

Hip-Hop Culture Mourns Justo Faison

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The hip-hop world was dealt a crushing blow over the weekend by the news that Justo Faison, who founded the annual Mixtape Awards back in 1995 — had been killed in a car accident on Friday night. Faison's sport utility vehicle ran off of a highway in Richmond, Virginia, striking a guardrail before flipping over and slamming into a tree.

According to the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Faison, a 36-year-old New York resident whose real first name was Orpheous, was pronounced dead at the scene. Police said the crash occurred around 1:12 a.m., when Faison's 1998 Lincoln Navigator ran off the left side of Interstate 64, just west of state Route 716.

Faison founded the annual Mixtape Awards, which acknowledged the efforts of innovative underground hip-hop, R&B and reggae DJs nationwide.

This year's ceremony, held in New York on March 9, honored Bad Boy Records boss Sean "P. Diddy" Combs for his notable achievements as a hip-hop producer, as well as his contributions to the genre. The event featured performances from rap artists Kanye West and Cuban Link.

Faison was also a renowned rap record promoter, who held positions at Nervous, Atlantic and Epic Records over the course of his career.