

Why Do Some Famous Deaths Last... and Others Don't?

Legend Classifier: Using information before death to predict if an individual will be a legend after death

Taran Singh



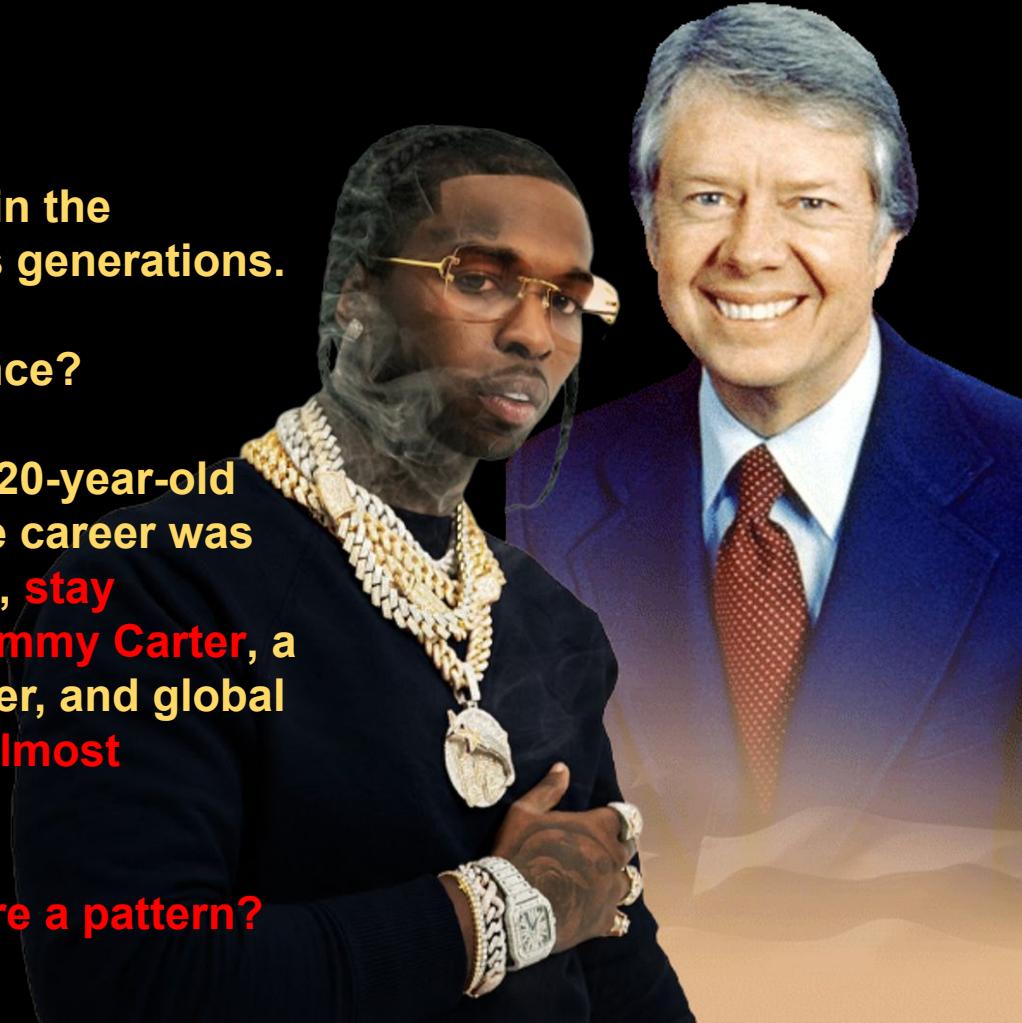
Every day, someone famous dies.

Some disappear instantly. Others stay in the spotlight for months, years, sometimes generations.

How come? What explains that difference?

How does someone like Pop Smoke, a 20-year-old up-and-coming New York rapper whose career was cut short at the hands of someone else, stay culturally alive... while someone like Jimmy Carter, a U.S. president, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and global humanitarian who lived to 100, fades almost immediately?

What makes someone a legend? Is there a pattern?



Why Legends Are Usually Young not Old (Hypothesis)

Young Death:

1. Story cut early = unfinished
2. Unfinished = high curiosity
3. Usually not natural (often caused by someone else) = mystery
4. High curiosity + Mystery = legend energy

Old Death:

1. Old age = full arc
2. Natural death = closure
3. Closed story = low curiosity
4. Closure + Low Curiosity ≠ legend energy



Can this be modeled?

Use information before death to see if they would be a legend post death



Rich in data (temporal views, edits, achievements)

Typically shown first in searches, so can be a good standard

A screenshot of a Google search results page. The search query "popsmoke" is entered in the search bar. The top result is a link to Wikipedia with the title "Pop Smoke". Below the Wikipedia link, there is a snippet of text about Pop Smoke, followed by several buttons: "Murder", "Pop Smoke discography", "Teddi Mellencamp Arroyave", and "Boogie (2021 film)". Below the Wikipedia link, there is an Instagram profile for "realpopsmoke" with 3.1M+ followers, and a bio mentioning "BIGG PAPI LOCSTA" and "@realpopsmoke".

Google

popsmoke

Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop_Smoke

Pop Smoke

Bashar Barakah Jackson (July 20, 1999 – February 19, 2020), known professionally as Pop Smoke, was an American rapper. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York ...

Murder Pop Smoke discography Teddi Mellencamp Arroyave Boogie (2021 film)

Instagram · realpopsmoke
3.1M+ followers

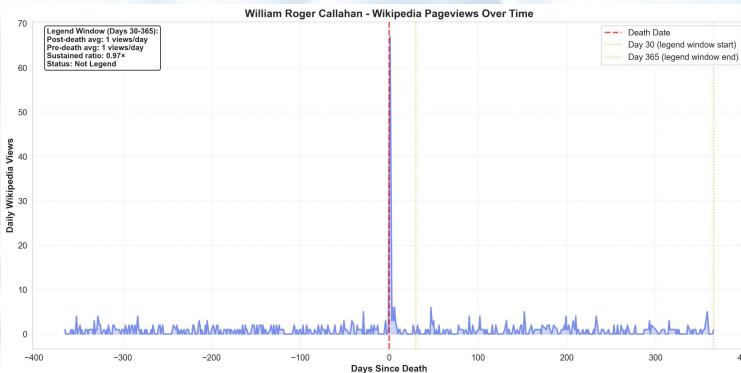
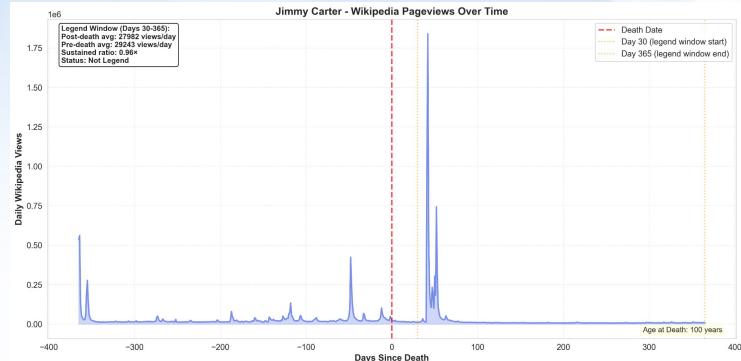
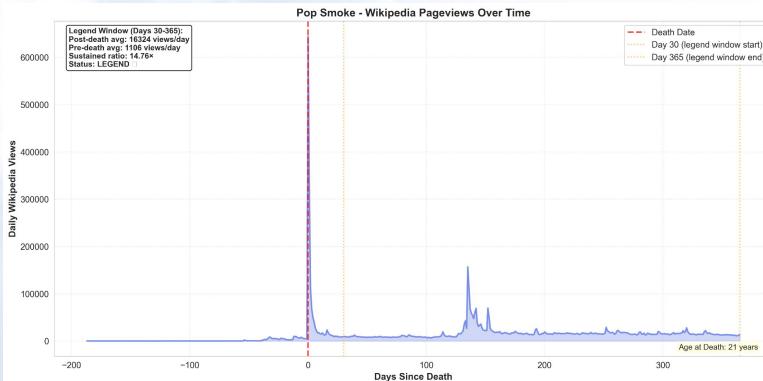
BIGG PAPI LOCSTA (@realpopsmoke)
3M followers · 202 following · 48 posts · @realpopsmoke: "WOO ORDER @shootforthestars"

Can this be modeled?

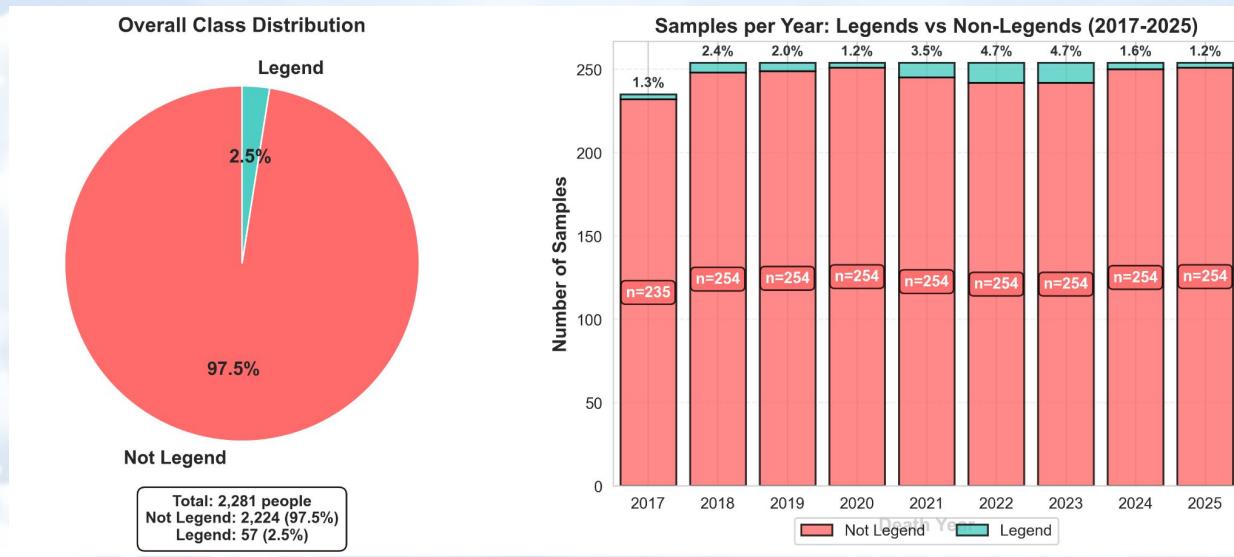
My Wikipedia API Friendly Definition of a Legend

Sustained Increase in views post initial death spike

1. > 2.5x increase in average daily page views from day 30 to day 365 after death
2. > 50 daily page views in average daily page views from day 30 to day 365 after death



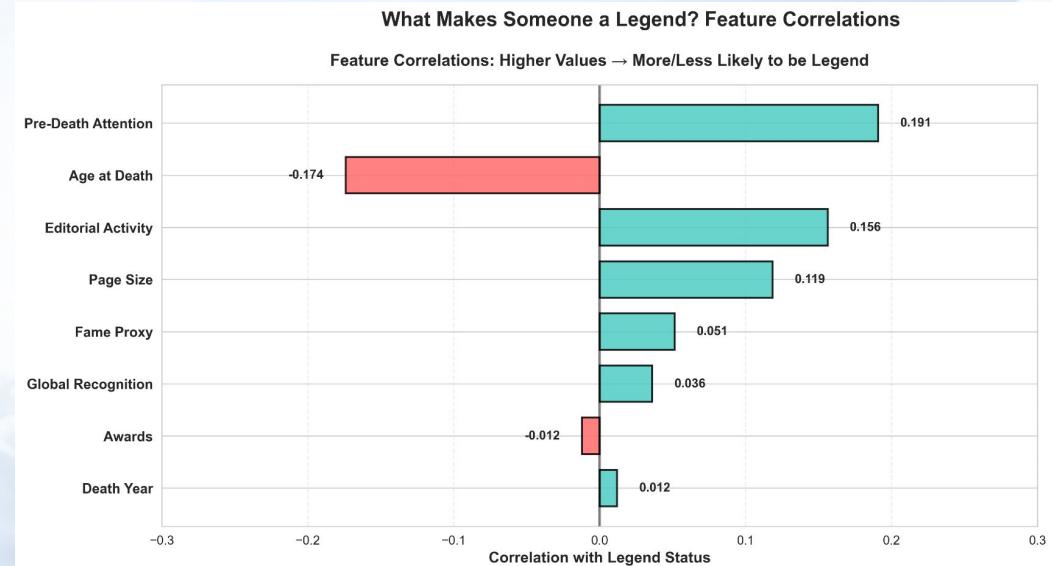
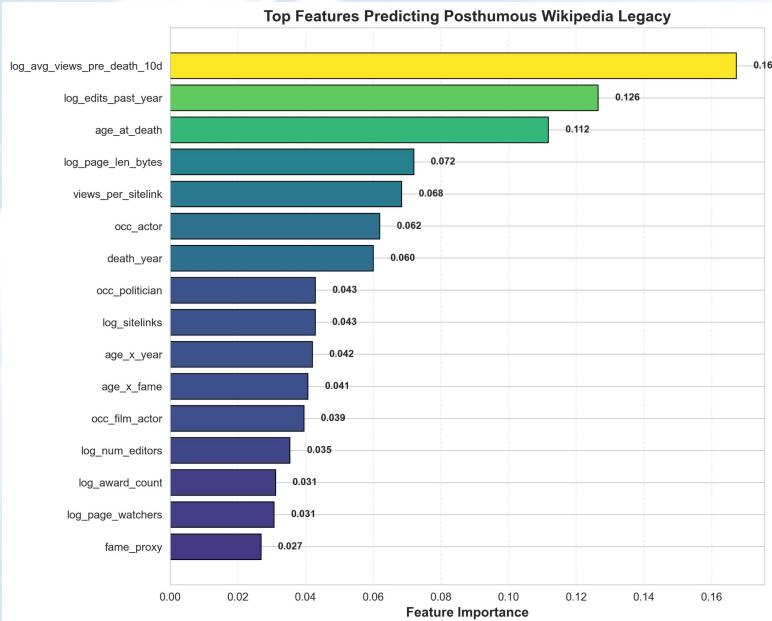
Can this be modeled?



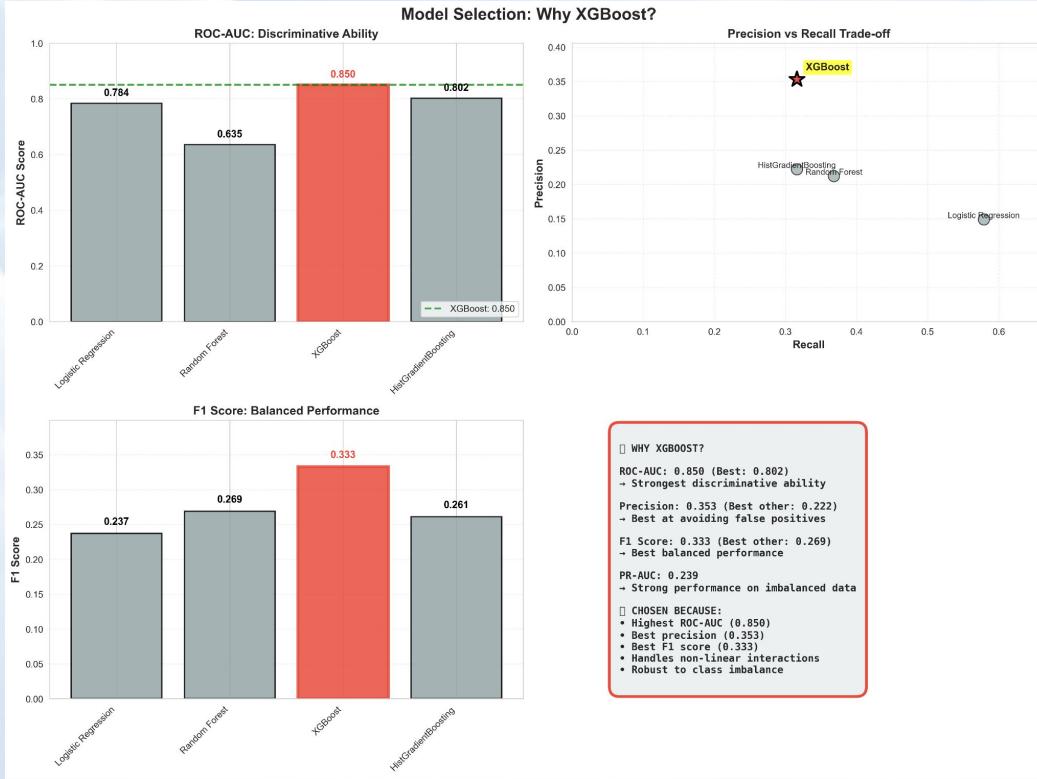
Initial thought:

Fits how rare the title of legend is among famous individuals

Can this be modeled?



Can this be modeled?



Yes it can be modeled...

The XGBoost model creates a selective, high-discrimination classifier that rarely calls someone a legend, but when it does, it's right about 35% of the time

Adding to my definition of legend and/or more data would probably make these numbers higher

Can be used on living individuals

Legend Detector

Predict who will be remembered after death using machine learning

WHAT DOES THIS TOOL DO?

Plain English: This predicts if someone will be culturally remembered months and years after they die—not just a brief spike in the news, but sustained interest like Kobe Bryant or David Bowie.

Technical: Uses gradient boosting (XGBoost) trained on 2,281 deceased Wikipedia subjects (2017-2025). Temporally balanced dataset (equal samples per year) prevents temporal bias using only pre-death features.

Enter a Person to Analyze

Tory_Lanez

[Advanced Settings](#)

Analysis: Tory_Lanez

Basic Information



Status: Currently Living
Current Age: 33 years
Wikipedia Page Created: 2014-10-01
Profession: singer, record producer, songwriter

Pre-Death Metrics (What Model Used)

All values are from current (as of today) — this is what the model analyzed to make its prediction.

| Pre-Death Metric | Value | Description | Predictor |
|----------------------|----------|--|------------------------|
| PRE-DEATH ATTENTION | 1,991 | avg daily views (10 days before death) | 1st predictor (~6.7%) |
| PRE-DEATH PAGE EDITS | 2,362 | total edits (creation > today) | 2nd predictor (~12.8%) |
| PRE-DEATH PAGE SIZE | 81 KB | Wikipedia page size (current) | 4th predictor (~7.2%) |
| VIEWS/STRIKE | 6.9 | attention efficiency | 3rd predictor (~31.2%) |
| AGE AT DEATH | 33 years | Top predictor (~31.2%) | |
| GLOBAL REACH | 1 | language Wikipedia | |

Why LEGEND?

1. Pre-Death Interest: 🔥 HIGH — 1,991 daily views. People already cared about this person.
2. Page Activity: 📊 ACTIVE — 2,362 total edits to date. Page was actively maintained.
3. Age Factor: Died at 33 years old. Younger deaths create more legends.
4. Page Depth: 81 KB page size. Comprehensive coverage = existing fame.

Model Confidence: **31.0% LEGEND**

Advanced: Feature Engineering Details

LEGEND STATUS PREDICTED

Model Confidence: 31.0% LEGEND

Plain English: This person is likely to be culturally remembered for years after death—not just a temporary news spike, but sustained public interest like Kobe Bryant, David Bowie, or Matthew Perry.

Technical: XGBoost gradient boosting classifier output $P(\text{Legend})=0.310$ exceeds threshold $\tau=0.25$. Prediction based on pre-death feature vector including page metrics, demographics, and engineered interaction terms.

Conclusion

Yes. We can model legend status to some degree. And from a random pool of Wikipedia individuals, the ones who become legends are usually younger and still rising when their story gets cut short. Training on more people would help though.



Thank You

