

Rapper Tupac Shakur Gunned Down

Sept. 13, 1996 -- Trouble-plagued rapper and actor Tupac Shakur is dead at the age of 25 -- just about a week after sustaining 4 bullet wounds last Saturday night in Las Vegas. Shakur spent the week in the hospital on a respirator in critical condition. The Reverend Jesse Jackson, members of the Nation of Islam, and fellow Death Row Records artist Hammer visited Shakur's bedside on Sunday, when he had one of his lungs removed. Shakur's mother, Afeni -- featured in his "Dear Mama" video -- and other family members kept a vigil at his hospital room in the intensive care unit of University Medical Center in Las Vegas. Early in the week, doctors rated Tupac's chances of survival at one in five, then said his chances had improved on Tuesday, then on Thursday declined to speculate on his prognosis at all. Chris Connelly was on the scene to reconstruct the ultimately fatal events of last Saturday night.

CHRIS CONNELLY: I'm here in Vegas, where the most violent portion of Tupac Shakur's Saturday night was supposed to take place behind me, over there at the MGM Grand Hotel, where Tupac saw Mike Tyson pound Bruce Seldon into submission less than two minutes into their heavyweight bout. The fight ended around 8:55 PM local time, and from there, Tupac headed off to the home of Suge Knight, which is about 5 miles away from here. He's the head of Death Row Records. From there, they were supposed to go to Club 662, that's Knight's club, for a celebration in honor of Tyson, that was going to feature entertainment by people like Run DMC. But the caravan of cars from Knight's house never got to the club.

Tupac and Suge Knight left Knight's home at around 10:30 PM to go to Club 662. By 11:15 that evening, they were heading east on Flamingo, just coming to this intersection here at Koval. They were driving a black BMW 1996 model. Knight was driving, Tupac was in the passenger's seat. Along the passenger's side came a late model white Cadillac. From inside, shots were fired, 14 of them. Tupac was hit four times, twice in the chest, once in the arm, and once in the thigh. Knight was mildly injured by some bullet fragments; but he promptly floored the car, spinning it completely around and took a U-turn so it instantly headed east on Flamingo.

With Tupac bleeding profusely in the passenger seat, Suge Knight was able to get his vehicle just about a mile away from the site of the shooting, something of a miracle given his condition,

the condition of the car -- which had a flat tire -- and the fact that the traffic on the strip after a heavyweight fight in Vegas is something to behold. They made it to this corner here, Las Vegas Boulevard and Harmon Avenue, where they were finally pulled over by the Bike Patrol, who radioed ahead to paramedics, who swept them off to University Medical Center -- their evening out in Las Vegas ending just a few steps away from where it had begun, the MGM Grand.

Shortly before midnight, Tupac was brought here, to UMC's Trauma Center, where he was immediately operated on, and then again about 20 hours later.

DALE PUGH, University Medical Center of Southwest Nevada: He's had a right lung removed, he's back in his room, and again, he remains in critical condition. He's in the intensive care unit.

CONNELLY: Is he conscious? Can he communicate with his doctor?

PUGH: He has been conscious, he is under a lot of medication, so he's pretty sedated at this time. He's severely injured. Suffering multiple gun shot wounds is obviously a terrible insult to the human body, so he's in very critical condition, and he's requiring intensive care, and he is receiving that, right now.

Once again, Tupac Shakur died of those bullet wounds at the age of 25 on Friday, September 13.

Suge Knight, who was released from the hospital Sunday night, finally spoke with police on Wednesday, and told them he "heard something, but saw nothing" last Saturday night, leaving the cops with, as one spokesman put it, "nothing" in the way of leads towards suspects or motives. Police also looked at security camera tapes from the Tyson fight at the MGM Grand, where Tupac and his entourage got into a scuffle with someone, who was ruled out as a suspect, since he was still held by security when Tupac left the building. Because there's a possibility of Tupac's shooting being gang-related, Vegas police got in touch on Thursday with Los Angeles police regarding two shootings that happened in LA this week. The Vegas P.D. has also been in touch with New York City police, for it was there that Tupac Shakur was shot two years ago. Of course, Tupac and trouble have hardly been strangers. Here now is a look back at his turbulent life and career.

MTV: Tupac Shakur's public life began when he joined the seminal Bay Area rap ensemble, Digital Underground, first as a tour dancer, then as a rapper. Tupac demonstrated his range as a performer when his first solo record, "2Pacocalypse Now," was on the charts at the same time as his critically-acclaimed feature film debut in the violent, coming of age drama, "Juice." While he maintained a thug image, Tupac was a man of contradictions, recording sentimental raps in support of black women, including "Brenda's Got A Baby," and "Keep Ya Head Up."

(From an interview, March 9, 1994)

TUPAC SHAKUR: Because I was raised by a woman half my life in the... streets, it's like I got the woman's side, then I got real rough, manly values, like, forced on me.

MTV: As Tupac's film credits grew, with John Singleton's "Poetic Justice," he faced the possibility of doing time for assaulting director Alan Hughes, who had dropped him from the cast of "Menace II Society."

TUPAC: If I have to go to jail, I don't even want to be living. I want to just cease to exist for however long they have me there, and then when I come out, I'll be reborn, you know what I'm saying? I'll be taking less problems, and that my mind would be sharper, and the venom would be more potent. So, they shouldn't send me there. They should really try to... It's like, you don't want to throw gasoline on a fire to put it out.

MTV: What followed was a cross-country tour of courtrooms and jail houses: 10 days in a Michigan prison for assaulting a fellow rapper with a baseball bat (April 5, 1993); an arrest for allegedly shooting two off-duty Atlanta police officers, in which charges were eventually dropped (October 31, 1993); and sexual abuse, sodomy -- both, allegedly, against a fan -- and weapons charges in New York City (November 18, 1993). The day before he was convicted of sex abuse in New York, Tupac was shot five times in the lobby of a Times Square recording studio. The crime was officially classified as a robbery; and the police dropped their investigation when Tupac failed to cooperate.

(From an interview with Tabitha Soren, October 27, 1995)

TUPAC: That situation with me is like, what comes around, goes around... karma, I believe in karma. I believe in all of that. I'm not worried about it. They missed. I'm not worried about it unless they come back.

MTV: While serving his sentence for sexual abuse, Tupac's third solo release, "Me Against The World," spent four weeks at number one.

TUPAC: It was a trip. Every time they used to say something bad to me, I'd go, "That's all right. I got the number one record in the country."

MTV: After eight months, Tupac's case was appealed, and Death Row head Suge Knight promptly bailed Tupac out of jail, and took the opportunity to sign him to Death Row Records.

TUPAC (counting a handful of money after being signed to Death Row Records): If you come to Death Row, you will see your art brought to a bigger plateau, and you will be paid one of these days. Death Row...

MTV: Tupac turned his troubles to a career that was bigger than ever. His double album Death Row debut, "All Eyez On Me," sold more than 5 million copies, scored a number one single, and included tracks with new label mate, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Dr. Dre. With three years past since Snoop's last solo release, and the departure of Death Row Co-Founder, Dr. Dre, to start his own label, Tupac became Death Row's artistic centerpiece, as well as its biggest mouthpiece.

Death Row and Tupac shared a common enemy: the New York-based Bad Boy Entertainment. Tupac had earlier implicated Bad Boy Producer, Sean "Puffy" Combs, and star artist, the Notorious B.I.G., in his 1994 shooting.

TUPAC: Bad Boy Records. That's for Bad Boy Records (he winks and holds up the handful of money from signing with Death Row). I love you all.

MTV: But despite his taunts, Tupac realized danger could be around the corner. Back in New York City for this year's Video Music Awards, just three nights before he was shot in Las Vegas, Tupac surrounded himself with bodyguards and clutched a walkie talkie throughout the evening as a security precaution.

(From an interview at the MTV Video Music Awards, September 4, 1996)

TUPAC: We are businessmen. We are not animals. It's not like we're going to see them and rush them and jump on them. If they see us and they want drama, we're goin' to definitely bring it like only Death Row can bring it...

We spoke this week with Ernest Dickerson, who directed Tupac in his big screen debut, "Juice," and asked him what about Tupac might surprise people. Here's what Dickerson told us.

ERNEST DICKERSON, Director, "Juice": I think that he's very introspective. I mean, when we were shooting "Juice," in between takes, he would spend a lot of time by himself, writing. You know, he thinks a lot. He thinks about what's going on in the world, he thinks about what's going on in the neighborhoods. He thinks about what's going on in this country and around the world, and he talks about it in his music. And the thing that I really got from Tupac was that he was always thinking, always at work. His mind was always going.

Tupac Shakur recently finished shooting another movie, called "Gridlock," in which he and Tim Roth play heroin addicts trying to kick their habits. Described as "a buddy film for the 90's," it's due out early next year.

Tupac Shakur dead at 25 -

Rapper hit in drive-by shooting last week

September 13, 1996

Web posted at: 10:45 p.m. EDT

LAS VEGAS (CNN) -- Tupac Shakur, the rapper whose raw lyrics seemed a blueprint of his own violent life, died Friday from wounds suffered in a drive-by shooting. He was 25.

Shakur, his mother at his bedside, was pronounced dead at 7:03 p.m. EDT at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas, according to hospital spokeswoman Nancy Collins.

Collins said doctors determined Shakur died from respiratory failure and cardiopulmonary arrest. The rapper had been in a medical-induced coma after having his right lung removed earlier this week.

Shakur was hit by four bullets September 7 as he rode near the Las Vegas Strip in a car driven by the head of Death Row Records, Marion "Suge" Knight, who was slightly wounded. It was the second time in less than two years that the rapper was gunned down.

The Las Vegas attackers got away, and no arrests have been made.

Controversial career

Known simply as 2Pac, with "Thug Life" tattooed across his stomach, Shakur embodied the extremes of pop culture. Fans loved him, buying millions of his records, while politicians and others denounced both him and his lyrics for glorifying violence and drugs and degrading women.

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

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He was born Tupac Amaru Shakur in 1971 in New York City. His mother, Afeni Shakur, is a former Black Panther activist and the inspiration for the touching song "Dear Mama" on his Grammy-nominated album "Me Against The World."

As a member of the Grammy-nominated group Digital Underground, he appeared in 1991 on the track "Same Song" from "This is an EP Release" and on the album "Sons Of The P."

That same year, Shakur achieved individual recognition with the album "2Pacalypse Now," which spawned the successful singles "Trapped" and "Brenda's Got A Baby."

The album, with references to police officers being killed, drew notoriety when a slain police officer's family claimed Shakur's music drove the killer to action. By that time, Shakur had made his first film appearance in Earnest Dickerson's "Juice."

In the 1992 John Singleton film, "Poetic Justice," Shakur co- starred opposite pop singer Janet Jackson. But Shakur seemed to spend as much time in courtrooms and jail cells than he did on movie sets.

A 1993 confrontation with two off-duty Atlanta police officers led to charges that were later dropped.

In 1994, he was sentenced to 15 days in jail for assault and battery on a music video producer.

Then, in November 1994, he was shot five times and robbed of \$40,000 worth of jewelry in the lobby of a New York recording studio.

In 1995, Shakur was found guilty of sexually assaulting a female fan in a New York hotel room. He served eight months before winning release pending his appeal. In 1996, a judge ordered him to serve 120 days in jail for probation violations. An appeal was pending, and he had recently completed filming a role as a detective for the Orion picture "Gang Related."

'soldiers are out there"

When the rapper appeared at the MTV Video Awards three days before the Las Vegas shooting, he explained why he stayed in touch with members of his "posse" by two-way radio.

"Well today, every young black man needs to be physically inclined and military-minded," he said. "And this (two-way radio) is part of the military mind. The soldiers are out there.

"I'm not the same guy that would come to the awards, have a problem with somebody and whup their ass in front of everybody," Shakur continued. "So now I got the radio. I see a problem, we quelch it. It's out. No big fires, just small, tiny little sparks that can be put out."

"That shows my growth," he said. "That shows our brain power. That shows the organization and not just Tupac, but Death Row as a whole."

Still there was trouble.

Police were called into the awards show to break up a confrontation between Shakur's entourage and six other men.

The night he was hit by four bullets, Shakur and his entourage had been involved in a fight outside their Las Vegas hotel.

Yet Shakur was not just the fury, expletives and anger of songs like "F--- the World." He could be poignant ("It was hell hugging on my mama from a jail cell") and both sympathetic and critical of young black men trying to become "gangstas."

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He even admitted to being tired of the gangsta lifestyle.

"Thug Life to me is dead. If it's real, let somebody else represent it, because I'm tired of it," Shakur told Vibe magazine. "I represented it too much. I was Thug Life."

Still, there were forebodings of a violent ending.

When Shakur talked to Details magazine earlier this year, he said: "All good niggers, all the niggers who change the world, die in violence. They don't die in regular ways."

Correspondent Mark Scheerer, The Associated Press and Reuters contributed to this report.

Authorities raid rap label and homes, arrest three in murder conspiracy case

By Carri Karuhn The Associated Press Writer (11-15-02)

LOS ANGELES — Authorities on Thursday raided the record label and homes of rap mogul Marion "Suge" Knight, a figure in an East Coast-West Coast rap feud that some believe led to the killings of two major stars.

A sheriff's spokesman said Knight is not considered a suspect.

Meanwhile, three other people were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit murder, though authorities declined to provide further details of the alleged crime.

Theodore Peter Kelly, 29, was arrested at the offices of Tha Row Records, formerly known as Death Row Records. Arrested elsewhere were Michael Leroy Payne, 25, and Kordell Depree Knox, 37. All were being held without bail.

Knox is a former sheriff's deputy who was fired Nov. 1 because of his suspected involvement in an assault with a deadly weapon, Los Angeles County sheriff's Deputy Alba Yates said.

A total of 16 search warrants were served at Knight's homes and at other homes and sites in the Los Angeles and Las Vegas areas.

Yates said Knight was not considered a suspect in the investigation. Deputy Darren Harris said there was "some connection" to Tha Row Records.

Knight and his record label have been at the center of an East Coast-West Coast rap feud that some believe was behind the unsolved killings of rappers Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G.

Knight was riding in a car with rapper Shakur in Las Vegas in 1996 when another vehicle pulled alongside and someone opened fire, killing Shakur. Knight has said he couldn't see who fired the shots.

Shakur had been feuding with The Notorious B.I.G., who was shot to death six months later in Los Angeles. Both killings remain unsolved.

Two other former associates of Knight have been shot to death this year.

Alton McDonald, 37, a former Death Row Records production manager, was killed in April as he pumped gas at a Los Angeles service station. Henry Smith, 33, who designed the label's electric chair logo, was killed as he sat in his parked sport utility vehicle last month.

Knight was released from prison in August after serving five years for violating probation by getting into a fight in a Las Vegas hotel. The altercation occurred hours before Shakur was killed.

Knight's attorney Arthur Barens said his client was being harassed, but was willing to cooperate with investigators.

"I have yet to see any association between the people arrested, any items taken and Suge Knight," said Barens. "We heard they were looking for weapons. There are certainly no weapons in his home, offices or anywhere else."

A heavily armored SWAT team descended on Tha Row Records' headquarters near Beverly Hills about 5 a.m., stalking the roof with drawn weapons, smashing a glass door and hauling off computer equipment and a dozen cardboard boxes. Deputies also searched luxury vehicles in the company's lot, including two SUVs registered to Knight.

A handgun was seized from another location, Harris said.

The search of Knight's \$1 million former home in a gated community southeast of Las Vegas had "nothing to do with the Tupac Shakur slaying," Las Vegas police Sgt. Kevin Manning said.

The Los Angeles Times earlier this year concluded that Shakur was shot by a now-deceased gang member using a pistol supplied by Wallace.

In 1999 police searched Knight's record label offices in connection with the slaying of B.I.G., whose real name was Christopher Wallace. No charges were filed.

Despite Rumors, Tupac Is Still Dead

MTV NEWS: One man you wouldn't think had to worry about what he puts in his system anymore is the late rapper Tupac Shakur, who was very publicly murdered on a street in Las Vegas last September. But a lot of people out there -- e-mailing us at the rate of dozens a day -- seem convinced that Tupac's career, and his non-stop run-ins with police aren't over, because he's not really over. Here's John Norris to shed some light.

JOHN NORRIS: Tupac filled his 25 years with enough drama and adventure to fill a three-hour movie. So it should come as no surprise that even in death, many of his fans still anxiously await one more plot twist. As with most good '90s conspiracy theories, "Tupac lives" began on the Internet.

Some speculate Tupac faked his death to boost record sales or to avoid enemies. In fact, Tupac's sales and public persona were never bigger than in the months before his death.

Armchair analysis of his lyrics shows that Tupac was preoccupied with his own passing, and an eerie video depicting his fatal shooting appeared just days after his death.

Speculation also centers on "The Don Killuminati: The Seven Day Theory," which Tupac posthumously released under the alias "Makaveli." A note inside the cover says "Exit: 2pac, Enter: Makaveli," fueling the theory that Tupac is heeding the advice of Nicolo Machiavelli, a 16th century Italian war philosopher, who some say advocated faking one's own death to fool enemies and gain power.

"Don Killuminati" is presumably a reference to the "Illuminati," a dubious secret society which aspires to world domination. Then there's the cover art and accompanying numerology, suggesting, to some, a resurrection.

MARION "SUGE" KNIGHT: On the cover of Makaveli he's on a cross, you know, shot up, being crucified and you know, it's real, it's real deep. I mean Pac got shot on the seventh and that's deep. You know, Jesus on the seventh day. And you know he went on to a better place on the thirteenth.

NORRIS: Adding to these omens in the minds of the skeptical, is doubt surrounding the circumstances of Tupac's shooting. True believers claim there were no witnesses to the shooting; that the white Cadillac from which Tupac was supposedly shot was never found; that Tupac always wore a bulletproof vest, but oddly didn't wear one that night; and that his hasty cremation and canceled funeral services were merely a way of avoiding an autopsy, a death certificate and a public viewing of the body, which, since there was no body, would have exposed the whole plot.

In fact, there is plenty of evidence that Tupac is indeed dead. Las Vegas police interviewed over 20 witnesses to the shooting, and they believe they know who killed Tupac. But without further witness co-operation, they fear they won't have a prosecutable case. Secondly, an autopsy was performed on a body positively identified through fingerprints as that of Tupac, the cause of death listed as injuries from gunshot wounds. A death certificate is on file in the Clark County Vital Records Office, and Davis Funeral Home of Las Vegas confirms that they services were provided for one Tupac Shakur.

SNOOP DOGGY DOGG: People need to let him rest in peace, let that rumor rest in peace. Because, you know what I'm sayin", it's a hard pill to swallow, people don't want to accept it, we don't want to accept it, first of all, and the public don't want to accept it, so they gonna keep that myth or that philosophy going on as long as they can because his music lives on and he's a legend, you know what I'm sayin". When you make legendary music, people don't want to believe you're gone. Like Elvis, they keep saying Elvis ain't dead you know what I'm sayin", but it's just all about the individual himself, he was a legend and everybody don't wanna let it go.

Tupac Rumors Alive and Well

Jan. 3, 1997 -- Despite Tupac Shakur's very public death on a Las Vegas street last October, rumors that he is still alive continue to pop up in electronic and print media.

Tupac filled his 25 years with enough drama and adventure to fill a three-hour movie. So it should come as no surprise that even in death, many of his fans (e-mailing us at the rate of dozens a day) anxiously await one more plot twist. As with most good '90s conspiracy theories, "Tupac lives" began on the Internet.

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"People need to let him rest in peace, let that rumor rest in peace," Snoop Doggy Dogg told MTV News. "When you make legendary music, people don't want to believe you're gone. Like, they keep saying Elvis ain't dead you know what I'm sayin", but it's just all about the individual himself, he was a legend and everybody don't wanna let it go."

News at the time

SLAIN RAPPER Tupac Shakur is shown in this Dec. 16, 1993 file photo. Police have arrested a 22-year-old gang member in connection with the execution-style killing of rapper Tupac Shakur, ABC reported Wednesday, Oct. 2, 1996. Shakur, one of rap's most successful and notorious singers, was shot following a boxing match Sept. 7, 1996, in Las Vegas. He died a week later. ABC radio reported that the 22-year-old man and others were arrested in an ongoing police sweep. The Compton Police Department declined to comment about the arrest report.

MTV Reports Tupac's Death And The Follow-Up Investigation

Watch MTV's News report of the death of Tupac Shakur. Right click to download.

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Watch MTV's News account of the investigation into the murder of Tupac Shakur. Right click to download.

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VIBE MAGAZINE honors slain rapper Tupac Shakur in a last minute inclusion to the November issue featuring New Edition in a unique special double cover issue to hit newsstands Oct. 8.

September 10, 1996 FRIENDS OF RAPPER Tupac Shakur are detained outside University Medical Center, where they had gathered in support of the injured singer.

October 02, 1996 COMPTON POLICE Detective Tim Brennan sifts through some of the paraphernalia confiscated from suspects arrested for murder or related charges during staged raids by nine federal, state and local law enforcement agencies Wednesday, Oct. 2, 1996. Officers were armed with 19 arrest warrants for suspects responsible for 12 shootings that have occurred in Compton since Sept. 7.. Compton Police Department investigators stated that the motives for some of the shootings may have been in retaliation for the shooting of rap artist Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas Sept. 7, 1996.

October 02, 1996 COMPTON Police officer Anthony Easter holds up a necklace with the "Death

Row Records" logo belonging to one of the suspects arrested for murder or related charges for 12 shootings that occurred in Compton since Sept. 7, during staged raids by nine federal, state and local law enforcement agencies Wednesday, Oct. 2, 1996. Compton Police Department investigators stated that the motives for some of the shootings may have been in retaliation for the shooting of rap artist Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas Sept. 7, 1996.

September 09, 1996

4 sought in Shakur shooting

By Karen Zekan

LAS VEGAS SUN

Four assailants remained at large today in the near-slaying of rapper Tupac Shakur after a drive-by shooting near the Strip.

Death Row Records Chairman Marion "Suge" Knight, a former Las Vegas resident, also was injured in the shooting.

Shakur, 25, was in critical condition this morning in University Medical Center's intensive care unit.

Several dozen friends and family members held a vigil in the lobby and on the driveway of the Trauma Center since Saturday night's shooting after the Mike Tyson-Bruce Seldon heavyweight boxing match.

"This is always so painful to see," the Rev. Jesse Jackson said Sunday about the assault on Shakur and Knight. Jackson was in Las Vegas on behalf of the National Rainbow Coalition, launching a voter registration and mobilization tour.

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Referring to what he described as "cycles of self-destruction," Jackson added, "I can only hope people choose life over death."

Jackson said he hoped to visit Shakur in the hospital.

Shakur underwent a second operation at 6:20 p.m. Sunday to repair bullet wounds, and returned to his room at 7:45 p.m., said Dale Pugh, hospital spokesman.

The recording star whose history is marred by violence and criminal convictions was shot four times in the chest while standing up through the open sun roof of a black 1996 BMW 750 sedan about 11:15 p.m. Saturday while eastbound on Flamingo Road near Koval Lane.

Shakur's friends said Knight, 31, was driving the BMW toward toward Club 662 at 1700 E. Flamingo Road, which Knight owns, when a late 1990s white four-door Cadillac pulled up to the BMW's passenger side.

One of the Cadillac's four occupants fired at least 13 rounds at the BMW, four striking Shakur in the chest as he stood up in the car and shrapnel grazing Knight's head, said Metro Police Sgt. Greg McCurdy.

Metro Police were in the Maxim hotel-casino parking garage on an unrelated call and heard shots from the nearby Flamingo-Koval intersection, McCurdy said.

"They saw about 10 cars pull a U-turn and head west on Flamingo at a high rate of speed," McCurdy said.

A traffic jam on the Strip helped Metro bike patrol officers catch up to the caravan on Las Vegas Boulevard South at Harmon Avenue, about a mile from the shooting. Police radioed for

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paramedics after finding a bloodied but conscious Shakur and Knight in the BMW.

Knight was released from UMC at 11 a.m. Sunday in good condition, However, he was not cooperating with Metro's investigation, said homicide Sgt. Kevin Manning.

Manning said the shooting "was not a random act of violence."

Metro Police would not comment on sources' claims that the incident was fueled by an argument earlier that evening toward the end of the Tyson-Seldon bout at the MGM Grand.

"At this point, we have no suspects in custody," said Lt. Marc Maston. "We've spoken with several people, but all of them have been released."

Shakur's family declined to comment on the attack. His mother apologized outside the hospital for not granting the SUN an interview. "I can only imagine how hard it must be for all of you (reporters) to have to do this type of work," she said politely.

The black BMW remained in the impound lot at Ewing Bros. Auto Body and Towing lot in North Las Vegas Sunday, its right front and rear ends damaged and passenger door sprayed with bullet holes.

Police found no weapon inside the car, merely a cigar case and a Motorola cellular flip phone.

It was the second time in less than two years that someone has shot at Shakur, the gangster rap star whose songs focusing on sex and violence have sold millions of copies.

The rapper, who starred opposite Janet Jackson in the movie "Poetic Justice," is working on another film, "Gridlock." His latest album, "All Eyez On Me," has sold more than 5 million copies.

In November 1994, he was shot five times and lost \$40,000 worth of jewelry during a robbery in a Manhattan recording studio.

Shakur was released last year from a New York prison after serving an eight-month sentence for sexual abuse.

Shakur pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor assault charge for trying to hit another performer at a concert at Michigan State University in 1983.

Also in 1983, Shakur was accused of shooting two Atlanta police officers, but charges were later dropped.

Shakur was charged with battery in 1992 for slapping a woman who asked for his autograph.

An appeal is pending of a judge's April order that Shakur spend three months in jail on probation violations in Los Angeles and New York for not doing roadside cleanup work as part of his sentencing.

He is scheduled for sentencing Thursday for carrying a loaded, concealed gun during an assault on a music video producer in Los Angeles.

September 18, 1996

Vegas Police Consult with L.A. Officers in Rap Star's Shooting

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Metro Police say they are not getting any substantial help from the entourage that accompanied rap singer Tupac Shakur when he was shot on a busy street near the Las Vegas Strip Sept. 7.

Shakur died Friday at University Medical Center.

"Our official stance is it is still unclear as to a motive or suspects," said Metro Sgt. Kevin Manning, who is heading the investigation. "We are not getting any substantial new help from the Tupac group, so anything we are doing now is pretty much on our own."

Two investigators from the Los Angeles County sheriff's office were in Las Vegas earlier this week to consult with Metro Police.

Homicide Lt. Larry Spinosa declined to release details of the meeting, or say whether it sparked any new leads.

Shakur, 25, was a passenger in a car driven by Death Row Records Chairman Marion "Suge" Knight.

Shakur was shot four times when a white Cadillac pulled up to the passenger side of the car and opened fire. Knight, a former UNLV football player, was struck in the head, possibly by a bullet fragment. He was treated at UMC and released several hours later.

Shakur's body was cremated and a private service was held in Las Vegas by his family.

Meanwhile, a memorial service planned for Shakur in Los Angeles has been canceled because there was no available site large enough to accommodate the expected crowd, Death Row Records said in a prepared statement Tuesday.

September 10, 1997

Former Shakur murder suspect files suit against rapper's estate

LOS ANGELES (AP) - A reputed gang member investigated for the shooting death of Tupac Shakur has filed a lawsuit against the slain rapper's estate alleging he was assaulted just hours before the shooting.

Orlando Anderson claims in his lawsuit that he suffered physical injuries and severe emotional and mental distress after a brawl with Shakur and Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight outside the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

A few hours after the fight Sept. 7, 1996, which was captured by a hotel security camera, someone fired on the car carrying Shakur and Knight. Shakur died a week later at the hospital. No arrests have been made in Shakur's death.

Anderson's lawyer, Renee L. Campbell, said authorities told her client he was a suspect in Shakur's death, but he denies being involved in the shooting.

"It is clear that if there is any victim, my client is the victim," Campbell said.

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:05 -

Richard Fischbein, co-executor of the Shakur estate's, was baffled by the lawsuit, which was filed late Monday.

"Only in California can a perjurer, and he is a perjurer, and an alleged suspect in a murder investigation start a lawsuit against the person that he allegedly killed," said Fischbein, reached late Tuesday at his home in New York.

Death Row lawyer David Kenner did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment Tuesday night.

Knight is serving a nine year sentence for violating probation. That violation was the brawl outside the MGM Hotel. At Knight's probation hearing in November, Anderson said Knight was actually trying to break up the fight.

When asked whether Anderson, had perjured himself on the stand at the hearing, Campbell said her client "testified the way he did out of fear for his safety."

In October, Anderson, who police say is a member of the Crips, was briefly held on an outstanding warrant for a death in Compton that was unrelated to Shakur's murder. No charges were filed against Anderson in that case.

Several other lawsuits have been filed against Shakur's estate and his parents are currently in probate court battling for a stake in it.

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September 06, 1997

The death of Tupac Shakur one year later

By Cathy Scott
LAS VEGAS SUN

A year has passed since rap and film star Tupac Shakur was shot to death near the Las Vegas Strip.

The murder has yet to be solved, and, according to investigators, it may never be.

"We're at a standstill," said Metro Police homicide Sgt. Kevin Manning, who is heading the investigation.

Still, detectives receive "information constantly" about the murder, he said.

The information, however, hasn't moved the case forward. In addition to bona fide tips, police have received many false tips from people claiming to know who did it.

Police say the case slowed early in the investigation as few new clues came in and witnesses clammed up. The murder weapon has not been found, and no one has fingered a suspect.

The Shakur slaying is one of the biggest murder cases in Las Vegas history.

The case attracted national media attention, and has been featured on television shows such as "America's Most Wanted," "Unsolved Mysteries," "Prime Time Live" and "Hard Copy."

Before his death, Shakur, 25, was a music icon for many who saw him as a voice for young people rebelling against their lot in life.

Since his death and the release of the critically acclaimed film "Gridlock'd" and his last album, "Don Killuminati -- The 7-Day Theory," he's been likened to a prince.

But he also was heavily criticized, before and after his death, for his violent lyrics and negative depictions of women.

Fateful night

On Sept. 7, 1996, Shakur and Death Row Records owner Marion "Suge" Knight were driving to a nightclub with an entourage behind them on East Flamingo Road. They were in town for the Mike Tyson-Bruce Seldon heavyweight championship boxing match. Tyson was to meet them later at Club 662, where Shakur and other rap artists were scheduled to perform.

They never made it.

A light-colored late-model Cadillac pulled up next to Knight's rented BMW 750 and a gunman in the back seat opened fire on the passenger side. Shakur was hit three times.

He died six days later at University Medical Center.

So the question remains: Who killed Tupac Shakur? Was it as simple as jealousy over women and money? Was it related to street gangs, namely the Crips and Bloods? Was it because of an East Coast-West Coast rap music rivalry?

On Nov. 13, two months after Shakur's death, 19-year-old Yafeu Fula, a backup singer in Shakur's group Outlaw Immortalz, was shot gangland-style in the hallway of a housing project in Orange, N.J. The 19-year-old was part of Shakur's entourage in Las Vegas and was a passenger in a car directly behind Shakur's when Shakur was shot.

Police say Fula's murder was unrelated to the Shakur case, even though Fula was the only witness who told Metro investigators that night that he could possibly identify Shakur's assailant. Fula was killed before police could question him at length.

Then five months later, on March 9, Christopher Wallace, who also went by the name Biggie Smalls and performed under the name The Notorious B.I.G., was killed in Los Angeles in a shooting similar to Shakur's.

There was bad blood between the rappers. Wallace, on the East Coast, and Shakur, on the West Coast, had been involved in what has been termed a "bi-coastal rivalry" about who was the best rapper. Wallace, like Shakur, was a platinum-selling recording artist.

Metro's Manning said at the time of Wallace's death that it resembled "about 90 percent of drive-by shootings."

The 24-year-old drug dealer-turned-rap artist was killed as he sat in the passenger seat of his GMC Suburban while leaving a crowded party following the 11th annual Soul Train Music Awards.

Los Angeles Police have yet to solve Smalls' murder.

Lawsuits galore

Shakur's estate has been hit with a slew of lawsuits since his death. And his mother, Afeni Shakur, has been fighting to gain some control and benefit from his record sales as well as from as-yet-unreleased records. Afeni Shakur filed a suit against Death Row Records and its owner and chief executive officer, Marion "Suge" Knight.

Her New York attorney, Richard Fischbein, said he was close to reaching a settlement that would give his client a share of Shakur's earnings.

In another suit, Jacquelyn McNealey, now a paraplegic after being shot during one of Shakur's concerts, was awarded an undisclosed judgment in November against the late rapper's estate. She claimed Shakur "taunted and challenged" rival gang members in the audience, which caused a frenzy ending in her being shot, the lawsuit alleges.

And in yet another legal action, C. Delores Tucker, who in 1994 formed an anti-rap campaign with former U.S. drug czar William Bennett and is mentioned derogatorily in one of Shakur's songs, filed a lawsuit for damages against Shakur's estate. She claimed that her sex life with her husband was adversely affected because of some of Shakur's lyrics.

The latest suit was filed by Shakur's estranged father, Billy Garland of New Jersey. He's trying to share control of the estate with Afeni Shakur, even though he left the family when Shakur was 4 and remained absent until visiting Shakur in 1994 at a New York hospital.

Estimates of Shakur's worth vary because Death Row Records, the label under which Shakur recorded his last two albums, has claimed that Shakur was given hundreds of thousands of dollars in jewelry, cars, homes and cash that have been deducted from his platinum-selling records. Death Row Records wants millions of dollars in reimbursement it claims was advanced to Shakur.

The 32-year-old Knight has been imprisoned since November for violating a 1995 parole. He was sentenced to nine years in the California state prison system. A Los Angeles Superior Court judge said Knight violated his probation by taking part in a fight at the MGM Grand hotel-casino on Sept. 7 following the Tyson-Seldon bout. About three hours later, Shakur was shot and Knight was grazed in the drive-by shooting on East Flamingo Road.

Police later identified the person beaten in the fight as Orlando Anderson of Compton, Calif. He was held for questioning by Compton and Las Vegas police, but later released. He has contended, through his attorney Edi O. Faal, that he had nothing to do with Shakur's killing.

Knight's downfall

Since the Shakur murder, more information has been learned about Knight's activities in Las Vegas, including a 1987 arrest at the Rancho Sahara Apartments at 1655 E. Sahara Ave., where Knight lived at the time. He was arrested on charges of attempted murder and grand larceny on Halloween night after Knight shot a man in the wrist and leg during an argument. Knight pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor.

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:05 -

On Nov. 3, 1989, Knight and Sharitha Lee Golden were married in Las Vegas.

Then, on June 6, 1990, Knight was charged with assault after he broke a man's jaw outside a house in West Las Vegas. Knight later pleaded guilty to felony assault with a deadly weapon.

Knight had attended UNLV and played on the Rebel football team in 1985 and 1986 but dropped out shortly before graduation, according to his teammates.

In May, several months after his parole violation conviction, Knight was transferred to the California Men's Colony East in San Luis Obispo, where he is serving out his nine-year sentence.

Since Knight's incarceration, his now-estranged wife, Sharitha Knight, has been taking care of the day-to-day operations of Death Row Records.

April 04, 1997

Rap musicians vow to end violent rivalries

CHICAGO (AP) - Several rap musicians promised to end violent rivalries and announced plans to tour the country to promote unity and uplift the black community.

The musicians gathered in Chicago on Thursday at the urging of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. They promised to forgive each other for professional and personal insults that may have motivated the killings of two prominent rappers, Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G.

Farrakhan called for the summit after those killings, which came in September and March, respectively.

Among the rappers at the meeting were Snoop Doggy Dogg, Busy Bone, C Low and Doug E. Fresh.

Several rappers will cut an album together to kick off the tour, Farrakhan said. The tour will end Oct. 16, the second anniversary of the Farrakhan-orchestrated Million Man March on Washington.

March 03, 1997

Tupac witnesses" stories conflicting

By Cathy Scott
LAS VEGAS SUN

Metro Police homicide detectives have left messages with two men who claim they can identify the assailants who murdered rap and film star Tupac Shakur near the Las Vegas Strip.

It could lead to a break in the case, said homicide Sgt. Kevin Manning.

At the same time, Manning said the pair have changed their stories told to detectives on Sept. 7.

Shakur, 25, was shot three times that night on East Flamingo Road at Koval Lane. He died six days later at University Medical Center. Because Shakur lapsed into a coma, police were not able to interview him.

Marion "Suge" Knight, chief executive officer of Death Row Records and the driver of a BMW in which Shakur was a passenger, was grazed in the temple. The 31-year-old Knight made a U-turn and drove to the Strip at Harmon Avenue, where he was stopped by bicycle patrol officers.

Malcolm Greenridge, a rap singer in Shakur's backup group, and Frank Alexander, a former bodyguard for Shakur and a one-time reservist for the Orange County sheriff's department, told the Los Angeles Times they could identify the shooters.

But they told police otherwise, Manning said.

When asked if he could identify the shooters, Alexander told detectives the night of the shooting, "Absolutely not," Manning said, describing Alexander's interview as 13 pages long after it was transcribed. Greenridge's interview was 11 pages long. Greenridge, he said, answered "Nope" to the same question.

"They never said they could identify a shooter," Manning said. "Nowhere during the taped interview did they say they could recognize or identify anyone in the vehicle, the shooter or otherwise."

Manning said it's curious that the pair complained to a Los Angeles Times reporter that they were harassed by police while also saying they were never contacted by detectives.

"So which is it?" Manning asked.

Alexander, Greenridge and rapper Tufau Fula were in a car behind Tupac when the shooting broke out. Alexander, who was driving, followed Knight's rented BMW to the Strip and Harmon. When police arrived, officers ordered some members of Shakur's entourage to drop to the ground until they could assess the situation. In November, Fula was murdered in New Jersey.

"The L.A. Times is not going to help them find the killer," Manning said.

He said detectives left a message at Alexander's home Thursday. Greenridge's number has been disconnected, but detectives left word through a third party to call Metro homicide detectives.

As of today, Manning said, the two have not called detectives.

Homicide Lt. Wayne Petersen said even if the two were to identify a shooter, defense attorneys would ask them, "How does your recollection of what happened get better six months after the event? There are inconsistencies."

November 13, 1996

Shakur shooting witness found dead in N.J.

By Cathy Scott
LAS VEGAS SUN

A key witness Metro Police has been trying to interview since the fatal shooting of rapper Tupac Shakur has been murdered in New Jersey, homicide Sgt. Kevin Manning said today.

Yafeu Fula, 19, a member of Shakur's backup group, the Outlaws Immortalz, was shot to death Sunday, Manning said.

Police in Orange, N.J., notified Manning late Tuesday about the killing, he said.

Fula, who lived in Montclair, N.J., was shot once in the head and was found slumped in the third-floor hallway of an apartment building at 325 Mechanic St. early Sunday where he had been visiting a friend, Orange police said. Officers found Fula at 3:48 a.m. after receiving a report of a shooting.

Orange Police Capt. Richard Conte said the investigation was expected to end in an arrest "within days."

"We don't believe it's related at this time to the Shakur killing," he said. "The way the investigation is going, it's not going in that direction, but it's still under investigation."

Some of Fula's friends said they believed Fula was Shakur's half brother, The Star-Ledger in Newark, N.J., reported today. Orange police said they didn't know if the two were related.

"A lot of people have stated he was Tupac's cousin, he was his half-brother, that they had the same father," Orange Police Capt. Richard Conte said today. I know they had a working relationship. I doubt if there's a blood relationship with what we know at this time. Their mother's are close friends."

Fula toured with Outlaw Immortalz, formally named Thug Life, and appeared with Shakur on his album "All Eyez on Me."

Fula is shown with Shakur in an album photo insert standing on the stage of Club 662 in Las Vegas.

Shakur, 25, was gunned down Sept. 7 while he, associates and friends in a caravan of luxury cars headed to a benefit at Club 662, a private nightclub operated by Marion "Suge" Knight. Knight was driving the rented BMW in which Shakur was a passenger. Knight suffered a minor head wound. Shakur died six days later.

Fula was sitting with body guards in the car behind Tupac's when the shooting occurred, Manning said. The detective said he had been in touch with Fula's attorney since the shooting to return Fula to Las Vegas for a second interview. Detectives interviewed him briefly after the shooting.

Meanwhile, homicide has received new tips in Shakur's killing near the Strip after "America's Most Wanted" aired a segment about the incident.

The program, shown Saturday night on the Fox Network, prompted "a healthy amount of tips," said Lena Nozizwe, a correspondent with the program. Officials from the show forwarded those tips Tuesday to homicide investigators, Lt. Larry Spinosa said.

The first in the fall series of new shows, "America's Most Wanted Fights Back," aired Saturday night and featured the shooting of Shakur in Las Vegas. The program has resulted in the arrest of 423 criminals.

Spinosa said Tuesday that detectives were reviewing the new tips and "are following up on them, making phone calls."

To date, police have received sketchy details of the gunmen, described only as three to four black men in a white or light-colored late-model Cadillac that pulled alongside Shakur and Knight on Flamingo Road East. Tupac and his entourage were in town for the Mike Tyson-Bruce Seldon fight.

October 02, 1996

Arrest made in connection to Shakur killing

SUN STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Compton, Calif., Police arrested 21 gang members early today, including at least one person who will be questioned in connection with the Sept. 7 murder of rapper Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas.

The sweep targeted individuals believed to have been involved in as many as a dozen shootings that occurred in the Compton area in possible retaliation for the Shakur shooting, police Capt. Steven Roller said.

"None of the suspects that we arrested will at the present time be charged with the events that happened in the city of Las Vegas," Roller emphasized.

Three people were killed in the 12 shootings that have occurred in the Compton area since the Shakur shooting, Roller said. Some may have been in retaliation for the Shakur attack, he said.

A New York radio station reported this morning that one of those arrested, 22-year-old Orlando Anderson of Compton, told police that Marion "Suge" Knight, Death Row Records owner and driver of the BMW in which Shakur was a passenger, was the target of the Sept. 7 drive-by shooting near the Las Vegas Strip.

Compton Police said Anderson has ties to the Los Angeles Crips gang. Knight reportedly has ties to the Los Angeles Bloods and sports an "M.O.B." tattoo on his arm that police have said stands for "Member of Bloods."

Knight, who owns a home in the southeast Las Vegas Valley and has interest in a nightclub here, gave police very little information after the shooting. It took four days for him to meet with homicide detectives to give a statement.

Shakur, 25, died Sept. 13 from chest and abdominal wounds. Although he was conscious at the time he was admitted into University Medical Center, he was in a coma and on a respirator at the time of his death. A day after the shooting, doctors surgically removed a lung to try to stop internal bleeding.

Knight, 31, was driving with Shakur on East Flamingo Road a few blocks off the Strip after the Mike Tyson-Bruce Seldon heavyweight fight when a gunman in a white late-model Cadillac pulled up next to them and emptied a semiautomatic pistol into the passenger side. Knight suffered a minor head injury during the shooting.

Knight, driving with two flat tires, made a U-turn on East Flamingo after the shooting even though bicycle patrol officers were in pursuit. He told investigators he was trying to find a hospital, police said. Knight was finally stopped by officers about a mile away.

Shakur, whose family and relatives told homicide detectives that his real name is Lesane Crooks, was struck four times, in the chest and abdomen.

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:05 -

Days after the shooting, three attorneys accompanied Knight to the offices of Metro's homicide division where detectives questioned him for about an hour.

"We were hoping he would tell us who shot him," homicide Sgt. Kevin Manning said. "He didn't give us anything beneficial."

Knight also did not shed light on a possible motive for the shooting.

September 19, 1996

Tupac's final music video eerily foreshadowed death of rapper

SUN STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

A music video of Tupac Shakur made about a month before he was gunned down in Las Vegas foreshadowed his violent death and shows the gangsta rapper being ushered into heaven.

The video for "I Ain't Mad," which aired Wednesday night on MTV, also shows Shakur being riddled with bullets and dying in an ambulance.

He is met in heaven by comedian Redd Foxx, who is hosting a jam session with Miles Davis,

Jimi Hendrix, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Robert Johnson, among other performers.

Shakur's label, Death Row Records, delivered the video to MTV on Monday -- three days after the 25-year-old rapper died Friday of gunshot wounds suffered in a Sept. 7 shooting on East Flamingo Road, the New York Post reported today.

In another eerie similarity to real life, the video shows Shakur -- who was in a car with Death Row President Marion "Suge" Knight at the time of the shooting -- riding with a friend in a limousine.

"It is ironic -- definitely a case of life imitating art," Death Row's George Pryce told the Post. "It's almost as if Tupac had a sense of foreboding."

Metro Police are investigating the shooting, but they have few leads. The shots came from a white Cadillac that pulled up next to the vehicle in which Shakur was riding. Witnesses, including Knight, have refused to cooperate.

Sources have told the Los Angeles Times that a double killing in Compton, Calif., last week was in retaliation for the Shakur shooting.

September 11, 1996

Media, fans seek clues to reason for shooting

By Karen Zekan

LAS VEGAS SUN

The shooting of rap star Tupac Shakur has stirred a media frenzy in Las Vegas.

Local radio stations have been flooded with requests to play his albums and throngs of fans have flocked to University Medical Center. News reporters from across the country are here to report on events following the weekend shooting.

Pop star Hammer was granted entry to the rapper's bedside Tuesday, the latest on a list of friends and celebrities, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, that the family is permitting to see Shakur, said Dale Pugh, University Medical Center spokesman.

"(Shakur) has been on a respirator since he arrived here late Saturday, and has been heavily sedated because of his extensive internal injuries," Pugh said. "Critical is the most serious term we can apply to a condition, and he remains very, very critical."

If he survives the multiple bullet wounds that forced the removal of his right lung Sunday night, Shakur, 25, will be facing at least six months' recovery, authorities said.

Reporters from music magazines, tabloids and the nation's largest newspapers have been flooding local police, hospital and media switchboards in a frantic scramble for the latest shreds of insight into the shooting. Yet those who seem to be controlling the information game -- Shakur's tight-knit buddies -- aren't warming to a tete-a-tete.

Few faces were hanging outside UMC Tuesday following Monday's 8 p.m. scuffle between Shakur loyalists and Metro Police's gang detail. Officers had been watching the area in the event of retaliatory violence for Saturday's shooting.

"We believe this was a gang-related shooting, and we want to make sure that everyone is safe," said gang Sgt. Cindi West. "Whether or not the people we stopped were gang members, they

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:05 -

still have a right to grieve. And while there are a lot of people gathering outside the hospital, we've had no complaints about them."

The last time West could recall a large following of fans gathering for an injured star was mid-December 1994 when rodeo bull-rider Brent Thurman was stomped by a bull at a National Rodeo Finals event and lingered six days in a coma before dying.

Shakur's fans and friends shut down reporters who approached, angrily accusing the media of distorting how the shooting happened. Some left their cars parked in red-curbed emergency zones to hang out near the lobby doors to meet up with friends.

One man pointed fingers and yelled "reporter" to hospital security each time media entered the trauma center's lobby for condition updates.

The few in the crowd outside UMC who talked anonymously said the gunman, whoever he was, "will be taken care of."

As Metro Police try to sort fact and fiction among the rumors they hear, local rap and hip-hop fans are in a fierce fight over Shakur's music, produced under the Death Row Records label.

Death Row's president, Marion "Suge" Knight, 35, who is affiliated with the Compton, Calif.-based Bloods, gang, was driving the black BMW 750 when Shakur was hit by a drive-by gunman.

"I'm really tired of people saying this music is about gangs," said Warren Peace, rap director at KUNV 91.5-FM. "It's not about gangs -- the message is about what we can do to get by, cooperating with each other, and what we need to do."

And it's also about business, Peace said.

"Death Row Records has legendary ties to the Bloods in LA, but other people on the roster have ties to the Crips," Peace said. "Whatever the gang, they put that down as secondary to making money. And they're definitely making money. They're all business, but they don't forget their fan base in the streets, the people who got them where they are now."

Peace says the people he knows at Death Row -- Shakur and Knight among them -- are "very business minded."

A truce between the Crips and Bloods in Los Angeles a few years back was supposed to calm rivals who live the violent urban background that has turned Shakur, Snoop Doggy Dogg and other rappers into mega-stars.

Yet multimillion-dollar record sales prove that the attraction goes beyond gangland.

"You can't go around shooting people, but you can kind of live through the music," Peace said. "It's the same entertainment people get from watching Arnold Schwarzenegger. He blows people up, but it's not like a real shooting. This isn't just music about the black community or the gang community. It's the sound that people want, and the more attention Tupac gets makes people want it more."

March 11, 1997

Murders of two feuding rap artists prompt questions about coastal rivalry

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:05 -

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Both Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. said they hoped their music would bring positive change to inner cities, but with both men murdered, all eyes are again on violence in rap - and on the East-West feud.

The two rappers were the central characters in that rivalry, but some observers of the rap scene say focusing on that is unfair.

Phyllis Pollack, a publicist who has represented several rap stars, including the Geto Boys and N.W.A., said it's too early to speculate on what role the bicoastal feud had in their deaths.

"Sure, there's been this competition, but that's been since day one, but we don't have artists on the West Coast saying, "Let's kill off all of those East Coast rappers so we can sell more records on the East Coast," she said.

Jesse Washington, managing editor of VIBE magazine, acknowledged there was animosity between the rappers but cautioned against trying to read too much into the deaths. VIBE magazine sponsored the party that B.I.G. attended before his death Sunday.

"I think all I can say right now is that it's too early to attribute this to a coastal rivalry, Tupac revenge or anything else because there's just so many different possibilities and aspects to this whole situation," said Washington, a former Associated Press reporter.

More importantly, Washington said, the deaths are a "sad reflection on the level of violence in our community."

But Chaka Zulu, a cousin of Tupac Shakur's, disagreed.

"I think to some extent this was a retaliation for Pac's death," said Zulu, who is music director for Atlanta-area rap station WHTA-FM. "I don't think it came out of Pac's camp, though. I think it came from people that are caught up in the hype of the music and the East-Coast-West Coast

thing. As said as it is, it empowers some people to say, "This is my coast!"

The Notorious B.I.G., whose real name was Christopher Wallace, was leaving a party celebrating the Soul Train Awards when someone drove by and shot through the passenger side door of the GMC Suburban where he was sitting. The driver of B.I.G.'s car drove to a hospital, where 24-year-old Wallace was pronounced dead.

Los Angeles police Lt. Ross Moen said Wallace died of multiple 9 mm gunshot wounds to the upper body. Police were interviewing about 200 witnesses and hope to soon release a sketch of the gunman, who is described as black, in his early 20s and believed to be driving a dark-colored sedan.

The gunman pulled along side of Wallace's vehicle at a stop light and fired before speeding away. One of three vehicles in Wallace's group tried to follow the suspect, but couldn't keep up with him, Moen said.

"We're not overlooking any possibilities of a payback or gang-related type shooting, (and) we're not overlooking the fact that this was possibly a hit, a direct target, coming out of possibly New York. It could come out of L.A. It could come out of Atlanta," Moen said.

No arrests have been made in the September shooting of Shakur, 25, either.

Shakur was in Las Vegas with Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight on Sept. 7 when he was shot near the Las Vegas Strip while sitting in the passenger seat of Knight's car. Shakur was rushed to the hospital, but died one week later. Knight suffered minor injuries and has been described as uncooperative by Las Vegas police.

On Monday, Death Row Records, which Knight ran and that produced Shakur, sent official condolences to friends and family of B.I.G.

News at the Time

Written by Staff ID23

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:05 -

"Having just had the untimely death of one of our own, Tupac Shakur, by way of the same senseless violence, we do sympathize with those closest to Mr. Wallace," a statement read.

Relations between the two rappers, once best of friends, became hostile as they competed for fans, fame and women.

The rivalry developed in the 1980s as West Coast rappers grew in popularity, surpassing many East Coast rappers' record sales. The Notorious B.I.G. was credited with helping put the East Coast rap scene back on the map a few years ago while building his gangsta rap persona around authenticity.

The feud between Wallace and Shakur was more than just a regional rivalry, however. It was very personal. It accelerated in 1994 after Shakur was robbed of \$40,000 worth of jewelry and shot several times. Shakur, who was born in the Bronx but lived in California as an adult, claimed Wallace was behind the attack.

Wallace, also known as Biggie Smalls, always denied involvement, but Shakur held fast to his belief.

Shakur also claimed to have slept with Faith Evans, Wallace's estranged wife. Shakur bragged about his conquest in a song.

*Contributing to this story were staff writers Paula Story in Los Angeles and Nekesa Moody in Albany, N.Y.

Tupac Shakur dead at 25

Rapper hit in drive-by shooting last week September 13, 1996

LAS VEGAS (CNN) -- Tupac Shakur, the rapper whose raw lyrics seemed a blueprint of his own violent life, died Friday from wounds suffered in a drive-by shooting. He was 25.

Shakur, his mother at his bedside, was pronounced dead at 7:03 p.m. EDT at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas, according to hospital spokeswoman Nancy Collins.

Collins said doctors determined Shakur died from respiratory failure and cardiopulmonary arrest. The rapper had been in a medical-induced coma after having his right lung removed earlier this week.

Shakur was hit by four bullets September 7 as he rode near the Las Vegas Strip in a car driven by the head of Death Row Records, Marion "Suge" Knight, who was slightly wounded. It was the second time in less than two years that the rapper was gunned down.

The Las Vegas attackers got away, and no arrests have been made.

Controversial career

Known simply as 2Pac, with "Thug Life" tattooed across his stomach, Shakur embodied the extremes of pop culture. Fans loved him, buying millions of his records, while politicians and others denounced both him and his lyrics for glorifying violence and drugs and degrading women.

He was born Tupac Amaru Shakur in 1971 in New York City. His mother, Afeni Shakur, is a

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former Black Panther activist and the inspiration for the touching song "Dear Mama" on his Grammy-nominated album "Me Against The World."

As a member of the Grammy-nominated group Digital Underground, he appeared in 1991 on the track "Same Song" from "This is an EP Release" and on the album "Sons Of The P."

That same year, Shakur achieved individual recognition with the album "2Pacalypse Now," which spawned the successful singles "Trapped" and "Brenda's Got A Baby."

The album, with references to police officers being killed, drew notoriety when a slain police officer's family claimed Shakur's music drove the killer to action. By that time, Shakur had made his first film appearance in Earnest Dickerson's "Juice."

In the 1992 John Singleton film, "Poetic Justice," Shakur co- starred opposite pop singer Janet Jackson. But Shakur seemed to spend as much time in courtrooms and jail cells than he did on movie sets.

A 1993 confrontation with two off-duty Atlanta police officers led to charges that were later dropped.

In 1994, he was sentenced to 15 days in jail for assault and battery on a music video producer.

hen, in November 1994, he was shot five times and robbed of \$40,000 worth of jewelry in the lobby of a New York recording studio.

In 1995, Shakur was found guilty of sexually assaulting a female fan in a New York hotel room. He served eight months before winning release pending his appeal. In 1996, a judge ordered him to serve 120 days in jail for probation violations. An appeal was pending, and he had recently completed filming a role as a detective for the Orion picture "Gang Related."

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When the rapper appeared at the MTV Video Awards three days before the Las Vegas shooting, he explained why he stayed in touch with members of his "posse" by two-way radio.

"Well today, every young black man needs to be physically inclined and military-minded," he said. "And this (two-way radio) is part of the military mind. The soldiers are out there.

"I'm not the same guy that would come to the awards, have a problem with somebody and whup their ass in front of everybody," Shakur continued. "So now I got the radio. I see a problem, we quelch it. It's out. No big fires, just small, tiny little sparks that can be put out."

"That shows my growth," he said. "That shows our brain power. That shows the organization and not just Tupac, but Death Row as a whole."

Still there was trouble.

Police were called into the awards show to break up a confrontation between Shakur's entourage and six other men.

The night he was hit by four bullets, Shakur and his entourage had been involved in a fight outside their Las Vegas hotel.

Yet Shakur was not just the fury, expletives and anger of songs like "F--- the World." He could be poignant ("It was hell hugging on my mama from a jail cell") and both sympathetic and critical of young black men trying to become "gangstas."

He even admitted to being tired of the gangsta lifestyle.

"Thug Life to me is dead. If it's real, let somebody else represent it, because I'm tired of it," Shakur told Vibe magazine. "I represented it too much. I was Thug Life."

Still, there were forebodings of a violent ending.

When Shakur talked to Details magazine earlier this year, he said: "All good niggers, all the niggers who change the world, die in violence. They don't die in regular ways."

Tupac Shakur is Dead

by Jeff B. Copeland and Marcus Errico

Sep 13, 1996, 5:15 PM PT

Rap star Tupac Shakur is dead.

The University Medical Center in Las Vegas announced that Shakur died today at 4:03 p.m. local time of "respiratory failure and cardiopulmonary arrest."

The 25-year-old was shot last Saturday as he rode in a car driven by Death Row Records chairman "Suge" Knight near the Las Vegas strip. Knight was slightly wounded in the attack. On Sunday, doctors removed Shakur's right lung, but he lingered on in critical condition.

Not since John Lennon was shot on the streets of New York has a major entertainment figure been murdered at the height of his popularity. Like the Lennon shooting, Shakur's death is certain to echo far beyond the rap music world. "Everybody has to learn from this," said one caller to KPWR, Los Angeles' biggest rap station, Friday night. "There's no hiding from violence."

Shakur, Knight and a group of bodyguards and friends set off from the Mike Tyson bout Saturday night in a convoy of ten cars. Witnesses say a white Cadillac pulled alongside, then nine shots raked Knight's black BMW, hitting Shakur several times in the chest.

Police say they have no leads in the case and have expressed frustration with how the investigation is going. Sgt. Kevin Manning said earlier this week that "we did not receive a whole lot of cooperation from most of [Shakur's] entourage. It amazes me when they have professional bodyguards that they can't even give us an accurate description of the vehicle." Shakur was seen arguing with an unidentified man just after the Tyson fight, but investigators ruled him out as a suspect. The department has offered a \$1,000 reward for information.

Tupac and other West Coast rappers have had a long-running rivalry with East Coast rappers, and the hit sent conspiracy theories about a revenge killing rocketing through the music industry. Shakur and other West Coast rappers had to be pulled apart from their New York adversaries at the MTV Video Music Awards last week.

"Suge" Knight is reputed to be close to the Bloods, the L.A.-based gang--also raising suspicion that their deadly rivals, the Crips, were somehow involved.

The shooting is certain to rekindle the debate about whether rap promotes violence or just reflects the ugly mood of the streets. Indeed the aura of violence that hangs around the music genre makes it easier to think that, in some way, Shakur--a man with the words "Thug Life" tattooed on his chest--had it coming. He'd already been nearly killed in 1994 when gunmen robbed and shot him outside a Manhattan recording studio. Among other recent scrapes with the law, he served eight months in prison in New York for sexual abuse and was released last year.

Still, Shakur's songs had plenty to say against the gun culture of the ghetto. In "Young Niggaz,"

he sang, "Don't wanna be another statistic out here doin' nothin'/Tryin' to maintain in this dirty game/Keep it real and I will even if it kills me/My young niggaz stay away from these dumb niggaz/Put down the gun and have some fun nigga."

Friday night, reaction poured in to rap stations. Callers flooded the airwaves at KPWR in Los Angeles, as disk jockey Big Boy played songs in memory of Shakur. "A whole lot of people are sad, whole lot of people angry," said one caller. Another denounced the gangsta lifestyle. "This shit's got to stop," he said. "Something like this brings the whole world together--ain't no East Coast-West Coast, color thing," Big Boy said as the caller hung up.

Tupac Amaru Shakur was born in 1971 in New York. His mother, Afeni Shakur, a member of the radical Black Panther party, had just been released from prison after being acquitted of bomb-conspiracy charges. He grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and Oakland, California.

Shakur told *Details* magazine earlier this year: "All good niggers, all the niggers who change the world, die in violence. They don't die in regular ways."

Obituary of Tupac Shakur

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his first film appearance in Ernest Dickerson's Juice.

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In 1994, he was sentenced to 15 days in jail for assault and battery on a music video producer. Then, in November 1994, he was shot five times and robbed of \$40,000 worth of jewelry in the lobby of a New York recording studio. In 1995, Shakur was found guilty of sexually assaulting a female fan in a New York hotel room. He served eight months before winning release pending his appeal. Earlier this year, a judge ordered him to serve 120 days in jail for probation violations. An appeal was pending, and he had recently completed filming a role as a detective for the Orion picture Gang Related.

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SLAIN RAPPER Tupac Shakur is shown in this Dec. 16, 1993 file photo. Police have arrested a 22-year-old gang member in connection with the execution-style killing of rapper Tupac Shakur, ABC reported Wednesday, Oct. 2, 1996. Shakur, one of rap's most successful and notorious singers, was shot following a boxing match Sept. 7, 1996, in Las Vegas. He died a week later. ABC radio reported that the 22-year-old man and others were arrested in an ongoing police sweep. The Compton Police Department declined to comment about the arrest report.