

## PATCHES OF SORROW QUILT MEMORIALIZES VIOLENT DEATHS IN SOUTHWEST DETROIT

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, December 8, 1993

Author: CAROL TEEGARDIN Free Press Staff Writer

He was known as "Shadow" because he ran so fast that's all of him you could see. Few called David Morales by his real name except his mother. Mary Morales remembers him as a happy-go-lucky kid who liked to joke around, but she admits he was a **Latin Count**, member of one of the most notorious gangs on Detroit's southwest side.

"But, I don't relate to him as a gang member," Morales says. "He didn't smoke. He didn't drink. He didn't do cocaine. He had gone to a boot camp up north for six months and when he came out he wanted to straighten his life out. Two months before he died he got out of the gang but they kept harassing him."

Morales breaks down when she talks about her son's death in April, 1992. It just wasn't his time to go, she says through her tears. She lost another son, Mario, Moralescq, in 1986 due to a gun accident. He died at 16 and she got closer to Shadow after that. That made losing him all the harder.

One who knows this all too well is Yolanda Salazarcq, the Southwest Youth Assistance Program coordinator at the Clark YMCA. To bring notice to the senseless killings in the area, Salazar helped organize the making of the Youth Memorial Quilt.

Patterned after the AIDS Memorial Quilt, made to remember those who've died of AIDS, the youth quilt hangs at the YMCA as a memorial to local victims of violence.

"Not all the people on our quilt were killed in gang activity. Our quilt is dedicated to victims of street violence in general," says Salazar, 38. "A mother and a daughter were abducted and killed. Another on the quilt is the victim of a carjacking on Michigan Avenue. I wanted to work on the quilt to bring attention to everybody that people are being killed here. We can't pretend it doesn't exist."

The quilt features the names of 25 Southwest Detroiters, including Malice Green, who was killed by police officers in 1992.

Morales feels the quilt is a positive way to let people in her community know that these kind of killings occur far too often. She especially hopes young people who see the quilt will realize the ugliness of gangs and avoid them.

Detroit police say gang activity is on the rise and that at least 50 gangs with some 800 members proliferate in Detroit, many of them in the southwest area. Non-members are not usually the direct targets of gunfire, but the horror touches everyone.

The Youth Memorial Quilt may help heal some of that horror.

It was a friend who put David Morales' white and gold patch on the quilt. It reads: "You'll always be the Shadow in our hearts."

But the Shadow people remember is a different person according to who's doing the remembering. Some describe him as a sensitive, friendly guy who loved children. Others say he was a ranking member of the **Latin Counts** who could be as tough as the streets he grew up in.

Shadow's girlfriend Kim Lindenbaum, 21, knew little about his gang affiliation. "He kept the gang life to himself," she says.

Lindenbaum had lived with Shadow off and on for about three years. "He got shot out of jealousy," she says. "People looked up to him because he'd never back down and someone didn't like that."

Cyndi Mendoza, 19, the friend who made Shadow's patch for the quilt, says, "The thing about Shadow is that everyone who met him liked him. I guess it was because he could be so funny. If he was dangerous I never saw that side of him."

On April 29, 1992, Shadow was walking down an alley with friends when he was shot by someone on foot. The killer got away. Shadow was 19.

Just before her son's death, Mary Morales had called Shadow from work to tell him not to go out that night, that she had bad vibes.

After midnight, she got a phone call from her mother saying Shadow had been shot. "She told me to go to Henry Ford Hospital," Morales says. "I cried all the way there and when I got there a doctor sat down and told me my son had gunshot wounds to the chest. I knew right then he was gone."

Isaac Ramos, 16, a former **Latin Counts** member, went to Shadow's funeral and still thinks about him.

Shadow's fate makes Ramos fear for his own future. Names of three other friends of his are on the quilt and Ramos says his own home has been shot at by gangs, once three times during the same night.

Ramos explains he was in a gang because those were the guys he grew up with. "It's a way to be accepted," he says. "The gang serves as sort of a family around here, but if I stay in Detroit, the way things are going more than likely I won't live till I'm 24."

"You have to get rid of the guns that are being sold on the street," says Salazar. "I hear shootings most every night and I'm sick and tired of it. The windows of my house have been shot at and I didn't even call the police because they never do anything anyway."

And there's little choice for people who own homes and have lived in the area all their lives. They sit and watch the memorial quilt grow patch by patch.

#### TALES FROM THE YOUTH MEMORIAL QUILT

- rr\* Octavio (Bootis) Viramontez, 17, a reputed **Latin Counts** gang member, died Dec. 23, 1990. He was killed in a drive-by shooting while talking on an outdoor pay phone at a gas station.
- \* Jerry Sam Borieo, 21, died Aug. 20, 1991. He was shot during a car-jacking while washing his car at a southwest Detroit car wash.
- \* Maxmilian Morin, 21, died Jan. 10, 1992. He went to a house party and there was trouble between two men over a woman. When shooting started Morin ran for his car but was shot on the way. Manolo Garza, 18, of Detroit, the man suspected in Morin's death, is on the Detroit Police's most wanted list but is rumored to be in Mexico.
- \* Maria de la luz Estrada, 19, mother of two children, died Jan. 21, 1993. She was killed as she opened the front door of her home.
- \* Linda Mendoza, 20, and her daughter Lisa Marie Mendoza, 1, died March 20, 1993. They were killed by the baby's father, Damon Johnson. The child's body was found in the trunk of the father's car.
- \* Eduardo Santiago, 40, a roofer, died May 15, 1993. He was killed in his home by a bullet apparently meant for his son James (P' wee) Santiago, 18. P' wee worked on the quilt panel for his father with help from Teens Reaching Out, a group sponsored by the Southwest Youth Assistance Program.

Caption: Photo Color

: Cyndi Mendoza, above, made a patch for the Youth Memorial Quilt to remember David (Shadow) Morales, killed last year in a gang-related shooting. Above right, Shadow's mother, Mary Morales, and 7-year-old brother Leonard display his photo.

Right, former gang member Isaac Ramos, 16, reflects on the violence.

\*\*\*

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: WWL

Page: 1F

Index Terms: ANNOUNCEMENT ; SCHEDULE ; CALENDAR ; ART ; EXHIBIT ; JUVENILE ; VIOLENCE ; DEATH

Record Number: 9302140351

Copyright (c) 1993 Detroit Free Press