

## COMMENTARY

# It's time to grab Tupac's mike

By Alonza Robertson

Many words have been written, and even more said, after the news last week that Tupac Shakur had died. It was an eerie

## Shakur

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happen with a tragedy like this. I don't think it's a trend that will continue."

Because Death Row Records - like many music companies - is privately owned, it would be hard to determine the impact of Shakur's death on the company, the A. G. Edwards and Associates broker said.

Death Row Records has reported more than \$125 million in earnings during the past four years. It's not clear how much of that was raked in by *All Eyez on Me*, Shakur's only project on the label, which has already sold more than 5 million copies.

What is clear is that his death has created a new martyr, the first for hip hop music, Hinds said.

"Hip hop has never had a figure like Tupac Shakur, so it (seem) inevitable that he become a martyr," he said. "As a matter of fact, I've already seen the martyrization begin.

"In New York, of all place,

thought to comprehend; hip hop's reigning bad boy had actually succumbed to the same "guns-flashy cars-and big booty-women" rhetoric in reality, that

people have put up murals of him," the editor said hinting at the long-standing hostilities between Shakur and the New York-based Bad Boy Entertainment.

Local fans have also honored Shakur's life. Crowds of fans gathered around the city last Friday to mark the rapper's death.

At UMC where Shakur died at 4:03 p.m. Friday, people congregated outside the trauma center.

Saturday, KVBC Channel 3 TV, reported that more than 180 people attended a candlelight vigil honoring the slain artist. Another impromptu vigil was held at the site of the shooting at Koval Lane and Flamingo Road.

KCEP music director Kevin "Special K." Spellman reports a 60 to 70 percent increase in the number of requests for Shakur's music since he was first shot, but the music is not played that often.

"Most of (the callers) want to

he rapped about in his top-selling albums and widely-watched videos.

How could this be?

For the past several years,

send their regards out to the family," Spellman said. "They request inspirational song's like 'Dear Mama' and 'Keep Your Head Up'.

"A lot of them are (also) attacking how (his murder) has been portrayed in the media," he said referring to a local newspaper columnist's headline that called the shooting "...a slug in a thug."

Hinds believes the legacy of Shakur's turbulent life and violent death will be one of regret, but not of the artist's violent past which has been widely covered by mainstream media.

"There was a sense of potential and the sense of evolution (surrounding Shakur) that never took place," Hinds said.

He looked like he was turning a corner, Hinds said, but now "we'll never know."

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police report no new information in the on-going murder investigation.

he'd faced a growing lists of troubles off the stage. His past included numerous arrests on charges of assault, a shooting at two off-duty policemen, a previous robbery where he was shot and there was even that sexual battery conviction in New York from which he was free on appeal.

Even then, he served several months in prison before the appeal was granted and Death Row Records CEO Suge Knight posted his bail. But each time, it seemed Tupac emerged from his mess only to unveil his next layer of thought, braggadoccio and even charisma on a new CD, an MTV interview or even at the movies where he was a scene stealer with his realistic portrayals, particularly in Ernest Dickerson's "Juice."

Surely Tupac would pull through this latest shooting episode in the entertainment capital of the world.

His image was that of a tough, angry young man who continually beat the odds, and then, with no shame, thumbed his nose at the system, a tendency cheered by his legions of young fans who related (no matter whether it was morally right or wrong) to his feelings of

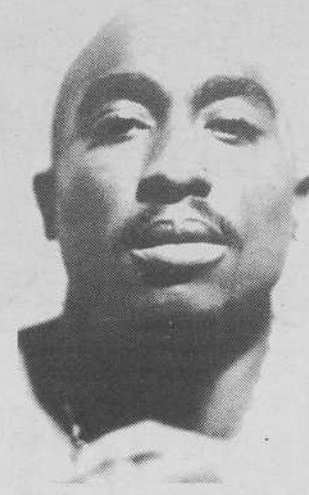
being oppressed by THE MAN.

Nevermind he'd been shot four times, had lost a lung and was breathing only with the help of a respirator. I believed. Deep down inside I really believed he would survive. Maybe, I too, had been secretly cheering his successes.

I'd first encountered Tupac Shakur in 1990 when I was a summer intern for the San Francisco Chronicle writing concert reviews and he was a member of the Oakland-based Digital Underground, the group led by fake nose-wearing Shock G and famous for the "Humpty Dance" song. His talent, minus the Babylonian image, was noticeable then.

Then it was the rap songs he wrote addressing everyday problems of teen pregnancy, single parenthood, drugs, violence, getting paid and then preparing for death. They seemed to always tell really vivid stories and the music, the grooves backing up the words, were usually just as good.

Then how about that line from John Singleton's "Poetic Justice" when he put the pristine Janet Jackson character in her place, reminding her she had a monthly cycle just like any other woman,



TUPAC SHAKUR

so there was no need to act uppity towards him just because his nails were dirty. All that after the real Janet Jackson required Tupac to take an AIDS test before she would even agree to any of the kissing scenes in the movie.

Tupac had come a long way in the past six years, a triumph considering his mother was an imprisoned member of the Black Panthers just before his birth and later in life she'd become addicted to crack.

He seemed to represent all the bad things that befall young brothers today at the same time he was talented and used that to carve out a measurable amount of success in his chosen field.

Of course, many of you are saying "the brother didn't do jack for the community or his people,"

(See *Tupac*, Page 6)

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- Cedric Singleton - Black Market Records
- Tanya Hart - "E" Entertainment News

■ JACK THE RAPPER

## Archie

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Army 2nd Lieutenant commission in 1964.

Three years later, he graduated from the University's law school and went straight to the frontlines of the Vietnam War as an U.S. Army captain.

"Bob spent his last night in this country before Vietnam at my house. The next day I put him on the plane. I knew he would be a good soldier," O'Callaghan said. "And he was."

Archie ran a prisoner of war camp during his tour in Vietnam and was awarded several medals including the Bronze Star. He was honorably discharged in 1969.

The then 28-year-old lawyer started his legal career in the Clark County Public Defender's Office. Two years later, O'Callaghan, who was by then governor, appointed him as the executive director of the state Employment Security Depart-

ment, which made him the highest ranking black in the state, his friend said. But it was a position Archie never wanted.

Only after an 11th-hour call did Archie agree to take the position, O'Callaghan said, when he was reminded about the importance of integration in the civil rights movement.

"He never forgot where he came from," his friend said. "He was a good man to have as a friend."

In 1973, he went into private practice specializing in criminal defense work but notably taking on many civil rights cases usually with blacks, friends said.

Meanwhile the former Washington, D.C. Capitol Hill police officer served as an administrative hearing officer for the state Personnel Advisory Commission and the Taxicab Authority. He also chaired the Nevada Equal Rights

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