

Why Kanye West Isn't On The Forbes Billionaires List—Yet

Kanye West sang *Forbes'* praises as recently as two weeks ago with the release of new album *Jesus Is King*, recalling the days when this publication's "[cover was just a mirage](#)." Indeed, he's come quite far, [earning a career-high \\$150 million pretax](#) this year, thanks mostly to his Yeezy sneakers. But West changed his tune yesterday.

"When I did *Forbes*, I showed them an \$890 million receipt and they still didn't say 'billionaire,'" he [said](#) at an event in New York. "When people say it's crass to call yourself a billionaire, I say I might legally change my name to Christian Genius Billionaire Kanye West for a year until y'all understand exactly what it is."

So why hasn't West appeared on our [Billionaires list](#)? The main reason is quite simple: the issue containing that ranking comes out once per year, usually in the spring. When we looked at West's wealth in early 2019, [we pegged his net worth at \\$240 million](#)—admittedly conservative, as we aim to be with all our wealth estimates.

Subsequently, over the summer, I sat down with West and interviewed him for the [cover story in our August issue](#) (though I don't recall seeing the aforementioned \$890 million receipt among the materials he and his team provided, that alone would not be enough to prove billionaire status).

The success of his Yeezy brand—projected to do some \$1.5 billion in sales of his footwear (via Adidas) and apparel through the end of 2019—had, by that point, already increased his net worth markedly from our previous estimate, as I noted in the story: "*Perhaps most impressively, West still owns 100% of Yeezy. This is the reason he became a centimillionaire many times over much earlier in his life than [Michael] Jordan. Given Yeezy's success, West should eventually join the NBA legend—alongside sister-in-law Kylie Jenner and mentor Jay-Z—in achieving billionaire status, though the never-modest West would claim he's there already.*"

"We've yet to see all of the beauty that would be manifested through this partnership," West [told](#) me. "We've only experienced a small glimmer of light."

Our August feature focused on West's annual earnings, not his net worth. He and his team supplied documents that we considered when finalizing our estimate of his annual pretax pay at \$150 million; we saw enough to call the Yeezy brand a "billion-dollar empire," which references retail sales. We haven't yet seen enough evidence to push his fortune into ten figures.

As West himself said, it's still early. If Yeezy's sales numbers meet their full-year projections—and nothing else arises that would put profit margins at risk—he may soon make the list, joining [hip-hop's first billionaire, Jay-Z](#).

West didn't immediately reply today when we asked just where, precisely, he places his own net worth. The next *Forbes* Billionaires issue will drop in the spring. Rest assured, Kanye, we're watching closely—if and when you make it, you'll be the first to know.

<https://forbesmiddleeast.com/why-kanye-west-isnt-on-the-forbes-billionaires-listyet>