

NY Shooting of Hip Hop Icon Tupac 2Pac Topic of LA Times Web Exclusive

Written by Robert ID4215

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In a web-only presentation by Los Angeles Times, Pulitzer Prize-winning staff writer Chuck Philips deconstructs the 1994 ambush of hip hop icon Tupac Shakur (2Pac) at the Quad Recording Studio in New York. The shooting of Tupac at the Quad Studios was the first shot of a lethal, bi-coastal feud that culminated in the killings of Tupac Shakur and hip hop and rap's other leading star, Christopher Wallace, better known as The Notorious B.I.G.

Until the night he was murdered in 1996, the hip hop icon and rap star (2Pac) insisted that associates of Sean "Diddy" Combs were behind the brutal ambush at the Quad. New evidence - FBI records and exclusive interviews with individuals who were at the studio that night - support his suspicions.

The story also discloses that there is an ongoing federal grand jury in New York investigating a series of unsolved hip hop and rap-related crimes, including the 1994 Quad assault. Tupac was pistol-whipped, shot 5 times and left for dead, but survived to write songs about the experience.

The story reveals exactly who set up the ambush, how it went down and why. It shows that Combs was not only present in the studio with 2 dozen Bad Boy associates when the assault took place 10 floors below in the lobby, he was notified in advance that the trap for Tupac Shakur had been laid, according to sources familiar with the incident.

The two main players who allegedly orchestrated the ambush are interesting too.

One is an ex-convict named James Rosemond (aka Jimmy Henchman), who now runs Czar Entertainment, the most successful hip-hop talent management firm in Manhattan. Rosemond's artist roster includes such hip hop and rap stars as The Game, Too \$hort, Shyne and Gucci Mane. After the attack, Rosemond grew close with Combs and remains so today.

The other main player is James "Jimmy" Sabatino, the Italian-American son of a reputed captain in the Colombo crime family. He is currently serving 12 years in a federal penitentiary in Pennsylvania for racketeering and wire fraud.

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Sabatino was the individual who personally told Combs that Tupac Shakur (2Pac) would be attacked, sources said. After the assault, Sabatino was welcomed into Combs' inner circle. Sabatino introduced Combs to mobsters and escorted him to mobbed-up nightclubs in New York and Miami, sources said.

Sabatino also financed a recording of The Notorious B.I.G. that Bad Boy released after the rapper was murdered. Combs invited Sabatino on his 1997 "No Way Out" tour, where the alleged mob associate used fake credit cards to charge up hundreds of thousands of dollars in bills for posh hotel suites, limousines and parties on behalf of the Bad Boy entourage. Sabatino continued working with Bad Boy right up to the moment of his 1998 arrest in London. He was subsequently extradited to the U.S., where he was convicted and locked up.

Accompanied by a vivid photo-gallery of the cast of characters, copies of confidential documents, an interactive timeline and audio of lyrics and videos from Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G., Chuck Philips pieces together a case that has left many in the music world as well as law enforcement officials baffled.

Be sure to check out the story first thing Monday morning by visiting www.latimes.com/tupac . Philips is also scheduled to conduct a live chat with readers on Tuesday.