

BEYONCÉ'S NEW CONCEPT ALBUM IS BASED ON OBITUARIES

by Arlo Thompson

INT. A RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

BEYONCÉ is in the sound booth, headphones on, in front of a mic. She has a note pad with lyrics on it.

PHARRELL is at the mixing console in the next room. A window separates them. Into the talk back mic...

PHARRELL

Can't wait to hear your new lyrics,
Beyoncé.

BEYONCÉ

Yeah Pharrell! It's a concept
album. My last one was feminist *and*
sexy but this time it's different,
a celebration.

PHARRELL

A party? Yeah, let's do this--

BEYONCÉ

No, a celebration of life. You ever
read the paper... the dead people
section?

PHARRELL

What?

BEYONCÉ

I'll show you. Start the track.

Pharrell hits play on the console. A *Partition*-esque beat drops.

BEYONCÉ (cont'd)

(singing)

MARY JANE SMITH PASSED, EIGHTY-
THREE/ SURVIVED BY HUSBAND, HIS
NAME IS LEE./ HAD TWO KIDS, NOW
THEY ALL GROWN/ UP IN THE VALLEY
OUT ON THEIR OWN--

Pharrell stops the track.

PHARRELL

Yo Bea, hold up, are these lyrics
from a lady's obituary?

BEYONCÉ

I told you it celebrates life. This is raw and visceral... inevitable.

PHARRELL

Yeah, I get that... I'm not sure it's the way to go for an album.

BEYONCÉ

It'll be hot. Don't believe me? Cue up the next track.

Pharrell hits play. This time it's a power ballad a la *Halo*.

BEYONCÉ (cont'd)

SHE GREW UP WITH A SILVER SPOON/
NEVER HAD A WANT OR CARE/ LEFT HER
MONEY TO HER DOG NAMED SCMOOCHIE/
THAT PUP HAS GOT AN AMEX BLACK--

Once again the track abruptly stops.

PHARRELL

I am not mixing down a track about Schmoochie, a dead woman's rich dog.

BEYONCÉ

Yo, that dog is living it up now!

PHARRELL

Doesn't matter.

BEYONCÉ

I get that you're skeptical but this is my project. Let's keep going.

Pharrell sighs and starts the next track. This time a *Drunk In Love* type track kicks in.

BEYONCÉ (cont'd)

WALTER RICE, WALTER RICE/ LEFT US
TODAY WHEN HIS HEART FAILED/ WALTER
RICE, IT'S NOT SO NICE/ FOUND IN
THE GUTTER/ NO KIDS, NO HOUSE, NO
WIFE... YES LICE--

As he stops yet again...

PHARRELL

No, no, no. You can't be singing about a homeless guy who died!

BEYONCÉ

Technically he was a hobo.

PHARRELL

That's awful. No one will get up
and move to this.

BEYONCÉ

The man's life was epic. He was a
billionaire that went crazy and
started hoppin' trains. Once, on a
trans-continental trip, he had to
drink his own urine to stay alive.

PHARRELL

You want people up in the clubs
grinding to a song about a piss
drinkin' dead hobo?

BEYONCÉ

Deceased hobo please, respect.

Jay-Z enters the studio.

BEYONCÉ (cont'd)

Hi baby!

PHARRELL

Yo Jay-Z. What's up?

JAY-Z

Thought I'd stop in and see how the
session is coming along. Her lyrics
are hot, right?

PHARRELL

No! They're creepy. I don't get it.

JAY-Z

Man, they're gonna kill. No pun
intended. Concept albums are in.
Hey, why don't I lay down my rap
for the title track?

Jay-Z heads into the sound booth and throws on some
headphones. Steps up to the mic.

PHARRELL

All right, you ready? Wait, is this
going to be more stuff like hers?

JAY-Z

Don't you worry. This might be my
best work yet. Hit it.

PHARRELL

I am not sold but here we go.

Pharrell hits play on a *Crazy In Love* type beat.

JAY-Z

(rapping)

THIS SUNDAY EAST ELM NINETEEN OH/
ESTATE SALE, MARVIN SMITH, MUST ALL
GO/ NINE O'CLOCK TIL NOON, WE'LL
SEE, UH OH/ ARMOIRES, DAVENPORTS--

Pharrell stops and snaps.

PHARRELL

Ah hell no! What are you doing?
You're rapping about furniture.
Furniture man! Who came up with this?

Jay-Z and Beyoncé give each other a knowing glance. She shrugs. They exit the booth to talk to Pharrell in person.

BEYONCÉ

Pharrell... we got nothing for this album.

JAY-Z

Yeah, no ideas.

BEYONCÉ

You got any thing else we could try?

PHARRELL

Um...

(beat)

No. Let's back up to the hobo track.

BLACKOUT.