

Archive | Archive Portal Prince Superfans (Xaykaothao) 01FB2MF117S95SPX5N1645EKTR

SPEAKER 1: Well, as we know, Prince was loved by fans of all racial backgrounds, and his death last year had a profound impact on people all over the world, most especially for two Black Minnesotans. Doualy Xaykaothao reports.

DOUALY You might think you've heard just about every Prince story there is. But this one may surprise you. Our story
XAYKAOTHAO: starts in North Minneapolis where a 26-year-old Brynne Crockett was born. She's Black, proud, and passionate. She's been rhyiming since she was 8. Today she's a hip hop artist known in the local music scene as BdotCroc.

[MUSIC PLAYING] Hope you like what you see

Cause the vision is clear, the game been waiting on me, shit

Ready [INAUDIBLE] set, go

BRYNNE You may not know me, BdotCroc, living in a basement of royalty, known as the Prince, you know, or the King--
CROCKETT:

DOUALY Did you catch that in her freestyle rap? She lives in the basement where Prince lived as a teenager. Crockett and
XAYKAOTHAO: her family moved there when she was still in high school, more than 10 years ago.

BRYNNE Hey, welcome.
CROCKETT:

DOUALY Last week she invited me into her basement bedroom.
XAYKAOTHAO:

Thanks for having us.

BRYNNE [INAUDIBLE] upstairs. And this is the basement. So when we first moved here, my mom and the realtor, the
CROCKETT: people that had owned the house too, were like showing us around and stuff. And we came down here and my mom was like, this is a really special basement, you know? And I'm like, I'm looking at it like it's drywall, it's cement floors, I'm like, there's nothing special about down here.

DOUALY In other words, she didn't much care for the basement. And she wasn't a super fan of Prince.
XAYKAOTHAO:

BRYNNE I wasn't like a diehard Prince fan, right? Like, it was just like if I went somewhere out of town and I'd be like,
CROCKETT: where are you from? Minnesota, and the only thing they would know is like, Oh, like Prince, like yeah, OK, cool.

In reality, he was also an urban myth because like I'd never seen-- like, I think the closest I got to Prince was at a basketball game. The Lynx were in the championship and I heard he was there like in a suite or something.

Like, Prince was like a ghost or something like that. So it was like, I never seen him, I never like had the opportunity-- like back in the day with my mom and them, they got to see him go from local to national. So they seen him playing parks and stuff like that. For me--

DOUALY Her first memories of his music is as a child roller skating around a rink to tunes of Prince. Of course, she
XAYKAOTHAO: completely tuned out her mother's lectures about the basement, those historic jam sessions that Prince had with his childhood best friend, Andre Simone, and pal, Morris Day. The two later became Prince's first bandmates in the late 1970s.

So when Prince died, something curious happened, roses and other flowers started showing up at her family's home on their front porch in front of her basement door. The family was suddenly inundated with media requests. CNN called. Film crews wanted to tour the basement. International fans wanted to see the space where Prince created his Minneapolis sound. Crockett said it was touching, but she also feared coming home to die hard emotional Prince fans.

BRYNNE CROCKETT: I don't want to come downstairs in my room and see nobody like rolling on the floor, like trying to absorb the purpleness or something. Like, it's an amazing thing, but it was stressful in the beginning for my mother.

DOUALY XAYKAOTHAO: Days after the media frenzy, Crockett looked up more of Prince's story. That's when she discovered his social activism, his political songs, his androgynous style, his corporate battles with music giants, and his influence on young artists.

BRYNNE CROCKETT: The thing I loved about him the most that I really identify with is how he was himself so unapologetically. Like, he did not care really what people's ideas of normatives were, or how he should be or what he should do. And he was very bold I feel like in his music and in his statements and things that he said. And he was so serious about his craft.

So for me, I think I've just adopted more so like that attitude in the sense of like, this is my art, I'm going to do with it what I want, and give it to the people and let the people make that decision for me, not companies, not people's ideologies of what a female MC should be, you know what I mean? Because he didn't allow himself to be put in any box.

[MUSIC PLAYING] Never mind, sunshine, turned away

Whenever my hopes and dreams

TERRY GRAY: I'm Terry, and I'm a huge Prince fan.

DOUALY XAYKAOTHAO: Terry Gray is in his 40s, born and raised on the East side of Saint Paul.

TERRY GRAY: He was the first person that kind of looked like me, that was Brown, that was playing a really loud guitar.

PRINCE: Like this, y'all ready for the Oldschool?

[GUITAR PLAYING]

DOUALY XAYKAOTHAO: Gray was an early fan of Prince before the movie *Purple Rain* came out, and his life seems to have intertwined with Prince concerts or record releases.

TERRY GRAY: Growing up here in the Twin Cities, there really wasn't Black radio. We had KMOJ that you could get if you were like three blocks away from it in Minneapolis. You know, so I was always on the East side of Saint Paul, or in the heart of Saint Paul, that's where I grew up, and we couldn't get KMOJ.

And back then, our radio was all White. So I grew up with White artists. Which isn't a bad thing because I love all music, but he was the first person that was doing something similar to the folks that I had heard-- I was listening to on the radio. And he was Brown, or mocha Brown, [LAUGHS] as he used to say. [LAUGHS]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DOUALY Disappointed that he couldn't be like his Black guitar hero, Gray chose the next best thing, recording and
XAYKAOTHAO: producing. He's now an Emmy award audio engineer at TPT, the Twin Cities Public Broadcasting Station. Here he recalls a moment when Prince appeared behind him at Paisley Park.

TERRY GRAY: And it was one of those dance party deals, and I happened to be standing in the hallway, and he had this door that was in a wall. You didn't know that was a door. It was so-- Again, that part of that myth and mystique thing, he just appeared.

And when I tell that, people were like, Oh, you're hyping this up. No, there's no hype. We were standing there and all of a sudden my friend's eyes got really big because he was behind me. And I turned around and there he was.

My first initial impression, and I'm short, but I'm like, dude, this dude is really short. But then when he got on stage, he might as well been 10,000 feet tall. Because that's the swagger and the chops, the skills, and just the-- everything that went into that package.

[PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION, "KISS"] Don't have to be rich to be my girl

Don't have to be cool to rule my world

Ain't no particular sign I'm more compatible with

I just want your extra time and your kiss

DOUALY Gray says many artists that he loved died last year, including David Bowie, but the death of Prince, nothing
XAYKAOTHAO: compares to that.

TERRY GRAY: He wasn't family, but he felt like he was, and to a lot of us, that's what he felt like. Because he was always there. I find myself all the time going, damn, I miss him. I'll see something on YouTube or a song will come on and I'll go, I really miss that dude like he was a brother or something.

Prince died. Prince died. That guy is gone. And I must have said that for two weeks. And because we're coming up on the anniversary, it's hard, because I'm reliving that day.

DOUALY For him, it's still hard to imagine a world without Prince. Doualy Xaykaothao, Minnesota Public Radio News.
XAYKAOTHAO: