

Arts & Entertainment

Mourning for Nipsey Hussle Goes Well Beyond His Music

Hussle, killed Sunday at 33, is remembered for entrepreneurship and philanthropic work that went well beyond ‘giving back’

By Jonathan Landrum and Andrew Dalton, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Nipsey Hussle thought Marathon Clothing could be a seed to revive the impoverished Los Angeles community where he grew up.

The 33-year-old rapper and his business partner purchased property in the Crenshaw neighborhood, intending to knock it down and erect a six-story residential building atop a commercial plaza, with Marathon as its anchor.

But as Hussle stood in that same plaza Sunday afternoon, he was shot and killed. On Monday, the neighborhood he sought to improve mourned him for much more than his music.

Hussle’s philanthropic work went well beyond the usual celebrity “giving back” ethos, and political and community

leaders were as quick and effusive in their praise as his fellow hip-hop artists.

“Nipsey’s activism, leadership and dedication to community was an inspiration for Californians and beyond,” tweeted California senator and presidential candidate Kamala Harris. “His senseless death leaves us worse off.”

By Monday, hundreds of people formed a circle in front of the closed store to pay their respects. A memorial of candles, flowers and paintings of Hussle took shape in front of the store and in the parking lot. Blaring loudly through several speakers, some of Hussle’s popular songs were being played including “The Weather,” “Double Up” and “Hussle & Motivate.”

Some shed tears. Many mourners pulled out their phones to document the scene. Others

yelled, “Long live Nipsey.”

Dontae Coleman, 28, who lives in the neighborhood, fell to his knees and cried and called Hussle “a legend.”

“Someone changed history yesterday,” he said, referring to the gunman.

Coleman commended the rapper for trying to uplift his own community first instead of simply going elsewhere.

“A lot of people who get rich don’t come back here,” he said. “He’s rare. A lot of people like him don’t come around often.”

Denise Francis Woods, a neighborhood resident who is running for City Council, remembered Hussle as a teen who appeared unlikely to do much of anything.

“He used to sell his demo tapes right here on these corners for \$5,” Woods said. “He would stand out here and hand them out. People would



Fans of rapper Nipsey Hussle gather at a makeshift memorial in the parking lot of the Marathon Clothing store in Los Angeles, April 1. Hussle was killed in a shooting outside his clothing store on Sunday.

tease him. They didn’t think that this would work out and look what happened. He persevered, he stayed in, he never gave up.” The effort took him to a whole other level “where he ended up owning property on the same corner.”

An autopsy performed Monday found that Hussle’s death was a homicide, caused by bullet wounds to the head and torso. Police did not re-

veal a motive or publicly identify any suspects. Two other men standing near Hussle were shot and wounded.

Los Angeles Police Commissioner Steve Soboroff tweeted that he and Police Chief Michel Moore had agreed to meet with Hussle on Monday to talk about ways to stop gang violence.

Hussle, whose real name was Ermias Asghe-

dom, was an Eritrean-American father of two who was engaged to actress Lauren London.

His hip-hop friends and other stars, including Rihanna and Snoop Dogg, mourned on social media, with many pointing out his particular role in uplifting African Americans.

“I’ll remember the beauty that he saw in our community. And the

See Hussle on page 9



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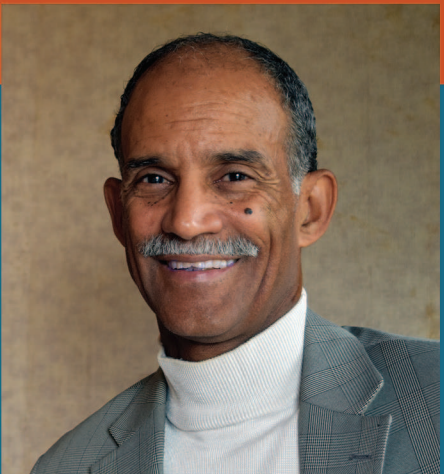


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