

430 1993-1999—Rap Goes Mainstream

HARD KNOCK LIFE (GHETTO ANTHEM)

Take the bassline out, uh-huh. Jigga (Bounce with it), uh-huh uh-huh uh-huh, yeahh. Let it bump though.

[Chorus]

It's the hard knock life (Uh-huh) for us

It's the hard knock life for us!

'Stead a treated, we get tricked

'Stead a kisses, we get kicked

It's the hard knock life!

From standin on the corners boppin to drivin some  
Of the hottest cars New York has ever seen, from droppin some  
Of the hottest verses rap has ever heard, from the dope spot  
With the smoke Glock fleein the murder scene, you know me well  
From nightmares of a lonely cell, my only hell  
But since when y'all niggas know me to fail? Fuck, naw  
Where all my niggas with the rubber grips? Bust shots  
And if you with me, Mama, rub on your tits, and whatnot  
I'm from the school of the hard knocks, we must not  
Let outsiders violate our blocks, and my plot  
Let's stick up the world and split it fifty-fifty, uh-huh  
Let's take the dough and stay real jiggy, uh-huh  
Let's sip the Cris' and get pissy-pissy, flow infinitely  
Like the memory of my nigga Biggie, baby!  
You know it's hell when I come through, the life and times  
Of Shawn Carter, nigga, Volume 2—y'all niggas get ready

[Chorus]

I flow for those dro'ed out, all my niggas  
Locked down in the ten by fo' controllin the house  
We live in hard knocks, we don't take over, we borrow blocks  
Burn 'em down and you can have it back, Daddy, I'd rather that  
I flow for chicks wishin they ain't have to strip to pay tuition  
I see your vision, Mama, I put my money

On the long shots, all my ballers that's born to clock  
Now I'ma be on top whether I perform or not  
I went from lukewarm to hot, sleepin on futons  
And cots to king size, dream machines, the green fives  
I've seen pies, let the thing between my eyes analyze life's ills  
Then I put it down type real  
I'm tight grill with the phony rappers, y'all might feel we homies  
I'm like still, y'all don't know me, shit  
I'm type real when my situation ain't improvin  
I'm tryin to murder everything movin—feel me?!

[Chorus 2x]

I don't know how to sleep, I gotta eat, stay on my toes  
Got a lot of beef, so logically, I prey on my foes  
Hustlin's still inside of me and as far as progress  
You'd be hard-pressed to find another rapper hot as me  
I gave you prophecy on my first joint and y'all all lamed out  
Didn't really appreciate it 'til the second one came out  
So I stretched the game out, X'ed your name out  
Put Jigga on top and drop albums nonstop for ya, nigga

[Chorus 2x]

RENEGADE  
(feat. Eminem)

*Jay-Z + Eminem*

[Jay-Z]

Motherfuckers say that I'm foolish, I only talk about jewels (Bling bling)  
Do you fools listen to music or do you just skim through it?  
See, I'm influenced by the ghetto you ruined  
That same dude you gave nothin, I made somethin doin  
What I do through and through and  
I give you the news with a twist; it's just his ghetto point-of-view  
The renegade, you been afraid, I penetrate  
Pop culture, bring 'em a lot closer to the block where they

Pop toasters and they live with they moms  
Got dropped roasters, from botched robberies, niggas crotched over  
Mommy's knocked up 'cause she wasn't watched over  
Knocked down by some clown, when child support knocked  
No, he's not around. Now how that sound to ya? Jot it down  
I bring it through the ghetto without ridin' round  
Hidin' down, duckin' strays from frustrated youths  
Stuck in they ways. Just read a magazine that fucked up my day  
How you rate music that thugs with nothin' relate to it?  
I help them see they way through it—not you  
Can't step in my pants, can't walk in my shoes  
Bet everything you worth you lose your tie and your shirt

[Eminem]

Since I'm in a position to talk to these kids and they listen  
I ain't no politician but I'll kick it with 'em a minute  
'Cause, see, they call me a menace and if the shoe fits, I'll wear it  
But if it don't, then y'all'll swallow the truth, grin and bear it  
Now who's the king of these rude ludicrous lucrative lyrics?  
Who could inherit the title, put the youth in hysterics?  
Usin' his music to steer it, sharin' his views and his merits  
But there's a huge interference—they're sayin' you shouldn't hear it  
Maybe it's hatred I spew, maybe it's food for the spirit  
Maybe it's beautiful music I made for you to just cherish  
But I'm debated, disputed, hated, and viewed in America  
As a motherfuckin' drug addict—like you didn't experiment?  
Now, now, that's when you start to stare at who's in the mirror  
And see yourself as a kid again and you get embarrassed  
And I got nothin' to do but make you look stupid as parents  
You fuckin' do-gooders; too bad you couldn't do good at marriage (Ha ha)  
And do you have any clue what I had to do to get here  
I don't think you do, so stay tuned and keep your ears glued to the stereo  
'Cause here we go: he's Jigga joint Jigga-chk-Jigga  
And I'm the sinister, Mr. Kiss-My-Ass, it's just the...

[Chorus 2x]

RENEGADE! Never been afraid to say  
What's on my mind at any given time of day  
'Cause I'm a RENEGADE! Never been afraid to talk  
About anything (ANYTHING) anything (ANYTHING)

[Jay-Z]

I had to hustle, my back to the wall, ashy knuckles  
Pockets filled with a lot of lint, not a cent  
Gotta vent, lot of innocent lives lost on the project bench  
Whatchu hollerin'? Gotta pay rent, bring dollars in  
By the bodega, iron under my coat, feelin' braver  
Doo-rag wrappin' my waves up, pockets full of hope  
Do not step to me; I'm awkward, I box leftier often  
My pops left me an orphan, my mama wasn't home  
Could not stress to me I wasn't grown, 'specially on nights  
I brought somethin' home to quiet the stomach rumblings  
My demeanor, thirty years my senior  
My childhood didn't mean much, only raising green up  
Raising my fingers to critics, raising my head to the sky  
B.I.G., I did it—multi before I die (Nigga)  
No lie, just know I chose my own fate  
I drove by the fork in the road and went straight

[Eminem]

See, I'm a poet to some, a regular modern-day Shakespeare  
Jesus Christ, the King of these Latter-Day Saints here  
To shatter the picture in which of that as they paint me is  
A monger of hate and Satan, a scatterbrained atheist  
But that ain't the case; see, it's a matter of taste  
We as a people decide if Shady's as bad as they say he is  
Or is he the ladder, a gateway to escape?  
Media scapegoat, who they can be mad at today  
See, it's as easy as cake, simple as whistlin' "Dixie"  
While I'm wavin' the pistol at sixty Christians against me  
Go to war with the Mormons, take a bath with the Catholics  
In holy water—no wonder they try to hold me under longer

I'ma motherfuckin spiteful, DELIGHTFUL eyeful  
 The new Ice Cube, motherfuckers HATE to like you  
 What did I do? (Huh?) I'm just a kid from the gutter  
 Makin this butter off these bloodsuckers, 'cause I'm a muh'fuckin . . .

[Chorus]

— end —

#### DECEMBER 4TH

*Shawn Carter was born December 4th. Weighing in at 10 pounds, 8 ounces, he was the last of my four children, the only one who didn't give me any pain when I gave birth to him. And that's how I knew that he was a special child.*

They say they never really miss you 'til you dead or you gone  
 So on that note I'm leaving after this song  
 So you ain't gotta feel no way about Jay, so long  
 At least let me tell you why I'm this way, hold on  
 I was conceived by Gloria Carter and Adnes Reeves  
 Who made love under the sycamore tree, which makes me  
 A more sicker MC and my mama would claim  
 At ten pounds when I was born I didn't give her no pain  
 Although through the years I gave her her fair share  
 I gave her her first real scare, I made up for birth when I got here  
 She knows my purpose was on purpose, I ain't perfect, I care  
 But I feel worthless 'cause my shirts wasn't matchin my gear  
 Now I'm just scratchin the surface 'cause what's buried under there  
 Was a kid torn apart once his pop disappeared  
 I went to school, got good grades, could behave when I wanted  
 But I had demons deep inside that would raise when confronted. Hold on

*Shawn was a very shy child growing up. He was into sports and a funny story is: At four, he taught himself how to ride a bike, a two-wheel at that. Isn't that special? But, I noticed a change in him when me and my husband broke up.*

Now all the teachers couldn't reach me and my mama couldn't beat me  
 Hard enough to match the pain of my pop not seeing me  
 So with that disdain in my membrane

Got on my pimp game, fuck the world, my defense came  
 Then DeHaven introduced me to the game  
 Spanish José introduced me to 'caine, I'm a hustler now  
 My gear is in and I'm in the in-crowd  
 And all the wavy light-skinned girls is loving me now  
 My self-esteem went through the roof, man, I got my swag  
 Got a vocal from this girl when her man got bagged  
 Plus I hit my mama with cash from a show that I had  
 Supposedly knowing nobody paid Jaz wack ass  
 I'm getting ahead of myself—by the way, I could rap  
 That came second to me moving this crack, give me a second  
 I swear I will say about my rap career  
 'Til '96 came, "Niggas, I'm here." Good-bye

*Shawn use to be in the kitchen, beating on the table and rapping and, um, until the wee hours of the morning. And then I bought him a boom box and his sisters and brothers said that he would drive them nuts. But that was my way to keep him close to me and out of trouble.*

Goodbye to the game—all the spoils, the adrenaline rush  
 Your blood boils, you in a spot knowing cops could rush  
 And you in a drop, you're so easy to touch, no two  
 Days are alike except the first and fifteenth, pretty much  
 And trust is a word you seldom hear from us  
 Hustlers, we don't sleep, we rest one eye up  
 And a drought can define a man, when the well dries up  
 You learn to work the water, without work you thirst 'til you die—yup!  
 And niggas get tied up for product and little brothers'  
 Ring fingers get cut up to show mothers they really got 'em  
 And this was the stress I lived with, 'til I decided  
 To try this rap shit for a livin, I pray I'm forgiven  
 For every bad decision I made, every sister I played  
 'Cause I'm still paranoid to this day  
 And it's nobody fault, I made the decisions I made  
 This is the life I chose or rather the life that chose me