

The Notorious B1G

Biggie Smalls was born Christopher George Latore Wallace on May 21st, 1972 in Brooklyn NY, the only child of Jamaican parents and died on March 9th, 1997 in a drive-by shooting in Los Angeles. He was only 24 years of age. He is the only person, other than Nas, to compete with Tupac for the greatest in hip-hop history.



Biggie began rapping at the age of 11. He learned to dictate and phrase his lyrics from jazz drums. He excelled at Queen of All Saints Middle School, winning several awards as an English student. Biggie transferred to George Westinghouse Career and Technical Education High School in Brooklyn, which future rappers Jay-Z and Busta Rhymes were also attending. At 17, he dropped out of high school and became involved in criminal activities.



Black History

He signed with Bad Boy Records in 1993, and his debut album, *Ready to Die* (1994), went gold within two months of its release and went double platinum the following year. This put him as the leader of the East Coast hip-hop scene at a time when the West Coast hip-hop scene had exploded and gained prominence. Biggie's *Ready to Die* album was certified as a quadruple platinum album, and the song "Big Poppa" earned Biggie a Grammy nomination. Biggie's album was autobiographical, and he used it to talk about his experiences as a criminal in his younger days. He referred to himself as "the Black Frank White".

Many artists, including Kendrick Lamar, claim to have been inspired by Biggie. Lamar did a freestyle over "The What" on the 18th anniversary of Biggie's death, sampled Biggie's songs on his tracks and said he wanted to "leave a mark as great as Biggie."

Two of Biggie's albums were released posthumously, and they garnered sales of over 28 million copies in the US. In 2020, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

