

= Hit ' Em Up =

" Hit ' Em Up " is a diss song by rap artist Tupac Shakur (2Pac) , featuring his group the Outlawz . It is the B @-@ side to the single " How Do U Want It " , released on June 4 , 1996 , from the album All Eyez on Me . The song ' s lyrics contain vicious insults to several East Coast rappers , chief among them , Shakur ' s former friend turned rival , The Notorious B.I.G. , also known as Biggie Smalls . The song was recorded in Los Angeles , California at Can Am Studios in May 1996 . Reporter Chuck Philips , who interviewed Shakur at Can Am , described the song as " a caustic anti @-@ East Coast jihad in which the rapper threatens to eliminate Biggie , Sean Combs (Puffy) , and a slew of Bad Boy artists and other New York acts . " The song was produced by long @-@ time collaborator Johnny " J " and samples the bassline from " Don ' t Look Any Further " by Dennis Edwards and interpolates " Get Money " by Biggie Smalls group Junior M.A.F.I.A. , which used the Dennis Edwards sample as well . The video , itself described as infamous , includes impersonations of Biggie , Puffy and Lil ' Kim .

" Hit ' Em Up " had a large role in exacerbating the East Coast ? West Coast hip hop rivalry . Following its release , the East Coast rappers insulted in the song responded through tracks of their own . The controversy surrounding the song is due in part to Shakur ' s murder only three months after its release .

The song is widely considered by the American hip hop community as one of the greatest " diss tracks " ever recorded due to its explicit lyrical content and the seriousness of violent intent by Shakur and his colleagues towards their competitors .

= = Origins = =

" Hit ' Em Up " was written and recorded in Can Am Studios in Los Angeles , California in May 1996 . For the song , Shakur recruited the members of the former group Dramacydal whom he had worked with previously , and was eager to work with again . Together , the rappers (along with other associates) formed the original lineup of the Outlawz . The first and third verses are performed by Shakur , while the second verse is performed by Hussein Fatal , the fourth by Yaki Kadhafi and the fifth by E.D.I. Mean .

The ferocity of Shakur ' s raging vocals , as said by long @-@ time collaborator and producer of " Hit ' Em Up " Johnny " J " , was entirely authentic . He explained that Shakur was initially fueled by his anger against Biggie and Bad Boy Records for the belief that they had a role in the November 30 , 1994 ambush and attack on Shakur . He claimed that Biggie and his crew knew of his shooting and wanted him dead . Shakur used this fury , which Johnny " J " described as " superhuman " , to attack Biggie and other East Coast rappers . Johnny " J " also stated that he had never seen Shakur so angry and that the words he rapped were in no way an act , describing the recording process as the most " hard @-@ core he had ever done . " Although he was very happy with the work he had put into it and the resulting song , Johnny " J " went on to say that he had no desire to work on anything of that magnitude again .

Shakur was also enraged by Biggie ' s release of " Who Shot Ya ? " provocatively only months after the shooting incident , and although it did not mention Shakur ' s name , he believed it was directed towards him , but it was not . Shakur admitted to releasing " Hit ' Em Up " as a response to " Who Shot Ya ? " In a Vibe interview , the rapper called out Sean ? Puffy ? Combs and Biggie Smalls and accused both of them for setting him up , or obtaining knowledge of the attack , and not cautioning him . He also singled out business men James Rosemond (" Jimmy Henchman ") , and Jacques Agnant (" Haitian Jack ") of orchestrating the assault . Shakur announced the names of his ostensible conspirators to Kevin Powell , a journalist for Vibe ; however , to mask their true identities , Vibe referred to Henchman as ? Booker , ? and Jack as ? Nigel ? in the published interview . Persons familiar with the interview say they used different names after the magazine received threats from Henchman . A former Vibe editor denied receiving threats , but neglected to explain why the magazine substituted aliases for Henchman and Haitian Jack .

Henchman promised Shakur \$ 7 @, @ 000 to duo with Lil Shawn , a rapper whom the business

man represented at that time . In a 2008 article by Philips , Henchman was implicated in organizing the assault , and in 2012 by his long @-@ time friend Dexter Isaac , who confessed to attacking Shakur on Henchman 's orders . He was confirmed as a source for Philip 's earlier story and in Henchman 's own confession according to prosecutors at his 2012 trial .

= = Composition = =

The lyrics in " Hit ' Em Up " were aimed primarily at Biggie and Puffy . Shakur viciously insults Biggie throughout , the first line by Shakur is " That 's why I fucked your bitch , you fat motherfucker " , and threatens retaliation in " Hit ' Em Up " , saying " Now you 're about to feel the wrath of a menace . " He also used the song as a platform to express his belief that Biggie was guilty of stealing his style of rapping , and was merely imitating his lifestyle . This notion is addressed in the verse in " Now it 's all about Versace , you copied my style . " He also touches topically on their early friendship with the line " Biggie , remember when I used to let you sleep on the couch ? " and their subsequent fallout . Towards the end of the song Tupac disses Mobb Deep , saying " Don 't one of you niggas got sickle cell or something ? You fucking with me , nigga you fuck around and get a seizure or a heart attack " , referring to Prodigy , a member of Mobb Deep , suffering from sickle cell disease . Mobb Deep responded by releasing Drop a Gem on ' Em , which was released shortly after Tupac 's death , however recorded before . " Hit ' Em Up " features much profanity and was issued a Parental Advisory label , using the word " fuck " and " motherfucker " over 35 times in the song .

The bassline in " Hit ' Em Up " is taken from the 1984 Dennis Edwards song " Don 't Look Any Further " . The chorus of " Hit ' Em Up " is a play on the chorus of Junior M.A.F.I.A 's " Player 's Anthem . " The phrase " take money " is repeated throughout the song , which is a play on Junior M.A.F.I.A 's recent release " Get Money " , which is also the beat used in " Hit ' Em Up " . Faith Evans , who at the time was Biggie 's estranged wife , was reportedly seen with Shakur after a public breakup with Biggie . Journalist Chuck Philips spotted Faith Evans at Can Am when he interviewed Shakur a year earlier in 1995 . People at the studio told the reporter that Faith Evans also contributed ? that the R & B chanteuse recorded one or more ? Take Money ? background vocals that would appear on ? Hit Em Up . ? In his October 1995 interview of the rapper , Philips remembered in 2012 , " I was so unaware of the bi @-@ coastal rap war that I suspected nothing when Faith Evans appeared with Shakur at Can Am . The estranged wife of Biggie was recording background vocals for " Wonder Why They Call U Bitch " , a song which was at the time yet to be released . According to Shakur she had given him gifts of clothing , which he offered as proof of a relationship in an interview . Using this against Biggie in " Hit ' Em Up " , Shakur continued to fuel the rumors of a sexual relationship with Evans in the song 's line " You claim to be a player , but I fucked your wife . " Claims of an affair with Evans appear three times in the song .

Shakur also attacked many other people associated with Bad Boy Records and with Biggie , such as Lil ' Kim and Junior M.A.F.I.A. He exclaimed that their lifestyle and what they rapped about were fraudulent , and that they were not from the streets . He believed that they were only perpetuating the drama and did not understand the situation they were getting into . Bronx rapper Chino XL was also insulted for vulgar comments he made about Shakur on his song " Riiiot ! " . In the original recording , Shakur also insulted Jay Z at the ending segment , but removed it after being convinced by Outlawz members that Carter had nothing to do with the conflict between Death Row and Bad Boy . After Jay Z 's debut album (which featured Biggie on " Brooklyn 's Finest ") was subsequently released after " Hit ' Em up " , Shakur included Jay Z amongst the many other East Coast rappers to be insulted in his next studio album .

= = Music video = =

The music video for " Hit ' Em Up " was filmed in a warehouse off Slauson Avenue near Fox Hills Mall in Los Angeles in May 1996 . It was filmed by the production company Look Hear Productions . Shakur raps in a white room with The Outlawz , as well as in purple @-@ caged room and a black

room with bullet holes in the background . TV monitors in the background show clips of Shakur , Puffy , and Biggie Smalls , and even clips from the video " Made Niggaz . " The video featured actors who were recalled from their prior roles in the music video for " 2 of Amerikaz Most Wanted " to impersonate some of those who were attacked in " Hit ' Em Up . " This included Biggie , whose stand @-@ in stares dully into the camera and sports a Kangol and jacket , similar to one Biggie would wear . During the moments where Shakur raps about his claimed affair with Evans , the Biggie impersonator crouches near the camera while Shakur yells in his face . Puffy is also impersonated , appearing with a high @-@ top fade and leaning towards the camera , lowering and raising his sunglasses .

During the shooting of the video , Shakur was engaged in an argument with someone , who was heard telling him " You 'll get shot . " His armed bodyguard assured him that he had nothing to worry about . He also broke up a fight involving his friend Muta during the filming , and fired a production assistant on set . The assistant was answering Shakur 's pager and returning his personal calls without his consent . Many callers were confused or angry that a female assistant was answering Shakur 's calls . The assistant had mistakenly lost the pager , and with Shakur already growing wary of her , fired her for that reason .

Like the song , the video for " Hit ' Em Up " has also been called " infamous " . The pro @-@ West Coast track 's music video featured the members crushing buildings in Manhattan , which was already done in another pro @-@ West Coast music video for " New York , New York " by Tha Dogg Pound earlier . The music video for " Hit ' Em Up " can be found on Tupac : Live at the House of Blues DVD .

= = Release and reception = =

Upon finishing the recording of the song , Shakur felt very positively about the track , saying the " song is going to be playing in every club . Deejays are calling from everywhere , wanting to get a piece of this . " " Hit ' Em Up " appeared first as a B @-@ side , on the single " How Do U Want It " , by Shakur featuring The Outlawz . On June 4 , 1996 under the label Death Row Records , " Hit ' Em Up " was released on compact disc , 12 @-@ inch , and a 45 RPM . The original cover for the single had Puffy 's head on a snake 's body , and Biggie 's head on a pig 's . It also appeared posthumously on several compilations , including the 2004 release of Shakur 's last recorded live performance , Live at the House of Blues . " Hit ' Em Up " was also remixed on Nu @-@ Mixx Klazzics . Upon its release , " Hit ' Em Up " received frequent radio airplay , which was attributed to the public interest in the ongoing feud and radio stations ' desire to garner high ratings . However , some radio stations , such as the Los Angeles @-@ based KPWR , refused to play it . The follow @-@ up to " Hit ' Em Up " was the song " Bomb First (My Second Reply) " .

" Hit ' Em Up " has been called " controversial , " " infamous , " " disturbing , " and " brutal . " Shakur 's insults against virtually the entire East Coast scene of rappers were said to be ferocious . The song , along with " Dear Mama , " has been viewed as one of Shakur 's songs that resonated with and was spoken of the most by young people . Some felt that " Hit ' Em Up " showcased Shakur ranting and raving like a fool , and J.R. Reynolds of Billboard called it horrendous , noting that Shakur revealed his true colors upon recording the song . He also went on to say that although sympathetic to the shooting , " Hit ' Em Up " had " fan [ned] the flames of hatred ... and affect [ed] an entire black culture 's psyche " ; he called the song " repugnant and unacceptable . " Among associates of Shakur , it was called a " bad @-@ luck song . " Los Angeles radio director Bruce St. James called the song " the be @-@ all , end @-@ all , curse @-@ word , dirty @-@ lyric , violent song of all time " [sic] . Game 's manager has called it the best diss record . Documentary filmmaker Carl Weston believed that " most people in Biggie 's shoes would have wanted to at least hurt Tupac " in a Spin magazine interview .

Among musicians , the song drew criticism from singer Dionne Warwick , and disapproval from fellow rappers Kool Moe Dee and Chuck D , as written in their book There 's a God on the Mic : The True 50 Greatest MCs . They felt that although Shakur was one of the most substantive rappers of that period , he had gone too far with " Hit ' Em Up , " causing some of Shakur 's fans to turn on him

, according to the two rappers .

= = = Aftermath = = =

Shakur and the Death Row crew attended a boxing match in Las Vegas , where he was murdered in 1996 . In retrospect of the events which ensued only a few months afterward , the song has been viewed as the turning point in the feud between Shakur and Biggie , where things were said and sung which could never be taken back during the remainder of Shakur 's life . This has led to it being dubbed as the beginning of the war between the East Coast and the West Coast , and the centerpiece in what became the most venomous battle in rap history .

In 2002 , Chuck Philips reported that the Crips ' Orlando Anderson pulled the trigger that killed Shakur and Biggie helped pay for the gun . Although Biggie 's family produced computerized receipts to show that Biggie was in the studio at the time of the murder , The New York Times called the evidence " inconclusive " noting :

The pages purport to be three computer printouts from Daddy 's House , indicating that Wallace was in the studio recording a song called Nasty Boy on the afternoon Shakur was shot . They indicate that Wallace wrote half the session , was In and out / sat around and laid down a ref , shorthand for a reference vocal , the equivalent of a first take . But nothing indicates when the documents were created . And Louis Alfred , the recording engineer listed on the sheets , said in an interview that he remembered recording the song with Wallace in a late @-@ night session , not during the day . He could not recall the date of the session but said it was likely not the night Shakur was shot . " We would have heard about it , " Mr. Alfred said . "

Philips ' article was based on police affidavits and court documents as well as interviews with investigators , witnesses to the crime and members of the Southside Crips who had never before discussed the killing outside the gang . As Assistant Managing Editor of the LA Times Mark Duvoisin wrote : " Philips ' story has withstood all challenges to its accuracy , ... [and] remains the definitive account of the Shakur slaying . "

" Hit ' Em Up " has been studied by and with academics , and it has been used as a part of a series of lessons for building the means to communicate with younger people . Its main role in these lessons is to define anger in rap music . Biggie was shot and killed six months after Shakur 's death .

= = Response = =

= = = From Biggie = = =

After hearing " Hit ' Em Up " Biggie continued proclaiming his innocence in the shooting incident . He also remarked that the song " Who Shot Ya ? " was written before Shakur was shot and thus , was not about him . Regarding the lyrics aimed at his wife Faith , Biggie expressed an inability to find merit in what Shakur had claimed . He believed that Shakur intended to attack him through Faith , although he remained unsure of whether an encounter between them had occurred . Ultimately , he thought that if something had occurred it was none of his business , and that Shakur should not have publicly disclosed this information in a song . Biggie responded to this matter in a similar fashion to " Hit ' Em Up " , rapping in a joint release by himself and Jay @-@ Z in the song " Brooklyn 's Finest " , where he says " If Faye have twins , she 'd probably have two Pacs . Get it ? Tupac 's ? " Shortly after the release of " Hit ' Em Up " , Evans went on the radio and denied that she had been with Shakur .

= = = From other artists = = =

Puffy had trouble understanding the sheer rage Shakur had expressed for Biggie in " Hit ' Em Up " . He also responded by reinforcing his and Biggie 's innocence regarding the shooting and went on to

say that prior to the incident they " were friends " , and that they " would have never done nothing to hurt him . " In an interview with Vibe Magazine concerning Shakur 's allegations of Biggie and Puffy having prior knowledge of the ambush , Puffy stated :

He ain 't mad at the niggas that shot him ; he knows where they 're at . He knows who shot him . If you ask him , he knows , and everybody in the street knows , and he 's not stepping to them , because he knows that he 's not gonna get away with that shit . To me , that 's some real sucker shit . Be mad at everybody , man ; don 't be using niggas as scapegoats . We know that he 's a nice guy from New York . All shit aside , Tupac is a nice , good @-@ hearted guy .

Lil ' Kim responded on the original version of her song " Big Momma Thang " , which was aimed at Biggie 's wife , Faith Evans , and Shakur . Junior M.A.F.I.A. recorded a music video for the song " Get Money " , which has been regarded as a diss to Shakur . Biggie denies these claims , stating : " It 's just a video ; ain 't nobody got no time to make no diss on nobody . " Lil ' Cease said after the release that Biggie still had love for Shakur , and even respected him . The attack on Mobb Deep came as a response for their involvement on the song " L.A L.A " by Capone @-@ N @-@ Noreaga , which was a retaliation to Snoop Dogg and Tha Dogg Pound 's song " New York , New York " music video in which members of Tha Dogg Pound and Death Row are seen knocking down buildings in New York City . Mobb Deep responded to Shakur with the track " Drop a Gem on ' em " . It was first released as a promotional single , and later appeared on their album Hell on Earth . Lyrically , it did not specifically name Shakur , but it did allude to the shooting incident . It has also been noted for erroneously stating the cost of the assets Shakur had taken from him during the shooting incident . Bronx rapper King Sun also responded to Shakur with " New York Love (All Eyez On Sun) " .

= = Appearances = =

" Hit ' Em Up " was originally featured as a B @-@ side on Shakur 's single " How Do U Want It " . In 1998 , it was released on Shakur 's first compilation album , Greatest Hits . A remix of the song was featured on Nu @-@ Mixx Klazzics (2003) , where the intro lyrics from the originally explicit version and the main lyrics from the edited radio version . A live version of the song was included on the 2005 release of Tupac : Live at the House of Blues . " Hit ' Em Up " was first released on Death Row Greatest Hits , and was again released as a live recording on the 2004 album 2Pac Live .

In the second half of Eminem 's song " Quitter " , the rapper attempts to remake " Hit ' Em Up " and in itself is a diss track aimed towards Everlast . Eminem has support from D12 on his version like the Outlawz supported Shakur on the original . Khia used the song 's beat and part of the hook in her song " Hit ' Em Up " , which is a diss to female rappers Trina and Jacki @-@ O. " What I Think About You " by Bow Wow uses a reinterpolation of " Hit ' Em Up " and is a diss song to fellow rapper Soulja Boy Tell ' em .