

People & Places

Music

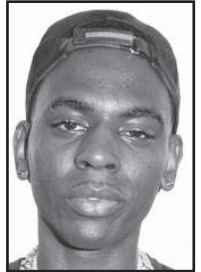
Police hunt for suspects

Dolph left a lasting legacy in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Nov. 20, (AP) — Two days before he was gunned down while buying cookies at his favorite bakery in Memphis, Tennessee, rapper **Young Dolph** visited a cancer center where a relative had received treatment.

The 36-year-old who grew up on the Memphis streets in town to hand out turkeys at a church and other locations ahead of Thanksgiving. He stopped by West Cancer Center in the Memphis suburb of Germantown on Monday, spending time with clinical staff and thanking them for compassionate care given to a relative, the center said in a statement.

Return trips like this one had become common in his life, which ended Wednesday when he was shot multiple times inside Makeda's Cookies, a popular bakery owned by a Black family and known for tasty butter cookies and banana pudding. The gritty southern city where Young Dolph grew up helped him forge the material that fueled his influential career in the hip-hop world — and was ultimately where his life was taken from him.



Dolph

"Our associates were deeply touched by his sincerity and effort to extend such gratitude," the cancer center's statement said. "During his visit, Dolph explained that he would soon venture to donate turkeys to the Memphis community at a variety of community centers across the city before Thanksgiving — which is yet another testament to his gracious heart."

Friends and associates of Dolph handed out Thanksgiving turkeys at a neighborhood church Friday in Memphis, Tennessee, two days after he was gunned down in broad daylight inside his favorite bakery.

Known for acts of charity in his hometown, the hip-hop artist and label owner had helped organize the event at St. James Missionary Baptist Church and was going to participate before he was fatally shot Wednesday.

Undaunted, members of his music label, Paper Route Empire, along with church volunteers and community activists, distributed dozens of turkeys, stuffing mix and cranberry sauce — and said "happy Thanksgiving" — to people driving past the church.

Reflection

It was the type of event Young Dolph, who grew up in the Castalia neighborhood where the church is located, has been organizing for years, often without the reporters and cameras present Friday. Before the event, volunteers spoke quietly among themselves or sat in solemn reflection as his music played outside the church on the sunny afternoon.

Label employee Bee Bee Jones, 38, helped hand out the food, honoring his friend of 30 years.

"When I hear his music, I just break down," said Jones, who spoke with a reporter while sitting on the rear bumper of a U-Haul truck full of 300 turkeys. "The truth in all of it, and where he came from, that's what really gets to me sometimes. This is what he would want us to do right here, still keep on giving. He came from nothing, but he wanted to make sure everybody got some."

Police on Friday kept searching for suspects in the killing, which shook Memphis and shocked the entertainment world. Police have released photos taken from surveillance video that shows two men exiting a white Mercedes and shooting Young Dolph before fleeing.

The killing of Young Dolph, 36, whose real name was Adolph Thornton Jr., intensified cries against violence in the Memphis area, which has seen high-profile shootings at a K-8 school, a post office and a grocery store in the past two months.

Police continued to search for suspects in the killing, which shook Memphis and shocked the entertainment world as another senseless act of gun violence against an African American man. Police on Thursday released photos taken from surveillance video that shows two men exiting a white Mercedes-Benz and shooting Young Dolph before fleeing.

Since his killing, social media has been filled with messages of respect and love for the rapper, whose music discussed drug dealing, street crime and his crack-addicted parents alongside hard-earned lessons of strength and perseverance in the face of difficult circumstances. His legacy as a fiercely independent artist and businessman was cemented in the hip-hop universe.

His acts of charity galvanized his reputation in Memphis, a city dealing with poverty, gun violence and disproportionately high incarceration rates of Black people. In 2020, Young Dolph donated \$25,000 to Hamilton High School for new sports equipment at his alma mater.

Earlier this year, he visited children on the day before Easter at St. James Missionary Baptist Church. There, he met Pastor Rodney Herron, who asked him to return to the modest church to hand out turkeys to families before Thanksgiving.

The rapper happily agreed and was planning to hand out the food on Friday. Despite his death, the event will go on, Herron said.

Community

"This is a nice young man, he was down to earth," Herron said. "I am distraught, because I knew what the young man was doing for the community, how far he was going to go in the community. ... He came back to where his heart was, and he always gave."

Herron said Young Dolph had discussed buying a local community center. Herron said he wants to push to rename the center after the hip-hop artist.

The rapper also was scheduled to attend a holiday event for children of incarcerated parents at a church in December, said Tameka Greer, executive director of Memphis Artists for Change.

"His generosity knew no bounds," she said in a statement. "Young Dolph didn't deserve to die, and neither do the children, youth, and adults who lose their lives to gun violence every day."

Young Dolph, whose real name was Adolph Thornton Jr., began his career by handing out CDs in the streets. He later released numerous mixtapes, starting with 2008's "Paper Route Campaign," and multiple studio albums. He collaborated with fellow rappers Key Glock, Megan Thee Stallion, T.I., Gucci Mane, 2 Chainz and others.

"The streets know me, everyone already knows who I am," he said in a 2014 interview with VICE. "Real respects real, so if you can get Memphis to love you, you have to have something real there. Memphis doesn't just support anybody."



Ruben Blades accepts the person of the year award at the 22nd annual Latin Grammy Awards on Thursday, Nov. 18, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)



Gloria Estefan arrives at the 22nd annual Latin Grammy Awards on Thursday, Nov. 18, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)



Rock



Bowie

Variety

LONDON: Photographer **Mick Rock**, whose iconic portraits of rock stars including **David Bowie**, **Lou Reed** and **Debbie Harry** saw him dubbed "the man who shot the 70s," has died. He was 72.

A statement posted Friday on Rock's official social media accounts said: "It is with the heaviest of hearts that we share our beloved psychedelic renegade Mick Rock has made the Jungian journey to the other side." No cause of death was given.

Born in London in 1948, Rock studied at Cambridge University, where he met **Syd Barrett**, a founding member of Pink Floyd, who became one of his first subjects.

He was Bowie's official photographer in the early 1970s, helping to make the singer's alter ego, androgynous alien superstar **Ziggy Stardust**, a sensation.

Rock went on to take some of the most famous music photos of the era: a topless **Iggy Pop** on the cover of the "Raw Power" album; a spectral **Lou Reed** on "Transformer"; the members of Queen, their faces part-shadowed, for the cover of "Queen II."

"People say, 'Man, how did you get all these pictures? Well, because no one else was interested,'" Rock told the Associated Press in 2002. "It wasn't like I was battling other photographers to get the pictures."

Rock had heart bypass surgery and a kidney transplant in the 1990s after years of rock 'n' roll excess.

"I lived the life," he said later. "As well as taking the pictures, I lived the life."

He gave up cigarettes and drugs and carried on working, taking images of musicians including **Pharrell Williams**, **Lady Gaga** and **Miley Cyrus**.

"Those who had the pleasure of existing in his orbit, know that Mick was always so much more than 'The Man Who Shot The 70s,'" the statement announcing his death said. "He was a photographic poet - a true force of nature who spent his days doing exactly what he loved, always in his own delightfully outrageous way."

Sharon Osbourne tweeted: "We lost a legend, a true artist Mick Rock."

Queen guitarist **Brian May** said he was "sad and shocked to hear of the passing of our friend, photographer Mick Rock."

He said the "Queen II" cover picture "gave us an enduring image, inspired part of the 'look' of our Bohemian Rhapsody video a couple of years later, and has been widely imitated by others over the years since then." (AP)

NEW YORK: This year's winner of the

Music

For Blades, public service worth more than all Grammys

'Power doesn't corrupt, it unmasks'

MEXICO CITY, Nov. 20, (AP) — Sometimes one may wonder what would have happened if Ruben Blades had been president of Panama. Would he have been good? Hated? Was it better that he didn't?

"I think it would have been good for the country," Blades said Thursday in a video call interview just hours before of the Latin Grammy Awards in Las Vegas. It turned into a huge night for Blades, who was honored as the Latin Recording Academy Person of the Year and won album of the year for "SALSWING!" and best salsa album for "SALSA PLUS!", both with Roberto Delgado & Orquesta.

"People say that power corrupts. I don't think so. I believe that power unmasks," he added. "They don't buy you if you don't sell yourself. ... Public service to me is worth more than a Grammy or all the Grammys I have earned or whatever they give me. There is nothing better than serving your country and your people, period."

What's happened since he ran unsuccessfully for president in 1994 is that he remained faithful to music and acting. (His fans are still eager to see more of him as Daniel Salazar in the series "Fear The Walking Dead.") And he held a public service position as Minister of Tourism from 2004 to 2009, without any of the corruption or nepotism scandals that often plague Latin American politicians. In fact, as seen in the 2018 documentary "Ruben Blades is Not My Name," he can still walk the streets of Panama and be greeted by people.

After being fascinated by the music of Frankie Lyman and The Teenagers in the movie "Rock Rock Rock!" when he was about 10, Blades entered music through a very back door in the '70s but never left.

Although, "contrary to what people who don't know what they are talking about say, I did not leave Panama with the purpose of being a musician, I left Panama because I was not going to be a lawyer in a dictatorship," said

Blades, whose parents left the country before him because of a problem with military leader Manuel Noriega. "When I arrived in Florida to be with my family, there were going through a lot of hardship and I couldn't help them because my law degree didn't work in Florida. So I called FANIA, which was the largest salsa record company."

Richie Ray and Bobby Cruz from FANIA had recorded Blades's "Guaguancó Triste" in 1971 and he was hoping they would give him a job as a songwriter or musician. The only spot they had available was as the person in charge of the label's mail room.

Trophies

"I started in the FANIA mail room and Ray Barretto found me there ... Someone told him, 'That guy that's there stamping correspondence in FANIA, that guy sings and writes songs,'" Blades recalled. "Barretto went to see me and I auditioned and he placed me in the orchestra with Tito Gómez, may he rest in peace, and that's how I started in New York in 1974."

"Buscando Guayaba," "Pedro Navaja," "Plástico," "Prohibido Olvidar," "Buscando América" and "Desapariciones" are some of the songs by FANIA's former mail clerk who, with the two trophies from Thursday, now has 10 Latin Grammys and nine Grammy Awards.

"As long as I can sing and provide to the public with the level of quality that I demand of myself and that they are used to receiving from me, I will continue working. But the moment I feel that the voice or the disposition, the enthusiasm, is not there, that is the day that will I stop immediately, just the way I stopped smoking," he said. "Music will never leave me because music is something that helps you spiritually, it helps you even therapeutically and keeps you in communication with the best in the universe."

On Wednesday, Blades was celebrated at the traditional Person of the

Year benefit concert by dozens of artists, including Andrés Calamaro, Vicensino, Flor de Toloache, Diego Torres, Farruko and Joaquín Sabina, who performed covers of his songs.

"The fact that he (Sabina) traveled from Spain to share this moment with me seems very special to me," he said. "I told him, 'You could have done it via Zoom.' It surprised me and I appreciate it immensely, I admire him very much."

"I was also surprised by Christina Aguilera. I didn't even know that she knew me," he said about the American singer, who performed "Camaleón" with an arrangement similar to the Ecuadorian pasillo.

The 73-year-old star emphasizes that music and acting always require teamwork. His on-screen companions through his more than 50 film and television credits have included Harrison Ford, Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton, Danny Glover, Robert De Niro.

"I learn a lot from my coworkers," Blades said. "I really like working and learning from other people."

However, he lamented that there are not many Latino figures in film and television in the United States.

"Despite the fact that we are the minority group with the largest number of people and despite our contributions that help greatly to the gross domestic product and the culture of the United States," he said. "So the presence of a Latino there is something that seems necessary to me to represent all the contributions that we make."

The third constant in Blades' life has been his search for social justice, backing causes ranging from the fight to hunger and poverty, to supporting migrants and HIV patients.

"Fame provides a stage and an opportunity to express opinions that are going to have an impact and should be a positive impact on our society," said Blades. "It is positive that an artist speaks in a responsible and informed manner on issues that otherwise might not attract attention."

National Book Award for poetry, **Martín Espada**, is among 20 Puerto Rican writers chosen as the inaugural fellows for a program co-funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Flamboyant Foundation's Arts Fund.

The Letras Boricuas Fellows are a blend of new and established voices who also include the fiction writers **Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa** and **Francisco Font Acevedo**, the creative nonfiction writers

Mercy Romero and **Vanessa Mártil** and children's writer **Mrinali Álvarez Astacio**.

Each fellow receives a \$25,000 grant. "Twenty vibrant Puerto Rican voices make up this remarkable initial cohort, each one resonant and powerful, poet **Elizabeth Alexander**, president of the Mellon Foundation, said in a statement Friday. "These are writers who convey the depth and breadth of Puerto Rico's stories and histories across literary genre and a range of

styles, and who affirm the vital significance of the word through their work."

The two foundations will choose another 20 fellows next year and plan a 2023 gathering in **San Juan** for the 40 selected writers. (AP)

NEW YORK: A **Frida Kahlo** self-portrait that shows the artist with the face of her husband, **Diego Rivera**, in the middle of her forehead, sold at Sotheby's in New York on Tuesday for \$34.9 million, an auction record for a work by a Latin American artist.

The 1949 painting, "Diego and I," depicts Kahlo's tumultuous relationship with Rivera, the Mexican muralist who was far better known than she was during their lifetimes but whose fame has been eclipsed by hers in recent years.

A Rivera painting had been the previous record-holder for highest auction price for a Latin American artist's work - \$9.8 million in 2018.

Anna Di Stasi, Sotheby's director of Latin American art, said "Diego and I" was painted in the same year that Rivera started an affair with her friend, the film star **Maria Félix**. Di Stasi described the work as "a painted summary of all of Kahlo's passion and pain, a tour de force of the raw emotive power of the artist at the peak of her abilities."

A Sotheby's spokesperson said the painting was bought **Eduardo F. Costantini**, the founder of a museum in Buenos Aires, for his private collection. Sotheby's did not disclose the identity of the seller. (AP)



Christina Aguilera honors Ruben Blades at the Latin Recording Academy Person of the Year gala honoring Ruben Blades at the Mandalay Bay on Wednesday, Nov. 17, in Las Vegas. (AP)