

Tupac is Alive!

On *Me Against the World*, the 1995 album from Tupac Shakur, the prodigious rapper foretells his death. "I'm having visions of leaving here in a hearse/ God can ya feel me?/ Take me away from all the pressure/ and all the pain/ show me some happiness again," he raps on "So Many Tears." Eighteen months later, while riding in the passenger seat under the iridescent glow of the Las Vegas strip with Marion "Suge" Knight at the wheel, Tupac was gunned down and mortally wounded. Or was he?

Here's how his death supposedly went down. Just past 11 p.m. on September 7, 1996, at the intersection of Flamingo Road and Koval Lane (then just a few steps from the Maxim Hotel), Tupac and Knight were idle at a red light when a white Cadillac rolled up to the passenger side and opened fire. Tupac, whose career had been on a steep ascent since getting out of prison the year before, was hit four times; one bullet critically punctured his lung. Knight, for the most part, was unharmed.

A week later, on September 13, while on life-support in the critical care unit at the University Medical Center of Southern Nevada, the 25-year-old rap phenomenon died from internal bleeding.

The drive-by shooting was reported to be gang-related, spurred by a physical altercation involving Tupac, Knight, and Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson, a Crip gang affiliate from Compton, the night of September 7. (A 2011 investigation by the FBI showed several threats were also made on the rapper's life by the Jewish Defense League).

Dr. Ed Brown, the Clark County coroner investigator, determined Tupac's death a homicide. "I found no apparent life signs," he detailed in his report, "and trauma was observed to the right hand, right hip and right chest under the right arm, apparently caused from gunshots."

Tupac was pronounced dead at 4:03 p.m. on Friday, September 13, 1996.

But if the old saying is true, legends never truly die—perhaps quite literally in Tupac's case.

- 14 shots were fired, four of which hit Tupac. Knight, who is a considerably large man (around 6'4, 260 pounds) was not hit once. He was said to have sustained minimal injuries from bullet fragments, but no serious wounds were recorded. Did Knight mastermind the shooting? (Believe what you will, but nobody's luck is that good.)
- Since being shot at Quad Recording Studios on November 30, 1994, Pac wore a bullet-proof vest almost everywhere. It seems odd, on such a high profile night, that he'd forego protection.
- The BMW from the photo does not match the BMW from the police investigation video.

- The shooters were never found. As one former Outlawz member noted in a 2014 National Geographic documentary that explored Tupac's still unsolved murder, "This is America. We found Bin Laden." So why has it been so difficult to find the men who shot Tupac? What are the police not telling us?
- The streets of Las Vegas are typically jam-packed—with an assortment of cars, people, and entertainers trying to earn a living. Tupac was shot two hours after the Mike Tyson/Bruce Seldon fight, and the streets, the strip especially, were likely congested with traffic that night. And yet, nobody spotted the white Cadillac?
- The official coroner's report lists Tupac as 72 inches tall (6 feet) and 215 pounds. But the rapper's driver's license identifies him as 5'10 and 168 pounds.
- Afeni Shakur (Tupac's mother) and medical staff are the only people who saw the rapper once he was admitted into the hospital. Years later, in a video interview, Afeni says, "In the end, he chose to leave quietly." What did she mean by "leave quietly"? Was she implying Tupac had a hand in his removal from the spotlight?
- Tupac was reportedly cremated, and the man who cremated him retired after doing so. He has not been seen since, which, at the very least, is a little suspicious.
- Since Tupac's death, seven albums have been released under his name, more than when he was alive. (All the tracks were said to be recorded before his death, but that seems questionable at best.)

So, is Tupac really dead?

How does the writer persuade us that Tupac is still alive? (10)

Step 1: Annotate any persuasive techniques you can see (opinion, facts, statistics, rhetorical questions). You can also annotate any examples of a persuasive tone – for example – ‘a little suspicious’.

Step 2: Think about why these techniques are persuasive. What effect do they have on the reader?

Step 3: Are there any specific words that are persuasive? Why are they persuasive?

Step 4: Look at the grid below to help you plan an answer.

Step 5: try to write three PEE paragraphs, remembering to zoom in on language where possible.

Point	Evidence	Explain	Zoom in
The writer uses opinion.	‘Here’s how his death supposedly went down.’	The writer is suggesting that what we know about his death could be false.	The word ‘supposedly’ suggests that people have been lied to and that there is another version of events