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Honors 489 (H02)

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05/03/2011

Cold Case Paper (Tupac Shakur)

On September 7th, 1996, Tupac Shakur was shot in a car driven by Death Row Records CEO Marion “Suge” Knight. He died six days later due to fatal complications. The killer has never been caught and made to stand trial. There has been much controversy after his death, including rumors that Biggie Smalls was involved and the fact that more albums have been released after Tupac's death than while he was alive.

Tupac was born Lesane Parish Crooks in East Harlem on June 16, 1971 to Afeni Shakur and Billy Garland, both active members of the Black Panther party. Many of his family members were involved in various crimes such as robbery and murder. He studied acting, poetry, jazz, and ballet at the 127th Street Ensemble in Harlem. He attended the Baltimore School for the Arts as a teen, and was considered to be the best rapper at his school. In the late 1980s, his family moved to California where he got involved with the hip hop group Digital Underground. By 1991 he emerged as a popular solo artist and actor, with many of his songs being violent in nature and discussing gangs and sex often in a misogynistic way (“Tupac Shakur Biography”).

In November 1993, Tupac and his entourage were charged of sexually assaulting a woman in a hotel room. Tupac and the woman had previous sexual relations. On the night of November 30th, 1994, the day before the verdict was to be announced, Tupac was shot five times and robbed in Quad Recording Studios in Manhattan. He accused, along with two others,

Biggie Smalls of setting him up. On February 6th, 1995 Tupac was sentenced to one and a half to four years in prison for the sexual assault charge. While in prison, Tupac released a multi-platinum album, *Me Against the World*, that made number one on the Billboard 200. He read many books by Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, and other political strategy and philosophy books. After serving eleven months, Tupac was released on \$1.4 million bail paid by Suge in exchange for Tupac to release three albums under Knight's Death Row label. After prison, Tupac went straight back into producing music full time. In June 1996, he released the track "Hit 'Em Up," which was a full on assault Biggie Smalls and continuing the East Coast-West Coast rapper rivalry that existed at the time. He also claimed to have had sex with Biggie Smalls' wife ("Tupac Shakur").

On September 7th, 1996, Tupac attended a boxing match in Las Vegas. Once he left, in the lobby he saw a member of the Crips named Orlando Anderson and proceeded to attack him as Anderson and some fellow Crips had robbed a member of Death Row's entourage earlier that year. After the fight, Tupac met up with Suge to go to Club-662, which was owned by Death Row. At 10:55 P.M. at a red light, a photographer got the last photograph of him when Tupac rolled down his window. At 11:15 P.M., a white Cadillac pulled up to the right of the car and shot Tupac in the chest, pelvis, right hand, and thigh, and one of the rounds ricocheted into his right lung. Suge was relatively lightly injured, being grazed by a bullet. One of Tupac's bodyguards had wanted to ride along in the car, but Tupac had him drive a separate car in case they got too drunk to drive. One of the cars in the caravan drove off after the assailants but was never heard back from. While Tupac was at the hospital, the music director from Death Row and close friend of his named Gobi said he got a call from marketing that the shooters had called and had sent death threats to finish Tupac off. When Gobi alerted the police, they claimed to be

understaffed and so no one was available to investigate, but luckily the shooters never came to the hospital. Tupac was placed on life support and eventually put in a medically induced coma since he repeatedly attempted to get out of bed. He survived a multitude of surgeries, including the removal of his right lung, and was given a 50% chance of surviving. On September 13th, he died of internal bleeding and was pronounced dead at 4:03 P.M due to respiratory failure and cardiopulmonary arrest due to gunshot wounds. Some of the ashes from his cremation were mixed with weed and smoked by friends (“Tupac Shakur”).

The police never figured out who murdered Tupac, so has been much rumor and conspiracy surrounding his death. From the beginning, it was speculated that Biggie Smalls had a hand in the murder, which he along with family and associates denied. In 2002, the *LA Times* published a story by Chuck Philips that supposedly had evidence that proved Biggie Smalls, Anderson, and the Crips were behind the murder. Unnamed members of Crips were quoted saying that Biggie Smalls often hired Crips as security and paid Anderson \$1 million to murder Tupac on the condition that he used Biggie's .40-caliber pistol (“Paper investigates rapper murder”).

Biggie Smalls and his family were outraged at the report. His family released a statement that said Biggie Smalls was in his New Jersey home on the night of the murder and friends will continue to testify to this. Friends backed up this claim and more, also stating that the idea Biggie Smalls hired the Crips as security was a lie as well (“Notorious B.I.G.'s Family 'Outraged' By Tupac Article”). In 2002, Nick Broomfield made the film *Biggie and Tupac*, which discusses the non-progress made by the police and interviews family and close friends. While the film is inconclusive, in a BBC radio interview Broomfield stated, though this was a quote from Snoop

Dog, that the person who did it was “The big guy in the car next to him ... Suge Knight.” (“Biggie and Tupac”). In 2008, the Smoking Gun reported that Philips used fraudulent documents in his 2002 story, and the *LA Times* retracted the story and Philips left the *LA Times* less than five months later after accepting a buyout.

To make this strange case stranger, more albums were released under his name posthumously than while he was alive. He released seven while he was alive, and so far nine have been released after his death and all but one reaching platinum or multi-platinum. Also, three movies with him performing were released after his death. To end with a quote about how Tupac described himself:

If you walked by a street and you was walking on the concrete and you saw a rose growing from the concrete, even if it had messed up petals and it was a little to the side you would marvel at just seeing a rose grow through concrete. So why is it that when you see some ghetto kid grow out of the dirtiest circumstance and he can talk and he can sit across the room and make you cry, make you laugh, all you can talk about is my dirty rose, my dirty stems and how I am leaning crooked to the side, you can't even see that I've come up from out of that (“Biography for Tupac Shakur”).

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