

Conversation with Chantel Thomas Capone's sister

Written by Gza Genius ID367

Thursday, 11 November 2004 11:29 -

On Feb. 1, 2001, Capone "Pony Ryder" Thomas, 20 years old, was gunned down on Highway 280 in San Francisco's Ingleside District. Capone left behind four brothers and two sisters, including Chantel, along with an unborn baby girl, who is now three years old. I've never meet Capone or Chantel, but she asked me to add her brother to the panel because he was a true fallen soldier. I was able to chat with Chantel for a while to see how life has been for their family and for his daughter since his death, and this is what she had to say ...

Apollonia: Capone left behind a daughter, who is now 3 years old. How has his death affected her life?

Chantel: Capone's daughter will NEVER get the chance to see what it is like to bond with her daddy because his life was cut short at such a young age. His daughter often wakes up in the middle of the night asking can she see her daddy, and does he eat McDonald's like her. She knows a lot about her daddy to have never met him before because that is what he would've wanted for her, and we try to tell her as much as she wants to know.

We have shown her several pictures of him, and if you ask her who her daddy is, she will respond, Capone Thomas. It's very sad to hear her ask questions about her father because even though he's been gone for a while, we still miss him and we know that these questions will be everlasting. She knows that he's in heaven and she asked me one day, "Does my daddy love me and does he cry?" I didn't know how to respond, so while holding back tears, I just told her that her daddy loves all of us and that he doesn't cry because he's a big boy. She just said okay and didn't say anything else about it

Apollonia: What were some of Capone's dreams and aspirations before he was murdered?

Chantel: My brother's dream was to buy a big house and have his whole immediate family live in it. Before his death, Capone loved to drive his gas car and scooter up and down Lakeview. He also loved to fix up cars and sell them. His goal was to get his GED, but he never got the chance to fulfill his goal of doing that. Even though Capone didn't get a chance to graduate from high school, he was still very smart and had a wonderful personality.

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I can remember when he picked me up from school just two days before he was killed; my teacher came outside to walk me to the car and she seen Capone and asked him, "Hey, are you ready for me to help you get that GED?" He replied, "I am now more ready then ever." At that point, I knew that he wanted to change his life for the better.

Apollonia: Describe your brother and what he meant to you.

Chantel: Capone was very loving and it wasn't nothing he wouldn't do for his family or friends. We had a special bond that was like no other. I mean no brother and sister relationship can compare to ours. I remember the times when he used to come home and I would run up to him and say, "Brother, can I go with you today?" and he would say, "Yeah, I ain't going nowhere, but you can come ride with me." And I used to be so excited.

My brother would always hug and kiss me and tell me that he loved me. There was nothing that he wouldn't do for me, and that's one of the reasons why it hurt me so bad when he was taken away from me so soon. I never thought in a million years that he wouldn't be here to see me graduate from high school or college. When he died, I was four months away from my high school graduation, and when he died I thought my life would too end, but it didn't.

I gained enough strength to accomplish my goals and graduate because I know that was what he would've wanted me to do. I continued to go to school and I graduated with a 3.80 GPA, and I know Pone was there with me every step of the way.

I think his death affected me and my family because he was the one who kept us together. If we had a disagreement on something, we would say, "Let's ask Pone," and whatever he said, that's what we would go on. Capone was like a father to me, a brother and a friend. I miss him so much, to where I can easily cry myself to sleep just thinking about days and years we spent together.

Apollonia: Why do you think young Black men are killing themselves so rapidly?

Chantel: I think these young black men are killing themselves over a lot of hatred and jealousy.

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Young men these days are getting killed because of what type of car they're driving or where they grew up at or even smaller things like money.

I wish that these young men could come together and talk their problems out, because shooting their way out of the situation is causing more problems. When you shoot and kill a man, his family and friends are seeking revenge against you and your family, and the situation doesn't come to an end until everyone involved is 6 feet under.

I think "Turf War" is another reason why young Black men are dying in the streets of San Francisco. I look at it like this, I'm not gonna die over my turf because my turf won't die over me. When I'm sitting in jail for life or dead, these streets will still be here. It's just not worth it.

Apollonia: Why do you think Capone is a fallen soldier?

Chantel: When Pone died, my words won't even begin to explain how I felt. It was as if my whole life was coming to an end because I knew he was one of the people I could talk to when I needed someone. My brother is a fallen soldier because he died doing what he loved best; riding around in his car and being himself.

Capone was a "keep it real" type of person, and I've never ran across anyone who said anything bad about Pone. He just kept it real at all times and if you didn't keep it real he didn't have anything to do with you. At the age of 20, Capone had done and had a lot of stuff that some guy at the age of 40 have not had nor seen. His smile was so adorable, he would walk in a room and all eyes would be on him because his personality was loved by everyone who knew him.

Apollonia: If Capone was still alive, what do you think he would've wanted to be remembered by?

Chantel: If Capone was still alive, he would've wanted to be remembered by his flashy cars, nice clothes and the way he cared for himself and his family. Sometimes I sit and think about him and I say, wow, he was only 20. And now at 21, I try to compare my life to his, but it doesn't add up.

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I will never forget how Pone used to come in the house and be like, "Chani, where you at? I got something for you." Whether it was an outfit or some food, whatever he had for me was always a joy. I can remember back when we were younger growing up in Lakeview, we had a little swimming pool in the back. No one could make me get in the pool, and I would think that my brothers and cousins would let me drown.

But Pone told me he wouldn't let anything happen to me, and when he said that I decided to jump in and I scrubbed my knee because it was only two feet. I told him he said he wasn't gonna let nothing happen to me and he said, "Okay, I mean when you get older like me I won't let anything happen to you."

Now that I'm older, I know Pone's watching over me and making sure I'm on the right path. I go to school and work every day now, and if I have a bad day, I always ask Capone to help me get through this day and to please watch over me as I continue to do what I need to do in order to survive.

Chantel's final thoughts:

I just want to say a few things to the people who condone violence in our streets and neighborhoods: Please just put the guns down and pick up some books, or spend time with your kids. Maybe go play basketball at a neighborhood gym.

Why kill someone's daddy, someone's son, someone's brother, someone's husband? It's not worth it because when you do harm to someone it will always come back around to haunt you whether it's to you or your loved one, it will come back.

I don't recommend shooting because it won't solve anything, it just makes it worst. I lost seven people to violence and it hurts to go to a funeral and see a lifeless body in a casket. Just please let's try to work it out for your own sake ... and always keep GOD in your corner because the one I serve rains on the just as well as the unjust!

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