12. *Shawn Carter (Jay-Z)*, 1998

American rapper and record executive Shawn Carter, known professionally as Jay-Z, had reached stardom by 1998 when Lixenberg made this portrait. His 1997 album *In My Lifetime, Vol. 1* had gained platinum status, and his 1998 follow-up *Vol. 2...Hard Knock Life* would become his most commercially successful album.

Jay-Z's fame would continue to increase once he became romantically involved with singer Beyoncé; the two eventually married in 2008 and since then have continued to release new music, both independently and collaboratively. While the rapper's lifestyle with Beyoncé is lavish and guarded, this photograph of Jay-Z is intimate and endearing, and even somewhat awkward.

As George Pitts, the director of photography at *Vibe* magazine who commissioned the portrait has observed, "virtually all the celebrities portrayed by Lixenberg are rendered in a vulnerable way . . ."

Dana Lixenberg American Images

While Lixenberg's test Polaroids (also on display here) demonstrate that Jay-Z posed against a dramatic New York City skyline, the photographer selected a more mundane composition for the finished portrait, but one that allowed the sitter's personality and humor to shine: pictured in his hotel room and dressed in a hooded blue robe, Jay-Z holds a television remote control and yawns exaggeratedly before the camera.

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