

## Suge Knight Hip Hop 'Boogie Man' or Rap Innovator

Written by Robert ID4448  
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With the recent sale of Death Row Records, all the nay slayers have had their say and most of the hip hop community has chimed in on the recent events surrounding hip hop entrepreneur, rap mogul and the founder of Death Row Records; Marion 'Suge' Knight.

Some are even saying he is out of the game now and the sale of the Death Row Records catalog puts an end to the 'Suge' Knight era in hip hop. Set aside all the unsubstantiated rumors and unfounded accusations made towards him, and Marion 'Suge' Knight's performance in hip hop music speaks for itself.

Seems that the 'boogie man' of hip hop culture has never, and I suppose will never be noticed for his contributions and accomplishments in the hip hop, rap and gangsta rap world; mainly because the 'mainstream' press and some so called hip hop and rap web sites who like to focus on anything negative and very seldom look at the accomplishments of those in hip hop culture.

Coming out of Compton, California and then attending UNLV (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) where he played football. Marion 'Suge' Knight also played for a short time with the Los Angeles Rams until an injury sidelined him; Suge Knight was always a 'stand out' type person, he always had a business approach to everything.

Later he was a bodyguard for many celebrities; Bobby Brown was one that 'Suge' Knight body guarded for. As he moved among the 'people' he listened to what was being said and he watched how things were done and with his business mind, he came up with his own plan, a way for him to get ahead.

Funky Enough Records was Suge Knight's first label. Then came Future Shock Records and finally Death Row Records. With his business knowledge and street knowledge Marion Knight set out to make his mark not only in hip hop but in the music industry with Death Row Records.

He gave artist who were going un-noticed a chance to prove themselves. Among the stable of artists that he amassed came some of the greatest names in hip hop, rap and gangsta rap.

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Hip hop notables such as Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre, Kurupt, Daz Dillinger and the Dogg Pound came out of Suge Knight's vision of what the streets wanted; and he was right.

Also out of the Death Row camp came artists like Danny Boy, Nate Dogg, DOC, RBX, The Lady of Rage, Michel'le, Bow Wow, DJ Quik, J-Flexx, Sam Sneed, Mark Morrison, MC Hammer, Tha Realst, Crooked I, O.F.T.B., Eastwood, and Gina Longo. Lisa 'Left Eye' Lopez, of the hip hop / pop group TLC was also signed to Knight's Death Row Records and working on an album when she died in an automobile accident.

Among the artists coming to Death Row Records was Tupac Shakur (2Pac). On Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> 1995 Marion 'Suge' Knight and the then incarcerated Tupac Shakur (2Pac) signed what has become to be known as the \*Danamora Agreement; which got 2Pac out of jail and took him to Death Row Records under contract.

Contrary to reports that Marion 'Suge' Knight put up the bail money to get Tupac released from Danamora Prison, 'Suge' Knight merely brokered the deal. "The bail" that was put up was to get Tupac out of Danamora Prison until his appeal was heard. Here is how the monies were raised:

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 (2Pac).

During the short period between Tupac's release from Danamora Prison and his death, less than a year later, Tupac recorded three full CD's ( All Eyez on Me counted as 2 and the Makaveli album was the 3<sup>rd</sup>) and approximately 152 other tracks which have not yet been released.

Like any young man in business Marion 'Suge' Knight made some mistakes along the way; both business and personal. Much is always said of his run ins with law enforcement (like no one else in hip hop and rap has had those troubles). But the persona of being 'hip hop's boogie man' is far from the man Marion 'Suge' Knight has proven himself to be. One thing was certain Marion 'Suge' Knight took care of business, the best he knew how to. Think about that when you listen to a back in the day track from Dre, or Snoop or even 2Pac. Without Marion 'Suge'

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Knight we possibly would not have some of those tracks to bounce to.

Recently we have seen Death Row Records sold due to bankruptcy and the catalog of hits and would be hits are in different hands other than Suge's. What this means to hip hop only time will tell but one thing is for sure Marion 'Suge' Knight is still a force to be reckoned with in the music industry.

So for everyone who is counting Marion 'Suge' Knight out of the game, he is a proven commodity not only in hip hop, rap and gangsta rap but in the music industry, so I wouldn't count him out yet. We should look at the current situation as the beginning of another Chapter for Marion 'Suge' Knight.

\*Read the full 1995 "Danamora Agreement" at <http://www.ThugLifeArmy.com> - <http://www.thuglifearmy.com/news/?id=604>