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In the 'Black': Dierks Bentley Bows at No. 1 on Top Country Albums With Best Sales Week Ever



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Dierks Bentley turns in the biggest sales week of his career, as his eighth studio album, *Black*, bounds in atop Billboard's Top Country Albums chart (dated June 18), selling 88,000 copies in its launch sales week (ending June 2), according to Nielsen Music.

On the all-genre, consumption-based Billboard 200, *Black* arrives at No. 2 with 101,000 equivalent albums (below Drake's *Views*, at No. 1 with 152,000). Bentley's No. 2 entrance on the Billboard 200 surpasses his prior high of No. 3 set by 2009's *Feel That Fire*.

In pure sales, Bentley reigns, debuting at No. 1 on Top Album Sales; his sum of 88,000 bests Beyoncé's *Lemonade* (No. 2, 56,000).

Black's opening sales week surpasses Bentley's previous weekly best, set by 2006's Long Trip Alone, which debuted at No. 1 on Top Country Albums with 82,000.

"This is the album [Black] that I've been chasing my whole career," Bentley tells Billboard. "The entire process, from the first lyrics to the album launch, was magic. But it also took focus and attention to the smallest of details. My team gave it everything they had, and I couldn't be more proud of them."

Dierks Bentley & Fifth Harmony Heading for Top 5 Debuts on Billboard 200 Albums Chart

About the LP's opening week, Bentley adds, "Debuting at No. 1 is always great. The most records I've ever sold in a week ... crazy. I'm very grateful to all the fans."

Produced by Ross Copperman, the 13-track Black is Bentley's sixth Top Country Albums leader, all of which have arrived at the summit.

"I remember meeting Dierks to hear Black for the first time," says UMG Nashville president Cindy Mabe. "I had some concerns, and I know he felt some pressure to follow up his [2014] Riser album, which had really been a career album. Following up a career album is never easy. From the moment he played the title song, I was hooked. He went into the storyline of how one song led into another, and you could follow it from front to back. It's pretty rare to see an artist, 13 years into his career, continue to take on new perspectives and push the limits creatively."

On the hybrid Hot Country Songs chart, which combines airplay, sales and streaming data, Black lead single "Somewhere on a Beach" rebounds 5-2, having already topped the survey for three weeks, beginning April 30. It's his 11th Hot Country Songs No. 1.

"Different for Girls," Bentley's new single (featuring Elle King), bows on Hot Country Songs at No. 21. Fueled by 32,000 downloads sold, it vaults onto Country Digital Songs at No. 2.