



At The World loses Her Best

One in a Million
at the prime of her career

Aaliyah Dana Haughton
January 16, 1979 - August 25, 2001

By Jabari Jerkins

On Aug. 25, 2001, while more than a few of us were worried about how bad the Tar Heels got beat by the Oklahoma Sooners, the music industry, the world, the Haughton family and friends lost something much more important than a game.

On that day, Aaliyah and eight other people (Gina Smith, Keith Wallace, Douglas Kratz, Scott Gallin, Eric Forman, Anthony Dodd, Christopher Maldonado and L. Maradel) were killed in a plane crash. The music industry and the world lost a singer that had made three good albums, and still had limitless potential. The world also lost a lady with great acting potential, as we saw in her performance in "Romeo Must Die". We lost a lady that was going to do what few others have done. She was set to parlay her singing career into an acting career; she was going to appear in three movies ("Queen of the Damned" and the two upcoming "Matrix" sequels) in the next few years.

We cannot talk about Aaliyah without talking about her musical career. She came onto the music scene in 1995, amidst a lot of controversy. At the same time that her album, entitled "Age Ain't Nothing but a Number", was being released, there was a

rumor floating around that Aaliyah, who was then 16, and R. Kelly, who was then in his late twenties, were romantically involved, even married by some accounts. That controversy brought her, and her album to the spotlight, but the album is what kept her in the spotlight, and made people forget about the controversy. People were too busy getting down to "Back and Forth", "Age Ain't Nothing but a Number", "At Your Best", and other great songs on the album to worry about the rumors about her and R. Kelly. Her second album, entitled "One in a Million", was just as good, if not better, than her first. Tracks like "One in a Million", "Four Page Letter", and "Hot Like Fire" gave people more of what they had gotten in Aaliyah's first album: great vocals accompanied by nice beats. After her second album, Aaliyah did not come out with another album until the release of her self-titled album in 2001, just before her death. In the time between her second and last albums, Aaliyah made her acting debut, appearing in "Romeo Must Die". Her death came about a month after the release of her third album, which includes great tracks such as "We Need a Resolution" and "Rock the Boat".

Even if you are not a big fan of Aaliyah

and her music, the death of Aaliyah had to affect you. A large portion of the people that listen to hip hop music, like Aaliyah, are young people. The fact that a singer/actress died at such a young age—twenty-two—makes many of us reconsider our own mortality. The death of Aaliyah also affects the public at large. Aaliyah's plane crashing, coupled with the tragedies at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania, makes us all think twice about flying anywhere.

However, people that knew her lost much more than the singer and actress we saw. Her family—parents Diane and Michael Haughton and brother Rashad—lost Aaliyah Dana Haughton, a very important member of their family. Artists who knew and worked with her, like Ginuwine, Timbaland, Missy Elliot and Janet Jackson, lost an inspiration and great friend. These artists, as well as Aaliyah's brother Rashad, did a short tribute to Aaliyah at the MTV Video Music Awards on Sept. 6, 2001. One of the fan letters that was read during the tribute said, "We haven't lost anyone. We've gained an angel". I feel that same way. Aaliyah will always be remembered and missed by the black community as a whole.