

Christopher Wong Won, Rapper and a Founder of 2 Live Crew, Dies at 53

By The Associated Press

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Christopher Wong Won, known as Fresh Kid Ice, a founding member of the notorious hip-hop group 2 Live Crew and the first notable rapper of Asian descent, died on Thursday in Miami. He was 53.

The group's manager, DJ Debo, said Mr. Wong Won died at a Veterans Affairs hospital but did not specify the cause, saying only that Mr. Wong Won died of a "medical condition."

2 Live Crew gained fame in the 1980s and '90s for its sexually explicit lyrics, which fueled a national debate over the legal limits of artistic freedom.

A judge in Florida ruled that the group's 1989 album, "As Nasty as They Wanna Be," was obscene, leading to the arrest of a record store owner who refused to stop selling it. A year later the group's "Banned in the USA" was the first album to be sold with a "parental advisory" label warning about its content.

Christopher Wong Won was born in 1964 in Port of Spain, Trinidad. His family moved to Brooklyn in 1977.

He told Vice last year that many 2 Live Crew fans did not know he was Asian until their videos were released.

Asians, he said in the interview, had been "there in the beginning of hip-hop, but as D.J.'s," staying behind the scenes.

"A lot of people see us as being passive," he added, "but sometimes being passive means that you're learning. Right now, I see us right there with everyone else."

Mr. Wong Won was a founder of 2 Live Crew in California in 1984. The group later moved to Miami.

After the group broke up, Mr. Wong Won released several solo albums. In recent years he had reunited with members of 2 Live Crew for several performances. He wrote a memoir, "My Rise 2 Fame," published in 2015.

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