



Johnny Ramone

October 8, 1948 - September 15, 2004

Los Angeles, California

Johnny Ramone - born John William Cummings - founding guitarist of the Ramones and architect of a downstroke that taught punk how to be short, loud, and exact, died in Los Angeles, California, on September 15, 2004, of prostate cancer. He was fifty-five. Queens had made him; CBGB made the band public; the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction in 2002 arrived while he was already fighting the illness that would end the most disciplined right arm in American garage mythology.

Born October 8, 1948, Cummings took the Ramone surname with Joey, Dee Dee, and Tommy and then refused to treat the joke as a joke. Concerts rarely wandered; solos rarely bloomed; the buzzsaw guitar stayed a code. Outside the band he collected baseball memorabilia, argued politics against the grain of many peers, and kept a craftsman's pride in not wasting a bar. Bandmates sometimes fought him; audiences rarely doubted the sound.

Los Angeles was the last residence after New York years. Fans who had screamed through two-minute songs learned to wait through hospital updates that offered no encore. The cancer was public enough that the scene could not pretend the Peerless Leader of punk guitar had simply gone quiet by choice.

He died in Los Angeles on September 15, 2004. A statue in Queens later gave pilgrims a place to stand; the records already had.

Johnny's legacy is economy as aggression - the idea that three chords, played without apology, can remake a city's nightlife. Notice Nearby marks the death date so September 15 keeps the Ramones' guitar spine beside the jazz and literary names that share the calendar.

Services

Died in Los Angeles, California, September 15, 2004, of prostate cancer. Founding guitarist of the Ramones; Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee (2002).

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