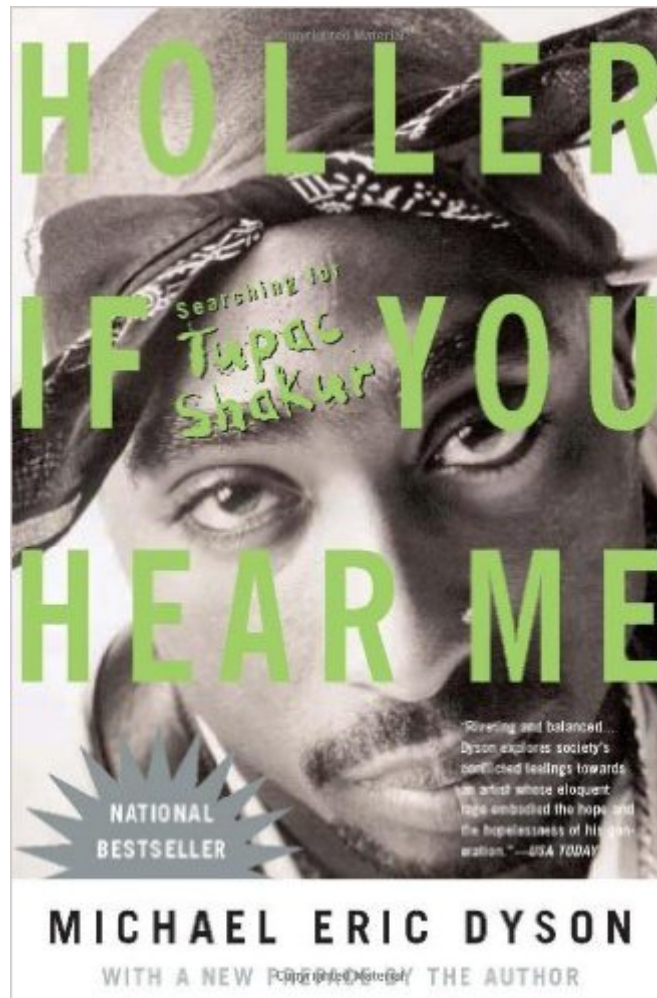


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## Holler If You Hear Me (2006)



## Synopsis

With a new preface by the author. Ten years after his murder, Tupac Shakur is even more loved, contested, and celebrated than he was in life. His posthumously released albums, poetry, and motion pictures have catapulted him into the upper echelon of American cultural icons. In *Holler If You Hear Me*, hip-hop intellectual • Michael Eric Dyson, acclaimed author of the bestselling *Is Bill Cosby Right?*, offers a wholly original way of looking at Tupac that will thrill those who already love the artist and enlighten those who want to understand him.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Michael Eric Dyson reveals in his latest book, "Holler If You Hear Me," that his own son, Michael II, once proclaimed, "Pop, if Tupac had had the chance to talk with you, he'd still be alive today." Having read Dyson's brilliant analysis of the most extraordinary poet to grace the modern music scene, I believe that Pac, indeed, would have found a healing salve for his wounds in the words and wisdom of America's unrivaled hip-hop intellectual. Dyson's tender probe of hip-hop's most shining knight takes us on a whirlwind search for Tupac Shakur. Eight chapters and an epilogue later, we learn that Pac was the one searching, searching for a Black man he could call father, searching for justice in America, searching for manhood and selfhood, and above all else, searching for love. An undeniable genius whose charismatic presence lit up the screen and stage, and whose searing social proclamations helped make rap a vehicle for change, Tupac's mercurial ascent has not yet plateaued, which makes Dyson's tome all the more important. Like other cultural icons he is

compared with, Tupac's popularity transcends race and generation. Dyson's unparalleled defense of black youth, shines forth like a beacon in "Holler If You Hear Me," and caused me to understand that Pac is that brilliant young black man that each one of us has struggled to save from his own self-destruction. Dyson-the-journalist interviewed scores of people whose lives' Tupac touched and adroitly gets them to speak candidly about the paragon of virtue and violence that was Tupac Shakur. Those who knew the young man behind the handsome, dreamy visage, tell how this self-made intellectual chose death's door as his destiny.

This is by far the most brilliant, insightful, cutting-edge treatment of Tupac and hip-hop culture available. Dyson doesn't offer a biography per se, and no one who is familiar with his equally impressive work on Malcolm X or Martin Luther King, Jr., would expect such a work. Dyson is helping to pioneer a distinctive new genre of scholarship: a seamless fusion of critical evaluation of an icon's life and a searching examination of that person's life and times. As such, this work takes its place as a sophisticated, meditative and scintillating tour through the dark passages of Tupac's complex music and his surprisingly nimble mind. The way Dyson sets the book up is compelling: He looks at Tupac's childhood, his mature artistry, and the beliefs that motivated his most thrilling achievements. I appreciate his joining Tupac's difficult childhood -- including his mother's drug abuse -- to both the political aspirations of a troubled revolutionary career (his mother was a Black Panther) and to the plague of poverty that cursed them. Dyson then convincingly links these stark realities to Tupac's plentiful and brooding music, and to the themes that would obsess him: death, betrayal, hopelessness, the search for forgiveness, spirituality, transcendence, racial authenticity and thug life. Dyson manages, in the process, to not only write about Tupac, but about the heartless vicissitudes that haunt millions of black youth. His discussion of the "n" word controversy is brilliant, as are his examinations of the contradictions that pile up around "keeping it real," the mantra of so much hip-hop culture.

In "Holler If You Hear Me," Micheal Dyson develops a critical analysis of legend rapper, Tupac Shakur. Dyson is well known as an intellectual scholar of hip-hop culture. "Holler" is not a formal biography of Tupac, but moreso an extended essay that attempts to place the life, music, and contradictions of Tupac in a cultural, political context. He explores Tupac's work and life in context of his relationship with his mother, a former Black Panther Party member, and as a youth growing up in a post-Black Panther Party era. Tupac's experiences living in poverty with a drug addicted mother certainly sheds serious light on his work and lifestyle. Dyson helps us understand more

clearly Tupac as an artist whose life and work was full of love for Black cultural life, but also as a tortured brotha who, like many men, got drawn into a machismo, sexist world. In essence, Tupac, writes Dyson, adopted "a creed that at once reflected his fractured home life and affirmed his essential aloneness and his combativeness with the universe he inherited, a stance that captured the domestic alienation of millions of other black youth in his song "Me Against the World." Personally, I've always had a problem with Tupac's ganster lifestyle and performance. I always felt that because he was looked up to by so many young people that he should have been a better role model for the hip-hop generation. But in reading Dyson's book, I discovered more about Tupac. First off, I didn't realize that he was so well read--that he read widely and continuously: authors including Richard Wright, Gabriel Marquez, Carl Jung, Alice Walker, feminist Susan McClary and Robin Morgan, and George Orwell. He listened to all types of music, and he reflected deeply about God and spirituality.

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