

Worksheet 1 – Here Today Gone Tomorrow

MC Hammer

MC Hammer (born **Stanley Kirk Burrell** on March 30, 1962) is an American MC who was popular during the late 1980s and early 1990s, known for his dramatic rise to and fall from fame and fortune, his trademark Hammer pants, and for leaving a lasting influence on hip hop culture and music. He became a preacher in the 1990s and now has his own television program. He lives in Tracy, California with his wife Stephanie and six children, 3 boys and 3 girls.

Later, Hammer parted ways with Pilate, switched record labels and signed with Giant Records. To adapt to the changing landscape of hip-hop, his next album was a more aggressive, gangsterish album entitled *The Funky Headhunter*. The accompanying video to *The Funky Headhunter's* first single, "Pumps and a Bump", was banned from heavy rotation on MTV with censors claiming that the depiction of Hammer in Speedos was too graphic. This led to an alternative video being filmed (with Hammer fully clothed) that was directed by fellow Bay Area native Craig S. Brooks, who also helmed the video of rap group D.R.S.' only hit single "Gangsta Lean."

In 1995, Hammer released the album *Inside Out*, which critics claimed was unfocused. The album sold poorly (peaking at number 119 on the Billboard Charts) and Giant Records dropped him from their roster. Because of dwindling album sales and a lavish lifestyle, Hammer, who was \$13 million in debt, filed for bankruptcy on April 3, 1996.

Hammer next signed with Death Row Records, then home to gangsta rap stars Snoop Dogg and Tupac Shakur. The label did not release any of Hammer's music while he was with them. However, Burrell did record music with Shakur, and the album he recorded leaked onto the internet some years later. Their collaborative efforts are yet to be released. After the death of Shakur in 1996, Burrell left the record company. In 1996, Burrell signed with EMI, which saw the release of a compilation of Hammer's chart topping songs. The album, *Greatest Hits*, featured 12 former hits and was released in October, only six months after his bankruptcy.

In 1997, MC Hammer (who by that time had readopted the "MC") was the subject of an episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and the VH1 series *Behind the Music*. In these appearances, Burrell admitted that he had already used up most of his fortune of over \$20 million.

Due to the success of the *Please Hammer Don't Hurt Em* album, Hammer had amassed approximately USD\$33 million in income.

First, \$12 million of this total was used to have his home built in Fremont, California, 30 miles south of where he grew up. Among the documented features this house had included:

- Recording studio
- 33-seat theater
- 2 swimming pools (one indoor/one outdoors)
- Tennis courts and a baseball diamond
- Waterfalls, ponds, and aquariums

- Mirrored Bathroom (at least \$75,000 (£35,000) in mirrors throughout the house)
- \$2 Million of Italian marble floors and a floor-to-ceiling gray marble office with customized marble niches for awards.
- Marble countertops in the kitchen (the house was heavily decorated in marble)
- Massive gold and black marble jacuzzi in the master bedroom
- Basketball courts
- Bowling alley
- 17 car garage
- Two gold-plated “Hammertime” gates for entrance to the property
- A dishwasher installed in his master bedroom for the purpose of “cleaning up after a midnight snack” (as told in the VH1 movie about his life, entitled *Too Legit: The MC Hammer Story*).

Many of these amenities did little to improve the value of the home.

After the purchase of the home, it left approximately \$20 million, the money that was supposedly squandered. After the home, his money went into other things (much described as frivolous):

- A fleet of 17 automobiles, including a Lamborghini, a stretch limousine, and a Range Rover.
- Two helicopters.
- Investments up to \$1 million in Thoroughbred racehorses.
- Careless spending on high-priced items like antique golf clubs, Etruscan sculpture, and gold chains for his 4 pet rottweilers.
- Extravagant parties financed by Hammer himself.
- The huge entourage of over 200 people, most of whom were on his payroll, for total monthly wages of \$500,000.
- Leased Boeing 727.

In 1991, MC Hammer established Oaktown Stable that would eventually have nineteen Thoroughbred racehorses. In 1991, his outstanding filly Lite Light won several Grade I stakes races including the prestigious Kentucky Oaks. His D. Wayne Lukas-trained colt Dance Floor won the Grade II Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes and the Lane's End Breeders' Futurity in 1991 then the following year won the Fountain of Youth Stakes and finished 3rd in the 1992 Kentucky Derby.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Hammer released the patriotic album *Active Duty* on his own World Hit label. He donated portions of the proceeds to 9/11 charities. In 2004, he released the *Full Blast* album. Neither album managed to peak on the Billboard Charts.

In 2003, Hammer appeared on the first season of *The Surreal Life*, a reality show known for assembling an eclectic mix of celebrities to live together.

In the 2005 MTV Music Video Awards, MC Hammer made a surprise appearance in the middle of the show with best friend Jeremiah Jackson.

In February 2006, the first single off Hammer's new album *Look Look Look* was released. The Scott Storch-produced title track was released as a single and a music video.

Hammer now frequently posts about his life on his blog "Look Look Look."