

Cedric Muhammad Remembering Hip Hop Artist Biggie

Written by Cedric Muhammad ID3412
Friday, 09 March 2007 00:29 -

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On the morning of Sunday March 9, 1997, as usual, I entered a Muslim-owned restaurant in Harlem to pick up a cup of coffee. While I was at the counter, I looked up at the TV monitor, which, at the time was tuned to the New York One News Channel. On the screen, the video for the Total remix of "Can't You See", which featured Puffy and the Notorious B.I.G., was playing. At the bottom of the screen was the headline, "RAPPER KILLED".

I did a double take as the cashier looked at me and then up at the screen. My first sad thought, because of the clip in the video they were playing, was that Puffy may have been dead, but the commentator said that it was the Notorious B.I.G. The cashier shook her head and confirmed that it was Biggie and that she had just found out about it. I left the restaurant went to my car and just cried.

I first met Biggie in 1995 in the offices of Bad Boy Entertainment where I was doing some consulting work. My first reaction, when we met in person, was that he really wasn't as heavy or "big" as I thought (smile). It must have been those TV pounds that fooled me.

The last time that I would see him was at his memorable platinum album party at the Palladium in NYC.

I will always remember that at the party, they played a video tape and tribute to Biggie which included excerpts of interviews, given just for that night, from a variety of artists and celebrities speaking about Biggie's album and its success. I was moved to see and hear the glowing words that KRS-One had for Biggie and his album.

I first heard about Biggie from the incredible street buzz he was generating in 1993 and 1994. I especially remember how a few of my friends, who were Hip-Hop concert promoters, were marveling at Biggie's performance at a concert with Tupac (2Pac) in Trifalga (sp?) Square in New York. Even though Tupac was the headliner, they tell me, that Biggie stole the show.

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To this day the tapes of Biggie's performance that night are legendary.

The thing about Biggie that many people appreciate was his lyrical flow. As a few of my friends would always say, "Biggie never had a bad verse". And while I never bought into the hype that Biggie was the greatest rapper of all-time, he certainly was one of a handful of the greatest, with maybe, in my opinion, the tightest end-rhymes in Hip-Hop history.

While there are so many Biggie memories that we all have, the one that I remember the most points to the tremendous loss that all of us in Hip-hop felt, in one way or another. It deals with the creativity and evolution of Biggie, as an artist, that we never saw.

I remember in early 1997, while I was general manager for Wu-tang, talking to Puffy about getting Method Man and Biggie together to do a song. Puffy had told me that Biggie had told him about how he and Meth were talking about doing a follow-up to their 1994 classic, "The What? Puffy told me that both of them were thinking about calling it "The Who?" But for a variety of reasons the two never made the follow-up.

One can only imagine what it would have sounded like.

The safe money, says that it too, would have been a Hip-Hop classic.

But, of course, the real ultimate loss of Biggie is that we lost a human being who was a son, brother, friend and father who meant so much to so many people, personally. We can always play the music that he left behind, but we can never bring Christopher Wallace back, as much as we all may want to.

But we can all be content with studying the beauty of his life, weigh the good and not-so good and the near-perfection of his talent that he so generously gave to the world. What a wonderful lesson his life provides for us all.

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Biggie, without a doubt, has taught us more in death than he did in life.

As it is written in Hebrews 9:16-17

16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

May Biggie rest in peace and may God comfort his family, friends and loved ones.

Cedric Muhammad

*This article was originally published by Cedric Muhammad: Remembering Biggie (March 9, 2001). It is re-posted on The Black Electorate today 3-9-07 in remembrance of the death of Biggie.

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