

Nipsey Hussle, a hometown hero, immortalized at LA memorial

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LOS ANGELES — Nipsey Hussle’s legacy as a persistent rapper, community activist, uniter, a doting father, a protective sibling and a loving son were underscored at his public memorial service on Thursday, with deeply personal testimonies from those closest to the rapper, including his actress-fiancee Lauren London, collaborator and dear friend Snoop Dogg and his mother, who said she was at peace with the death of her “superhero” son.

Beyonce and Jay-Z were among the big-name celebrities who attended the three-hour event in Los Angeles at the Staples Center, where the last celebrity funeral held at the concert arena was



A silver hearse carrying the body of Nipsey Hussle, whose given name was Ermias Asghedom, leaves Staples Center in a procession following the Celebration of Life memorial service for the late rapper on Thursday at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

AP Photo/Chris Pizzello

Michael Jackson’s in 2009. The arena was packed with more than 21,000 fans and drove home the important impact Hussle — just 33

when he died — had on his city and the rest of the world. “I’m very proud of my son. My son Ermias Joseph Asghedom was a

great man,” said Angelique Smith, dressed in all white. Standing onstage with Hussle’s father, Dawit Asghedom, she declared: “Ermias

was a legacy.” London, who was in dark sunglasses, was emotional but stood strong onstage as she told the audience: “I’ve never felt this type of pain before.” London called Hussle “majestic” and “brilliant” and said she had learned so much from his presence. She added though she was hurting, she was really sad for their son Kross, whom she feared wouldn’t remember his dad: “My pain is for my two-year-old.” Snoop Dogg’s words to immortalize his friend were both serious and silly, as he told old stories about Hussle and their brotherhood. “This a tough one right here,” he said, visibly shaken but keeping his composure. Snoop thanked Hussle’s parents multiple times and told his father that “you

picked up another son in me.” Hussle’s father said he knew his son was strong because when he was born, the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck but he prevailed. “He was a fighter,” he said. Earlier in the ceremony, Hussle’s children also appeared onstage to pay tribute. London’s son with rapper Lil Wayne, Cameron Carter, said days after Hussle died, he had a dream he saw the rapper. “I realized Ermias told me what heaven was like. He told me it was paradise,” Cameron said. Cameron then told the audience that Hussle would look at him through the window at times and say “respect.” Cameron then asked the crowd to say “respect” in unison, and they complied.

BRIEFLY

WikiLeaks’ Assange hauled from embassy, faces U.S. charge

LONDON (AP) — British police on Thursday hauled a bearded and shouting Julian Assange from the Ecuadorian Embassy where he was holed up for nearly seven years, and the U.S. charged the WikiLeaks founder with conspiring with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to get their hands on government secrets.

Police arrested Assange after the South American nation revoked the political asylum that had protected him in the embassy, and he was brought before a British court — the first step in an extradition battle that he has vowed to fight.

Ecuador’s President Lenin Moreno said he decided to evict the 47-year-old Assange from the embassy after “repeated violations to international conventions and daily-life protocols,” and he later lashed out at him during a speech in Quito, calling the Australian native a “spoiled brat” who treated his hosts with disrespect.

In Washington, the U.S. Justice Department accused Assange of conspiring with Manning to break into a classified government computer at the Pentagon. The charge was announced after Assange was taken into custody.

Assange took refuge in the embassy in 2012 after he was released on bail in Britain while facing extradition to Sweden on sexual assault allegations that have since been dropped. He refused to leave the embassy, fearing arrest and extradition to the U.S. for publishing classified military and diplomatic cables through WikiLeaks.

Prosecutors paint Avenatti as con man, he says claim ‘bogus’

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Federal prosecutors painted a picture of attorney Michael Avenatti on Thursday as a scheming operator who stole millions of dollars from clients, cheated on his taxes, lied to investigators and tried to hide money from debtors in bankruptcy proceedings.

A 36-count indictment returned late Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Santa Ana, California, offered the most damning and detailed account to date of Avenatti’s apparent fall from grace a year after he seized the spotlight while crusading for porn actress Stormy Daniels in her legal battles against President Donald Trump.

Avenatti embezzled settlement funds and proceeds from other matters he handled from five clients and doled out small portions of what they were due to “lull” them into thinking they were getting what they were owed, prosecutors said.

“Money generated from one set of crimes was used to further other crimes,” U.S. Attorney Nick Hanna told reporters. “Typically in the form of payments designed to string along victims so as to prevent Mr. Avenatti’s financial house of cards from collapsing.”

Avenatti denied the charges on Twitter, saying he had made powerful enemies and would plead not guilty and fight the case.

Authorities say deputy’s son behind fires at black churches

OPELOUSAS, La. (AP) — The suspect in a string of fires that destroyed three black churches in rural Louisiana is the white son of a sheriff’s deputy whose father helped arrange for his arrest, authorities said Thursday.

Holden Matthews, 21, was jailed without bail on arson charges in connection with the blazes in and around Opelousas, a city of 16,000 where the flame-gutted remains of the buildings evoked memories of civil rights era violence.

Louisiana Fire Marshal Butch Browning offered no motive for the fires. He and other officials stopped short of calling them hate crimes. Eric Rommal, the agent in charge of the New Orleans FBI office, said investigators were still looking into whether the fires were “bias motivated.”

Browning said there were no indications that anyone else was involved and the danger to churches was over.

“This community is safe again,” he said at a news conference. “We are extremely, unequivocally confident that we have the person who is responsible for these tragic crimes.”

Sudan’s military overthrows president amid bloody protests

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan’s military overthrew President Omar al-Bashir on Thursday after months of bloody protests against his repressive 30-year rule. But pro-democracy demonstrators vowed to keep up their campaign in the streets after the military said it would govern the country for the next two years.

Al-Bashir’s fall came a week after Algeria’s long-ruling, military-backed president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, was driven from power. Together, the developments echoed the Arab Spring uprisings eight years ago that brought down autocrats across the Mideast.

The announcement of the arrest and removal of the 75-year-old al-Bashir was made by a veteran insider in his government, Defense Minister Awad Mohammed Ibn Ouf, who is under U.S. sanctions for links to atrocities in Sudan’s Darfur conflict.

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