

JOU 2303 obituary

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654 Words

Mac Miller and Takeoff were 26- and 28-year-old chart-topping rappers when they died. Despite their similar ages, devoted fanbases and industry innovations, their obituaries portray their lives, and subsequently their impacts on the world, differently.

Their obituaries, available on the New York Times website, describe the lives of two talented and successful young rappers who died of unnatural causes: Miller of an accidental overdose and Takeoff in a shooting. Both of these men were best-selling artists when they died, and their untimely deaths devastated millions of fans worldwide. Based on the somewhat limited mention of their success in these obituaries, these men have received more fame and acknowledgement for their art since their deaths.

[Mac Miller's obituary](#) on the New York Times website recounts his successes and failures, ultimately focusing on his lyrical talent and musical/producorial successes. His influence on the music industry is discussed within three paragraphs of the lead, but his full name and childhood are not addressed until over halfway through the article. The article mentions his DUI charges and substance abuse, but does not make any effort to justify his behavior. The positive reflections of his character at the end do not seem out of place despite this, with the article portraying him as artistic, depressed, and a little lost, but well loved by those around him.

[Takeoff's obituary](#) focuses on the crime involved with his death, a shooting that also injured two others, for the first six paragraphs of his obituary. Excluding the lead, it is not until the ninth paragraph that Migos, the rap trio he was a part of that was named one of the biggest of the last decade, is mentioned. His full name appears over halfway through the article, followed by positive reflections of character. These do seem out of place, however, as obituary ends with mention of rape claims two years prior to his death, making the subsequent final paragraph justifying his character seem odd and unauthentic.

The structures of both pieces are very similar. Both headlines list the artist's name, explains their prominence and announce the age of death. At the top of Takeoff's obituary, there is a news conference regarding the shooting. Miller's obituary has an image of him at the top.

Despite a few differences, the content of both obituaries is structured very similarly. Although both men had legal infractions, addressing it early on, like in Miller's article, seems to preserve the character of the individual more. Both, however, successfully show the creativity, hard work and reaching impact of these men.

As it briefly mentions on the NY Times Overlooked website, the Overlooked project was important because of the lack of written representation and documentation for marginalized

groups. By only publishing the obituaries of white men, entire lives, ones that deserved to be remembered, were forgotten. One of the most valuable aspects of writing obituaries, even decades after the person died, is the inherent sameness and humanity we can find in the stories of others.

I now recognize that obituaries rely almost entirely on the information of others, specifically friends, family, people with information about the death and anyone else with a significant relationship to the deceased. Unlike the recent obituaries I read on the NY Times website, the obituaries in the Overlooked project relied primarily on people with distant connection to the person and any historical, medical or other records or information available.

The obituary that stood out to me the most from the Overlooked project was [Overlooked No More: Jobriath, Openly Gay Glam Rocker in the '70s](#). The piece focuses heavily on his rebellious fashion, musical talent and the rejection of his work by American audiences. This piece was fascinating to me, because despite my extensive rock music knowledge, I had never heard of Jobriath. He is considered the first openly gay rockstar. He has been nearly erased from history because of his identity, which is devastating to me.