

CARMEN MANUEL

Wassup! Methamphetamine

*You aynt seen the struggle we came through pain in our eyes
What you know about growing up round here where we come from
Always something bad going on around here keeping our decisions blown
We gotta keep moving! Keep it on the low
Got the mixed tape booming - Keep it on the low
Push it out to the streets and use the TriX of the Trade
That I was given by my family to get me by...*

“TriX of the Trade – Recommended Dosage”

Defying the odds of methamphetamine (P)...The kaupapa is eXpressed through the lenses of personal eXperiences of an independent Māori wahine and the impacts these eXperiences have had on my life. To understand this unique journey of resilience in restoration of my mana and wairua I had to go back to my roots. In Te Ao Maori I found our whanau “TriX of the Trade” a modern platform with 3 interactive Kaitiaki; Whakapapa, Whakakoha and Whakamana. We call this Taonga Tuku Iho, knowledge passed down through generations to get us by. Once acknowledged connections to the healing process began “Taitimu Taiaha – The turning of tides, flipping the script and moving with the times”. The struggle makes us stronger giving us a stauncher positioning “Kia mau tonu tou mauri - Keepn it Real”

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Whakapapa and Whakakoha: Respectful Relationships

In 2007 I wrote 2 poems that have great significance to my journey within my online Bebo page (pre-Facebook). After a while I decided to privately archive them because of the content and the continuous poppy chopping I received for making that life changing choice to provide ahurutanga (safe space) for my tamariki, whānau and most importantly my mauri. The dates in which each blog were written have insights as to who I am today and the journey I have travelled to get to today. With my follow up piece (Just Done It – Now That’s GangXsta) that was written a day before my namesakes birthday. The poem is as follows with original dates attached:

“Wassup! Methamphetamine” 28/03/2007

*Wassup! I'm living proof I beat you
Introduced by my conscience, sad but true
Been there done that Wassup! Made it back!
Feel sorry for the neXt victims you got in the sack*

*For sure it's an eXperience I'll never forget
And because of that contact that's WHY my minds set
To use my eXperience to help those in need
Provide them with info bout your evil seed
Bring family and friends back to where they should be
And help them obtain back their identity*

*The old saying still stands “Only The Strong Survive”
I represent “Keep It Real” I'm alive and I'll strive
I'm still here not in hell and I know you can tell
I'm a souljah I told yah I salute yah old pal!
Just one last thing to say when the shit hits the fan
Delay or waylay Wassup! That's the plan!*

**“Just Done It! Now That’s GangXsta!” 04/11/2007
(Follow up to Wassup! Methamphetamine)**

*I celebrate the execution of being two years P free today
That’s the choice I made and I’m proud I’ve achieved it*

*I thank my mum my dad and my little brother, WHO stood by me
tirelessly
And showed that they cared, that’s what famz do for the ones
they love
Yes “WHAT would I do” Without the support of those above*

*I also thank CAD’s in South Auckland, the counsellors and my
bro
(You know who you are)
For educating and helping me I suppose.....See the light
At least now I can laugh and I’m grateful kaa-pow!
Seemed impossible back then but “Just look at me now”
Yeeaay Yaaaay!*

*Life is good life is great I have no room for hate
Things are happening for me now I’m making moves and life’s
bright
But the best thing of all me and my famz are aught!*

*Today I get high naturally off doing my designs
Knowing my famz is proud of me and my sons always smile
So here’s to me for succeeding and maintaining my steez
Wassup! I “Just Done It” THOSE WHO DOUBTED ME PLEASE!
Now to me that’s straight gangXsta in its purest form.*

#KeepnItGangXsta #KeepnItReal! (Manuel.C - 04/11/07)

Whakamana: Empowerment

Reflecting on the journey I’ve endured I’m so blessed for the guidance of my Tupuna, whānau and those hoa haere who have

been that constant tautoko, I could not have done it without them. I also have aroha in regards to te whakakoha rangatiratanga for the people met along the way who I continue to have a special bond with now. They were not only kaitiaki for me but they also provided me with kaitiakitanga (responsible stewardship) and a sense of direction in uplifting and strengthening my mauri ora. Today as an independent mother of four I have encountered and conquered many trials and tribulations. Born and raised in the streets of South Auckland, living and witnessing the reality of our community contributes to my purpose. Understanding the social relationships whānau and communities have to endure in order to directly connect to mauri ora has been acknowledged and consciously identified. My wero was to seek and navigate innovative indigenous ways of responding to P. Going back to my roots and engaging in Te Ao Māori, Tikanga and indigenous practices have allowed me to smash all main-stream statistics out of their boxes and to defeat my addiction to methamphetamine.

This year I'm 13 years P free!

“Kia Mau Tonu Tou Mauri” – “Keepn It Real”

The next episode begins...

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