
THE AUG DIGEST

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I Remember 2PAC

By M. Frank Weaver

I went out and bought my first (that's right!) CD the day after Tupac Shakur's death. I exhumed my not-another-dead brother essay pen in honor of black America's native son: a simple product of this environment. 2 Pac's *all eyez on me* prompted me to pen this last and final essay in the remembrance of being young, black and male in America.

All eyez on me is Tupac's piece de resistance: self-reflective, introspective and prophetic. I asked myself, "How was Tupac able to be so clairvoyant on these tracks as well as in last year's VIBE magazine interview? He initiated the interview by stating it was going to be his last. In the beginning of a recording in his early career Tupac laments, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Prophetic yet forewarning as the old testament prophets, Tupac's appeal to Xers gives us revelations into the daily interactions - positive and negative - of the 90's decade young black man.

Depicting words:

Loud. Rapacious. Rambunctious. Upset. Explosive. Loose-lipped. Embittered. Disrespectful. Combative. Belligerent. Irate. Selfish. Daring. Brash.

And others:

Talented. Proud. Conscious. Mutable. Clairvoyant. Intuitive. Creative. Cautious. Thoughtful. Provocative. Assured. Understanding. Existential.

Yeah, Tupac, you like other young black men are all of those and more. But you are also very much misunderstood in your actions. This society hears your message and ignores it. Your lone cry in the wilderness predicts America's head-on collision with its past

injustices. Unfortunately, young brothers are caught up in America's date with destiny as scapegoats and finger-pointee. Tupac, you tell America that young black men deal with the hand dealt to them: single parent or both parents; gangs or Jack and Jill; projects or suburbs; drop-out or tracked education; unemployment or husslin', and designer or generic gear. Our people listen to that message in your prose and in your verse. Your drum continues to beat, to call and to beckon.

Justly, I pour out a lil' licka for you. This I do in remembrance of young brothers whose lives have come to abrupt endings. The same African tradition of pouring libation exhibited in another decade reflecting young black manhood via Cooley High. So from the 1890's lion who wrote history to yourself, the 1990's edition of *Black America's* manchild in the promised land, black male youthfulness have and always will be society's fall guy. Similar to the untimely deaths of Marvin, Jimi, Otis, Yardbird and others, you stated the message of being young and black very well.

One day in the not-so-far-away future when my teenage son will be going through a difficult rite of passage, I will play *all eyez on me* on a dusty anachronistic CD player. Like you, Tupac, I will reference those black male griots of the old testament and tell that young black man, "Nothing new is under the sun."

Thank you for drumming the message in the music, Brother Shakur. As my pen once again finds a resting place in my roll top desk, may you too rest in eternal peace. Heaven ain't hard 2 find. Ashe.'
