

## Cleveland Hip-Hop Rap Artist Found Dead

Written by Robert ID1591

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2 Tha Hard Way, the hip-hop rap duo from Cleveland, Ohio are set to drop their first nationally distributed CD titled 'Patience Determination' on Jul 05, 2005 by Sonic Wave International.

Now there is tragic news out of Cleveland that one member of the duo, Raymond Maxwell 23 has been found dead about 2 a.m. Sunday on Westropp Avenue, according to Cuyahoga County Coroner Elizabeth Balraj.

The Cleveland hip-hop rap artist died early Sunday after being shot in a robbery.

Maxwell and his cousin, James Portis Jr., formed 2 Tha Hard Way in 1993.

"Somebody blew our dreams out of the sky," James Portis, Raymond Maxwell's uncle and manager said.

Police questioned several suspects, but no one had been arrested or charged Sunday evening, Lt. Thomas Stacho said.

Raymond Maxwell was going to Los Angeles next week to perform, his uncle said. James Portis Jr. has been living and working there.

Raymond Maxwell recorded under the name Ray Smooth and performed at many local venues, including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum as part of its "Rock and Soul" day in 2000. His group also performed as the opening act for other artists, Portis said. Maxwell wrote many of the songs and started performing at age 10.

Raymond Maxwell aka "Ray Smooth" is survived by his mother, Darlene; his father, Raymond Portis; and his sister, Michelle Maxwell, Portis said.

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RIP - Raymond Maxwell