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Block-Rockin' Beats

Lil Wayne Cover Opens The Door For FRAMING HANLEY

When one of Framing Hanley's guitarists quit the band due to health issues earlier this year, the group never imagined a practice session with his future replacement would result in an out-of-left-field hit.

"We came home from tour in April, and we were trying to get our new guitar player, Ryan, in the band. We wanted to see how things would work out between us musically," lead vocalist Kenneth Nixon says. "During rehearsal, I'd mentioned we should cover Lil Wayne's 'Lollipop' at our next show. Next thing I knew, Ryan was playing the intro on his guitar and an hour later we had our

own rock rendition of it."

The band played the reimagined track at a show in its hometown of Nashville a few days later and shortly after that, fans began requesting it via the act's MySpace page. The demand prompted Framing Hanley to record the song and upload it. "The plays went through the roof," Nixon says.

The song, which will be available on a rerelease of Framing Hanley's debut album, "The Moment," due Nov. 18 from Silent Majority, is No. 37 on Billboard's Modern Rock Tracks chart. Thus, Lil Wayne, a ubiquitous presence on Billboard's pop and R&B/hip-hop charts, scores his first appear-

ance on a Billboard rock tally.

Other songs on the album include "Built for Sin," about a girl battling addiction, and "Home," which relates to the group members' own experiences of being away from their loved ones while on tour.

Originally called Embers Fade, Framing Hanley was formed by high school friends Chris Vest (drums) and Luke McDuffee (bass). The two met Nixon in college and released a five-song EP, "With October Came the Fall," later that year. In 2006, they teamed up with former Creed bassist Brett Hestla, who agreed to record two tracks with them: "Hear Me Now" and "Wave Goodbye." The former became their

first official single.

In January 2007, manager Jeff Hanson (Creed, Paramore, Seven-Dust) heard a demo of "Hear Me Now" and offered the group a deal with his independent label Silent Majority. The subsequent name change was a tribute to a friend the band had lost in a car accident a few months prior.

"The Moment" was released digitally in May 2007, a month before Silent Majority inked a distribution deal with Warner's Independent Label Group. On Aug. 7, the album was released on CD.

With curiosity reaching a new high, the "Lollipop" cover sold 7,500 of its 22,000 to-date downloads this week (the video is also included on the new version of "The Moment"). Framing Hanley just began a month-long North American tour with Theory of a Deadman and hopes to work in some TV appearances before year's end, according to ILG executive VP/GM Stu Bergen.

For his part, Nixon is just hoping Wayne, who plays guitar himself and is an avowed rock'n'roll fan, is happy with the band's take on the track. "I love Wayne. He's the originator, and I hope he believes imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," Nixon says. "The fact of the matter is, that song is what took people to find out about our band, and I'd be crazy to complain about it. Our music does speak for itself, though. So if you like the song, then chances are you'll be a fan of the entire record." ...