



SSIC<sub>SIM</sub>

2019

BACKGROUND GUIDE

# THE DEATH OF CHRISTOPHER WALLACE



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Dear Delegates,

Our love for rap and hip hop inspired this committee. Normally, Crisis committees at SSICsim and the University of Toronto have centered around historical events or current popular culture. This year, we wanted to try something different and extend our passion for music and rap into the world of Model United Nations. Finally, we can proudly say that we have accomplished our goal of broadening U of T's MUN world into incorporating a committee that is one of a kind, and truly dynamic. The Murder of Christopher Wallace, famously known as "Biggie Smalls" or "The Notorious B.I.G.," is a crisis committee interested in exploring issues related to gang violence, systemic prejudice, and the state of the LAPD in the 90's. More than this, you are encouraged to delve deeper into what may have provoked Biggie's untimely death through the lens of your character. You will find yourself in the year 1997, shortly following the death of Biggie. This committee takes place at Biggie's label — Bad Boy Records, where you are to discuss the affairs of Biggie's music henceforward. The real focus of this committee is finding justice for Biggie in relation to his musical legacy. Moreover, there is a possibility that you may find yourself immersed in the murder case itself. If this is the case, you are encouraged to delve deeper and unpack the clues that may indicate who is responsible.

Our goal when planning this committee was to make it as fun and creative as possible. We wanted to see a committee that offered the space for delegates to be as creatively involved as possible, while simultaneously honouring rap history and the legacy of 90's hip hop. Biggie's death is considered one of the most famous unsolved murder cases in American entertainment history, and so we felt his legacy deserved to be explored. We sincerely hope you find yourselves as invested and passionate about this committee as we were while developing it, and we encourage you to take an



improvisational approach as well. This is because much of the information surrounding Biggie's murder is unknown, so you have the space to be as unique and inventive as possible. That being said, you should stick to what your character is likely to argue for or against, while maintaining an energy that leaves room for originality.

When we first began planning this committee, we never imagined it would take form. We are proud to say that SSICsim is the first to offer a committee of this nature, and therefore you will also be a part of MUN history. We are truly excited to see where you will take this committee, and we have the utmost faith and trust that you will do Biggie's spirit justice. We hope you are as prepared (as you can be) for the surprises we have in store for you throughout this crisis committee, it will be a memorable time to say the least. That being said, we will leave you some advice from the legend himself, "Learn to treat life to the best, put stress to rest."

Sincerely,

*Arpun Pannu & Karen Pannu*  
Directors, *The Death of Christopher Wallace*



## IMPORTANT NOTES

### Timeline

This committee will be taking place a year after Biggie's untimely death. Up until this point, there had been many aggravating encounters between the West and East Coast hip-hop scenes. Biggie's death represents the climax of this conflict. By 1997, both the West Coast and East Coast lost important figures from their hip-hop scenes. Committee members will consist of people from both Bad Boy Records and Death Row Records. Furthermore, there will also be members representing the LAPD, as they were responsible for much of the investigation following Biggie's death. Although this committee is based entirely on true events, ultimately this is fashioned after a meeting that did not take place. What is important to remember is that characters are limited in the information regarding the issue of Biggie's death.

Biggie's death is the topic of a lot of rap 'folklore' – as there are many differing theories on what actually happened. Much of these 'leads' came to light much later and, therefore will not be fully explored within this committee. In essence, we encourage delegates to avoid researching popular conspiracy theories regarding Biggie's death and instead focus on the facts presented within the case. Yes, finding the person who is responsible for Biggie's death is incredibly relevant to this committee - however it is not the only main topic.

With that being said, we would like to reiterate that this meeting did not actually take place and that it would have been quite unlikely for people from Bad Boy Records and Death Row Records to sit down together for a meeting. Nonetheless, we believe that despite their differences, both record labels



played a large role in carving out space for rap and hip-hop within the mainstream. We believe that both these labels and their associated music scenes had a responsibility to the future of hip-hop in the US and beyond. This is important to consider as you work through this committee.

## **TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS**

### March 1997

March 9th, 1997 was a date of historical significance for the future of hip-hop. East Coast legend, Christopher Wallace (also known as Biggie Smalls) along with Sean "Puffy" Combs, an entrepreneur responsible for the growth of the hip hop scene, were invited to attend the Soul Train Awards. The award show and much of the related parties took place in LA, specifically The Miracle Mile - a very famous LA address. The Miracle Mile was a strip of famous high rises, museums and landmark buildings. The Petersen Automotive Museum was the most notable venue, and was where many Soul Train festivities were taking place.

At the award show itself, there was a particular emphasis on the new generation of music superstars. Although the show included 60s greats, it was clear that the show was making an attempt to highlight hip hop's advent to the mainstream. Biggie was invited to represent this new generation of hip hop. Although he was not nominated for any particular category, there was no doubt that he represented the future of music. His second album, *Life After Death* was two weeks away from its highly anticipated release. His leaked track "Hypnotize" was already a huge radio hit. The song would ultimately rocket to



Number 1 on all the charts and remain a hip-hop anthem for many years to come.

### Tension at Soul Train

At the night of the award ceremony, everyone greeted Biggie and Puff with cheers. Biggie and Puff had gotten on stage to present Toni Braxton with the award for Best Female Vocalist. However, amongst these cheers there were scattered jeers and shouts of "West Side." There was tension in the room as Biggie and Puffy were the face of Bad Boy Records, the East Coast music label that had been feuding with Death Row Records, their West Coast competitors.

Tupac Shakur was the face of Death Row Records and just like Biggie, he was responsible for bringing hip hop to the mainstream. Biggie and Tupac had longstanding conflict. Before the release of Tupac's third album in November 1994, he was non-fatally shot multiple times in the lobby of a Manhattan recording studio. Tupac vehemently believed that his rap rival, Biggie Smalls, was responsible for organizing this shooting. Biggie and his team at Bad Boy records denied this claim entirely. In June 1996, Tupac released a heated diss track where he came for the entire Bad Boy team, this included the likes of Puffy, Biggie, Faith Evans and the Junior MAFIA. Tupac died in September of 1996, a year before Biggie's death. He was shot in Las Vegas outside an MGM Grand Hotel, where he was supposed to watch a Mike Tyson boxing match. Tupac died from his gunshot wounds, and his death remained an unsolved mystery.

During the Soul Train Awards, there was a special segment dedicated to Tupac and his contributions to the hip hop scene. This coupled with the fact that Tupac's East Coast rivals were present was a source of a lot of conflict and



tension within the room. As Biggie spoke, it became incredibly apparent that there was a considerable amount of tension within the audience – it was clear that Biggie and Puff Daddy were in hostile territory. The fact was that Biggie had been camping on the ‘enemy’s’ doorstep for about 4 months prior to this award show. Biggie alongside his entourage had been renting a Los Angeles studio to work on the recording of *Life After Death*. They had also gone as far as filming the music video that accompanied *Hypnotize* in various locations in downtown LA. During his time in LA, Biggie had a large posse that accompanied him everywhere. This included assorted friends from his Brooklyn neighborhood known as Junior M.A.F.I.A. Tupac’s murder was believed to have provided his East Coast counterpart, Puffy’s Bad Boy enterprise, a sharp sigh of relief. Tupac was signed to Suge Knight’s label, Death Row Records, and just like Biggie – Tupac was the crown jewel of his record label. There were many rumors regarding Tupac’s death and the possibility that Puffy was involved. Puffy denied these rumors vehemently. Regardless – whether or not Puffy was involved did not matter, the rapper’s death served as a form of provocation within the East v. West conflict.

From the moment they stepped foot into LA, Biggie was also surrounded by professional bodyguards. Puffy Combs had hired Kenn Story, owner of LA based TNT Protection Service. Another bodyguard on duty was Paul Offord, head of security of Bad Boy Records. Combs had good reason for investing in heavy protection and defense. As rap became more popular and much more mainstream, promoters and producers went to great measures to downplay the controversial rivalry between music’s West Coast and East Coast contingents. They made sure to present this rivalry as nothing more than a publicity stunt; they insisted that it was meant to sell records by creating competition. By getting rid of this aspect to rap music, producers/promoters, like Puffy Combs, were trying to make hip-hop palatable to the mainstream audience (an audience that





existed in a realm beyond this violence). This attempt to disembark from the rivalry narrative was also a way to protect the talent that was bringing companies like Bad Boy Records a lot of money.

### Vibe After Party

Biggie had surrounded himself with security because of the events surrounding the Soul Train Awards – he had many press events and interviews. His busy schedule included a Vibe Magazine Interview – which included candid information on his estranged wife, Faith Evans. The Vibe After Party was scheduled for March 9 – a day after the televised presentations - and took place at the Petersen Automotive Museum. Vibe Magazine was the voice of the new age of black artists. It pioneered coverage on rap's emergence. The party was the place to be that night, with 2,000 people crowding the museum space and another 200 outside trying to find a way in. By midnight, the fire marshals came to the conclusion that the event was dangerously overcrowded. A half hour later, the entire event was shut down. Leaving with his entourage, Biggie got into one of two GMC vehicles that had been rented for the evening. In the front seat of the car was “D-Roc”, Lil’ Cease and the Driver Gregory “G-Money” Young. Puffy was sitting in another car with his driver and 3 bodyguards. Paul Offord, their head of security, was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> vehicle trailing behind. At 12:24 AM, the streets were crowded and full of people who were leaving the event, and as a result caused major traffic. This caused Biggie’s car to come to a stop at Wilshire Blvd and Fairfax avenue – directly in front of the museum (the heart of LA’s Miracle Mile). A white Toyota Land Cruiser attempted a U-turn and tried to cut between Biggie and Offord’s vehicle, a black Impala pulled up on the right side. The driver, alone in the car, described by witness as a black male wearing a blue suit, bow tie and fade haircut. This man looked Biggie in the eye before pointing his automatic pistol and emptying it into the passenger seat of the



vehicle. Biggie was shot 4 times. The impala sped off and the land Cruiser made another U-turn and left the scene.

### The Aftermath

This committee will take place a year after Biggie's death. Biggie's death, like Tupac's death, remained unsolved. On the one-year anniversary of Biggie's death, Bad Boy records have organized to have a meeting with key members of their record label, members from Death Row Records and the LAPD. This meeting is a last resort effort at finding peace between these two labels. The goal of this committee is to set out a plan on how to move forward. Bad Boy records are especially interested in trying to find justice for Biggie. Nothing has come from the LAPD's investigation and the people from Bad Boy are incredibly skeptical. They believe that the LAPD are not doing enough and partly responsible for his death. Members from Death Row have also been invited. They are keen on clearing their name, as they vehemently claim that they are not in any way responsible for Biggie's death. In fact, some even believe that Biggie's and Tupac's deaths were related. Ultimately, this meeting is about closure and moving on. The future of hip-hop rests on this meeting.



## MAIN TOPICS

Topic 1: Who Killed Biggie?

Topic 2: The People vs. The Police

Topic 3: The Future of Rap

## CHARACTERS

**Sean “Puffy” Combs:** Puffy is the person behind Bad Boy Records. He is a musical entrepreneur who is a major player in the growing rap scene. Comb's career started as a concert promoter before breaking through with his successful label – Bad Boy Records. His label's first signing was Biggie Smalls and Biggie's success launched the company's legendary status. Puffy oversaw every aspect of Biggie's career – this included co-writing and co-producing “Hypnotize” along with other *Life After Death* hits, “Sky's The Limit: and “Mo Money Mo Problems.” The loss of Biggie had a huge effect on Puffy and his business. He is still working through how to move forward with his label. He is also particularly interested in finding justice for Biggie. He believes the LAPD are not doing a good enough job at finding Biggie's killer. He believes that Death Row needs to be looked at closely.

**Suge Knight:** Suge Knight is in charge of the West Coast's famous record label - Death Row Records. Suge, along with his record label, is responsible for much of Tupac's rise and success. However, Suge is also known as being a suspect in the



untimely death of Biggie Smalls. Some believe that he organized Biggie's death and others even believe that he's responsible of the death of Tupac as well.

**Faith Evans:** Faith Evans is a singer and songwriter hailing from the East coast. Faith Evans was the first female signed to Bad Boy records. Nine days later after meeting – they were married and in October 1996 they had a son, Christopher Jr. In the months prior to his death, Faith and Biggie were going through some marital issues. Regardless, his death was a shock for Faith. She wants to move forward, but needs closure first. She is interested in finding justice for her family.

**Albert Moretti:** Albert Moretti is a lawyer representing the LAPD. The LAPD have been perceived by the public as corrupt and untrustworthy. Bad Boy Records have helped to sustain this image, as the record label and their associated acts have made it clear that they do not trust the police force. Many executives from Bad Boy Record believe that the LAPD were involved in Biggie's shooting and that their involvement explains why they have not been able to solve it. Moretti's job is to defend the legitimacy of the LAPD. Through his work, he argues that the LAPD are an impartial party trying their best to find justice for Biggie's family.

**Charles Marshall:** Charles Marshall is the lawyer representing Death Row Records in this matter. Death Row Records has been implicated as it is believed that Biggie's death is an extension of the conflict between the two labels. He's present at this meeting to defend Death Row.



**Jada Pinkett:** Jada Pinkett is an actress and was a very close friend of Tupac. Her and Tupac grew up together and even got the chance to work on some films together. His untimely death is something she struggled to accept and get over. She knew Tupac intimately and knew him beyond his 'tough boy' appearance. Biggie's death shocked Jada, and she believes that this ongoing conflict between the East and West Coast is something that needs to come to a stop. She believes that the future of hip-hop depends on the end of this conflict.

**Kimberly Denise Jones (Lil' Kim):** Former Junior M.A.F.I.A. member and solo artist Lil Kim' was discovered by Biggie Smalls in 1994. They were on and off lovers up until his death in 1997, and their relationship was highly controversial. Not surprisingly then, it is likely that Lil' Kim would be interested in Biggie's affairs. Lil Kim' has publicly opened up about how his death has impacted her, and has said that Biggie's death has forever changed her. Lil Kim' is undoubtedly an important figure in 90's hip hop, and has close ties with both East coast and West coast artists.

**Voletta Wallace (The Mother of Christopher Wallace):** Voletta Wallace is likely the most involved figure in Biggie's murder case, and rightfully so. Born in Jamaica, Voletta Wallace immigrated to the United States and worked as a preschool teacher in Brooklyn where she raised her son Biggie as a single parent. She has worked closely with LAPD officers in investigating his death and has repeatedly argued that her son's death is a conspiracy. Voletta Wallace is convinced that Biggie was not the target of the shooting, and was caught in the crossfire. There will be no closure for Voletta Wallace until her son's murder is solved.



**William Brown (Biggie's Lawyer):** William Brown is the formal representative for Christopher Wallace and his legal estate. Brown is interested in ensuring justice for Biggie's musical legacy as well as his finances. Brown has represented Christopher Wallace for majority of his musical career. At this time, it is not known who has the primary rights over Biggie's music and his money henceforth. There are many conflicting parties that have claimed ownership over Wallace's affairs. Brown is primarily focused on protecting his rights to his music during this time.

**Olivia Martinez (Private Investigator for Bad Boy Records):** Olivia Martinez was hired by Bad Boy Records to investigate Biggie's death outside of any LAPD influence. Bad Boy Records is highly skeptical of the LAPD's movements and do not believe that they have Biggie's best interest in mind. This decision is also provoked by the ongoing West coast and East coast feud between artists, where Olivia Martinez is representing the East coast looking out for "one of their own." She has been instructed to investigate who could potentially be responsible for Biggie's death, as well as the parties involved.

**Mia Collins (Journalist for New York Times):** Mia Collins is a renowned journalist for the New York Times, and has taken an interest in reporting on the contents discussed at this meeting. Biggie's fanbase is largely responsible for the media's interest in his affairs, as the public has continued to demand an explanation for Biggie's death. Collins is particularly useful for her objective stance on the case. Whereas all other parties involved in this meeting are either emotionally or professionally involved with Biggie, Collins is the only person who is arriving to this conversation with a nonpartisan perspective.



**David Mack (LAPD Officer Rampart Division):** David Mack is an LAPD officer involved in the Rampart Division's Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums unity or (CRASH). Mack is also a controversial figure as he has been accused of being present at the drive-by shooting, as well as having affiliations with Officer Rafael Perez who is known for being corrupt. Both David Mack and Rafael Perez have been highly criticized by the public lately. It is likely that Mia Collins is most interested in reporting on what David Mack has to say at this meeting. David Mack is present at this meeting because he was invited on behalf of the LAPD unit.

**Amanda Hayes (Lawyer for Bad Boy Records):** Amanda Hayes is the lawyer representing Bad Boy Records in this matter. Bad Boy Records has been implicated, as it is believed that Biggie's Death is an extension of the conflict between the two labels. She's present at this meeting to defend Bad Boy Records. Amanda is a famous lawyer from New York City and has not lost a case to date.

**Paul Offord (Biggie Small's Bodyguard):** Paul Offord is Bad Boy Records director of security. Offord was the third car trailing behind Biggie's the night of his assassination. Not only was Offord Biggie's primary bodyguard, but he was also a primary witness to Biggie's murder and can therefore speak on the events that took place on March 9, 1997. Offord strongly represents the East Coast, and has repeatedly expressed his assumptions that the West Coast rap scene and LAPD are responsible for Biggie's death.



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