

Surviving the Times

Nas

I was young, I was surviving the times
Waiting for my moment, I was destined to shine
Little Ray had an NSX, I was hoping I'm next
Wanting bracelets, never had a rope on my neck
Unless I was holding Taiyeh chain-Rest In Peace
Even though that night you flipped on us
You warned us If you came back and we still on the corners,
We goners, moving on to...
Move your arm in your watch To another time on the block
'Cause this 40 Side Where they say Shorty rhyme
Tragedy he used to come through all the time
I'm talking Juice Crew, not what the word define
He had a sister named Erin, for sure was fine
That was my first crush; I bought my first mic
I wrote my first verse, I was about nine
I was about mine, fantasize house-buying
Met Paul, he wore some big glasses
Him and Melquan took me where G Rap lived
I was happy, just getting some answers
I ain't even know what a record advance was
I'm seeing hoes sex in the studio bathroom
With rap dudes, thinking wow she moved me
Same girl then, right now's a groupie
Back then, she was like the star in the movie
Large jewelry and expensive Gucci
Next stop, Paid In Full posse recruits me
Knew they were some millionaires, their ropes were dookie
Eric B man looking like touch-it-he-shoot-me
You see, every time Ra didn't show
I get to record demos at attempts to blow
I wonder could they tell, how did they know
Sixteen years later, here I go

I'm with Akinyele in the street, trying to get us a deal
G Rap tried to get us to sign to Cold Chill
But Fly Ty didn't have the contract we wanted
Clark Kent just signed Das, he didn't want us
Russell said I sounded like G, the nigga fronted
Reef and Matty C offered me a little money
Shit a little funny, feel a little laughter
Rebel of Hip-Hop coming through a white rapper
My boy MC Serch nevertheless
Took me to Columbia, back then CBS
Chris Schwartz, RuffHouse, he was the best man
Now bugging because the label had just dropped Def Jam
Could you picture Russell needing a check, man
But he smart, he plotted a plan for Polygram
Life is I'll, again life's a movie
Then, the roster's: Cypress Hill, Nas, and Fugees
Before I sold records, no promotion
The rap world like, what's all this commotion
Went plat', mad bottles I'm toasting
20/20 hindsight, but how did they know then

Invincible, lyrical, miracle man, huh
But back to the matter at hand
'Cause ten years ago we all strived to be twenty-five

Some cats didn't make it alive
Dated some stars but respect their privacy
Copped mad cars, laying back in the driver's seat
Held myself down, just steering the wheel
Here I am, completed my whole record deal