

MiC Prophecies

written by Dana Dajani and Jibberish

Plot Summary:

Lydia is a jaded journalist, who has been waiting to meet with international hip hop phenomenon 'Gemini' for an hour and a half.. she has somewhere else to get to and by the time he finally shows up, she can only stay with him for 10 minutes. She is sure that should be long enough to get enough dirt to write a scathing review of him and his trashy music. Through their surprisingly sharp conversation, Lydia discovers Gemini's witty personality. She challenges him to reframe his intentions, and employ his art to liberate the masses, though it will not be easy to leave behind his fame and life style.

Program Note:

They say: you're not ready to listen until
you are willing to lose it all, to change.
But when music hits you, you feel no shame and let go of blame.
Because we listen to be moved, to be made
to feel an emotion,
captured and spun, and then come undone. Listen.

Characters:

Lydia- Lydia is a smart girl from the South. She is an experienced journalist, a globally conscious and "green" woman, a feminist. She loves the arts, and wants to write about NGOs. When she was asked to interview controversial Hip Hop artist (Gemini) for Rolling Stone magazine, she only accepted the job to discredit him and reveal the sham called the Hip Hop "industry".

Gemini- 5 years ago, Gemini was signed to a major record label and started gaining a reputation for his lewd lyrics.. but he sells enough albums to top charts and out-do his rivals. He is educated though he downplays it, in fact, he doesn't ever mention it. He is pulling a "Lady Gaga" in terms of playing to the audience. His goal is to make money as quickly as possible and pull out of music because he knows the life span of a hip hop artist is short. He wants to secure the lives of the people around him. Gemini is exploiting Hip Hop because the system exploits the artists and the people. He respects the medium, is a fan, grew up on the music, but now he is playing a different game.

Music plays, "Money" by J Dilla

Lights up - spotlight on two chairs and a table.

A reporter walks on stage, checks her watch and sighs. She looks around for the person she is interviewing. She is annoyed and looks quite uptight. She sits, waiting impatiently. Finally, she spots her subject.

Gemini walks in casually, dressed like one would expect for rapper: baggy, sagging pants, bling, cap on backwards, big watch, sneakers. **Music fades out.**

Lydia: (unimpressed) Hi Gemini, right? Thanks for joining, finally.. I hope you don't mind I took a seat, it was pretty lonely where we agreed to meet. You kept a lady waiting for over an hour on the street....

Gemini: My bad, Miss Lydia. You know how it is! Some fans wanted a piece of the man. They jumped me outside, like 50 deep!

Lydia: Yeah? I'm sure that made your week... Where is your entourage, by the way? We hardly see you without them these days...

Gemini: They're in the jeep. I said I wanted to be alone with you. Saw your profile and I thought it'd be nice to have an 'intimate interview'.

Lydia: And that's my cue to start recording.. (She takes out her recorder) Helps me remember for more accurate quoting.. Let's begin the interview formally, shall we? You've got a bit of a love/hate relationship with the public now, it seems...

Gemini: Consequence of being the best. I consider haters a mark of my success!

Lydia: Well, that's quite an optimistic way to handle the stress of this new group of conservatives taking you to court over the latest vid for your song "Shake and Snort"... what do you have to say about this?

Gemini: All they're really doing is giving me free publicity! Cuz in the end everyone clicks the link to see.. And my views skyrocket into the millions, it's already going viral, gonna be a big club hit!

Lydia: But your critics are calling this latest release a weak attempt to extend the life-line of a rapper well past his prime.

Gemini: (amused and smug) The only reason they're talkin' about me is 'cos I *have* maintained my shine. They can think what they want. I've just begun. You pay the cost to be the boss, and I aim to stay number one.

Lydia: And has this always been a dream for you? When did you realize "music" was what you wanted to do?

Gemini: Since the womb boo. Music is what I was born to do. Umbilical cord connected, I plugged in and selected the beat of life. And so the 'Gemini' manifested.

Lydia: Word. (*deadpan*)

Gemini: Nah but seriously. I always wanted to be heard, plus the money is good. All this I have to do is talk about the hood.

Lydia: Understood, so you're just cashing in. There's little passion, just flash and acting.

Gemini: It puts food on my plate. (*agitated*)

Lydia: Sorry, I don't mean to hate, rap music and I just can't relate.. I can't tell you how it grates on my nerves; trashy verse, misogyny and violence, "with my bitches I be stylin'" I just.. can't.

Gemini: Well there's enough genres that sound tiring, like...country music. Just a whole bunch of recycled whining.

Lydia: Personally, I prefer to suffer in silence. So back to the womb. Your relationship with your mother?

Gemini: Love her like no other. Single handedly, she raised me into a... smart, young hustler.

Lydia: A hustler? Right. See, that's where Hip Hop and I collide. You wear that term like a badge of pride!

Gemini: I picked a side. We do what we do to survive. My kind are less of a threat than a government that can fund a genocide. Or stand by as whole generation of father figures get smoked up in a crack pipe.

Lydia: Must've been a tough young life. And through all that how did you find the mic?

Gemini: (*slyly*) I stole it.

Lydia: What wit! Hey, that fits.. it's said that Hip Hop is the lobby of the prison industrial complex; it glorifies violence and gang allegiance! Tell me Gemini, have you ever been to jail? Why does the concept of "street cred" still prevail?

Gemini: Street cred is not about who's been to jail. It's about weight to your words when you spin those tales. Those who have known you will vouch for your name, when those who *don't* question what you claim. For a lawyer, or scholar, or journalist: it's the same!

Lydia: Yea, but we're not in it for the fame, for the glory of the game.. we tell a story through our frame. And quite frankly, I think your response was rubbish. Because for one to be held accountable doesn't mean he must be *thuggish*! Tasteless language and slang.. encouraging youth to join gangs.. "click click, bang bang".. Where is the poetry, the beauty in what you sang?

Gemini: I suppose the *beauty* is in how a gun-toting, drug-smoking, slang-quoting bunch of THUGS rapped their way into sparking a billion dollar industry, and a culture that conquered Brooklyn to the Maldives.

Clearly it doesn't matter about the grammar if the rhythm is tight, Miss Lydia..

Lydia: Look, I'm no idiot.. everyone knows Hip Hop is an international business... but what's still radical to me-- now that you've brought up the topic of the tropics-- is how commercial Hip Hop *Beta* had roots in the sound systems of Jamaica!

Gemini: Yeah.. portable speakers and sound spread down to South Bronx. Consequence of immigrant Caribbean minds thinking out the box.

Minds like DJ Kool Herc. He had his eye on the crowds he played to, and saw what worked.

See, Funk records tend to have an instrumental solo, we called these "breaks". Breaks were what the crowds loved to get down to and participate.

So he looped this, on two turntables, back and forth. Stretching it out with his man Coke La Rock on the mic for support. La Rock was just goofing around, calling out names and toasting the crowd.

Then dudes added to mix and the formula clicked. And now here we are... talking about this.

Lydia: Sorry, but I must have missed what you attempted to depict. What exactly has "clicked" when an entire genre of music now just perpetuates being useless? Hip Hop only feeds vanity, arrogance and self-promotion. All talk and no action, just bragging and boasting.

How does this hold a candle to Stevie, Marvin and all your greats? They fathered your father's generation and sought to elevate! I see nothing in your music that earns the same respect..

Gemini: Times are different now, Miss Lydia, and I just came to collect.

Lydia: So, money is the aim!

Gemini: Money IS the aim. Its the aim, its the game, its on everyone's brain..

Lydia: And just to wear that fancy chain, you pied piper these kids and take them down the wrong lane?

Gemini: Look I'm not a role model that's never something I claimed.

Your blame is misplaced. All you're seeing is the surface.

Who you should be talking to is those dudes stoking up the furnace.

They've bought everything; print, radio, tv.

Because really, it's your *soul* they want to purchase.

We're nothing but a market share. And why would a machine, a corporate machine care? (*Lydia laughs*)

It *is* a machine, it plays for no one's team. Money is its oil and it feeds on our dreams.

The American Dream.

An illusion, a desire, a want. Rags to riches. Cash, cars, and bitches.

You see the thing is, all YOU see is the surface.

Your blame is misdirected. I *simply* provide a service..

But the way I look, the way I dress, my whole attitude, makes your little cocktail party crowd nervous.

So you're fresh out of a yoga class with your hand sanitizer on, about to write a little op-ed piece about the truth?

Forget the truth, here's the solution:

Tell them to turn off the TV. Turn off the Radio. Tell them to cancel that magazine subscription, and stop shopping for product to live in a marketing team's little world of fiction.

That's how you do your part to kill the system.

Tell them to teach the children. Read to them and celebrate REAL heroes. Not a pimp, gangster, rapper or a brother just aiming to sink free throws. Abducted, we abandoned OUR history AND our heroes in Africa. So all this you see? We learned from you. Hip Hop is a mirror, sister, so get mad cos it isn't beautiful.

You come here looking to lay blame, and never stopped to ask what YOU can do to make a change. You're as neutral as I am!

Lydia: I give a voice to the voiceless too, I bring awareness to *humanitarian* issues! It was just a fluke that I was asked to interview you. I live the change, embrace the strange and facilitate the exchange of ideas and empower action. Your whole job is to be a distraction!

While Lydia continues, Gemini takes out a pack of cigarettes, he offers one to Lydia, she rolls her eyes. He takes out a cigarette and holds it in his hand. He looks at it like it has the answer. He is listening to Lydia, though defensive.

You do this "gig" just to survive, but why not deliver a message that brings you pride? "Neutral" you claim; you "simply provide a service", which is not just worthless, it actually detracts from the potential of society because it distracts from our ascension into higher beings..

When you could, instead, make the old system *obsolete*. "Teach the kids," you said. Do it, then! Build your own fleet of word warriors who will keep to a new beat!

Give a voice to a generation of youth hiding behind spray cans. Help them understand and unfold a *new* plan. Reflect another mirror, not the same black caricatures.

Gemini puts the cig in his mouth about to light it. Lydia snatches it out of his mouth.

Become a new activist-orator... you can be a hero!

Gemini: Man, ain't no body got time for that shit.

Gemini takes back his cigarette. He shakes his head and puts the cigarette in his mouth.

Lydia throws in the towel; he is a lost cause. She grabs her purse and starts to leave their table.

Gemini pauses a moment as he goes to light his cigarette. He doesn't. Try as he might, he cannot deny that there is truth to her words.

Music cue: play "Umi Says" by Mos Def

Gemini takes the unlit cigarette from his mouth, looks at Lydia and begins a slow nod. He has heard from Lydia what he already knew, and now it is undeniable.

Lydia smiles. Not a victorious, "I told you so!" smile, but a slight, hopeful smile.

Gemini removes his cap and places it on the table. He looks at Lydia as if to say "what now?"

Lights out.

“MiC Prophecies”

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Starring Dana Dajani as Lydia,
and Jibberish as Gemini.

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