

= Hard (Rihanna song) =

" Hard " is a song by Barbadian recording artist Rihanna from her fourth studio album , Rated R (2009) . The song was written by Terius Nash , Christopher Stewart , Rihanna , and Jeezy , with vocals performed by the latter two . Nash and Stewart produced it under their stage names , The @-@ Dream and Tricky Stewart . " Hard " was sent to radio by Def Jam Recordings on November 10 , 2009 , as the second United States single from Rated R. It is a hip hop song and features military horns , hissing synthesizers , sharp beats and piano chords . Upon its release , it received critical acclaim , with critics praising Rihanna 's vocal performance and Jeezy 's collaboration .

The song became Rihanna 's thirteenth top ten hit on the US Billboard Hot 100 , matching Beyoncé as the female artist with the most US top ten songs since 2000 . It was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America . An accompanying music video , directed by Melina Matsoukas , was filmed in Los Angeles in December 2009 . In the video , Rihanna commands an army while clothed in stylized military costumes . Critics praised the video and noted a difference from her previous clips . After the video premiere , the song charted in Canada , New Zealand and the United Kingdom . Rihanna performed " Hard " at Jay @-@ Z 's concert at UCLA Pauley Pavilion and at the 2009 American Music Awards . The song was also included on the set lists of the Last Girl on Earth Tour (2010 ? 11) and the Loud Tour (2011) .

= = Background and composition = =

In an interview with MTV News , producer Mikkel S. Eriksen of Stargate initially confirmed " Wait Your Turn " as the second single from Rated R ; however , " Hard " was ultimately chosen instead . Hard (The Remixes) was made available for digital download on January 19 , 2010 in the United States . In an interview with MTV , Rihanna explained that while she was in Paris , Christopher " Tricky " Stewart and The @-@ Dream played a few songs for her , which included " Hard " . Rihanna decided to record the song because it was different from her normal creative output . Stewart , in an interview with Rap @-@ Up , spoke about the song before its title or any details were released , describing the song as " edgy " and a " club banger " . When asked if the song was bigger than Rihanna 's commercially successful song " Umbrella " , he said , " No , it 's different . It 's a superstar taking a step in a totally different direction . " " Hard " is the first song for which Jeezy was credited thus , instead of under his enduring stage name " Young Jeezy " .

" Hard " incorporates musical elements of hip hop and is four minutes and ten seconds long . It features militant horns , hissing synths , sharp beats and piano notes . It is written in the key of B minor and set in common time with a pop and R & B groove and a tempo of 91 beats per minute . Rihanna 's vocal range in the song ranges from the low note of G3 to the high note of B4 . As noted by Ailbhe Malone of NME , Rihanna adopts Jay @-@ Z 's vocal style in the lyric , " Brilliant , resilient , fan mail from 27 million . " " Hard " is a song about emulating power and strength , and how Rihanna assumes a role of being the best at what she does . Ryan Dombell of Pitchfork Media wrote that the song is " a strutting statement of power " .

= = Critical reception = =

" Hard " received acclaim from music critics . Greg Kot of the Chicago Tribune said that Rihanna lashes out on the song , with " help from an even harder @-@ edged MC , Young Jeezy . " Monica Herrera of Billboard magazine wrote : " Rihanna effectively assumes the hip @-@ hop posture and even recruits the ultimate street cred booster in rapper Young Jeezy , who provides the thrust needed to send a song with a somewhat inert chorus home " . Herrera continued , " Though ' Hard ' doesn 't find Rihanna in her typical comfort zone , the atypical is precisely what she has aimed for with her new material ? and it works " . Alexis Petridis of The Guardian called " Hard " and " Rude Boy " the highlights of Rated R , and wrote , " both of which exploit Rihanna 's most appealing vocal style , a sulky , icy , monotone " . Petridis also noted that the song " undercuts the standard braggadon of Hard ? ' fan mail from 27 million ' " . Leah Greenblatt of Entertainment Weekly

commented on Rihanna 's vocal style and the persona she adopts in the song . Greenblatt wrote , " Rihanna dons hip @-@ hop swagger like borrowed armor , leaning heavily on her Caribbean accent and unleashing a string of baddest @-@ bitch boasts via dancehall @-@ riddim 'd bangers like ' Hard , ' ' G4L , ' and ' Wait Your Turn ' " . Ryan Dombell of Pitchfork Media wrote , " the bulletproof guise is good for the record 's high point on ' Hard ' , a strutting statement of power bolstered by a roiling undertow of a beat from ' Umbrella ' producer Tricky Stewart . "

= = Chart performance = =

In the United States , " Hard " peaked at No. 8 on January 30 , 2010 . It became Rihanna 's thirteenth US top ten Hot 100 single , and Rihanna equaled Beyoncé as the female artist with the most US top ten hit singles since 2000 . The song reached No. 1 on the US Hot Dance Club Songs chart on March 6 , 2010 , reached No. 9 on the US Pop Songs , and No. 14 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart . " Hard " was certified two @-@ times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) , denoting sales of over 2 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 copies .

Although the single was not released internationally , it charted in several countries after the release of the music video . In Canada , it peaked for one week at No. 9 on February 6 , 2010 . In New Zealand , it debuted at No. 40 on January 11 , 2010 and peaked at No. 15 in its fifth week , and it stayed in the top twenty for a further two weeks . " Hard " debuted and peaked at No. 26 on the Swedish Singles Chart on January 22 , 2010 . It dropped off the chart for a week , but re @-@ entered at No. 55 . In the United Kingdom , " Hard " debuted at No. 46 on the UK R & B Chart on January 16 , 2010 , peaking at No. 17 on January 23 , 2010 . The same day , the song debuted at No. 55 on the UK Singles Chart , and peaked at No. 42 the following week . " Hard " spent another six weeks on the chart , descending to No. 100 on February 24 , 2010 and leaving the chart on March 3 , 2010 . It re @-@ entered the UK Singles Chart at No. 64 on August 28 , 2010 , and fell to No. 89 the following week . In total , it spent ten non @-@ consecutive weeks on the UK singles chart .

= = Music video = =

= = = Background and synopsis = = =

The music video for " Hard " was directed by Melina Matsoukas and released in December 2009 . It was the first Rihanna video directed by Matsoukas , who would go on to direct videos for " Rude Boy " and " Rockstar 101 " . Before the premiere of the video , Rihanna told Kyle Anderson of MTV News : " It 's couture @-@ military . Everything is surrounded by the whole idea of something military . We have tanks , we have troops , we 've got helicopters , we 've got explosions . [...] Tight gear , lots of cute outfits , lots of bullets . Crazy . "

The video 's first scene is set in a desert at night . Rihanna , wearing a garrison cap , sunglasses , and a stylized white top , stands in front of an army . This scene is intercut with scenes of Rihanna in a bunker ; she wears an army hard hat , pink lace up boots , and a skin @-@ colored top with small black rectangles covering her breasts . Half way through the first verse , the scene changes to a daytime desert scene in which Rihanna wears a low cut , short black dress with spiked shoulder pads , and walks through the location as small explosions occur around her .

As the first chorus begins , earlier scenes from the video are intercut with each other ; Rihanna is shown commanding her troops , firing a machine gun , and dancing in the bunker . As the second verse begins , Rihanna is seen with slicked @-@ back hair wearing a metal bikini top , rolling in mud and surrounded by troops on a stone structure before a mountainous backdrop . She is shown gambling with (and winning against) soldiers in another bunker .

As the second chorus starts , Rihanna , wearing a bullet bra and a helmet similar in appearance to the ears of Mickey Mouse , stands on a pink army tank . During Jeezy 's rap verse , Jeezy is seen in the middle of a crosshair , and explosions occur around Rihanna . During the bridge and final chorus

of the song , scenes of Rihanna from throughout the video are intercut with each other . In this sequence , Rihanna wears a high @-@ waisted black bikini and waves a large black flag with a white " R " in the middle of it .

= = = Reception = = =

Peter Gaston of Spin wrote that the video for " Hard " resembles " Janet Jackson 's ' Rhythm Nation ' meets Christina Aguilera 's ' Dirty ' phase ? Rihanna vamps in dimly lit outposts , dodges explosions in the desert , and , quite enticingly , takes a break from boot camp to smother herself with mud . Morale @-@ boosting , indeed ! " James Dinh of MTV News showed the video , on a small player , to fans in Times Square in New York City to ask their opinions . Most said she looked " sexy " in the video , and agreed that it was different from previous videos and shows where she came from and where she is going in her personal life . Bill Lamb of About.com wrote , " I must confess that I do fail to understand the point of Rihanna humping the gun turret of a pink tank dressed in Mickey Mouse ears . It seems pains were taken to make the setting look like Afghanistan or Iraq with the other actors looking as close to real military personnel as possible . " Lamb criticized the video 's lack of sensitivity and respect for using an army and weapons of destruction to glamorize war , saying , " Does Def Jam , Rihanna 's label , need to be reminded that this comes on the heels of sadly sending off an additional 30 @,@ 000 troops from our country to real war ? In my mind this is one of the most tasteless , offensive moves by a major pop artist in recent memory . "

= = Live performances = =

Rihanna performed " Hard " live for the first time on November 8 , 2009 at Jay @-@ Z 's concert at UCLA Pauley Pavilion . To promote Rated R in the UK , Rihanna performed the song with Jeezy at the launch of the Nokia X6 smartphone at Brixton Academy in London . Other songs on the set list were " Russian Roulette " and " Wait Your Turn " from Rated R , and " Don 't Stop the Music " , " Take a Bow " , " Disturbia " , and " Umbrella " (with Jay @-@ Z) .

Rihanna performed " Hard " live at the 2009 American Music Awards on November 22 , 2009 , at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles , California , as part of a medley with " Wait Your Turn " . Gil Kaufman of MTV wrote that Rihanna was wearing a " skintight white catsuit bisected by cut @-@ out lines that revealed horizontal lines of skin across her body , spiked shoulder pads , white studded cuffs and a barbed @-@ wire bracelet snaking up her right forearm " . The performance started with a science fiction themed video clip , which featured robots performing a surgical operation on Rihanna . After finishing " Wait Your Turn " , Rihanna began singing " Hard " ; red lasers were shone across the stage and audience , and red tracer beams shone from Rihanna 's spiked shoulder pads . On December 5 , 2010 , Rihanna made her Saturday Night Live debut performance , singing " Russian Roulette " and " Hard " , with Jeezy accompanying her performance of the latter . Rihanna also sang " Hard " on BET 's 106 & Park on December 10 , 2009 , and on NBC 's " New Year 's Eve with Carson Daly 2010 " .

To promote the single 's release in the US , Rihanna appeared on The Ellen DeGeneres Show on February 1 , 2010 , where she sang " Hard " and " Don 't Stop the Music " . The following day , Rihanna recorded some video performances of her songs for AOL Music Sessions , which were made available to watch on AOL 's website on February 23 , 2010 . The set included Rihanna 's singles " Russian Roulette " , " Hard " , " Take a Bow " , and a stripped down version of " Disturbia " . On February 4 , 2010 , she performed " Hard " at the Super Bowl Fan Jam on VH1 , sharing billing with Timbaland and Justin Bieber .

On March 27 , 2010 , Rihanna performed the song as part of a medley with " Rude Boy " and " Don 't Stop the Music " at the 2010 Nickelodeon Kids ' Choice Awards at UCLA 's Pauley Pavilion in Westwood , California . The performance featured a large camouflage tank and two robots , similar to those used for Rihanna 's performance at the ECHO Awards , where she performed " Rude Boy " . Rihanna performed " Hard " at Radio 1 's Big Weekend 2010 on May 23 , 2010 in Bangor , Wales , where she also performed " Madhouse " , " Disturbia " , " Rude Boy " , " Te Amo " , " Russian

Roulette " , " Don 't Stop the Music , " SOS " , and " Umbrella " . Rihanna wore a reggae @-@ inspired leather playsuit with red , green and yellow stripes . " Hard " was included on the set list of Rihanna 's Last Girl on Earth and Loud tours . Rihanna performed " Hard " at Radio 1 's Hackney Weekend on May 24 , 2012 , as the twelfth song on the set list . The performance featured a giant sphinx on the stage .

= = Format and track listing = =

The Remixes ? Digital EP

" Hard " (Jump Smokers Radio Edit) ? 3 : 10

" Hard " (Chew Fu Granite Fix Radio Edit) ? 3 : 43

" Hard " (Jody den Broeder Radio Edit) ? 3 : 30

" Hard " (Jump Smokers Extended) ? 3 : 36

" Hard " (Chew Fu Granite Fix Extended) ? 5 : 27

" Hard " (Jody den Broeder Club Remix) ? 6 : 43

" Hard " (Jody den Broeder Dub) ? 6 : 45

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from the liner notes of Rated R.

Terius " The @-@ Dream " Nash , Christopher " Tricky " Stewart , Robyn " Rihanna " Fenty and Jay Jenkins ? Songwriting

Christopher " Tricky " Stewart and Terius " The @-@ Dream " Nash ? Production

Ross Parkin ? Assistant recorder

Makeba Riddick ? Vocal production

Marcos Tovar , Brian " B @-@ LUV " Thomas , Andrew Wuepper , Chris " TEK " O 'Ryan and Pat Thrall for Rihanna . ? Engineer

Cédric Culnaërt , Sébastien Salis , Luis Navarro , Tyler Van Dalen , Jason Sherwood and Steven Dennis ? Assistant Engineer

Jaycen Joshua at Penua Project at Larrabee Studios , Universal City , California , United States ? Mixing

Giancarlo Lino ? Assistant mixer

Monte Neuble ? Additional keys

Studios Devout , Paris , France ; The Boom Boom Room , Burbank , California , United States ; Legacy Recording Studios , New York City , New York , United States and Triangle Sound Studios , Atlanta , Georgia , United States . ? Recording

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =