

= Death of Jimi Hendrix =

On September 18 , 1970 , the American musician Jimi Hendrix died in London , aged 27 years . One of the most influential guitarists of the 1960s , he was described by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as " arguably the greatest instrumentalist in the history of rock music . "

In the days before his death , Hendrix had been in poor health , due in part to fatigue caused by overworking , a chronic lack of sleep , and an illness assumed to be influenza @-@ related . Insecurities about his personal relationships and disillusionment with the music industry had also contributed to his frustration . Although the details of his final hours and death are disputed , Hendrix spent much of his last day with Monika Dannemann . During the morning of September 18 , she found him unresponsive in her apartment at the Samarkand Hotel , 22 Lansdowne Crescent , Notting Hill . She called for an ambulance at 11 : 18 a.m. , and he was taken to St Mary Abbot 's Hospital where an attempt was made to resuscitate him . He was pronounced dead at 12 : 45 p.m.

The post @-@ mortem examination concluded that Hendrix aspirated his own vomit and died of asphyxia while intoxicated with barbiturates . At the inquest , the coroner , finding no evidence of suicide and lacking sufficient evidence of the circumstances , recorded an open verdict . Dannemann stated that Hendrix had taken nine of her prescribed Vesparax sleeping tablets , 18 times the recommended dosage .

On October 1 , 1970 , Hendrix was interred at Greenwood Cemetery in Renton , Washington . In 1992 , his former girlfriend Kathy Etchingham asked British authorities to reopen the investigation into his death . A subsequent inquiry by Scotland Yard proved inconclusive , and in 1993 , they decided against proceeding with the investigation .

= = Background = =

The American musician Jimi Hendrix (born November 27 , 1942) was one of the most influential guitarists of the 1960s . His Rock and Roll Hall of Fame biography says he " was arguably the greatest instrumentalist in the history of rock music . Hendrix expanded the range and vocabulary of the electric guitar into areas no musician had ever ventured before . His boundless drive , technical ability and creative application of such effects as wah @-@ wah and distortion forever transformed the sound of rock and roll . "

During the week before his death , he was dealing with two pending lawsuits , one a paternity case and the other a recording contract dispute that was due to be heard by a UK High Court the following week . He was also troubled with wanting to leave his manager , Michael Jeffery . Hendrix was fatigued and suffering from poor health , due in part to severe exhaustion caused by overworking , a chronic lack of sleep , and a persistent illness assumed to be influenza @-@ related . Lacking trusting personal relationships , his insecurities about the future and disillusionment with the music industry contributed to his frustration .

On September 11 , 1970 , Hendrix gave his final interview in his suite at the Cumberland Hotel in London , where he talked with Keith Altham , a journalist for Record Mirror . During the interview , Hendrix confirmed reports that Billy Cox , the bass player in his band , The Jimi Hendrix Experience , was leaving . Cox , who had been suffering from severe exhaustion and was exhibiting symptoms of paranoia , mutually agreed with Hendrix that they should suspend their plans to collaborate musically . When Altham asked Hendrix : " Do you feel any kind of compulsion to prove yourself as King Guitar " , Hendrix replied : " No , I don 't even let that bother me . Because they say a lot of things about people that , if they let it bother them , they wouldn 't even be around today ... King Guitar now ? Wow , that 's a bit heavy . " Altham also suggested that Hendrix invented psychedelic music , to which he laughed and replied : " A mad scientist approach ... I don 't consider [my music] the invention of psychedelic , it 's just asking a lot of questions . "

The following day , Hendrix received a phone call from one of his girlfriends , Devon Wilson , who had become jealous after hearing rumors that he was dating another woman , Kirsten Nefer . Nefer recalled : " I heard Jimi talk to Devon ... she was mad ... she went into fits ... Jimi said ' Devon , get off my back ' " . Hendrix was scheduled to perform in Rotterdam on September 13 , but the show ,

along with three others , was cancelled due to Cox 's incapacitation . During the evening of September 13 , Nefer visited Hendrix at the Cumberland . After informing him that she would have to go back to work that evening , he convinced her to phone her boss , actor George Lazenby , and ask for the night off . Lazenby became angry and shouted over the phone to Nefer : " You 're nothing but a fucking groupie " , which Hendrix overheard . The exchange upset him , and he told Nefer : " Don 't you ever go out to that guy again " . Nefer explained to him that she had spent six months working on a film with Lazenby and that she did not want to quit her job ; Hendrix eventually agreed . Nefer spent the night with him and left in the morning .

Hendrix spent most of the early afternoon and evening of September 14 discussing his career plans with the record producer Alan Douglas . In the early morning hours of September 15 , he went to London 's Heathrow Airport with Douglas , who was returning to New York . Hendrix 's confidante Sharon Lawrence was in London , and spoke with him that day . Lawrence commented : " Jimi tracked me down , detailing his pressures and discussing the ' so @-@ called friends ' . He was jittery and angry . " According to Lawrence , Hendrix told her : " I can 't sleep . I can 't focus to write any songs . " Later that afternoon , his girlfriend Monika Dannemann arrived at the Cumberland . She and Hendrix then drove to her apartment in the Samarkand Hotel , 22 Lansdowne Crescent , Notting Hill .

During the afternoon of September 15 , Hendrix was asked by his friend Eric Burdon , formerly of the Animals , if he wanted to participate in a jam session at Ronnie Scott 's Jazz Club with Burdon 's newly formed band , War . Hendrix accepted , but when he arrived at the club that evening , he was not allowed to play due to his apparently drug @-@ related disorientation . Burdon commented : " Jimi came down and was well out of it . He ... was wobbling too much to play , so I told him to come back the following night . " Hendrix returned the next night and presented a healthier appearance . The crowd was enthusiastic and impressed by his performance despite his uncharacteristically subdued guitar playing when he sat in with War on " Tobacco Road " and " Mother Earth " . This was the last time Hendrix played guitar in public .

= = Final hours = =

= = = Late morning and early afternoon = = =

Although the details of Hendrix 's last day and death are unclear and widely disputed , he had spent much of September 17 in London with Monika Dannemann . He awoke late that morning at Dannemann 's apartment in the Samarkand Hotel . By around 2 p.m. , he was sitting in a garden area outside the apartment enjoying some tea while she took photographs of him holding his favorite Fender Stratocaster guitar that he called the " black beauty " . In the opinion of author Tony Brown , " Jimi doesn 't look particularly healthy in these photographs : his face seems a little puffy and on only a few of the pictures does he attempt to smile . "

According to Dannemann , by 3 p.m. they had left the apartment to use a bank . They continued on to Kensington Market , where Hendrix signed an autograph for a young boy , purchased a leather jacket , and ordered some shoes . He also briefly spoke with his ex @-@ girlfriend Kathy Etchingham , inviting her to visit him at his hotel that evening at 8 p.m. ; she declined the invitation due to prior engagements and later admitted that she had " regretted it ever since " . Hendrix and Dannemann then went to a Chelsea antiques market , where Hendrix purchased more clothing . After another stop to buy writing paper , which he used to compose his final lyrics , Dannemann and Hendrix drove to his suite at the Cumberland Hotel , meeting Devon Wilson as she walked down King 's Road . Hendrix asked Dannemann to stop the car so that he could get out and talk with Wilson , who invited Hendrix to a party that evening . Dannemann became jealous , giving Wilson a cold stare during the brief meeting . Later , Phillip Harvey invited Dannemann and Hendrix to tea ; they accepted . Prior to their arrival at Harvey 's , they briefly stopped by the Cumberland .

While at the hotel , Hendrix made several telephone calls . Dannemann said he phoned his lawyer Henry Steingarten , asking him to find a way out of his contract with his manager Mike Jeffery , and

producer Eddie Kramer , for whom Hendrix left a voice message . Mitch Mitchell said that he called Hendrix at the Cumberland on September 17 , after having been asked to do so by tour manager Gerry Stickells , who had spoken to Hendrix just minutes earlier . Mitchell said that during the phone conversation Hendrix agreed to join him around midnight at the Speakeasy Club for a previously arranged jam session , which included Sly Stone .

= = = Late afternoon and evening = = =

After stopping at the Cumberland , Hendrix and Dannemann accompanied Harvey to his apartment , arriving around 5 : 30 p.m. Hendrix and Dannemann smoked hashish and drank tea and wine with Harvey and two of his female companions while discussing their individual careers . Sometime around 10 p.m. , Dannemann , apparently feeling left out of the conversation and jealous of the attention Hendrix was giving Harvey 's female friends , became visibly upset and stormed out of the flat . Hendrix followed her , and an argument ensued between them during which Dannemann reportedly shouted : " you fucking pig " . Harvey , concerned that their yelling would draw unwanted attention from the police , asked them to quiet down .

Harvey , who had remained silent about the incident out of respect for his English nobleman father , Arthur Vere Harvey , gave an affidavit after his father 's death in 1994 . In his statement , he claims to have been mildly concerned for Hendrix 's safety , worried that Dannemann might " resort to serious physical violence " . According to Harvey , Dannemann " verbally assaulted [Hendrix] in the most offensive possible way " . Approximately 30 minutes later , Hendrix re @-@ entered the flat and apologized for the outburst before leaving with Dannemann at 10 : 40 p.m. Dannemann said she then prepared a meal for them at her apartment around 11 p.m. and shared a bottle of wine with Hendrix . Sometime after returning to the apartment , Hendrix took a bath , then wrote a poem titled " The Story of Life " .

= = = Early morning = = =

At approximately 1 : 45 a.m. on Friday , September 18 , Dannemann drove Hendrix to the party Wilson had invited him to earlier that day , which was hosted by Hendrix 's acquaintance and business associate , Pete Cameron . At the party , Hendrix complained to Cameron about business problems , ate some food , and took at least one amphetamine tablet . Approximately 30 minutes later , Dannemann rang the flat 's intercom asking for Hendrix . Another guest , Stella Douglas , asked her to return later . According to guest Angie Burdon , the estranged wife of Eric Burdon of the Animals , when Dannemann came back around 15 minutes later , Douglas used an assertive approach with her to the point of being impolite . Undeterred , Dannemann demanded to speak with Hendrix . Burdon recalled : " [Hendrix] got angry because [Dannemann] wouldn 't leave him alone . " According to Burdon , other guests at the party shouted out the windows at Dannemann , asking her to leave . Hendrix eventually yielded and spoke with Dannemann before unexpectedly leaving the party around 3 a.m.

Dannemann , the only eyewitness to Hendrix 's final hours , said that sometime after 3 a.m. , she prepared two tuna fish sandwiches for them after arriving back at her basement apartment . Around 4 a.m. , Hendrix , struggling with insomnia after having consumed amphetamines hours earlier , asked her for sleeping tablets . She later said she refused his request hoping he would fall asleep naturally . Dannemann said she surreptitiously took a sleeping tablet sometime around 6 a.m. , with Hendrix still awake . She awoke sometime between 10 and 10 : 20 a.m. to find him sleeping normally in bed next to her . She said she then left to purchase cigarettes , and when she returned around 11 a.m. , found him in bed breathing , although unconscious and unresponsive . She telephoned for an ambulance at 11 : 18 a.m. and one arrived at 11 : 27 a.m.

When ambulance crew members Reg Jones and John Saua arrived at the Samarkand , the door to the flat was wide open , the gas fire was on , the curtains were drawn , and the apartment was dark . The crew called out several times , but after receiving no response , they entered and found Hendrix alone in bed . Dannemann was nowhere to be found . According to Jones : " Well , we had to get

the police , we only had [Hendrix] and an empty flat , so John ran up and radioed , and got the aspirator ... It was horrific . He was covered in vomit . There was tons of it all over the pillow ? black and brown it was . His airway was completely blocked all the way down ... We felt his pulse ... showed a light in his eyes . But there was no response at all . " At 11 : 30 a.m. , police officers Ian Smith and Tom Keene responded to a call for police assistance from the ambulance control centre . Jones commented : " Once the police arrived , which seemed like no time at all , we got [Hendrix] off to hospital as quick as we could . "

The ambulance crew left the hotel at approximately 11 : 35 a.m. to take Hendrix to St Mary Abbot 's Hospital and they arrived at 11 : 45 a.m. Medical registrar Dr. Martin Seifert stated : " Jimi was rushed into the [resuscitation] room . He was put on a monitor , but it [ECG trace] was flat . I pounded his heart [CPR] a couple of times , but there was no point , he was dead " . According to Seifert , the attempt to resuscitate Hendrix lasted " just a few minutes " . The surgical registrar , Dr. John Bannister , commented : " He was cold and he was blue . He had all the parameters of someone who had been dead for some time . We worked on him for about half an hour without any response at all . " Bannister pronounced Hendrix dead at 12 : 45 p.m. , on Friday , September 18 , 1970 ; he was 27 years old . He later stated : " On admission he was obviously dead . He had no pulse , no heartbeat , and the attempt to resuscitate him was merely a formality . "

= = Media response = =

During the morning of September 18 , Eric Burdon arrived at the Samarkand sometime before the ambulance crew and found that Hendrix was already dead . Burdon immediately became concerned that police would find drugs at the apartment , and as he was collecting incriminating evidence , he found the poem that Hendrix had written hours earlier , " The Story of Life " . Burdon , who said he had previously discussed suicide and death with Hendrix , assumed the poem was a suicide note . Under this assumption , he made comments to the press regarding his belief that Hendrix had committed suicide that he has since recanted : " I made false statements ... I simply didn 't understand what the situation was . I misread the note ... I thought it was a goodbye " . Dannemann said Hendrix told her : " I want you to keep this [poem] forever [and] I don 't want you to forget anything that is written . It 's a story about you and me " .

Soon after Bannister pronounced Hendrix dead , a hospital spokesperson told the press : " We don 't know where , how , or why he died , but he died of an overdose . " By that evening , many newspapers in London and New York had printed sensationalized headlines that exploited the death @-@ from @-@ overdose account . Hendrix 's public relations manager , Les Perrin , granted an interview on Dutch radio soon after the hospital announcement . He commented : " Well , all I know is that Mr. Hendrix 's body was taken to St. Mary Abbots Hospital in Kensington , London , at 11 : 45 this morning , and he was certified to be dead on arrival . " At 2 p.m. , BBC Radio 1 reported : " Jimi Hendrix , regarded by millions as one of the most talented and original performers in modern rock music , is dead . " That evening , The New York Times described him as " a genius black musician , a guitarist , singer and composer of brilliantly dramatic power . He spoke in gestures and big as he could imagine and create . "

On September 19 , Dannemann spoke with a journalist for the German tabloid Bild . During the interview , published on September 24 , Dannemann stated : " I loved him , and Jimi loved me ... We were already engaged ... I would then have designed the sleeves for his records ... He could not sleep . So I gave him the tablets . " On September 20 , a reporter from The Daily Telegraph interviewed Dannemann 's brother , Klaus @-@ Peter Dannemann , who stated : " [Monika] telephoned me on [September 19] and told me that [Hendrix] took nine sleeping tablets . She said that Jimi had told her that he wanted to sleep for a day and a half before he went to America . She told me that he did not intend to kill himself . "

= = Post @-@ mortem = =

To determine the cause of death , the coroner , Gavin Thurston , ordered a post @-@ mortem

examination on Hendrix 's body , which was performed on September 21 by Professor Robert Donald Teare , a forensic pathologist . Teare reported that Hendrix was " well nourished and muscular " , and he identified a quarter @-@ inch scar on Hendrix 's left wrist . He said that there were " no stigmata of [intravenous] drug addiction . Once these marks are there [in the skin] , they never go away . In this case , there were no marks at all . " Although Teare observed that the right side of Hendrix 's heart was widely dilated , he found no evidence of valvular heart disease . He discovered a partially collapsed left lung and 400 ml of fluid in Hendrix 's chest . Both lungs were congested , and vomit was found in the smaller bronchi . According to Teare , Hendrix 's stomach " contained a medium @-@ sized partially digested meal in which rice could be distinguished . " Teare concluded that Hendrix 's kidneys were healthy , and his liver was congested . His " bladder was half full of clear urine . " He stated that Hendrix 's blood alcohol content was 100 mg per 100 ml , " enough to fail a breathalyzer test ... the equivalent of about four pints of beer . " Teare reported that analysis of Hendrix 's blood " revealed a mixture of barbiturates consistent with those from Vesparax " , and he estimated that drug concentrations translated to ingestion of 1 @.@ 8 grams of barbiturate , 20 mg of amphetamine , and 20 mg of cannabis . Teare gave the cause of death as : " Inhalation of vomit due to barbiturate intoxication . " He did not attempt to determine Hendrix 's time of death .

Thurston began an inquest on September 23 , and on September 28 he concluded that Hendrix had aspirated his own vomit and died of asphyxia while intoxicated with barbiturates . Citing " insufficient evidence of [the] circumstances " , he recorded an open verdict . He commented : " The cause of death was clearly inhalation of vomit due to barbiturate intoxication , but there is no evidence as to intention to commit suicide ... If the question of intention cannot be answered , then it is proper to find the cause of death and leave it an open verdict . " Dannemann later stated that Hendrix had taken nine of her prescribed Vesparax sleeping tablets . Intended to be taken in half @-@ tablet doses , nine tablets of the powerful sedative amounted to 18 times the recommended amount .

After Hendrix 's body had been embalmed by Desmond Henley , it was flown to Seattle , Washington , on September 29 . After a service at Dunlop Baptist Church on October 1 , he was interred at Greenwood Cemetery in Renton , Washington , the location of his mother 's gravesite . Hendrix 's family and friends traveled in twenty @-@ four limousines . More than two hundred people attended the funeral , including several notable musicians such as the original Experience members Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding , as well as Miles Davis , John Hammond and Johnny Winter .

= = Inconsistencies and the Scotland Yard inquiry = =

Tony Brown , author of *Jimi Hendrix : The Final Days* (1997) , had been in regular contact with Dannemann from 1980 until her death in 1996 . He visited with her on multiple occasions and spoke with her numerous times over the phone . Soon after contacting her , Brown came to the conclusion that her account of the events of Hendrix 's final days " would change from one call to the next . " In the days following Hendrix 's death , she gave two significantly different accounts of the morning of September 18 .

At approximately 4 p.m. on September 18 , Dannemann told Police Sergeant John Shaw : " We went to sleep about 7 a.m. When I woke up at eleven his face was covered in vomit , and he was breathing noisily . I sent for an ambulance , and he was taken to hospital . I also noticed that ten of my sleeping tablets were missing . " In a statement given to P. Weyell of the coroner 's office on September 24 , she said :

I made a sandwich and we talked until about 7 a.m. He then said that he wanted to go to sleep . He took some tablets , and we went to bed . I woke up about 11 : 00 a.m. , and saw that Jimi 's face was covered in vomit . I tried to wake him but could not . I called an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital in Kensington ... Prior to going with him to the hospital , I checked my supply of Vesparax sleeping tablets and found that nine of them were missing .

In Dannemann 's initial statements , she said she awoke at 11 a.m. on September 18 . During the

inquest she stated that she awoke at 10 : 20 a.m. , and left to purchase cigarettes , something she had previously failed to mention . In 1971 , she wrote a manuscript in which she said she awoke at 10 a.m. In 1975 , during an interview with author Caesar Glebbeek , Dannemann stated that she awoke at 9 a.m. According to Burdon , Dannemann phoned him as " the first light of dawn was coming through the window . " Stickells said he received a phone call regarding a problem with Hendrix " between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. " Mitchell said he waited for Hendrix at the Speakeasy Club until they closed at 4 a.m. , and a couple of hours after his hour and a half drive home , he received a phone call from Stickells , who told him Hendrix had died . In her statements to the police and coroner 's office , Dannemann never mentioned telephoning Burdon .

Although Dannemann stated that Hendrix was alive when placed in the ambulance at approximately 11 : 30 a.m. and that she rode with him on the way to the hospital , the ambulance crew later denied she was there . Statements from the paramedics who responded to the call support that they found Hendrix alone in the flat when they arrived at 11 : 27 a.m. , fully clothed and apparently already dead . Jones later commented : " [When] we arrived at the flat , the door was flung wide open , nobody about , just the body on the bed . " Saua stated : " There was just me and the casualty and Reg the driver . Nobody else . " Burdon stated : " [Dannemann] didn 't leave in the ambulance ; she was with me " . According to Jones , Hendrix 's bowels and bladder had released some of their contents prior to the ambulance crew 's arrival at the Samarkand . Saua stated that the vomit was dry when they arrived , making use of their aspirator ineffective . Saua commented : " When we moved [Hendrix] , the gases were gurgling , you get that when someone has died " . According to police officer Smith : " The ambulance men were there , but Jimi was dead ... There was really nothing they could do for him . " Smith also disputes Dannemann 's claim that she was there with Hendrix at the flat and in the ambulance :

No , I remember quite clearly the doors shutting on the crew and Jimi ... there was no one about . If she had been in the flat , they would never have called us to come ... But because no one was there , he was dead , and circumstances were a little odd , suspicious , they radioed ... us in . It wasn 't until later in the day that I found out that it was Jimi Hendrix .

In 1992 , after having conducted an extensive review of the events of September 18 , 1970 , the London Ambulance Service issued an official statement : " There was no one else , except the deceased , at the flat when they arrived ; nor did anyone else accompany them in the ambulance to St. Mary Abbotts Hospital . "

In 1992 , having arranged for a private investigation of Hendrix 's death , Etchingham supplied the results of the effort to UK authorities and requested they reopen the coroner 's inquest . After a several @-@ month inquiry by Scotland Yard , during which every interested party to the events was interviewed , officials were confident the request would be granted . The investigation eventually proved inconclusive in 1993 , when Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell decided that proceeding with the investigation would not serve the public , due in part to the excessive time that had passed since Hendrix 's death .