

# **SHOOK ONE**

**ANXIETY PLAYING TRICKS ON ME**

**CHARLAMAGNE  
THA GOD**

# FOREWORD

*I sat down with the legendary rapper Scarface to talk to him about the Geto Boys' song "Mind Playing Tricks on Me" and how, for me and a lot of people in the hood, it was one of the first songs that articulated the anxiety and paranoia that a lot of us were feeling.*

"Mind Playing Tricks on Me" was due to be on my solo album. I wrote three verses to that song first and recorded it. It was my first verse, my second verse, and this is the third verse that made the song. I put my paranoia and anxiety in my music, man. It wasn't shit to talk about. I didn't feel like it was a problem. I just felt like it was normal to feel like this. It was normal to look at every person you've come in contact with as a potential for some material.

I was making music that addressed how I felt. Like, this is me, this is what I was going through, and this is what I wrote my music based on. What I was going through and how I was feeling. I wrote my heart and that's what came from it.

It's easy to put out a song talking about struggle and vulnerability when you went through it. Like the easiest songs to write

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are the songs you've been through, the situations that you've been through. The music is about me, and there is a long list of fucking paranoia, schizophrenia in my family. I've got an uncle right now that's really going through it, man. He ain't been the same since the late seventies. I can put it on a lot of shit, man. But I think that the more drugs you do, the more that shit triggers.

It's in the chemistry. That's how my grandma was. My grandma, she probably didn't know, but she was a paranoid schizophrenic, because she was in, like, this real bad hurricane when she was young. It was horrible. She was the oldest child, and she watched all six of her brothers and sisters die, and her parents. She was devastated.

The way I dealt with mental—I can't even call it mental health issues. I just call it the reality of the life shit. The way that I dealt with it, man, was to accept the things that I could change and be smart enough to know the shit that I couldn't.

For me, I can't go to a doctor and have this doctor telling me how to feel. I can't go to a psychiatrist to tell me how I'm supposed to feel, if I don't feel like that. For me, it just doesn't work to be coached on how to feel, because feel is a feel. You can coach me on all kinds of shit, but you can't coach me how to feel.

I did do therapy when I was in the hospital for this shit. I think I did about twenty months in a hospital. At a psych ward. And that right there let me know that nobody can make me feel how I don't. And nobody can make me feel how I do, you feel me?

I don't think the therapy helped me. It did make me realize that I wasn't crazy. Therapy made me realize how normal I was. Therapy made me realize that it is what it is. You know, be

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smart enough to accept the things that you cannot change. You know what fixes everything?

Money. Money makes it easy. All that shit that you was worried about, that shit's gone with me now. You know what to do with money, don't you? You put people around you that you want around you. When you got money you can get the fuck out the way.

I mean, this is what I know, man. That shit on your report card: "Works or plays well with others"? I don't work and play well with others. I don't. I need to be around my people, man, in my element. I can't function no other kind of way.

Yeah, I'm here man. I know how to survive in this shit. You know what I'm saying? But I'm not worried—I'm going to have money, I'm not going to jump. I'll just go get another bag.

I think we all going to deal with anxiety. I deal with anxiety every time I put my mask on for the CPAP machine. I deal with anxiety when I'm in the back of a fucking airplane. You know what I'm saying? That's anxiety. When you know for a fact that you can't sit up against this fucking window. That's anxiety. You know, you can't move, man. I need to wait to go out to the plane until right before they close the door and start rolling. And I have to look out a fucking window. That's anxiety, all right? I cannot sit in the back, man. How many rows in the plane? How many rows? Not the big plane with first class. I am talking about the little commuter plane.

If you know there's something that makes you fucked up about certain things, don't put yourself in that position. Don't put yourself in that predicament, homie. Like if you know fucking well that you can't drive for a long period of time without feeling, you know, homesick after being away for a few, you know what I mean? Don't do it.

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You got to adjust, man. You don't put yourself in that position. I'm not going to the back of that fucking plane. I'm going to wait until they have a seat in the front, that way I can be next to the door.

I think that people in the hood experience post-traumatic stress disorder. I think that the people in the hood, they are experiencing years and years of fucking despair. That's the PTSD, or whatever the fuck that is. The post-traumatic stress in the neighborhood, just being in the same conditions and expect the shit to change every day. You know, you're waking up and you just—you wake up today and the same shit was going on in 1970. Ain't nothing changed.

If I made a new version of "Mind Playing Tricks on Me" now it would be bigger than me. You know. The paranoia, my paranoia would be based on my people going back into slavery. You know, my paranoia would be based on one of my children being pulled over by the police and shot down. You know, my paranoia would be one of my daughters being disrespected and shot up in her fucking school. That's my paranoia now. You know it's bigger than me now. I don't give a fuck about me right now. I give a fuck about what's behind me. You know, that's where I'm on the ground fighting. So that shit don't happen to mine or yours, to us, to ours. And I'm going to fight.

I'm going to fight, homie. I'm not going to let nobody fuck over your daughter, my nigga. I'm coming. Don't do it. I've already made it up in my mind, and I'm down to lay my life down for my people. Don't fuck with us. We are not afraid of the white man. We afraid of the white-man law, of the white-man rule.

We need to figure out a way to petition to get all these white-boy cops out of the black neighborhoods, and I'm going to leave

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it like that. No. I don't want to make it sound like that, but all the fucking claims with police officers in these black neighborhoods, shooting these black boys down, I want them gone—

Again, I'm just being real. Those are the issues that are creating the most anxiety in my life.

I feel like when I put my anxiety out there it opens up the lines of communication to the people that feel the same way. It opens it up. It opens up the conversation. So I'm scared of that shit. You know, that's what I'm fearful of. And I'm asking everyone else, are you fearful of the same things?

—Brad “Scarface” Jordan