



OF MY DEMISE..

WHEN MY HEART CAN  
BEAT NO MORE..  
I HOPE I DIE FOR A  
PRINCIPAL THAT I  
HAVE LIVED FOR..  
I WILL DIE BEFORE  
MY TIME BECAUSE  
I ALREADY FEEL  
THE SHADOWS DEPTH  
SO MUCH I WANTED TO  
ACCOMPLISH BEFORE  
I REACHED MY DEATH..  
I HAVE COME TO GRIPS  
WITH THE POSSIBILITY  
AND WIPED THE LAST  
TEAR FROM MY EYES

OF MY DEMISE..

→ 2PAC, 1993



TUPAC  
MAKEVELI  
born: 1971, died: 1996???

# my brother

Although they had no kin or blood relation, there would have been no 2Pac without **SHOCK-G**. More well-known to the masses as his alter ego Humpty Hump, the leader of Digital Underground remembers his fiery protégé.

WORDS BENJAMIN MEADOWS-INGRAM

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**"Pac was always a thug. He just didn't think to put it in his music yet. Nobody did, 'cause N.W.A hadn't happened yet. He'd put positive s#\*t in his songs, and then be a nigga in the streets. But once he saw that being a nigga in the recording booth worked as well, he incorporated that into his style."**

As the mastermind behind the influential Oakland collective Digital Underground, Shock-G (born Gregory Jacobs in New York in 1963) provided a P-Funked-out, party-time alternative for a hip-hop era otherwise defined by the political angst of Public Enemy, KRS-One and N.W.A. But, as Shock is the first to admit, DU's larger legacy stems just as much from introducing the world to Tupac Shakur.

Referred by DU's manager Atron Gregory, an 18-year-old Tupac dropped by Oakland's Starlight Studios for an

impromptu audition in 1989. Impressed, Shock offered 'Pac a job the following year when the group went out as part of Public Enemy's Fear Of A Black Planet Tour. Officially hired as a roadie and a dancer, 'Pac earned a chance to freestyle during each night's set, and made his first recorded appearance on DU's playful 1991 hit, "Same Song." Shock would go on to produce three tracks ("Rebel of the Underground," "Solja's Story" and "Tha Lunatic") on 'Pac's solo debut, *2Pacalypse Now* (1992), as well as his

breakout single "I Get Around" in 1993, and "So Many Tears" in 1995.

Although they grew apart over the years, the foundation of their personal and professional relationship stayed strong. At the time of 'Pac's death in 1996, Shock was working as his musical director, constructing a show for his upcoming tour. Says Shock: "Way beyond Digital Underground, 'Pac would always shout us out in interviews and give us props on his albums. Even though his thing was bigger than what we were doing, he never forgot and he never dissed."

**XXL: What was 2Pac like when you first met him?**

I was in the studio, mixing down *Sex Packets*. He came in real businesslike, like, "Yo, are you Shock-G? Wassup, I'm Tupac. You want me to spit right now?" And I could just feel 'Pac's energy, feel him wanting to do this. Some people come in and they're a little nervous, they wanna hang out first, but 'Pac wanted to get right to it. So I took him to the piano room and he did one looking at me fierce, eye to eye. "You wanna hear another?"... He didn't have that "2Pac" style yet, though. He was a Chuck D-head. The first rhyme he spit was MC-ish, but it was a pro-Black political rap, edu-



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ational and full of struggle. Most of his first demo was Public Enemy-ish, X-Clan-ish. I really thought he was hot, because at the time I was living in Oakland, and I couldn't understand most of the local cats. Most of them rhymed country and slow and that wasn't hot yet. 'Pac rhymed articulate. He didn't sound square, but he sounded clear.

Diction was different then. All the cats that were considered hot—KRS-One, Rakim, Craig G—spoke good, articulate English. But he always sounded how you're supposed to sound that year, so when the West and South hit hip-hop, and it started to sound like N.W.A, Cube and Scarface, he sounded like them niggas.

It was still political, but in a different way. Like, "Fuck speaking the Queen's English." That was part of the pro-African American, pro-poor, pro-have nothing thing. 'Pac was always a thug. He just didn't think to put it in his music yet. Nobody did, 'cause N.W.A hadn't happened yet. He'd put positive shit in his songs, and then be a nigga in the streets. But once he saw that being a nigga in the recording booth worked as well, he incorporated that into his style.

**What was he like on tour?**

He knew that was the opportunity for him, and every chance he got to rhyme, he rhymed. When it was his turn to rhyme on stage, instead of rhyming to the audience, he'd be rhyming to the backstage, making sure Ice Cube and Chuck D heard him. 'Pac's flow was average, but his lyrics were incredible, and he didn't waste words. You

could feel he really meant what he said. One time 'Pac came busting into our dressing room, like, "Yo, guess what! Chuck D just told me I got flows. Chuck D! Whoooo!" Then he'd run out the room and tell the next person.

**What was 'Pac like around women?**

I knew he was a star, 'cause even when he was the unknown new guy, he would bury as many chicks or more than me and Money-B—and we were video stars. When the girls came to the room, they sweated 'Pac, just because of his demeanor, and the way he was walking and talking. Sometimes he'd unzip in the dressing room and hit a bitch before we even got to the hotel. But he was tactless. A lot of us would shake girls after we had sex with them, but his tact was bad. On the surface he'd be mean like, "Yo, why is this bitch still here?" But deep down he was scared, like he didn't know what to do with the chick. Looking back, it's clear that he was worried that she might find something in him that she wouldn't like.

**What was 'Pac's creative process like in the studio?**

He showed up late and left early. I'd spend eight hours on his song, and he'd be there for 40 minutes. He'd get pissed if you asked him to do [his vocals] again. That's the way it was, "You straight? If you need me, holla." Then he'd go buy some weed, meet this chick, whatever he had to do... He was always high. I never really saw him sober, 'cause if he was sober he wasn't happy. And he was just always thinking and writing. He'd be on the toilet shitting, and if the phone rings, he'd go to the other room to

get the phone... And you come in, "Yo let me use the bathroom," and there's piss and shit all over the toilet. He just didn't have time for it. He felt like Martin Luther King or Malcolm X or something—he knew it could come and he had to get shit done before it came.

**What about when he wasn't working?**

Outside of his poetry book and his music, 'Pac was a weirdo. He was the worst basketball player. His shots would miss the whole backboard. But he would throw a fit, like "Yo, how come I can't play?" He wrecked every car he owned in the first week or two he had it. As far as we were concerned, he couldn't handle police well, 'cause he was always the one getting us arrested. His house was a mess. And all he ate was bar-beque wings. I knew 'Pac wasn't planning on living long, 'cause I never once saw him eat a vegetable. He might eat a French fry. I never saw him drink water. I never saw him drink nothing but beer and Hennessy. Beer, Hennessy, hot wings, Newports and weed—that was that nigga's diet.

And we all knew 'Pac had a boil-over point. His eyes would water up easy whenever he got mad, frustrated or sad, and you couldn't challenge him without it being a scene.

As big of a celebrity as 'Pac was, deep down he had that same gap foster kids have. That whole shit from relative to relative. Never feeling loved, like he didn't fit in, didn't have a foundation. He didn't feel like anybody loved him unless he was 2Pac the character. Tupac the thug was a celebrity, but Tupac Shakur, just the man, the boy at one point, felt like nobody loved him. So when

we'd step to him like, 'Pac, you need to calm down, these muthafuckas out here are trying to kill you, he'd just look at you with this confused look, like, What the fuck do you mean? I had nothing. Now I have everything. And it's from being this wild person.

**How much did you see him after he left DU? When you did see him, how had he changed?**

After he came to my wedding reception in '94, I only saw 'Pac four or five times, and you could tell he was different. His jewelry was sparkling a little more, he had more

when you rolled out with 'Pac, you knew you were rolling at maximum output. We gonna look good, roll big, floss, pull the bitches. Like, I'm about to have a great night. And only 'Pac could lead it. But there was no quiet time for 'Pac. I'd be going to bed and he'd be off to the craziest session on the craziest side of town. The shit he was getting into, I didn't have the energy for that shit. He had to be where the action was. He had to learn it, see it, tell it. And it got to the point where being around 'Pac was usually stressful.

back to the party or the video or whatever. When a cat you're trying to help looks you in the eye and says, "You don't understand, I don't give a fuck," that's that. You're still worried about him, but you're done.

**What were your feelings when he died?**  
Anybody who knew 'Pac and won't admit this is lying: When they pronounced 'Pac dead, first it was emotional, but the next day it was like, peace... This nigga survived police shootings, beat so many charges, walked on this, walked on that. It was almost like anytime the phone rang and it

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tats, and he wasn't a skinny nigga anymore. The stress in his eyes was more grown, and his eyes were redder. The bags of weed were bigger and there was Hennessy in the studio now. He's important and there's important muthafuckas standing around. Sometimes you see 'Pac, and he's with an entourage of cats, there's press all around, and he's moving. You just go up there to put something in his hand and say wassup, and he just gives you that look like, I can't stop right now, it's bigger than me.

**How did you feel about Suge? How did 'Pac change with Death Row?**

I thought it was a good thing. When I used to look at the cover of *Vibe* with 'Pac, Snoop, Dre and Suge, I was proud of that nigga. I was like, Goddamn, look at that muthafucka. He was just fooling around with us and these little labels. Now look at him. As for Suge's intentions, I can't speak on shit that I don't know. But I do know that Suge was the only one that could hold that nigga down the way he wanted to be held down.

**What about in the studio in those later years?**

In the studio, we were working. We talked about music, and he was so excited to play you his new shit. I'd try to tell him what I liked about *All Eyez On Me* and he's like, "Yeah, yeah, I did that for Suge. Listen to this..." and he put *Makaveli* on. There was too much bad shit going on to be hashing that shit. You could see it in his eyes, he didn't want to talk about it no more, and you didn't even wanna bring it up.

**What was it like hanging out with 'Pac?**

'Pac would do stupid shit, but you never did not invite that nigga. If 'Pac was there, I felt better, safer in some ways. I knew some stupid shit could go down, but



**What was your personal relationship with 'Pac like?**

Tupac was like a relative to me. When he called me to the studio, I was there. When I needed him, he was there. One time when I wasn't seeing him that much, a lot of people were asking me to talk to him. Even his mom, like, "He'll listen to you, Shock." But I felt like he wouldn't listen to me either. I was like, Yo, 'Pac, I'm on tour, here's a key to my condo. It's quiet, nobody will know that you're there. When you feel this is too much, here's a spot you can go hide out, watch *The Jeffersons* and just chill. He's like, "But I gotta go to Europe tomorrow." I'm like, Man, there's two or three new hits out on you, and we're all worried about you, bro. He said, "All I've ever wanted to do was to make a record and make a movie and I've done that, and now I can't stop." I was like, blah, blah, blah... "But, Shock, you don't understand. I don't give a fuck." And he rushed

was news about 'Pac, it was like, "Oh really? 'Pac's OK? OK." And when you hung up the phone you went back to what you were doing, like, That's just 'Pac. You knew he was searching for something he couldn't find, and he found it in death. When he was alive, he wasn't happy. A Black man, he grew up without a father, raised in the hood, left out of the whole social system, got fronted on by police who have the right to kill us without reason. 'Pac didn't like that shit to the point where he couldn't sleep at night, and he hurt so much when he was alive that it hurt you to know him.

I grew up hearing about Huey Newton and Malcolm X, Kennedy, Gandhi, Jesus, Bob Marley and all those cats, but I had nothing to do with it. I feel blessed and fortunate to be connected to his career in any way. 'Cause 'Pac would have happened no matter who he came through. It was just luck that he came through Digital. ●

# 2PAC: *All Eyez On Me*

about, "What's the name of the track?" Getting at me about the stuff. So I told him, "We ain't hard to find." He said, "Well, that's the name of the song." So everybody started writing... I'm sitting here with my little paper, and I asked him, "Are you sure you want me on this track, man? Come on, man, you're doing your thing, you're on a whole other page, right? A whole other level. Multiplatinum artist want me on there, D-Shot from the Bay?" He said, "Man, get on this damn song and shut up." So I started writing my part, and before I even put the pen to the paper, this cat already had a whole verse! Me and 40 were looking at each other like, *Damn!* There's nobody on this planet I know can sit there and write a rap in five minutes. He had like two verses, 15-measure verses, done. He wasn't no joke with writing. Seemed like he was a big ol' bank of information, and all he had to do was just get a subject and just put the pen to it, and he had it. He'd keep at least a half-ounce in his hand as he walked around the studio, smoking on a

blunt. And I'm still trying to figure out, how could the man be on weed and still think as he thought and write as fast as he wrote?

**B-LEGIT:** He was a real cat. He had a fetish for street niggas. He didn't want to meet the corporate dudes. He wanted to hang around the street niggas. In other words, the cats that was in his click was known drug dealers. He had a fetish for street niggas. The cats who were managing him at the time were drug dealers, and those were the cats that was holding him down. That's what he grew up around, and when he caught himself making it and doing his thing, those were the cats he brought up with him. **S-E:** This is the story that I'ma tell everybody: I was laying on the floor, 'cause when I rap—me, B-Legit and all of us—when we rap, we lay on the floor and write on our stomachs. That's just like a ritual. That's just what we do. We've been doing it ever since we've been rapping. So we get our little drink, and we lay on the floor... Everybody, we down there. 'Pac... When I laid on the

floor, I had two pistols. And I put them down on the floor... It wasn't for him, it was just we was looking with a whole other side of town at the time. We had beef with another side of town. And so I put my pistols down. He looked at me, he just put two pistols down on the ground and was writing along with me. And he laid on the floor, right with me. Right beside me. All of us right there. He pulled out like, "Nigga, I'm prepared, right with you." Some real shit. I shit you not.

**RICHIE RICH:** E-40, D-Shot, B-Legit—we stayed in there the whole day. There was this light-skinned chick there who was real hot. I thought she was with 'Pac because of the way they interacted, but she was Johnny J's wife. Johnny J produced a lot of 'Pac's radio-playable shit.

For me, the most memorable part was just seeing all of the niggas that was in there. To see Suge walk in there and interact with 'Pac. The way the studio was run. Quik was in one room making beats for 'Pac. It was like everybody was in there working. 2Pac had everything at his fingertips. If he didn't like a beat, someone would come in and bring him a hotter one. The shit was hooked up and organized. They checked you for weapons at the door. It makes it a lot easier to work when you're a rapper.

## **13** "Heaven Ain't Hard 2 Find"

Background Vocals by Danny Boy

Produced by QDD

**DANNY BOY:** You might hear 'Pac shit-talking. But I think as an artist he was really feeling where he was at the time, and how much he was enjoying life and the people he was around and doing what he needed to do. He was doing it. He was living the life that he always wanted. He was seeing things that he'd never seen. Suge was spoiling him. He was happy with the situation. He enjoyed Suge. Him and Suge enjoyed each other as friends. 'Pac was like a little brother to him, and I think he really appreciated what Suge had done for him and how he had reached out to him.

**QDD:** The first time we actually hooked up was through my sister Kidada. My sister was engaged to 'Pac at the time. He had kind of kept it a secret, so nobody really knew... The thing about 2Pac was that he had made some comments about our family in the past, and he had been rolling around LA with different sets of people. So every person had a different story. Some cats were saying that he was reckless, and other people were saying that he was mad cool. I was kind of confused about it... So it was like, "Let me just meet him and see how he is." And he was dope. As soon as I stepped in the studio, it felt like I had known him for a long time. Creatively, we clicked the first second. He was like, "Here's some Alizé and Hennessy, here's some weed... what do you want?" He was a warm guy and funny as heck.

But some things did go down in the studio [laughs]. The first time we did the session, I was late because it was raining. I was just trying to show up on time and be there. I had already heard about him and how he treated producers. If you didn't have the track up in five minutes, you were out of there. I brought my shit on multitrack into the studio, and they were recorded on ADAT [Alesis Digital Audio Tape]. So the engineer was supposed to rent the ADAT so we would be ready to go, but he had forgotten. 'Pac was like, "Alright, here's QD. Where's the ADAT?" The engineer started inching his way to the door, ready to jet out the door. So the first thing I see is 'Pac kind of smacking up the engineer a little bit. Not hard, but just enough to humiliate him. That was crazy. But as soon as I walked into the room, I knew it was some historical shit. Time was standing still. ♦