

A Fans View of the Legacy

Written by Robert ID543

Friday, 10 December 2004 07:41 -

Just today the The Hartford Courant had an article that dealt with the late rapper Tupac Shakurs upcoming album and how estates of other deceased stars are handled. While doing research for his article John Jurgensen staff writer for The Hartford Courant made contact with different people and fans to get a good rounded approach to his article.

Robert, who is the Site Founder / Chief Editor of www.ThugLifeArmy.com was contacted by John Jurgensen for his input to this article. Giving the hip hop fan aspect of Tupac's upcoming album and legacy Robert was asked many questions. The limits of space and content made a lot of his comments and answers to the questions posed to him by John Jurgensen unusable in Mr. Jurgensen's article.

We asked and obtained permission from John Jurgensen to post the question session he had with Robert. The following is the Q&A that took place via phone on 12-06-04.

I would like to thank John Jurgensen and [The Hartford Courant](#) for asking me to be part of this, and also for his permission to print this Q&A. See the article in question [HERE](#)

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John Jurgensen – How you doing?

Robert – Pretty good sir.

John Jurgensen – So how long have you been doing this?

Robert – For around 4 yrs. Been writing on the web for 4 yrs.

John Jurgensen – So how did you get into that kind of thing? Is it you sorta start start with fans sites and that kind of thing; and get hooked into it as you go?

Robert – Well no, first I started on message boards and forums. The site that I did like a lot, their boards were slow, the news was slow ; so I contacted the owner . I talked him into giving me a shot, he gave me my shot and things just went from there. And then I started getting known around, interviews are getting easier to get, people are getting easier to contact. It all came about that way. Then I opened my site ThugLifeArmy.com as more or less a Tupac fan

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site to start off. But it's grown into something more than I ever thought it would.

John Jurgensen – When did that site start?

Robert – It started about a year and a half, two years ago.

John Jurgensen – So you started mostly because you are a big fan yourself?

Robert – Well I am a rap fan altogether. I mean like rap and hip hop, but Tupac in particular because he has a lot of message in his music ya know. He is not like a lot of today's rappers. And that's why I think the legacy is going wrong because their mixing today's rap with his rap. Like even on the new cd coming out, they have twisted things to make it sound like Tupac is saying things that he is really not saying. And ya know that is wrong. I don't understand where their taking this to ya know. Like they are trying to build the Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Arts in Ga.. They are saying that the money that is made on these albums is, part of it is going for that. Now I understand that Tupac has charities that are still under his name. Like I think he still has the inner city baseball league in LA that his estate still handles, but – like they're selling bricks for this Arts Center. They are one hundred dollars and a thousand dollars. Now where is all this money at that these albums are generating? Plus if you look on – awhile back I did an article on where the money is going because Tupac's estate was listed as being back taxes like 58 thousand dollars (really this is \$85,260, according to On the Net:

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CyberShame:

<http://www.rev.state.la.us/sections/cybershame>

and Debtor's Corner:

<http://www.sctax.org/delinquent/delinquent.shtml>

). Then he (Tupac) makes Forbes Magazine 2 months later says he made 6 million dollars the year before.

John Jurgensen – Right.

Robert – Then they have this Makaveli Branded. Well Makaveli Branded if you're a web site owner, they expect you to give (if you have a Tupac site), advertising to them. They won't pay for advertising. And then when you say no you can't do that because you got bills to make to; well then your against the legacy of Tupac.

John Jurgensen – So is that also run by his mom, that company, or someone else?

Robert – Well when they say that these companies are run by Afeni, I think that there is a 'minder'.

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John Jurgensen – Right, right.

Robert – I think that someone is 'minding' his business and just pointing her in directions. Like the thing with Eminem on this new album. As soon as the word hit that Eminem was producing on that album there was a petition web site where a petition was put out immediately by Tupac fans to leave Tupac's music alone. And there is over 8 thousand signatures on there right now. (<http://www.petitiononline.com/2pacogs/petition.html>).

John Jurgensen – Do you know who was responsible for that petition? Who came up with that?

Robert – Not off hand but I can send it to you.

John Jurgensen – Ok. (and this info was sent to him – The [Release 2Pac's Music in its Original Form](#) Petition to Amaru Records was created by and written by Zarik Khan (zfwrestling@yahoo.com).

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Robert – But 8 thousand fans signed it and it seems the only people that are really happy with the new album, and the people that they put on the new album are the ‘newer’ generation of hip hoppers, ya know? The ones who can relate to Eminem or G-Unit and those folks instead a. I mean Tupac is an icon. Why don’t you use icon producers like Hurt M Badd, Johnny J people that worked with him, DJ Quik. People that really knew what Pac’s music was about. Because like there is even one song where they twisted to sound like Pac says something about G-Unit (John – Yeah.)which there is no way he could have said that.

John Jurgensen – Right this is like a decade , almost a decade after he died of course he isn’t going to be talking about them.

Robert – So you don’t know - If they twisted that, what else have they twisted?

John Jurgensen – Right.

Robert – See that’s part of Pac’s music is the lyrics. It’s just not the beat and the rhythm , it’s the lyrics of the music. Umm, I mean even ya got some gangsta music when he was in ‘character’; and that’s the way I look at it: he played a character. But when he was out of character; when you look at ‘Brenda’s Got a Baby’, ‘Dear Momma’ songs like that, ya know they could teach the kids something of today. But when you put Eminem, G-Unit ya know I mean like they sing about gym shoes and clubbin’ and everything’s a party ya know? And it’s not a party out here. So I think they are just taking the legacy in the wrong direction. It’s like that with every estate that

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comes along

that carries the name of the person, seems ta be in it for the person for awhile and things seem to change to where it's more money oriented then anything.

John Jurgensen – Do you have other examples of were you think that's happened?

Robert – A, Elvis Presley, Jim Morrison of The Doors , a Bob Marley; it get to the point where I think the person is lost in the shuffle ya know. And it's not really Afeni's fault, I really can't blame her. I think that she, ..the people she has around her. And one example is like Interscope is not bumping this album. There is no big push for this album.

John Jurgensen – Yea true, I haven't heard much about it.

Robert – And it comes out next week. And usually an album push, it's two months in advance; a month at least a month in advance. (John – Yea). But see they just figure cause it's Tupac it will sell. And then they put Eminem and G-Unit on it to guarantee that it will sell to the younger people.

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John Jurgensen – That is why I'm surprised that it's not all over the place, ya know that because anything connected with those guys ; since their so hot right now, you would have that all over MTV and the radio and everything.

Robert – Well see when it came up on the web a lot of fans were talking they were going to download it anyway, even though that is stealing. And we took the position, we didn't even post nothing on it unless it was an official stream from Interscope, then we posted it. Other than that we didn't post nothing because that's stealing, the way I look at it. Well everybody else was posting it and the full album was up.

John Jurgensen – The album is out there?

Robert – Yea the album is out there. People are downloading it because they figure they don't want to give any money to Afeni because they don't know where all this money is at.

John Jurgensen – Right.

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Robert – And ya know this started in Resurrection. When the Resurrection soundtrack came out, and Eminem was on it, everybody was in an uproar about it.; but they didn't listen to anybody. Then they put this one out and it's - aw I just don't understand where they are going with it.

John Jurgensen – Yeah. So do you think though that without his (Eminem)participation with this project the album would still sell? In other words you talk about this new generation but do think that Tupac has a place in the new generation or they even care about him that much?

Robert – Oh yeah, I mean even on RapNews.net , Tupac has just reached a million hits. That's a million hits of people looking at the artist Tupac, just his profile. I mean the new generation they understand Tupac; they know where Tupac came from. And they can relate to Tupac because the problems that Tupac talked about are still prevalent in the streets today, ya know. And I mean like the gangsta part, if you understand that the gangsta part of Tupac was a 'character', he 'played' a 'character'. I mean even Tupac said don't take one part of my life and twist it and make it my life - look at the whole thing. He played a gangsta more or less but that helped him get the point across of things that were wrong in the society. And the things that he talked about that were wrong are still wrong today. That's why the young people of today can relate to Tupac.

John Jurgensen – Well what would you, if you could sit down with them and tell them what you want or what the fans would want from his legacy what would it be? I mean because these albums keep coming out, I mean do wish they would just sorta stop or do you wish they would handle it a different way?

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Robert – He has well over 200 unreleased songs, Ok if they would - and they are not ac cappella songs those songs do have beats to them. Eminem got ac cappella's to work with for what he put out on this album, but the original unreleased versions that they have, have Johnny J, Hurt M Badd

people like that ; west coast artist that actually worked with Tupac, that actually knew who Tupac was and that is what I would like to see. I would like to see everything released in its original version. Or if they are going to put out albums like this mix tape that they are putting out; and that is what it boils down to it's a expensive mix tape, then they ought to put an OG version out in the original version out to compensate, ya know put them both out together see which one sells the most. And the one that would sell the most would be the OG version.

John Jurgensen – So umm, almost handle it in a way that ya know for example the Nirvana Box Set just come out and that's all the stuff like demo's and studio rehearsals and things like that in their original form. That's what your talking about not tampered with.

Robert – Right, see Tupac has the One Nation Project out there and they are looking for it, they don't know who has it. But they're looking for it because ya know, everybody wants to see that released. I don't think they will ever find it if they keep playing with his (Tupac) music. Like who ever has it isn't going ta give it up to have it chopped up. So there is some music that we are missing out on. Ya know they use ta get on Suge Knight and say that Death Row Records was not handling finances right and everything, well I mean I don't understand where all the money is that is coming in from Makaveli Branded, from Amaru Records, I mean ya know Interscope is making theirs. And then they had a big thing that Eminem asked to be on this album, well what did he get paid? What did G-Unit get paid? What money did they make out of this? If they got so much love did they do it for free?

John Jurgensen – Yea right.

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Robert – All these artist that say they got love for Pac, why don't they all just build that Arts Center and it would be over and done with and people could enjoy it. It gets so deep that you just don't know who to believe and who not to believe anymore. But ya can believe in Tupac if they put him out there the was he was. Ya know when Death Row Records released Nu-Mixx Klazzics the producer of that got fired because that was pure junk. I mean they chopped that up so bad that you had no idea it was even Pac. And it didn't sell. And that should have showed them, if ya mess with it – it's not going to sell.

John Jurgensen – How many is this since he died, which album is this coming out, how many have been released since he died?

Robert – 7 or 8; something like that.

John Jurgensen – So you think there are more serious fans against this kind of project than there are ones for it?

Robert – Right, yea I would say there are a lot of people not happy with it. And it's not a west coast east coast thing. I don't want to turn it into nothing like that; it's not that it's just that Pac was on the west coast when most of these songs were cut. A lot of them are dropped at Death Row. He was only at Death Row for about 9 months, that was one part of his life that

a lot of fans really do believe that he knew what was going to happen to him. He knew it was

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coming sooner or later. And the messages that are in these songs, we would like to hear from him, ya know. Not from somebody; somebody else's interpretation of it. We want to hear his interpretation of it.

John Jurgensen – What do you think about in comparison you know why that Biggie, was of course ya know a rival talent and rival as far as icon status; how come there aren't as many Biggie albums, Biggie products ya know marketing : the marketing force isn't is big. Is it just because he didn't put out as much material or is it being handled differently, what do you think?

Robert – I don't think he didn't put out as much, he doesn't have as much archived material as Tupac did. Plus that is another thing, if they want to give Eminem Tupac material then give Johnny J or somebody on the west coast , give them some Biggie material and lets put some west coast beats to it ya know. But they won't do that. That is an interesting that you brought up because not long ago P Diddy did put out a Notorious Big album, and it sold but it was remakes of songs that where in there original version and I think a few were added to. But he don't have the archived material like Tupac does. Cause Tupac worked with everybody. Tupac would drop with people just to drop with them to help them out. Cause they knew if Tupac were on their album ya know. Like when he got shot in New York, he wasn't working on his album he stopped to drop something for someone else. So I mean like that's the way he was. There is a lot of Tupac out there and almost everybody gots some. Quincy Jones the 3rd has some I think, Daz Dillinger says he has some, Death Row has some, Afeni's got some.

John Jurgensen – But are they aloud to do anything with it?

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Robert – If they own it they can. Death Row what they have they can do , I think that's finally settled , they can deal with what they got: I think Afeni has to give the final approval.

John Jurgensen – So you have heard the new album I take it?

Robert – Yea.

John Jurgensen – What do you think of it? Other than, I mean you kinda told me about Eminem and all but what do you think of the music and what they done with it?

Robert – It's a mix tape. Ya know that's the way I look at it. I mean it's good to hear Pac again don't get me wrong, it's good to hear Pac; but you deep down you know it could be better. Like Resurrection, Runnin" (Dying To Live) like that's not a bad song, I don't want ta say that the song was horrible or anything but it just could have been better if they would have left everything alone ya know. And I think a lot of fans see it that way to.

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John Jurgensen – Alright cause he was making music in the mid 90's not making it now, ya know he was making music it was suppose to sound differently then it does now.

Robert – Right. It's like if you would take Beatle music and put today's beats to it, it wouldn't sell like it did when the Beatles made it. Cause you loose something, and even the artist that Pac had with him; like Tha Outlawz they added 'flava' to it. And when you start putting 50 Cent in there or Eminem in there or Elton John in there, you change the 'flava' of it. Ya know they say Elton John; they picked him because Tupac liked Elton John. Well just because he liked him, he (Tupac) liked Frank Sinatra , so are we going to look for a Frank Sinatra and Tupac album coming out? I don't think so. I mean just cause you like somebody doesn't mean you would do a track with them.

John Jurgensen – So pretty much it is all about the marketing opportunities?

Robert – I think so. I think it's Interscope saying and trying to lead Afeni cause they want to bump their artist so hey we ought ta do this and add our artist to it, and it will sell better.

John Jurgensen – Alright Robert, well thanks a lot.

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Robert – Thank You