose, this platform bridges the gap between the streets and the industry - capturing moments before they are rewritten.

THE PLATFORM

PLAY

YOUTUBE CODEREDMKE

SUBSCRIBE. WATCH. TAP IN.

SCAN TO WATCH
FULL INTERVIEWS

YOUTUBE: @CODEREDMKE

INSTAGRAM: @CODEREDMKE



KB 'THEPLAYMAKER' BARRELL

CREATOR | HOST | EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

NOT SCRIPTED / NOT POLISHED / JUST REAL PEOPLE TELLING RAW STORIES WITH AUTHENTIC VOICES.