

## Soundtrack to My Life

### Playlist:

m.A.A.d city by Kendrick Lamar (feat. MC Eiht)

Once an Addict (Interlude) by J. Cole

Dear Mama by Tupac

Yahweh by Mali Music

It's Working by William Murphy

### Explanation

I chose these songs for the soundtrack of my life because they best relate to and describe some of the key areas in my life that shaped me into man I am today.

### Environment:

The song "m.A.A.d city" by Kendrick Lamar describes the environment that I grew up in, but I was not exposed to this environment until I was 13. I was born into a good family and mostly well-kept and sheltered. It was not until my parents divorced that my eyes were opened to the world around me. In middle school, I began to be introduced to drugs, alcohol, violence, and things of that nature. When I would spend the day with my friends, they showed me the ropes of the projects like where to go and where not to go, what colors to wear, how they survived, and other things. The first line of the songs is "If Pirus and Crips all got along, They'd probably gun me down by the end of this song, seem like the whole city go against me, every time I'm in the street hear..." "Yawk! Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!," being exposed to gang violence along with always

hearing and seeing gun shots, give me any elite awareness of everywhere I go. I must observe the land, people, and how they react to certain situations before fully interacting with them. The chorus explains how new people, mostly the young boys and men, are often interrogated by their peers in the projects saying “Man down, Where you from, nigga? Fuck who you know, where you from my nigga? Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga? This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga,” I use these tactics daily, but in a less profane way because of my wisdom and knowledge of who I am and what I represent. He then goes into depth into things that happen daily in our environment. Things such as: cocaine dealers, crack heads, everyone having guns, and death. I relate to lines such as "Joey packed a nine, Pakistan on every porch is fine, we adapt to crime, pack a van with four guns at a time..." When I was at our middle school dance in 7<sup>th</sup> grade I saw guys trading guns in the bathroom, selling marijuana to one another, passing condoms around in we “got some “that night, and plotting on who was going to get shot at after the dance. I experienced these things through high school where it was only worse. He speaks on death in lines like, “Seen a light-skinned nigga with his brains blown out...you killed my cousin back in ‘94, fuck yo’ truce... bodies on top of bodies...go buy a chopper and have a doctor on speed dial...” I have seen so many of my friends family member die this way and been to so many funerals. Although my environment did not work in my favor, it had me literally ready for anything, it was as if I was ready for that side of life in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Tramas and Abuse:

“Once an Addict” is an interlude by J. Cole that talks about his mother using substances and showing her pain in different ways because of the abuse of his father. I stated earlier that my parents got a divorce, I was 14. My dad was a narcissist. We made it look like our lives were great, but he was abusing us. He mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually abused my

mother. He did not show as much towards me and my sisters because my mom took all the heat behind closed doors. He favored me over my sisters, he would hit my little sister the hardest, he would whoop us for little to nothing at times, and my little sister would experience nightmares that did not stop until we left the house after the divorce. This shows that he is going beyond physically and mentally because demons fuel nightmares. The night we saw him touch our mother firsthand, he kicked out of the house, and we had to stay with our grandparents. I saw my mother at her lowest. She had no money, she found out he cheated many times on people that smiled in her face, and other things I do not have time to share. This led her to drugs and suicidal thoughts. J. Cole starts the song with singing softly, “somethings got a hold on me.” repeatedly. He then touched on how his mother resorted to drugs to ease her pain and how he would not come home because her demons would surface. A line that stood out was, “I tell her “Mama go to sleep” she tell me “Boy, hush you better pray to God you never get your heart crushed” this hit me so hard because my mom would tell me, “Look after your sisters, I'm about to go cry.” There were nights me and my sisters would go out and come back to our mom passed out on the couch because of overdose on drugs. But I knew she had the weight of the world on her shoulders. Over time she was able to clean herself up and get back to thriving.

My Mother:

“Dear Mama” is by Tupac, and it talks about how much he values his mother for pushing through life for him and his sister. My mother is the greatest backbone, and no one can come close to what she has done for me and my sisters. That is why the first that resonated with me was “Ain’t a woman alive that could take my take my mama’s place...” Tupac later says, “I finally understand, for a woman it ain’t easy trying to raise a man,” my mother did everything my father did not do for me. She is a major reason I am the man I am today. Another line I relate

to is the start of the chorus which says, “There’s no way I can pay you back, but plan is to show you that I understand; you are appreciated,” I know I will not be able to repay my mother by I will always try. The last line I will touch on is, “You just working with the scraps you was given and Mama made miracles every Thanksgiving,” my mother would break her back to get me and sisters what they needed. She literally made something out of nothing. She hustled every day to lift our heads above water. She achieved her goal of lifting us up with the help of God.

My Faith:

“Yahweh” is a Gospel song by Mali Music. This is one of my favorite songs of all time. It is amazingly simple, the lyrics read “All the glory belongs to You/ All the glory belongs to you, Oh God(2x) ... Hal/le/lu/jah(repeated) Yahweh Yahweh be praised Yahweh Yahweh be praised!” That is, it! Because there is no other way to put it. During my time of trials God showed me Himself like I have never seen before. God, Yahweh, and his son, Yeshua, or Jesus showed and taught me how to navigate through the darkness and how to think in a more divine mindset. I can honestly say I have not worried since 2018, that is how I trust God and he has come through every time. My thinking is so complex to the average person, and I love it. But gaining knowledge helped me realize I did not know much. So, I love going deeper into Yahweh and Yeshua, having conversations with them, and learning about them.

Faith continued:

“It’s Working” is also a Gospel song, but by William Murphy. “This my season for grace, for favor, this is my season, to reap what have sown” this line helps me evaluate what season I am in constantly. All seasons are different, so I must prepare my seeds differently for the harvest of each season. He then says, “See, I haven’t been perfect, but I sure been faithfully...” I know I

will not perfect, but I know God knows my heart. I am conscious of my weaknesses, I am working on them, but I still try to do God's work to the best of my abilities.