

"A Lesson Learned In Tragedy And The Precious value of choice."

Today, while laying down on my bunk in my cell, I had my walkman radio on and I heard back to back songs from the late great rap stars "Biggie Smalls" and "Tupac Shakur". The song by Biggie was "Give me one more chance", and the song by Tupac was "Change". Both songs are well known favorites, and both songs clearly illustrate and demonstrate the lyrical talent both of these rap artist possessed. What a shame both of these young men lost their lives so brutally, and so tragically, and so prematurely, all because an act of senseless violence made "another one bite the dust".

Suddenly disgusted, I turned my radio off and listened to the silence as a feeling of morosity washed over me. As I lay there, thinking about these two gifted and now deceased rap stars, I couldn't help but to wonder "why" the death of these two young men bother me so?

Then another question surfaced in my mind, (and it seemed itself in a play on words directly from "Big" and "Pac"), and I asked myself: "Why couldn't Big and Pac get "one more chance" to "Change" something about themselves that would have spared them from the grim fate that claimed them?"

When I ponder upon all the "lost opportunity" and all the "lost potential" both of these young men still had to offer to not only themselves, but to their fans the world over, it truly sickens me to my stomach.

Just think, think for one single moment, about the powerful impact and impression each one of these men's voice had on those whom heared them all across the world. The influence they wielded is amazing! Why, even here, in prison, almost everyday that I've been incarcerated I'm willing to wager that I've heard other prisoners, (especially the younger ones) perfectly recite from memory verse after verse from various Rap songs each one of these men have made.

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It's fascinating, troubling, and intriguing, all at the same time, because most of these prisoners whom have dedicated and applied themselves to lyrically memorizing the "multiple verses" to "multiple songs", are the very same prisoners whom have not memorized their "multiplication tables" or the necessary academic instructions that will elevate their literacy and educational level! Go figure, it's completely crazy and utterly sad.

But you know what's even more crazier and sadder than that if you bring yourself to think about it? Engage yourself in the mental exercise of journeying down that long and winding "what if" road, and contemplate these curious questions:

"What if," Biggie and Tupac had another chance to dedicate and use their artistic ability to influence and propagate progressive ideas that advocated giving those of us whom have fell and are struggling "one more chance" to "change"?"

"What if," all of Biggie and Tupac's fans began to eagerly "memorize" and "recite" new revolutionary ways of thinking about things, and new ways of "acting" towards one another?"

"What if," the power of voice wielded by Biggie and Tupac was utilized to speak unprecedented social, political, and cultural initiatives, that transcended racial and ethnic boundaries?"

Man, when one seriously considers the combined vast fan bases that belong to each of these men, and then consider the lost potential and opportunity due to the untimely deaths of these young and gifted men, the sense of loss is of such a great depth, comprehension of it is mentally staggering.

Now obviously, many of us do know and realize that the special gift that we call "Music" (through-out-time), has always been a powerful medium to share messages, feelings, information, etc... and many others (some even more inspirational than Biggie and Pac) have prematurely died, (e.g. John Lennon, Jim Croce, Janis Joplin, Aaliyah, Marvin Gaye, Sam Cook, etc...). So again, I ask myself, what is it about the tragedy of Biggie's and Tupac's death that bothers me so? What is it that makes me want to travel that "What if" Road?

Well, after racking my brain and thinking on this question for a little while, I finally settled upon a three pronged conclusion, which was: 1- Both of these men were close to my age (Biggie was born in '72, Pac in '71, and me in '77); 2- Both of these men are Black (and of course I'm African American); and 3- Both of these men, just like me, while coming up were in someway touched by the elements of Crime, drugs, gangs, sex, and violence, (which, by the way, are the common themes each one of these men rapped about).

Now, out of these "3" similarities I believe I shared with these men, the one that begs me to make "some kind of connection" with the "tragedy" of their "deaths", is this ^{3rd} factor.

See, the way I'm basically understanding the word "Connection", when I get right down to it, "connection" is another word or phrase to describe "WAKE-UP-CALL", meaning Biggie and Tupac's tragic deaths are wake-up calls I need to heed in my life because "even though it's a tragic shame that Big and Pac no longer have "one more chance" to "change",the merciful fact remains that "I Do".

The powerful reality and truth behind this undeniable fact, implores me to contemplate a different branch in the long and winding Road of "What if's" and ask the new questions of:

"What if", I do get out of prison and get "one more chance" to "change", am I prepared to do all that will be needed in order to believe, success and a better life?"

"What if", I get the chance to use my own power of voice to give others something to think about before they take that tragic route and follow the footsteps that lead to death or the prison house doors?"

"What if", I dedicate some of my life's time to the efforts of helping to share, propagate, and advocate, progressive ideas that may speak unprecedented ways of thinking towards social, political, and cultural initiatives that transcend religious, racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual preference boundaries?"

Sometimes, out of tragedy, if we look real closely with our hearts and minds, we can, (and will), find a positive that will triumph over the negative. The type of positive I can salvage from the negativity of Biggie's and Tupac's death, is the powerful lesson that through tragedy the precious value of choice can be exercised through one's intellect.

Through the power of choice, we can choose the path or course that can offer us better ways to better life. Through the power of choice, I have chosen to make the best out of my "One more chance" to "change" NOW rather than later so that I can attempt to better the lives "in here" as well as the lives "out there".

In this way, the tragic and untimely deaths of two of hip hop's most biggest and beloved stars can be used as an instrument to triumph, and in this way, the

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Vestiges of Biggie and Tupac can "Live After Death"
When All Eyes are On Me".

I remain Yours

The Realist

DeANNA Tha Doll

*** (Any and All Comments are Invited) ***