

FAMILY, STUDENTS MOURN FOR TEACHER

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, June 5, 1986

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They had walked 10 blocks, from Pelham Middle School to the Greater King Solomon Baptist Church at Forest and Fourth streets, dressed on a sunny, hot Wednesday in their Sunday best to honor Billy R. Malone, their friend and teacher.

But the emotion of the moment -- and the mysterious and gruesome manner in which Billy Malone had died -- were too much for many of the approximately 50 students, who had to be led shaking and weeping from the church.

"Did you see how emotional those students were?" asked Pelham principal Louis Jeffries. "That was just a segment of them. We've got 275 of them over in school who've been like this over a week. The day we heard he was dead, they literally fell apart on us."

Billy Malone, a product of Detroit public schools who returned to his neighborhood to teach for the last nine years, was beaten to death in his apartment on King Street, apparently on May 22. His body was found in the ransacked apartment May 27.

Detroit Police Department homicide Lt. James Lally said police have no suspects in the killing. He asked that anyone who may know something about the killing call detectives at 224-4280 anytime.

ACCORDING TO family members, Malone's landlord found the teacher, 32, bludgeoned to death inside his apartment at 69 King St. Because he missed school the previous Friday, it is believed he died sometime Thursday night.

The family said Malone had recently won \$5,000 in the state lottery and that he may have been robbed.

"I'm quite sure it was somebody he knows," said Malone's older brother, Larry. "It's like a mystery; this person probably thinks he's getting away with it."

Billy Malone grew up the fifth of 13 children of Samuel and Vernell Malone, who lived for 33 years in a three-bedroom home in the Jeffries housing project near Temple and Fourth streets.

It was a home where everything was sacrificed for the children's educations.

"All of my kids, they all finished high school except one," Vernell Malone said. "Seven went to college and three finished college."

Josephine Clanton, who lived in the projects across the street from the Malones for 26 years, said Billy's ambition was to teach and that, even as a child, he would get out board and chalk to teach spelling and grammar to his siblings and Clanton's children.

"HE WAS SO proud; I will never forget when they sent him to Jefferson (Elementary School) to teach at the school where he had went to," Clanton said. "He always wanted to be a teacher."

Asked what he was like, Clanton said, "Billy Ray? He smiled all the time. He was always happy. . . . He was not a harsh- speaking person. He was soft, but direct. Even as a child, he got his point across."

His father, Samuel Malone, a Blue Eagle cab driver, said: "Out of all 13 kids, he was the best of all of them. I never had this much trouble with him." He placed his right thumb and index finger as close as he could without touching.

He said his son graduated with honors from Cass Technical High School and Michigan State University and was to have received a master's degree in education from MSU in August.

Jeffries, the principal at Pelham, said Malone was "young and had lots of energy." Malone organized yearly trips to MSU's East Lansing campus. This year's trip was canceled because of Malone's death.

MALONE, WHO had a homeroom eighth-grade class and taught English, was unique, Jeffries said, because he taught English grammar the old-fashioned way: by diagramming and outlining.

"He was the kind of guy who probably could have done something else, but he was concerned about working with the kids here. A lot of folks with his ability would've made preparations to move onto high school or the study of law or something else," Jeffries said.

Billy Malone is the second victim of violence in the Malone family.

Donnie Malone, the one who dropped out of school after the 11th grade, was shot and killed in November 1982 while trying to break up a fight in the projects, Vernell Malone said.

Said Samuel Malone: "It took (the police) a year to get" Donnie's **killer**. "But they knew who they were looking for; they had eyewitnesses."

The Rev. William Reed, minister at Greater King Solomon, said many people have forgotten the value of human life. "We are here because to somebody Billy Malone's life didn't mean anything," he said.

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Billy Malone

Caption: Photo

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SHORTER IN METRO FINAL EDITION 1A

Edition: STATE EDITION

Section: NWS

Page: 1A;

Index Terms: FAMILY ; VIOLENCE ; BILLY MALONE ; MAN ; BLACK; MURDER

Record Number: 8601250554

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