

## 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