

Andre 'Mac Dre' Hicks More Than A Rapper

Written by Westside ID299

Tuesday, 02 November 2004 20:34 -

R.I.P. Andre "Mac Dre" Hicks

Family, friends and fans of west coast rapper Mac Dre were trying to make sense of the rapper's violent death Tuesday as investigators in Kansas City, Mo., sifted through evidence that included a bullet-riddled van and what may be the suspect's 2003 Infiniti G36.

Dre, given name whose given name was Andre Hicks, was killed early Monday in Kansas City, Mo. when an unknown suspect fired through the vehicle on U.S. 71, a four-lane highway running through the middle of town. Though the driver crawled to safety, Dre was thrown from the van and pronounced dead at the scene. Kansas City police reported late Tuesday that Dre died from a bullet wound. He was 34.

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He was like the Beatles or Elvis, but on a smaller scale to a lot of people, said Vallejo native James Trujillo, otherwise known as Jay Tee of the rap group, N2DEEP. I've known Dre since the late 1980s. He was my biggest influence. He was a for-real superstar. Kansas City Police Department spokesman Darin Snapp said homicide detectives are following leads and releasing few details.

There were about a dozen bullet holes (in the van), I can say that, but I can't say what kind of gun was used, Snapp said. Only one person knows that, and that way, when we catch the perpetrator, he won't be able to say, he read it in the newspaper.

Snapp said the police have some pretty good leads on it, and are questioning someone who's cooperating. We should know something by the end of the week.

Police linked the Infiniti to the shooting but declined to specify what the evidence was, reported Channel 9 in Kansas City. The vehicle was found with no license plates.

Dre had staged a concert in Kansas City, Kan., on Friday night and stayed in the area during the weekend.

Back in the Bay Area, despondent relatives and friends paid tribute to the pioneer rapper.

Life wasn't fair to Andre. It dealt him a pretty low deal, but he always managed to keep his

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spirits up. He'd look at you in a certain way, and you'd know he was going to be OK, said Betty Landers of Vallejo, who is the grandmother of what she believes is Hicks' only child, 13-year-old child, Drané Hicks.

Landers described the man she knew Hicks as her daughter's boyfriend, the man her daughter used to skip school to see; a long, lanky kid trying to make people happy. He was funny as hell.

I grew to love Andre. He was never Mac Dre to me. He left a legend for all of us to learn < not to give up on your dreams, Landers said.

Others, too, believe Hicks is too widely remembered for youthful mistakes.

He tried so hard to be a good person. He was a good boy, and now that he's gone, he should be left alone with all the negative stuff, said Bernard Hicks, Dre's uncle, and the brother of Vallejo teacher and former City Council member Foster Hicks.

Andre Hicks spent several years in prison for his part in an attempted bank robbery, and was linked to a rash of robberies committed in the early 1990s by north Vallejo's Romper Room Gang. Even so, many of those close to him said Hicks had pulled his life together.

He was a very good person, said Marquette Hall, Dre's stepmother. He was a very young man when he did those negative things he did. But he also funded children's programs in Sacramento, and did free concerts there and in the park by the North Vallejo Community Center, near the Country Club Crest where he had lived with his grandmother.

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Dre would hand out turkeys in the Crest at Thanksgiving, said Hicks half-sister sister, Jacquil Hicks.

I'm not saying he was a saint, but he just did things, out of the kindness of his heart and wasn't the type who liked to brag, Hall said.

Hall said she met DreHicks when he was about 9.

He was the cutest little boy, Hall said. He always said, when I get older I'm gonna be a rapper. Hall said Dre Hicks attended Peoples High School in Vallejo and was well-liked, if a little rowdy as a teenager, Hall said. A Peoples worker said no one there could speak to Dre's high school career. But he was always well-mannered and respectful of his elders, Hall said. I know he did some things here and there, but lots of people make bad choices in their past.

Hall said Dre Hicks moved to Sacramento, where Jacquil Hicks, 24, now lives, about four years ago to make a fresh start. Jacquil Hicks, 24, also of Sacramento, said she fondly recalls the early days in Vallejo with her brother. He was my only big brother, and I really looked up to him, she said. He was my idol. I was a girl and I wanted to be him. I dressed up as him for Halloween in eighth grade at Vallejo Middle School and won the costume contest.

Jacquil Hicks said her famous brother inspired her to write, something she still does.

I won a talent contest at Vallejo High School for rapping, because of his inspiration,. she said. Jacquil said she and other family members are especially distraught over her brother's death because it came just as he was getting his life straight. He wanted to be a real star and he knew

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he had to get away from all the negativity to get there and that's what he was doing, Jacquil Hicks said. He was getting out of all that rowdiness. He'd gotten more mature, and he was on his way. It's really sad. It was too soon. He'd made it so far. He was almost there. It almost seems like there are forces that don't want to see people pull themselves out of the negative energy, because just when they start to do it, something like this happens.

E-mail Rachel Raskin-Zrihen at RachelZ@thnewsnet.com or call 553-6824.

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* Article by By RACHEL RASKIN-ZRIHEN

* Thanks to Richard Freedman entertainment editor for the Vallejo Times-Herald, Mac Dre's home town.