

Hip-Hop Remembers Rap Icon Tupac Shakur

Written by Robert ID1537

Wednesday, 15 June 2005 10:04 -

Today in remembrance we celebrate the birth of one of hip-hop's greatest rap icons. Although he is no longer among us, Tupac Shakur is remembered as 'more than a rap musician', more than a 'gangsta rapper' and much more than what the main stream press has 'painted' him over his life and afterward. His music, writings and films will always be an inspiration to us and will always be with us.

Even though he was and still is, misunderstood by many; he is also loved and revered by many.

Although Tupac was taken from us long before he reached his full potential, his life and legacy will remain part of hip-hop culture as an important part of our history.

Tupac was lead into this world as Lesane Parish Crooks on June 16, 1971 in Brooklyn, New York; 34 years ago today.

His mother, Alice Faye Williams, aka Afeni Shakur; changed young Lesane's name to Tupac Amaru Shakur when he was very young.

'Tupac Amaru' was an Inca Indian revolutionary; the meaning of the name is 'Shining Serpent'. 'Shakur' in Arabic means 'Thankful to God'. In later years Tupac would also be known as 'Makaveli'.

Tupac's 'family' was deep rooted in the struggle for civil and equal rights. His mother, Afeni, was an ex-Black Panther and deeply rooted in the movement. His godfather, Geronimo Pratt, and godmother, Assata Shakur, were also politically involved in the movement.

His 'step' father Jeral Wayne Williams, aka Mutulu Shakur was also involved in the movement.

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The rest of Tupac's family members are William Garland, Tupac's father, Maurice Harding, aka Mopreme, Tupac's step brother, and Sekyiwa Shakur, Tupac's half sister.

Tupac's family left Brooklyn and moved to Baltimore, Maryland. While living there Tupac attended The Baltimore School for the Performing Arts. It was apparent even at an early age that Tupac was a unique individual.

Then another family move found young Tupac in Oakland, California. This is where Tupac encountered many trials and tribulations as a young black male in urban America.

He started rapping with his group Strictly Dope. Then it was on to the Digital Underground with Shock G and that is when Tupac was noticed as the talent he was.

The song 'Same Song' with Digital Underground brought Tupac to the forefront and things would never be the same for the young rap artist or the hip-hop and rap world.

Tupac released his first album '2pacalypse Now' when he was about 20 years old. This album got Tupac noticed, not only by fans and the record industry but also political figures including Dan Quayle; who was vice president at the time. He also was notice by C Delores Tucker who tried many times to sue Tupac during his career over his music. She was later dubbed C "Deplorable" Tucker among the hip-hop community for her actions against Tupac, Suge Knight and others in the rap music genre. During these times is when 'gangsta rap' was at the forefront of all people seeking press.

All thru out his career Tupac was outspoken on the struggles of inner city life and was a very outspoken political activist. He spoke street truth and this attracted a large following even among the other races. Black, White, Asian, Latino; it seems everyone could relate to what Tupac was saying. His record sales prove that. He also was a target for lawsuits and cases all over the country.

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November 30th, 1994 at 12:20 a.m. at Quad Recording Studios in Times Square NY; Tupac was shot 5 times. Tupac always blamed his ex-friend Notorious B.I.G. (aka Biggie Smalls, whose legal name was Christopher Wallace) and Bad Boy Records CEO Sean 'Puffy' Combs for setting him up to be shot.

Tupac checked himself out of Bellevue hospital a few hours after surgery fearing that those responsible would try to finish what they started. There are conflicting reports of where he went after he checked out. Some reports say he went to Metropolitan hospital and others say he moved secretly to the house of the actress and friend Jasmine Guy to recuperate.

Tupac was to be in a NY court room to hear the verdict on a trumped up rape charge the following day. He returned to the courtroom bandaged and in a wheelchair to hear his verdict. Tupac was acquitted of the three sodomy counts and weapons charge, but was convicted of two counts of sexual abuse for forcibly touching Ayanna Jackson's buttocks. Bail was set at three million dollars, and Tupac turned himself in and was incarcerated. On February 7, 1995 Tupac Shakur was sentenced to 1½ to 4½ years in the case.

April 29, 1995 Tupac was married to Keisha Morris while he was still in prison, but the marriage was annulled later in 1996.

Sept. 15, 1995 while incarcerated in Danamora Prison, Tupac, Death Row Records CEO Marion 'Suge' Knight and Death Row Records lawyer David Kenner sat down in Danamora Prison and came to an agreement that would get Tupac out of jail on bail on an appeal bond. Among the agreement was that Tupac would record three record albums for Death Row Records. The first was to be based on material already recorded; the second would be released in 1996; the third would be released in 1997. The bail had three components. \$850,000 was posted in the form of a corporate guarantee by Atlantic Records; \$250,000 was posted by Interscope, and the balance of \$300,000 was posted in the form of a bail bond. All three components were secured by the future royalties to be earned by Tupac. On or about October 11, 1995, Tupac was released from Danamora.

The year that followed brought some of Tupac's greatest music. His tracks were filled with feeling and understanding.

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On September 7, 1996 at approximately 11:15 PM Tupac Shakur was shot in Las Vegas while in route to Club 662 with his boss and friend Suge Knight. On September 13, 1996 Tupac Shakur left the limelight that surrounded him to enter the next phase of his journey.

Tupac touched many people. Not only thru the different hip-hop rap groups he was with and helped form, but as a man. He is looked at by some, as our generations' Malcolm X.

We will never know the true potential of this fallen souljah, but we do know that his short stay with us, be it controversial; has left an impact on hip-hop culture and society as a whole.

At the time of the incident in Las Vegas in September of 1996, it had seemed that Tupac had found happiness and a future with Kidida Jones, daughter of Quincy Jones. Life was good for Tupac. He was a mega rap star, an accomplished actor, a smart businessman, well loved and respected by many inside music and beyond.

ThugLifeArmy.com celebrates this day that the Creator saw fit to 'bless' us with the presence of Tupac Amaru Shakur. Although short lived his legacy, his mark has been left on all of us.

If you would like to know about the legendary icon figure, Tupac Shakur, please visit www.ThugLifeArmy.com

– Keeping the Legacy Alive!

*Graphic By Keith - Co-Administrator ThugLifeArmy.com