

# How Beyoncé Reinvented Sex

(on record, anyway)



HzS  G  d

“Fighting to Stay Free”

**\* (WAY MORE THAN) DOUBLE ISSUE \***

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**And now, ladies and gentlemen...**

The final installment of...



A



History



Of



Sex



In



Pop



Music

...because we may as well go all the way...to 2014.

## The 1990s



**ROAM – B-52's (1990)** The beginning of the 1990s may have marked the end of the age of subtlety. When was the last time someone said to you (or vice versa), “Oh, yeah – that song’s about sex”? Could have been when this was out.

**JUST A FRIEND – Biz Markie** and **THE HUMPTY DANCE – Digital Underground (1999)** Along with “Wild Thing” a year earlier, set the bar for sex in rap: edgy then, closer to comedy now.

**WHIP APPEAL – Babyface (1990)** Only in the early 90s could an R&B ballad have whip appeal. I actually still have no idea what that is.

**WILD WOMEN DO – Natalie Cole (1990)** “...and they don’t regret it.” Probably the nastiest song she ever did, all the more interesting seeing as the next time we heard from her, she was duet-ing with her dad’s ghost.

**U CAN’T TOUCH THIS – M.C. Hammer (1990)** Because it was re-purposed as a song about sex. If you were dating around this time, you know what I’m talking about.

**ALL I WANT TO DO IS MAKE LOVE TO YOU – Heart (1990)** Heart deserved better than this four-minute version of a daytime soap, where woman has all-night sex with handsome stranger to get preggers as hubby couldn’t get the job done. Sure there were sperm banks in 1990, but this is rock ‘n roll, people.

**POISON** and **DO ME!** – **Bell Biv Devoe**, and **RUB YOU THE RIGHT WAY** – **Johnny Gill (1990)** Former members of New Edition go out of their way to show they're grown up. BBD's two biggest hits gave us a pair of unforgettable lyrics: "You never trust a big butt and a smile" from the former, and "Smack it up, flip it, rub it down, oh nooooo!" in the latter.

**HANKY PANKY** and **JUSTIFY MY LOVE** – **Madonna (1990)** Where Maddie went from being just a video sex symbol to video-and-audio sex symbol, first with her ode to the joy of spanking, then with a recording bordering on porn to the point that its video was not only banned from MTV but featured on an entire episode of "ABC Nightline" (yes, with Ted Koppel) weeks before the Gulf War. This is why we love America.

**UNSKINNY BOP** – **Poison (1990)** Loved by the fifth grade boy in us all.

**FEELS GOOD** – **Tony! Toni! Tone! (1990)** The sampling of the "Uh! Uh! Baby" from Indeep's "When Boys Talk" made ears perk up back then, anyway.

**CHERRY PIE** – **Warrant (1990)** Another fifth-grade-boy fave, but give 'em credit, they had the chutzpah to do it first.

**KNOCKIN' BOOTS** – **Candyman (1990)** One-hit wonder introduced many of us to this expression, in a song that included the in-case-you-didn't-get-it lyric "Tunnel of love is what I'm entering."

**WIGGLE IT - 2 In A Room (1990)** Nasty? Just-a little bit.

**GONNA MAKE YOU SWEAT** – **C+C Music Factory (1990)** Not so much this, but the parody heard a bit in clubs around that time.  
<http://youtu.be/yipkllujH8I>

**RICO SUAVE** – **Gerardo (1991)** "My only addiction has to do with the female species, I eat 'em raw like sushi." To me, rhyming "species" with "sushi" was more obscene.

**SADENESS PART 1** – **Enigma (1991)** To leave it out would mean omitting what may have been the most sensual recording of its time, even if there was nothing openly controversial about it. But the Marquis was a pretty perverted guy.



**HOW TO DANCE – Bingo Boys (1991)** In which we're reminded that dancing is "like sex, start out dry and end up all wet." Surprised no one thought of that before.

**I TOUCH MYSELF – Divinyls** and **TOUCH ME (ALL NIGHT LONG) – Cathy Dennis (1991)** More the former than the latter: that moment when the self-pleasure franchise was no longer exclusively male.

**I WANNA SEX YOU UP – Color Me Badd (1991)** and **PEOPLE ARE STILL HAVING SEX – Latour (1991)** Mostly the latter, which contended the reason they were was "This AIDS thing's not working."

**GETT OFF** and **CREAM– Prince (1991)** Back-to-back singles proving Prince has (or at least had) a wicked sense of humor. 23 positions in a one-night stand, indeed.

**O.P.P. – Naughty By Nature (1991)** 2/3 of which deals with what the second "P" stands for.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX – Salt-n-Papa (1991)** Ironically, one of the least sexy songs they ever did.

**AIN'T 2 PROUD 2 BEG** and **BABY-BABY-BABY – TLC (1992)** First two hits came out swinging: "two inches or a yard, rock hard or if it's saggin'" in the former; "I require plenty conversation with my sex" in the latter.

**BABY GOT BACK – Sir Mix-a-lot (1992)** and **RUMP SHAKER – Wreckx-N-Effect (1992)** Here's where the derriere's stock (perhaps the derriere itself) went way up. While often celebrated, it took Mix-a-lot's 4-minute lecture on why he liked big butts (and could not lie), and why the media had female beauty all wrong, to switch the focus to the rear view. And this year, right now, for the girls to answer back.  
<http://youtu.be/7PCkvCPvDXk>

**DAMN I WISH I WAS YOUR LOVER – Sophie B. Hawkins (1992)** Lots of interesting stuff going on here, with female sexual honesty at the later-Lady Gaga level ("I give you something sweet each time you come into my jungle book").

**HUMPIN' AROUND – Bobby Brown (1992)** Just because it's the only major pop hit (at least I think) to use that word.

**EROTICA - Madonna (1992)** Even then it was little more than “Justify My Love Part 2,” but Madonna did take things further (this was also out the same time as her Sex picture-book-for-adults), which by this time was what radio and fans had come to expect.

**SEXY M.F. – Prince (1992)** Retro-Prince, save for that one line.

**FLEX – Mad Cobra (1992)** Rhymes with “time to have sex.”

**NO ORDINARY LOVE – Sade (1993)** Sexiest song ever? Some say so.



Sade and the art of sensual fin-esse.

**NUTHIN BUT A G THANG – Dr. Dre (1993)** Pushed hip-hop forward while championing safe sex. How long did it take Snoop to find a rhyme for “contraceptive”?

**FREAK ME – Silk (1993)** I say it’s the song that inspired *Saturday Night Live’s* “D\*\*\* In A Box.”

**IT WAS A GOOD DAY – Ice Cube (1993)** Some fairly explicit sex described at the midpoint, and that’s the single version.

**DAZZEY DUKS – Duice, WHOOMP! / WHOOT THERE IT IS – Tag Team and 95 South (1993), DUNKIE BUTT – 12 Gauge and TOOTSEE ROLL – 69 Boyz (1995)** I threw together all the guys-yelling-at-strippers (or guys-pleading-with-girls-in-clubs-to-have-sex) hits. Heard one, heard ‘em all? Maybe. But they’re all hilarious.

**THAT'S THE WAY LOVE GOES** and **IF** – **Janet Jackson (1993)**

This was no lyric malfunction: Janet meant to up the nasty quotient. And yes, this was at the time of the hands-on-my-glands *Rolling Stone* cover.

**DOWNTOWN** – **S.W.V. (1993)** Yes, that's what it's about. After which time I never heard Petula Clark the same way again.

**SHOOP (1993)** and **WHATTA MAN (1994)** – **Salt-n-Pepa** Seems like the female rap field was more crowded then, but S-n-P owned the sexually-charged rap corner with hits like these: the former coining a new verb for it, and both with keep-your-eyes-on-the road lyrics like "Lick it like a lollipop should be licked" and "From 7 to 7 he's got me open like 7-11."

**COME INSIDE** – **Intro (1993)** What Rod Stewart said just once in "Tonight's The Night" Intro made an entire song out of.

**SEX ME (1993)** and **BUMP 'N GRIND (1994)** – **R. Kelly, and STROKE YOU UP** – **Changing Faces (1994)** With this guy's track record of mostly bedroom hits (including the one he wrote and produced for female duo Changing Faces), it's hard to believe "I Believe I Can Fly" wasn't about sex.

**BOOTI CALL** – **Blackstreet (1994)** It had to start somewhere, right?

**LONGVIEW** – **Green Day (1994)** The debut hit where masturbation lost its fun.

**CLOSER** – **Nine Inch Nails (1994)** While most alternative hits during grunge's golden age seemed like lyrical throwbacks to the psychedelic late '60s, Trent Reznor was in a different place, building a summer anthem around the chorus "I want to \$&%\* you like an animal." Only in the 90s.

**SHORT D\*\*\* MAN** – **20 Fingers feat. Gillette (1994)** and **LICK IT** – **Roula (1995)** What happens when Freda Payne's "Band Of Gold" falls into the wrong hands. While a novelty, it still was first to make fun of a man's shortcomings (and wouldn't be the last).

**CANDY RAIN** – **Soul For Real (1995)** I thought it was just Willy Wonka-type imagery, until I found out what it really meant. We've got LL Cool J's "Doin' It" (coming up) to thank for that.



**FREAK LIKE ME – Adina Howard (1995)** Just when you think you've heard it all, a new female act comes along and reads men a sexual bill of rights. I bet even Olivia Newton-John was embarrassed by this.

**RED LIGHT SPECIAL – TLC (1995)** Contribution: "I'll let you go further if you take the Southern route."

**LICK IT – Roula (1995)** Produced by the act responsible for "Short D\*\*\* Man," basically this was "Taking the Southern Route for Dummies."

**I KISSED A GIRL – Jill Sobule (1995)** While not a big hit, it certainly got lots of attention.

**DATE RAPE – Sublime (1995)** See above.

**YOU OUGHTA KNOW – Alanis Morissette (1995)** Wonder whether more couples went to the theater after hearing this?

**ONE MORE CHANCE – The Notorious B.I.G. (1995)** Not enough space in this *Hz So Good* to list all the way-over-the-top sexual boasts. But it's worth mentioning that Biggie revisited the "losing streak" couplet in the Stones' "Satisfaction" in a far more direct manner.

**PLAYER'S ANTHEM – Junior M.A.F.I.A. (1995)** Biggie project that introduced Lil' Kim, the chorus of which instructed male and female fans to grab or rub certain parts of their anatomy. Repeat after me: they just don't write 'em like they used to.

**TOO HOT – Coolio (1995)** An entire rap hit about safe sex. Who'd a thunk?

**DOIN' IT – LL Cool J (1996)** An entire rap about just plain sex. I didn't realize people from Queens were allowed to do that with anyone from Brooklyn. That or L's the exception.



Apparently, when LL rapped he was speaking tongue-in-cheek.

**MACARENA – Los Del Rio (1996)** One of the biggest (and seemingly innocuous) hits of the modern era (perhaps the biggest ever by a one-hit wonder) still manages to sneak in a reference to a ménage-a-trois.

**YOU'RE MAKIN ' ME HIGH – Toni Braxton (1996)** “I can imagine you touching my private parts. With just the thought of you, I can't help but touch myself.” Clearly there was no such thing as TMI in '96.

**HOW DO U WANT IT – 2Pac (1996)** Edit-heavy, like so much else at that time, but includes the lyrical gem “I'm hittin' switches on -----es like I been fixed with hydraulics.”

**MOUTH – Merrill Bainbridge (1996)** The lyric “turn you upside down, don't want to waste it” is just good old fashioned dirty.

**PONY – Ginuwine (1996)** “If you're horny, let's do it / ride it, my pony / my saddle's waiting / come and jump on it.” You probably already know this was found in the Irving Berlin lost file.

**WANNABE – Spice Girls (1996)** Introduced millions of pre-pubescent girls to zigga-zig-ahhh.

**SECRET GARDEN – Bruce Springsteen (1997)** The Boss hasn't let this side come out that often in his hits, but he did here with “she'll let you in her mouth.”

**CRASH INTO ME – Dave Matthews Band (1997)** Proving you could still be get the message across without being Ginuwine (“Hike up your skirt a little more and show your world to me”).

**BARBIE GIRL – Aqua (1997)** Yes, little girls, what your mom or dad or third grade teacher didn’t tell you, Aqua will. I once chaperoned a bus full of 6<sup>th</sup> graders where this was the big iPod song.

**CRIMINAL – Fiona Apple (1997)** Even without the video, “I’ve been a bad, bad girl” gets you.

**TOO CLOSE – Next (1998)** The year Viagra came out, we got the first (and to-date biggest) hit about an erection. Amazing but true.

**SEX AND CANDY – Marcy Playground (1998)** Was happy to have been too old by that time to be sitting in the passenger seat of the car with my mom when “I smell sex and candy...” came on the radio.

**ONE WEEK – Barenaked Ladies (1998)** It didn’t hit me until I noticed Radio Disney knocked out the lyrics “I’ve still got the rug burns on both my knees.”

...**BABY ONE MORE TIME – Britney Spears (1998)** It didn’t “hit me” until I overheard other parents of little leaguers question what the then-17-year-old Britney meant by “hit me.” That aside, it was already clear she was going to raise the teen sexuality bar up a few notches.

**MY NAME IS... - Eminem (1999)** His debut hit – essentially four minutes of standup comedy – is chock full of sexual references, some dated (“I can’t figure out which Spice Girl I want to impregnate”), others timeless (“I’ll %\$#\* anything that walks”).

**GENIE IN A BOTTLE – Christina Aguilera (1999)** Maybe the double-entendre “gotta rub me the right way” didn’t lift eyebrows the way Britney did in ’99, but it was still a first for a female pop act. And it was still kind of edgy when she brought it back a dozen years later on Maroon 5’s “Moves Like Jagger.”

**COWBOY – Kid Rock (1999)** “No remorse for the sheriff, in his eye I ain’t right, I’m gonna paint his town red and paint his wife white.” May have been the only time the word “white” was edited out of a song for radio.

## The 2000s



**THE BAD TOUCH – Bloodhound Gang (2000)** The one with the chorus “You and me baby ain’t nothin’ but mammals, so let’s do it like they do on the Discovery Channel.” Sex and basic cable, together at last.

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**THONG SONG – Sisqo (2000)** ‘Nuff said?

**THE REAL SLIM SHADY – Eminem (2000)** Quite certain this was the first top 40 hit lyrics of which mentioned a part of the female anatomy hinted at in a *Seinfeld* episode (but pronounced the other way here).

**CALIFORNICATION – Red Hot Chili Peppers (2000)** Just because of the title and the chorus that includes it, really. You can’t say those guys weren’t clever.

**IT WASN’T ME – Shaggy (2000)** Huge hit record about being caught *in flagrante delicto*, as they used to say. Just with a lot more detail.

**LIQUID DREAMS – O-Town (2000)** A boy band’s “Turning Japanese,” naming all the female celebs they, well, “turn” to...

**BOOTYLICIOUS – Destiny’s Child (2001)** ...including Beyoncé, who plays a larger role in this history over the next decade. And who was absolutely correct here: we weren’t ready for that jelly.

**BECAUSE I GOT HIGH – Afroman (2001)** Druggus interruptus. Specifically, taking an exit before the Southern route (but Afroman doesn’t mince words and keeps the radio edit folks busy).

**I'M A SLAVE 4 U – Britney Spears (2001)** Allegedly about dancing, strictly lyrically speaking, but, really now, Britney.

**ONE MINUTE MAN – Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliott featuring Ludacris (2001)** It’s all Luda here, with a break-in rap that leaves little to the imagination, although he’s best with those throwback metaphors we covered in part 1 (“Get your oil changed, I check fluids and transmission”).

**CONTROL – Puddle Of Mudd (2001)** It’s not every male artist who’ll sing about liking the way a woman smacks his backside...

**WHENVER, WHEREVER – Shakira (2001)** ...nor every female artist who’ll sing about her small and humble breasts.

**DON'T LET ME GET ME – P!nk (2002)** “Teachers dated me.” Proving some things are only right in top 40’s strange world.

**OOPS (Oh My) – Tweet (2002)** A hit about a girl taking her clothes off and touching herself...

**HOT IN HERRE – Nelly (2002)** ...followed not long after by the song of the summer, featuring a girl just taking her clothes off.

**MY NECK, MY BACK – Khia (2002)** One-hit wonder, as in, wonder how this ever got on radio or BET? Used to be when we said a song had “hot licks,” we were referring to...never mind.

**DIRRTY – Christina Aguilera (2002)** Ironically, not as suggestive (from an audio-only standpoint, anyhow) as “Genie In A Bottle,” but the combined audio-video-photo shoots’ intent was to trash the teen idol Christina in favor of the super-sexualized Xtina. Significant, as it pushed other female acts toward more suggestive lyrics in hit songs and showing more skin in music videos.

**HEY MA – Cam’ron (2002)** For many, introduced “lay the pipe” and “dome” into the lexicon of sex slang.

**WORK IT – Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliott (2002)** Woman-in-charge detail-driven rompin’ with more than a dash of Coasters-style humor, although it will probably be remembered most for introducing “ba-donk-a-donk-donk” into our vocabulary.

**YOUR BODY IS A WONDERLAND – John Mayer (2002)** I'm willing to bet there has never been any record before or after which has done more for getting its performer laid.

**ALL THE THINGS SHE SAID – t.A.T.u. (2002)** Not sure if the members of this Russian female duo were actually lovers, but they played them in their one hit and its video.

**IN DA CLUB - 50 Cent (2003)** "'I'm into having sex, I'm not into making love.' An entire book about millennial sexual mores would begin with this song. A milestone." (Charlie Mitchell)

**IGNITION – R. Kelly (2003)** Even though he'd been making records like this for years - and the "ignition" metaphor was already tired by this point - this is here as it became one of Kelly's biggest pop successes at the same time the underage sex, harassment and child pornography accusations against him surfaced in the media.

**ROCK YOUR BODY – Justin Timberlake (2003)** It probably didn't make anyone wince at the time - in fact, coming out of the radio it may have even been funny - but when JT sang "better have you naked by the end of this song" at that moment in 2004's Super Bowl halftime show when he tore off Janet Jackson's top, a lot of folks were surely asking "How did we let everything that led up to this happen?"

**MAGIC STICK – Lil' Kim featuring 50 Cent (2003)** Really, Fiddy? I mean, really?

**SEÑORITA – Justin Timberlake (2003)** The former N\*Sync teen idol as loverman ("Gentlemen...goodnight. Ladies...good morning"). Not even Mick Jagger got to sing that.

**MY LOVE IS LIKE...WO – Mya (2003)** ...along with some other things that according to Mya are wo-worthy. While the lyric "My main goal is to please you" wasn't a big deal in 2003, it would be coming from another female act a decade later. Stay tuned.

**WHY CAN'T I? – Liz Phair (2003)** A decade earlier she smashed sexual taboos with the critically-adored (and radio-ignored) *Exile In Guyville*. While this was tamer than anything on that album, she did continue her use of the f-verb, just this time on a top 40 hit.

**STACY'S MOM – Fountains Of Wayne (2003)** Sooner or later there had to be a MILF anthem, and this was it.





2003: “Mom” was the bomb.

**HEY YA!** and **THE WAY YOU MOVE – OutKast (2003)** The former so irresistible no one blinked at “just want to make you cumma,” the latter using the same word sans lyrical trickery.

**MILKSHAKE – Kelis (2003)** We can agree belly dancing is kinda hot, but combining that music with grade-school teasing (“My milkshake brings all the boys to the yard”) was way over the top even then.

**YEAH! – Usher featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris (2004)** Huge universal-appeal dance anthem that was apparently ok for the day camp DJs to play even with Luda’s rap about wanting “a lady in the street, but a freak in the bed.”

**THIS LOVE – Maroon 5 (2004)** Almost as big as “Yeah!” in ‘04, included the wink-wink double-meaning lyric “I tried my best to feed her appetite, keep her coming every night.”

**DIP IT LOW – Christina Milian (2004)** 1. Play Dusty Springfield’s “Wishin’ and Hopin’,” from 40 summers earlier (“Wear your hair just for him”). 2. Then play this (“Meet him at the door with nothin’ on”).

**SLOW MOTION – Juvenile featuring Soulja Slim (2004)** Not sure if 20 words edited out of a #1 song’s a record of any kind, but just in case, this should be here. In all fairness, here’s one of the few lines that got through intact: “Hop up on top and start jiggy-jiggy jerkin’.”

**GOODIES – Ciara (2004)** On her debut hit, they stayed in the jar. That didn’t last, of course.

### **WHITE HOUSES – Vanessa Carlton (2004)**

Singer/songwriter/pianist who hit big with “A Thousand Miles” returned with this song that ran into trouble because of a verse about losing her virginity that was a bit too clinical for MTV and much of radio.

**SOLDIER – Destiny’s Child (2004)** “Known to carry big things, if you know what I mean.” In other words, size matters. Then again, they’re from Texas.

**LA LA – Ashlee Simpson (2004)** I’m still convinced the only reason Ashlee Simpson had a recording career at all was so she could sing things her more popular sister Jessica could never get away with, such as this (“I like it better when it hurts”).

**CANDY SHOP – 50 Cent featuring Olivia (2005)** By this point, fairly routine stuff, but someone had to put “I melt in your mouth, girl, not in your hands” in a #1 hit.

**MR. BRIGHTSIDE – The Killers (2005)** Interesting how a jealous man’s imagination (“She’s touching his chest now, he takes off her dress now”) sounded more urgent and envelope-pushing than much of the above during this era.

**DON’T CHA (2005) and BUTTONS (2006) – The Pussycat Dolls** Went from homewreckers (“Don’t cha wish your girlfriend was hot/a freak/raw like me?”) to first-move makers (“Loosen up my buttons”).

**JUST A LIL BIT – 50 Cent (2005)** Another cliché goes pop: welcome to top 40, “clothes off, face down, @%\$ up.”

**MY HUMPS – The Black Eyed Peas (2005)** If not for “my lovely lady lumps, in the back and in the front,” would Fergie have a solo career?



Fergie: What day is it?

**I'M N LUV (Wit A Stripper) – T-Pain (2006)** You can argue that David Rose's 1962 instrumental hit is more suggestive using just its beat, instrumentation and arrangement, but seeing as this is the biggest hit song to feature a stripper in its lyrics, it's here.

**ME & U – Cassie (2006)** The idea of a woman wanting to confirm her sexual reputation with the right man ("They heard I was good, they wanna see if it's true, they know you're the one I wanna give it to") was so 2000s.

**PROMISCUOUS – Nelly Furtado (2006)** The big hit of that summer. "Has there ever been so blatant a celebration of a woman sleeping around?" (Mitchell)

**SEXYBACK – Justin Timberlake (2006)** While the S&M-oriented lyrics got some attention, it's probably remembered most for turning "I'm bringing sexy back" into a catchphrase.

**SMACK THAT and I WANNA LOVE YOU – Akon (2006)** Released in quick succession, the latter an example of "verb replacement," if you will.

**U AND UR HAND – P!nk (2006)** Guys did it, then girls did it, now girl tells guy he's gonna have to do it.

**CANDYMAN – Christina Aguilera (2007)** From an album best described as "retro-sexual," catchy throwback about a man who "makes the panties drop" and "makes my cherry pop."

**SHUT UP AND DRIVE – Rihanna (2007)** It took Rihanna to answer Prince's "Little Red Corvette," and she did it with what was probably way too many car-sex metaphors, which may explain why this wasn't a hit on the same level as the more-subtle "Umbrella" that preceded it.

**SO HOTT – Kid Rock (2007)** Rock radio hit possibly responsible for the catchphrase-or-something-like-it "I want to \$%#^ you like I'm never gonna see you again," which Alicia Keys cleaned up for a later hit.

**CRANK THAT (Soulja Boy) – Soulja Boy Tell 'Em (2007)** Teen dance sensation that somehow snuck in "supersoak that hoe." At least he didn't work Beanie Babies in there.

**SENSUAL SEDUCTION – Snoop Dogg (2008)** Snoop's "Sexual Healing," and you can tell the difference 25 years made.

**TOUCH MY BODY – Mariah Carey (2008)** Diva gets downright nasty for the first time in her hit-making career ("let me wrap my thighs all around your waist, just a little taste"), suggesting how important it had become to work sex (and humor, which Mariah also tried for the first time here) into a top 40 hit, to get listener attention.

**LOVE IN THIS CLUB – Usher (2008)** Made you feel bad for the cleanup crew.

**SEXY CAN I – Ray J & Yung Berg (2008)** Art imitates life when singer/rapper scores his biggest hit shortly after the Kim Kardashian sex tape in which he "co-starred" - and which he references here ("Let me get my camera") - surfaced.

**LOLLIPOP – Lil Wayne (2008)** Weezy's oral report, including the lyric "When I'm at the bottom, she Hillary Rodham," became a huge hit just when Obama was closing in on the nomination. Coincidence?

**I KISSED A GIRL – Katy Perry (2008)** Her pop debut - an instant hit that summer - remains the most controversial thing she's done (and probably boosted sales of cherry ChapStick).

**MRS. OFFICER – Lil Wayne (2008)** Manages to reference both N.W.A ("All she want me to do is \$%#^ the police") and Rodney King, who "...said beat it like a cop."

**RIGHT ROUND – Flo Rida featuring Ke\$ha (2009)** Turned Dead Or Alive’s “You Spin Me Round (Like A Record)” into a more radio-friendly version of “Lollipop,” if that’s possible.

**POKER FACE, LOVEGAME and BAD ROMANCE – Lady Gaga (2009)** Gaga’s 2009 full-on attack on pop culture included a sexual hat trick, from “I’m bluffin’ with my muffin” to “I wanna take a ride your disco stick” to “I’m a free bitch, baby!”

**IF YOU SEEK AMY and 3 – Britney Spears (2009)** In the ongoing race to shock at top 40, Britney scored twice that year, first with an obvious-to-every-kid spelling-driven pun, then with an ode to threesomes that drags Peter, Paul & Mary into the mess (no, there wasn’t any mention of blowin’ in the wind).

**I LOVE COLLEGE – Asher Roth (2009)** Not like we didn’t already know what goes on at our higher learning institutions, but Roth was first to work it into a hit, in which he gets girls completely naked at parties and advocates wearing two condoms (which I suppose makes that first part alright).

**I DO NOT HOOK UP – Kelly Clarkson (2009)** Leave it to America’s then-sweetheart to take the side of the girls on the opposite end of the room from Gaga and Britney, and to offer a safer-sex option than Roth.

**BIRTHDAY SEX – Jeremih (2009)** No mention of coming once a year, which didn’t stop Rihanna on the later, raunchier “Birthday Cake” (“It’s not even my birthday, but he want to lick the icing off”) or Katy Perry’s naughty-enough “Birthday” (“It’s time to break out the big balloons.”)

**I INVENTED SEX – Trey Songz (2009)** As in, “Girl, when I get you upstairs...you gonna think I invented sex.” But you had to think one of these guys would try to take credit for it sooner or later.

**EVERY GIRL and BEDROCK – Young Money (2009)** While the latter, which made an entire song out of a Flintstones one-liner, was the bigger hit, it was the former that really pushed limits, not just with the chorus “I wish I could \$%#^ every girl in the world” but by naming some of those girls, including the then-still-underage Miley Cyrus.

**The 2010s:**



**RUDE BOY** and **WHAT'S MY NAME (2010)**, and **S&M (2011)** – **Rihanna** The more hits she's knocked out, the more daring she's become: from directing the action on her 2010 hits ("I like the way you pull my hair" and "Every door you enter, I will let you in") to working the cliché "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but chains and whips excite me" into an irresistible pop song in '11.

**CALIFORNIA GURLS** and **TEENAGE DREAM (2010)**, and **LAST FRIDAY NIGHT (T.G.I.F.)(2011)** – **Katy Perry** Included in the string of #1s establishing Perry as the just-this-side-of-naughty queen of pop was this trio from the same album, covering: the "Sex on the beach" West Coast; alcohol-fueled teen sex at a motel near the beach ("Put your hands on me in my skin-tight jeans"); and a ménage-a-trois, pictures of which wound up online. And she's the act all the family loves on those Citibank commercials.

**TONIGHT (I'm Lovin' You)** – **Enrique Iglesias (2010)** Notable only because the off-radio downloadable version replaced "lovin'" with something else, a la Akon's "I Wanna Love You."

**SUPER BASS (2011)**, **STARSHIPS (2012)** and **ANACONDA (2014)** – **Nicki Minaj** While the biggest solo female rapper to date can keep the censors busy with the best of them when guesting on others' hits, she's reined it in on her own, yet still managed to get attention with a spicy grabber here and there, whether it's panties comin' off on "Bass," f-ing who you like on "Starships" or, her piece-de-resistance to now, celebrating sex with men who love her ample rear in current hit "Anaconda."



**MOVES LIKE JAGGER – Maroon 5 featuring Christina Aguilera**

**(2011)** Proving even the most contemporary love song of our time is more sexual than (or just plain sexual, compared to) its earlier-era equivalent, with “Take me by the tongue” and “Kiss me ‘til you’re drunk” as Adam Levine’s moon-June.

**SEXY AND I KNOW IT – LMFAO (2011)** And proving “sexy,” an adjective once reserved for adults who understood its meaning, is now something in grade-schoolers’ vocab (to the chagrin of teachers everywhere). That it was used in an M&Ms commercial surely didn’t help matters.

**WILD ONES** and **WHISTLE – Flo Rida (2012)** The music and radio business has hit a point where most songs that work have three things in common: 1. They’re danceable; 2. They get right to business from second one (so no instrumental intro), hitting you with the (or a) hook, and dead-stop when that has (or those have) been repeated enough (so no fade); and 3. Sex. Meaning most of the songs submitted here are basically formulaic: pushing the envelope is just part of the game. The hits of the very dependable Flo Rida consistently satisfy all three requirements, so the references to rough sex in “Wild Ones” or to oral sex in “Whistle” are really just Flo doing his job.

**LOCKED OUT OF HEAVEN – Bruno Mars (2012)** With Top 40’s reach wider than once thought, with an upper end pushing 50, it may be that “Your sex takes me to paradise” doesn’t startle anyone at all, and maybe shouldn’t even be included here.

**BLURRED LINES – Robin Thicke (2013)** Were *Playboy* still in the record business, this song might embody the “Playboy philosophy” -even if that philosophy may be outdated by a few decades - so it’s not just the song’s musical inspiration that’s rooted in the 1970s. “Blurred” was everywhere in the summer of ‘13, including some places it maybe shouldn’t have been, like in a too-easily-accessible video with *Playboy*-style female nudity (while Thicke and cohorts T.I. and Pharrell kept their clothes on), which probably fueled the fire of those who thought the “I know you want it” chorus veered too close to rape for comfort. While few sex-filled hits have given people second thoughts, “Blurred Lines” may wind up being the “what were we thinking?” exception.



“Blurred Lines”: Thicke with controversy.

**WE CAN'T STOP** and **WRECKING BALL - Miley Cyrus (2013)** The former not so much party-with-maybe-sex (or drugs, if “Dancin’ with Molly” is what you heard) as coming-out party for the new, bad, post-Disney Miley. The latter was less about the audio than the video, which featured America’s ex-sweetheart naked in said ball. But the real reason both are here is the renewed significance of music video and how YouTube views can make or break a hit in the new age (as was the case with “Blurred Lines” and “Anaconda”), meaning however we receive a sexual message – whether or not in the song itself – is going to matter, long as YouTube keeps giving radio a run for its money.

**SAME LOVE - Macklemore & Ryan Lewis (2013)** Homosexuality on top 40 has come a long way since “My Girl Bill,” but I wouldn’t have been able to say that before “Same Love,” which is much more than a straight male ‘coming out’ to support gay rights including marriage, and more than slamming most of hip-hop, social media and organized religion’s lack of that support in the process. It’s really about loving whoever you want and accepting those who do so.

**SLOW DOWN – Selena Gomez (2013)** Included the then-timely lyric “Mr. TSA, I’m ready for inspection.”

**TALK DIRTY TO ME, WIGGLE** and **TRUMPETS – Jason Derulo (2014)** The once non-controversial Derulo flipped the script on his latest release, with some genuine dirty talk from rapper 2 Chainz in the first of these three, trendy “big fat butt” focus on the second and

a girl whose striptease just happens to bring other top 40 acts to mind (that's one way to get your song added) in the third.

**DRUNK IN LOVE** and **PARTITION** – **Beyoncé (2014)** Sex in pop didn't end with Beyoncé, but her place in contemporary music right now makes her a perfect way to close this 100+-year examination. This is the story of an artist who for 15 glorious and wildly successful years resisted the temptation to push the boundaries of her music into more edgy, yet now arguably mainstream, territory. Until 2013.

It's possible that Beyoncé's (and Sony Music's) reason for releasing a new album on iTunes last December without the usual promotional build-up or two-hit-single carrot stick was to ease fans into this new-era, more sexual and less shy Beyoncé through discovery via purchase, vs. testing radio yet again following the Miley makeover along with other artists having switched from innocent to not-so-much.

As it turned out, the album's two biggest and most discussed songs are quite possibly its most sexual moments, as both are accounts of encounters as they take place. While other female acts have gone down that road - as Jane Birkin did all those years ago on "Je T'Aime," and as Madonna did on both "Justify My Love" and "Erotica" - Beyoncé, if you'll allow it, reinvented sex on record on "Drunk" and "Partition," introducing an honesty and delivery that was, pardon the play on words, lights-out sensual. Whether holding her own with Jay-Z on "Drunk" ("I want your body right here, daddy") or assuming a (surprisingly) more submissive, perhaps even sexually unsure, role in "Partition" ("Take all of me, I just want to be the girl you like"), Beyoncé has moved beyond the sex roles most female performers have been playing out on pop radio over the past decade.

Whether or not this means we'll see a change in how sex is portrayed in hit songs moving forward - especially as neither "Drunk" nor "Partition" were mega-hits along the lines of "Single Ladies" or "Crazy In Love" - remains to be seen. But as we have seen since the turn of this century, those ignoring Beyoncé's influence risk being left behind.

And that's it. (I know...some of you are saying "That's IT?").  
In any case, I hope this threesome of *Hz* issues were as good for you as they were for me.

*Hz So Good* online (current issue, and archive back to 2010) at <http://www.60s70s.org/HzSoGood/>.

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