

## KI'ANTHONY TYUS AND HIS GRANDMOTHER ERNESTINE "TINA" TYUS

**“He was so joyful and after he got shot I saw the joy go out of my baby.”**



Tina Tyus has a comfortable home in West Louisville where photos of grandchildren she has raised are on display or within easy reach.

There's Ki'Anthony as an infant along with one of the last pictures of him, at the family's Thanksgiving gathering last year, a lanky teenager smiling next to a proud grandmother who "had him since he came into this world."

Their world, from the time Ki'Anthony was 9, has been devastated by gun violence.

At age 9, Ki'Anthony was shot by a stray bullet while playing basketball in a park and suffered a debilitating leg injury. Four years later, on Dec. 22, 2018, he died when the stolen Lexus SUV he was riding in crashed into a utility pole on Fern Valley Road after a police chase. Four other juveniles in the car including the driver survived.

His family is grappling with the circumstances of his death and does not understand how or why he ended up in the stolen car.

Known as "Lil King," playful and fun to be around, Ki'Anthony was a symbol of resilience in a media spotlight during anti-violence efforts after he was shot. He was an active participant in a Christopher 2X "Hood2Hood" antiviolence movement. He visited other gunshot victims in the hospital to offer encouragement and comfort.

He also struggled with his wounds, both emotional and physical, and navigated among peers who were not always good influences.

His gun shot injury put him in the hospital for several days. He had multiple surgeries in the aftermath followed by months of physical therapy. He had a rod in his leg for a year and a bullet was left there permanently because of the damage it could cause if it was removed.

# 385

**Number of people shot in Louisville in 2017, an average of 32 people each month.**

The boy who loved to play football and basketball “wasn’t able to play any sport and that devastated him. He had to basically start all over again walking,” his grandmother said. He was “angry, very angry.”

He began disobeying rules in her home, and feared getting shot again, she said. His grades suffered, and she said a contributing factor was his assignment to a middle school far away from home that required a long commute on two buses each morning and afternoon while he was using a walker because of his leg injury. He acted out, she said, so he could be sent to another school.

# 355

**Number of people shot in Louisville in 2018, an average of nearly 30 people each month.**

His two sisters – 11 and 16 – also have been impacted. Neither are doing well in school, and “they are just hurt,” she said.

A happy time was last Thanksgiving, a few weeks before Ki’Anthony died, and she had made his favorite foods including a strawberry cake for the large annual family gathering in her home. “He was jumping around here, dancing.”

# 276

**Number of people shot in Louisville in the first nine months of 2019, an average of more than 30 people a month.**

At Thanksgiving, she told Ki’Anthony she would buy him a purple suit for Easter like the ones he saw and admired at a gospel program they had attended, “not knowing I had to bury him before Easter. He died on my mother’s birthday. It just eats me up.”