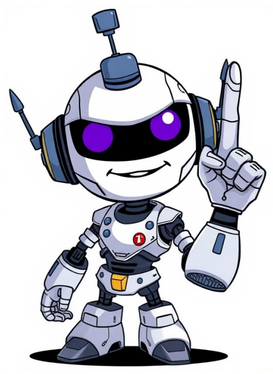
Click to verify



James A. "Al" Hendrix, was the father of rock legend Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970). He grew up in Vancouver B.C. and moved to Seattle in 1940. He married Jimi's mother, Lucille Jeter (ca. 1925-1958) in 1942, and three days later was sent off to war. Al was a single parent for the majority of Jimi's life, working at a variety of odd jobs and struggling to make ends meet. This biography uses Al's book My Son Jimi (Seattle: AlJas Enterprises, 1999) as the main source. The Son of Performers Al Hendrix was born in Vancouver, B.C., the youngest child of Zenora (1884-1985) and Bertram Philander Ross Hendrix (ca. 1869-1934). His parents were traveling vaudeville performers whose troupe disbanded in Seattle in 1911. Bertram moved the family, including Al's siblings Leon (ca. 1912-1932), Patricia (ca. 1914-1981) and Frank (1918-1986), up to Canada. He had heard from a friend that there was work there, and he wasn't finding anything in Seattle. He got a job as a steward at Quilchena Golf Club in Vancouver, the only job Al knew his father to have. The family had a happy home life, but they were shocked and heartbroken when Leon died of a ruptured appendix in 1932. Bertram died in 1934. The Depression was raging and times were tough. Al lost interest and dropped out of high school at 17. There was no work to be had, there was no money for college, and it didn't seem to him that it mattered whether he finished or not. Like his parents, Al had show-biz aspirations: He wanted to be a tap dancer or an entertainer. He tapped professionally for awhile -- even having an agent and tap dancing solo at Vancouver clubs. According to Al, he used to dance a mean jitterbug. He once entered a jitterbug contest at the Orpheum Theater, but was told he and his partner, Dorothy King, couldn't compete with the white contestants, because the whites, they said, "didn't have a chance against us." His friend Al Ford asked him if he was interested in boxing for money and he said sure. He was told the pay was $25 a round for three rounds. Al and a bunch of other guys drove down to Seattle for the fight. When he got there, he found out it was a Golden Gloves fight, and the amateur fighters didn't get paid anything. The Move to Seattle After a few years of attempting to find regular work and only just getting by, he decided to move out of Vancouver. He had tried to get a job with the railroad, but they told him he was too short. He stopped in Victoria and lived with a friend there, shining shoes to make enough money to get to Seattle. He had a visited Seattle as a child, and knew there was a larger black community in Seattle than in Vancouver. He arrived with $40 in his pocket in 1940. Luckily, he was able to get dual citizenship because his father had become naturalized in Canada after his children were born. He started with odd jobs such as cleaning acquaintances' homes and the like, and then got a job at a restaurant on Pike Street called Ben Harris. Later he got work at a local iron foundry. Jimi Is Born Al met Lucille Jeter (ca. 1925-1958), Jimi's mother, through his landlady's daughter. Around the time he got his army induction notice, Lucille told him she was pregnant. Al said although it was unexpected, he didn't mind at all, because he was planning on marrying her anyway. On March 31, 1942, he married Lucille at the Seattle courthouse, and just three days later was shipped off to Fort Sill in Oklahoma for basic training. Al spent a month in Fort Benning, Georgia, and was then sent to Camp Rucker in Alabama. He was a field artillery gunner for Company B of the 903rd Airbase Security Battalion. Their job was to guard the Eighth Airforce's airstrips, planes and bomb dumps -- traveling wherever the Eighth Airforce went. Al requested leave around the time Jimi was to be born, but he was refused because he lived in Seattle. The army was only allowing five days leave for family births, and he would have had to get right back on the train to Alabama as soon as he got to Seattle. The next day he was thrown in the stockade without charge. He suspected he was put there so he wouldn't go AWOL to be with his family. About a month and a half later when he was released, he asked his first sergeant why he had been put in, and the sergeant replied, "General principle, general principle." Al was sent to the Fiji Islands, Guadalcanal, and New Guinea. He said his company never engaged in any heavy fighting or were subject to frontal attacks by the Japanese -- which he was glad for -- but he hated being in the service because it took him away from his family and his responsibilities to them. After Jimi was born (November 27, 1942), Lucille's letters became much less frequent. Sometimes his letters to her would be sent back, and when he did receive letters from her, they always had a different return address. He found out that Lucille was having a hard time of it and their son was being taken care of by Clarice, Lucille's mother. A source says she was hospitalized for tuberculosis during this period. He got a letter from a stranger, a Mrs. Walls, who said that she had the boy, and he could pick him up when he got back. Al started sending his money to Mrs. Walls. Al got another letter from a Mrs. Champ, who told him her sister, Mrs. Walls, had died and that she now had Jimi with her in Berkeley, California. Al started divorce proceedings before he left the service. Making a Home Al got back to Seattle in September 1945, and after a quick trip to see his family in Vancouver, he went down to meet and pick up "Johnny Allen," the name Lucille had given him. Al imagined the name Johnny Allen could have been a guy that Lucille was seeing while he was away, so he when he got back to Seattle he changed his son's name to James Marshall (Jimmy changed the spelling of his name to Jimi in 1966 at the suggestion of Brian "Chas" Chandler, the bass player for the Animals, who "discovered" him at Cafe Wha? in New York). Al and Jimi lived with Lucille's sister, Delores, and her three kids, Roberta, Dee Dee, and Julia. Lucille showed up soon after and asked if Al would like to make a go of their marriage. Al agreed. He started working at Fry's Packing House and moved into a room with Lucille and Jimi at the Golden Hotel on 10th Avenue. Fry's didn't pay very much, so he got a job aboard a merchant marine victory ship, the Marshall and traveled to Japan. When he got back two weeks later, the room was locked up and Lucille and Jimi were gone. It turned out Jimi had gone with Clarice on a trip to Kansas, but nobody knew exactly where Lucille was. Al went to Delores' and stayed with her till Lucille came back, and they reconciled again. In 1947, Al started taking electronics classes under the G.I. Bill and working at the Pike Place Market as a Janitor at night. Lucille had a habit of taking off for a few days at a time without saying where she was going. When she got back she would say she had been at a girlfriend's, and Al would say "Uh-huh." Lucille got pregnant and gave birth to a son, Leon, on January 13, 1948. Al knew the child wasn't his and Lucille admitted to it. Around that time, Lucille had been staying with a Filipino man named Frank, and Clarice was taking care of Jimi during the day while Al was at work. Al was very reasonable with her, thinking "She was going to do what she's going to do anyhow, so ..." He said Lucille was a good and affectionate mother when she was there. Later in 1948, Lucille was pregnant again, and again, Al wasn't the father. Joey was born in late 1948. Al says, "Things got really hectic after that." He was still in school, and barely had any money. He decided to just stick it out until Lucille decided to stay or go -- but he finally had enough when he found out she had been running around with the underage baby-sitter for the boys. He divorced her in 1950 and got custody of the kids. He gave Joey up for adoption when the money got really tight, and he put Leon in a foster home for a time, too. Lucille had two daughters after their divorce, Cathleen and Pam, and another boy, Alfred. Lucille drank a lot. According to Al, she really enjoyed being the life of the party and alcohol provided the stimulant she felt she needed. She visited the boys once in awhile, but often came over after drinking late in the evening when the boys had already gone to bed. Hard Times Around 1953, Al began working for the City of Seattle, doing various tree and brush clearing work around town. He bought a house at 2603 26th Avenue. He shared this house with his niece, Gracie, and her husband, Buddy Hatcher. After losing the city job, he worked for Bethlehem Steel in the shipping department. When he lost that job, he started recycling scraps of metal. It was around this time that Al brought home an old, beat-up ukulele for Jimi -- Jimi's first instrument -- that he'd found while cleaning up a garage. Al sometimes went hungry to feed Leon and Jimmy. They ate horsemeat hamburgers two or three times a week. Al was trying for jobs, but often times he knew he wasn't hired because of his race. He said: "You'd see a job advertised in the paper, go down and apply, and they'd say, 'It's just been taken.' Two or three days later, it'd still be in the paper." It was hard for Al to cover the living costs during this time of unemployment. When Gracie and her husband moved out, Leon went to live with Patricia and her husband Pat Jimenez, and Jimi went to live with Frank and his wife, Pearl. Al's friends, Cornell Benson and his wife, Ernestine, moved in with him for a time. In 1956, when Al couldn't make the payments, he lost the house and moved into McKay's boarding house on 29th Avenue. Jimi soon came to live with him there. It was Mrs. McKay's son, James, who offered his acoustic guitar to Jimi for $5. Al gave him the money. Leon began having problems at Patricia's house, so he went into foster care with friends of Al's for a time. Around 1963, Leon came back and stayed with Al permanently. By that time, Jimi had already left for the military. Lucille died in 1958 while Al and Jimi were living at McKay's boarding house. She had been in the hospital a few times just before she died. Her ill health and death were related to her years of alcohol abuse. She was 32 years old. Al and Jimi moved in with Gracie and Buddy for awhile, and then into a room at Cornell and Ernestine's new place on College Street. Al started working with Patricia's husband, Pat, who had his own landscaping business, and shortly thereafter went into business for himself. He worked in landscaping until the late 1970s, when his health caused him to quit. Jimi's First Guitar In or around 1957, they were forced to move out from the Benson's when the landlord found them living there, and he and Jimi moved to an apartment on East Terrace Street. The place was infested with cockroaches -- so many they tried not to have any food in the house -- which wasn't hard as money was so tight. It was when they were living there that Al went and bought Jimi his first electric guitar. Al put the guitar on a payment schedule from Myers Music on 1st Avenue. That one got stolen off the stage during an intermission at the Birdland Ballroom when Jimi was playing a gig there. Mary, Al's brother Frank's second wife, noticed Jimi was down and told him to go get another guitar and she'd pay for it. Jimi did, but when Al found out he forced him to take it back. He bought him another one himself when he could afford it. Jimi Joins the Army Al met a lady, Wileen Stringer, and eventually moved with her, her daughter, Wilette, and Jimi to 2606 Yesler Way. Jimi was going to Garfield High School and worked with Al in his landscaping business. Instead of finishing high school (he was expelled and didn't bother going back), and in order to avoid jail-time for joyriding in a stolen car, Jimi joined the Army. (Al disputes this version of events.) Either way, Jimi's theft sentence was suspended, and joining the military was discussed with the judge at his hearing. Al says he might have seen a "Screaming Eagles" patch in a book, or had a friend come out of the service with one. At the recruiting office he was told it was a patch of the 101st airborne paratroopers. Jimi was classified 1-A, which meant he could be drafted at any time, and he figured he would be, so he thought he'd go "all the way" and join the paratroopers. In June 1961, Jimi was shipped off to Fort Ord, California, for basic training, and was later stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, just 60 miles from Nashville, Tennessee. Before going into the service, Jimi told Al that he was going to make it in the music business. Al said "Hurry up, I'm getting tired of working!" Wileen stepped out on Al, and although he thought of marrying her, he didn't want to go through what he'd gone through with Lucille, so he ended it right then. Al sent Jimi his guitar after Jimi requested it in January 1962. After Jimi got hurt in the summer of that year, he got a medical discharge from the army. Jimi stayed down south playing with musicians he had met, instead of coming back to Seattle where he thought he would just be "sitting around idle." Al understood that, because he had felt the same way about staying in Vancouver when he was young. Al's Marriage and Jimi's Fame Al met Ayako "June" Fujita in 1966 through his friend Delores Kurber, and they hit it off. June (who called herself June because she was born in June and nobody could pronounce her name) had five children: William, Marsha, Linda, Donna, and Janie. Janie was three, but all the other kids were grown. They got married, Al adopted Janie, and they lived together on Queen Anne Hill. Al and June separated amicably around 1986, and June died in 1999. Jimi called Al from London in September 1966, and said, "Dad, looks like I'm on my way to the big time." Jimi had heard he had gotten married, so Al told him all about June, and Jimi was happy for him. Jimi hadn't sent Al his first album, Are You Experienced, which was released in May 1967. Al heard his neighbors playing music and thought it sounded like Jimi, so he went over there, introduced himself, and saw that it was! The neighbors, whom Al described as "hippies," were ecstatic that they lived next to Jimi's dad, gave him the record, and asked for his autograph. Al's friend Ernestine Benson told him she thought "The Wind Cries Mary" was probably was about him and Lucille. Jimi kept in touch, but the first time Al saw him again was in 1968. Jimi came in for a show at the Seattle Center Arena on February 12, 1968. Al went to meet him at the airport and wondered why so many people were there -- he had no idea that Jimi was such a celebrity. Jimi met Janie for the first time, and Al said he was crazy about her. It had been five years, and the whole family was there to greet, congratulate, and visit with him. The next day, Jimi was given the key to the city of Seattle, and then an honorary diploma at an assembly at Garfield High School. He was asked how long he had been away from Seattle, and he replied, "Oh, for about 5,000 years." Jimi asked Al if there was anything he needed, and Al said June's car was giving them problems. A bit later, after he'd left, he sent money for Al saying, "Get a new car and a truck, too!" Al did -- a car for June and a truck for his landscaping business. Jimi returned to Seattle again in September 1968. He had a show at the Vancouver Arena, and his grandmother, Nora, got to see him perform. He played the Seattle Center Coliseum (now Key Arena) on September 6th. Jimi again came home for a visit in May 1969, and talked with his dad about maybe getting married and buying a house on the water in Mercer Island. He played Woodstock on August 18, 1969, and came home again in July 1970, for a show on the 26th at Sicks' Stadium (the old Seattle baseball stadium). This was Jimi's final visit to Seattle and the last time Al would ever see him alive. At the boarding ramp at the airport, Al said to him, "Keep your nose clean." Al said Jimi started towards the plane but came back and looked into his eyes. He went down the ramp again but turned around, came back to Al and just looked at him. He did this three times. The thought, "Will I ever see him again?" went through Al's head -- he always worried about Jimi's planes crashing -- and he sensed Jimi was feeling the same thing that day. Al waved him goodbye. Jimi's Death and the Theft of His Legacy On September 18, 1970, Al got a call from Henry Steingarten, Jimi's lawyer, and was told that Jimi was dead. Steingarten told him to come to New York and to bring a lawyer. Al brought Charles Pasco, a friend of a longtime friend. In New York he met Alan Douglas, who told him he and Jimi were great friends and that Jimi had been using his studio before he died, but Al said Jimi had never mentioned Alan to him. Al went to Jimi's New York apartment, grabbed some photos and a letter and asked that all Jimi's things be sent to him. Of all the belongings he saw in the apartment, he knows a lot of them weren't returned to him. Jimi's gold records and a photograph on the mantel piece were stolen from Al's home in 1985. Al heard of things of Jimi's being sold at auctions, but he never saw any of that money. Al did donate Jimi's Hopi jacket and some other things to a Planned Parenthood auction, but included a letter of authentication to go with these items. Al was encouraged to turn over Jimi's letters to lawyers for safe keeping, but he said he never saw them again -- the lawyers told him that they had been returned to him. Alan Douglas came and picked up all of Jimi's music recordings at Al's house, saying he was using them for mixing. Al hired a lawyer Leo Branton, Jr. in the late 1970s. A friend of Al's knew Leo's brother, and said he was a good lawyer for the entertainment world. When Al's niece, Diane, read about the rights to Jimi's music being sold, she asked Al if he was selling them. He said no and went about finding out what was going on. He thought he had the rights. In April 1993, Al filed a lawsuit in Seattle's U.S. district court to sue Alan Douglas and the family's legal advisor, Leo Branton, in order to regain the rights to Jimi's music. The litigation was funded by Paul Allen (1953-2018), who asked for repayment only if they prevailed. In July 1995, they won the case. With his daughter Janie, Al created Experience Hendrix, L.L.C. Al was chairman of the board and Janie heads the company as President. Bobby Hendrix, Frank's son, is vice president. Janie's husband, Troy, is in charge of the new Hendrix Records label, which is a joint venture with MCA records. They have also begun Dagger Records, an independent label through Experience Hendrix. Their website is www.jimihendrix.com. In 1995, One Reel held a Jimi Hendrix tribute concert at the Memorial Stadium at the Seattle Center's Bumbershoot Festival that really pleased Al. The line-up included Noel Redding, Mitch Mitchell, George Clinton and the P-Funk All-Stars with Parliament and Funkadelic, Buddy Miles, Billy Cox, Vernon Reid, Little "Jimmy" King, Junior Brown, Clarence Clemons, and Eric Burdon. Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne division parachuted into the stadium with purple smoke trailing from a contraption in their boots. They landed flawlessly one after the other in a 10 by 10' area marked off area in the middle of the stadium floor. To the cheers of the audience, they crowned Al "King" in a ceremony on stage, giving him and a robe and having him light a cauldron with a guitar sculpture in it similar to the flame lit at the Olympics. It started raining heavily, just as it had at Jimi's last Seattle concert at Sicks' Stadium, but most people stayed. To make the night more spectacular, there were about four or five lightening cracks that lit up the sky. In the hospital after a scare when his pacemaker went on the fritz, Al told Janie he wanted to "stick around" long enough to get Jimi's estate settled, get the rights back, and tell Jimi's story in a book. Al and Jas Obrecht worked together to create My Son Jimi, a book constructed of transcribed interviews with Al about Jimi and his life and career. Al Hendrix died peacefully at home in his sleep on April 17, 2002. His funeral was held at Mount Zion Baptist Church on April 27, 2002. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, as is Jimi. Page 2 See Additional Media Jimi Hendrix -- the single most famous musician to ever emerge from the Pacific Northwest's music scene -- rose from extremely humble beginnings to establish himself as perhaps the most gifted and inventive guitarist of all time, one who would be globally recognized as a major force in twentieth-century music. Born and raised in Seattle, Hendrix absorbed the region's distinct rockin' R&B aesthetic of the "Louie Louie" era, learned to play guitar, and performed in a series of at least three teenaged dance combos between 1959 and 1961. After a couple minor brushes with the law, Hendrix joined the U.S. Army in 1961, and upon discharge in 1962 formed an R&B band in Nashville, and then toured the "chitlin' circuit" of African-American-oriented nightclubs. By 1964 Hendrix had made his way to New York where he was discovered by elite British rockers. Flown to London in September 1966, his new band, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, was a literal over-night sensation. In 1967 they slayed the Monterey Pop Festival's crowds, within months became a top concert draw, and their albums were instant psychedelic rock 'n' roll classics. In 1969 Hendrix headlined the legendary Woodstock festival. In 1970 the magnificent young musician died in his sleep. A Family of Entertainers The Hendrix family first arrived in the Pacific Northwest during the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909. Nora (nee Moore) Rose Hendrix (1883-1984) was a dancer with Lacy's Band and their traveling vaudeville troupe whose "The Great Dixieland Spectacle" show was featured at the expo's Dixieland pavilion. Her husband, Bertran Philander Ross Hendrix (1866-1934), was a stagehand/roadie for the organization. Family legend tells that after the exposition concluded in October 1909, the troupe was stranded without future bookings and disbanded. By 1912 the couple had settled into Vancouver, B.C., and the following year brought them their first child, Leon Marshall Hendrix. Subsequent years brought additional offspring including James Allen Hendrix (1919-2002), who developed a love of competitive dancing by the 1930s. It was while attending a Fats Waller dance one night that Al, as he was called, met the pretty 16-year-old from the mining town of Roslyn, Washington -- Lucille Jeter (1925-1958) -- who would become his wife in 1942. Months later, on November 27, 1942, she bore their first child, Johnny Allen Hendrix, at Seattle's King County Hospital -- today's Harborview Medical Center (325 9th Avenue). By that time Al was stationed overseas with the U.S. Army, and he was not pleased with the name Lucille had bestowed upon their son. Young Lucille loved the nightlife and partying and in time Al would learn that she had not been entirely faithful to him -- with one probable partner in adultery being a fellow named Johnny Williams. Upon his return from service, Al legally renamed his son James Marshall Hendrix (in 1946). West Coast Seattle Boy By 1947 the Hendrix family was settled into a unit of Seattle's Rainier Vista Housing Project, but their domestic home-life never really did settle down. Al and Lucille bickered and battled over her drinking and disappearing for days at a time as young Jimmy began attending kindergarten at Rainier Vista School (3100 Alaska Street S). Meanwhile Al was totally surprised when Lucille gave birth to another boy, Leon Morris Hendrix, in January 1948. Other children -- who would be fostered out -- came along, including Joseph Hendrix (b. 1949), Cathy Ira Hendrix (b. 1950) and Pamela Marguerite Hendrix (b. 1951). In December of that same year, the couple was finally divorced and Al essentially took over raising Jimmy and Leon. While Jimmy began attending Horace Mann Elementary School (2410 E Cherry Street), Al took on multiple menial jobs including janitor, gas station attendant, and finally gardener. During those days of struggle, Jimmy and Leon were both taken in at times by relatives, friends, neighbors, and perhaps a half-dozen foster homes. But Al eventually stabilized his situation enough that Jimmy rejoined him (at the house he'd bought back in 1950 at 2603 S Washington Street) and and Al did what he could to provide -- including bringing home an old used ukulele for his oldest son. By the mid-1950s Jimmy was enrolled at Leschi Elementary School (135 32nd Avenue) where he played on their Fighting Irish football team. Jimmy and his boyhood pals -- like most all Seattle kids -- were huge fans of the Seafair festival's hydroplane races on nearby Lake Washington, and he also loved listening to the radio and playing Al's small collection of jazz and blues records. Jimmy's Blues With the dawn of rock 'n' roll as a popular form of youth-oriented music in the 1950s, Jimmy and his pals became obsessed with the new sounds. Initially the only radio stations to feature big-beat music were tiny FM operations in Bremerton and Tacoma that aired specialty shows hosted by local pioneering African American DJs like Bob Summerise (1925-2010) and Fitzgerald "Eager" Beaver (1922-1992). But by 1957 even pop/Top-40 stations had to play the early big hits by Elvis Presley -- and the subsequent legions of other Southern rockabillies and Hollywood-based wannabes that would emerge. It was in September 1957 that Presley's band electrified Seattle with a concert at the Sicks' Stadium ballpark near the Hendrix's neighborhood -- but even though various publications have reported that the then-15-year-old Jimmy attended, no proof of that assertion exists, and his family's precarious financial state would seem to cast further doubt on it. What is certain is that a cartoon sketch of Presley and his guitar was drawn by young Jimmy, and survives in his family's archives. It was also in about 1957 that Al bought an old used acoustic guitar for $5 and gave it to Jimmy, who immediately began teaching himself to tune and play chords on it -- in particular, the foolproof-but-addictive three chords to the region's signature tune, "Louie Louie." Jimmy also began to jam to songs on the radio and to theme songs from various television shows. By 1958 Jimmy was studying at Meany Junior High School (301 21st Avenue E) and making new friends. It was probably in 1959 that Al was able to afford a cheap Supro Ozark electric guitar from the Myers Music shop (1214 1st Avenue) downtown. Undoubtedly grateful, Jimmy must also have been a bit frustrated that his father was never able to spare the cash to match that guitar with an amplifier. For the next years would always be reliant on sharing or borrowing the amps of his friends. And it was with such neighborhood friends as Pernell Alexander, Butch Snipes, and Luther Rabb that he began jamming after school. Alexander and Rabb were among the members of the first band that Jimmy helped form: the Velvetones. Though the band-members were far too young to play nightclubs, they honed their skills playing teen-dances in venues including recreation halls at area housing projects including Yesler Terrace in Seattle's Central District. Before long Jimmy's left-handed guitar playing had advanced to the degree that his peers became admirers. The Velvetones even began to include his original tune, "Jimmy's Blues," in their dance sets. Time passed and Jimmy was invited to join another band -- the Rocking Teens -- who soon changed monikers to the Rocking Kings. Meanwhile, Jimmy became enthralled with the sounds being created by various top-tier local bands -- especially Seattle's Dave Lewis Combo, the Playboys and Dynamics, and Tacoma's Wailers -- and he undoubtedly ached to belong to a group that had the potential to break out of the small-time scene of house party, community hall, and rec center gigs his bands had been trapped in. That opportunity arose around 1960 when he was invited to join James Thomas and His Tomcats, a new combo assembled, managed, and fronted by an older guy who had a sense for business and successfully got his band booked at good gigs such as Seafair picnics and military officers clubs ranging from the U.S. Naval facility (at Seattle's Pier 91) to Everett's Paine Field to Fort Lewis to Moses Lake's Larson Air Force Base and back. By this time Jimmy had acquired a new Danelectro guitar to replace one stolen during a gig at the Birdland nightspot (2203 E Madison). Drivin' South It was while attending Garfield High School (400 23rd Avenue) that Jimmy first began to get himself in trouble. Years later he would claim that he was expelled for smart-mouthing a teacher, but school records only show that he dropped out. Although he began to work alongside his father in the yard-care business, Jimmy had a greater taste for flashy clothes than he could afford and he reportedly got involved in a few acts of burglary at retail shops. Even more seriously, in the spring of 1961 he was arrested twice in one week for the same crime of riding in a stolen car. Back in those days judges often allowed young defendants an optional out from being sentenced to jail: that of joining the military instead. By June Jimmy was sweating in basic training at Fort Ord, California, and soon after was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. It was then that Jimmy mailed a letter to Al requesting that his Danelectro guitar be shipped down, and upon its arrival he would often practice playing it on base during his free hours. That was how he crossed paths with a bass-playing soldier named Billy Cox who heard this music from a distance and was immediately impressed by the unseen guitarist's profound technique and musical acumen, later reminiscing that it came from a creative musical space "somewhere between Beethoven and John Lee Hooker" (Shapiro and Glebbeek, pp. 60-61). The two troopers hit it off and soon formed a combo, the King Kasuals, to play gigs around the adjacent Clarksville, Tennessee area. Long-story-short: Jimmy had difficulty managing his personal finances and was always frustrating his bandmates by pawning his guitar to raise a few bucks. Worse yet, at one point he actually sold his guitar to another soldier. Upon being discharged from the 101st Airborne Division in 1962 he begged the fellow to loan it back so he could find work. Interestingly, years later Hendrix would claim that he'd been cut loose by the army because he'd broken his ankle during a parachute-training jump. Yet in 2005 some of his military records were released under a Freedom of Information Act request (posted at TheSmokingGun.com), which reveal that the guitarist had been a rather problematic soldier -- one who, among other infractions, was "unable to conform to military rules and regulations," and was severely distracted "while performing duties" due to excessive "thinking about his guitar" -- which led to a recommendation that he be discharged under Army Regulation #635-208, the classification for "Undesirable" status. In addition, Charles R. Cross's 2005 biography references other army medical documents that show that Jimmy actually declared himself to have homosexual tendencies (a surefire way to get mustered out early). Though Hendrix earned a bit of a reputation as a teller of tall tales, his service did finally end -- for whatever reason, or combinations thereof -- on July 2, 1962. Highway Chile Upon Billy Cox's discharge around September, he and Jimmy scrambled around putting together a new lineup of the King Kasuals and aimed their sights on the black nightclub scene in Nashville. Scoring gigs at the Del Morocco and the Jolly Roger clubs the guys figured they were making inroads into the music biz and they even reportedly hired on in support of a few soul stars including Carla Thomas, the Marvelettes, and Curtis Mayfield. His father once recalled that at a couple points Jimmy became flush enough to afford train tickets back for visits to Seattle and it is also known that he visited his grandmother Nora in Vancouver during one Christmas season. That was where he sat in with, and briefly joined the town's top club act, Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers, who had an extended engagement at the Dante's Inferno venue. Some sources have insisted that that was where the 1950s rock 'n' roll icon, Little Richard, first discovered Hendrix. What is certain is that in time the promising young guitarist would ultimately join the star's band, and tour and record ("I Don't Know What You've Got But It's Got Me") with them. Hendrix himself would later confuse the record by making some possibly fanciful claims in media interviews regarding which other stars he played with along the way -- singers like Sam Cooke and Jackie Wilson included -- but it is a fact that after winding up in New York City in early 1964 he did join the Isley Brothers band (even touring through Seattle once with them) and record a few songs including the minor radio hit, "Testify," which in hindsight contains a tantalizing little flash of his guitar-playing prowess. Rejoining Little Richard, Jimmy ended up back on the West Coast and while in Los Angeles he played in a recording session for a girl singer, Rosa Lee Brooks, which produced another early disc with Hendrix's guitar-work, "My Diary." Then, settled back in New York City once again, Jimmy played with a few club bands including Curtis Knight and the Squires, and did recording sessions with Lonnie Youngblood -- and even one with the King Curtis Orchestra: Ray Sharpe's "Help Me," which was released by a major label, Atco Records. Jimi Emerges In late 1965, he formed Jimmy James and the Blue Flames and they played in various Greenwich Village coffee houses and nightclubs. Within months Jimmy's reputation as a phenomenal guitarist began to get traction. In 1966 he was spotted while performing by Linda Keith -- the British model and girlfriend to the Rolling Stone's guitarist Keith Richards. She stepped up and invited Jimmy over to a after-gig party and discovered that the budding guitar god was actually a shy, polite, and perfectly charming young man who suffered from self-esteem issues, the lack of adequate income, and a lack of nutrition. Feeling the need to help him out, she returned to her upscale hotel room, grabbed one of Richard's Fender Stratocaster guitars and gave it to the grateful musician. In addition, Keith did everything she could to spread the word about Jimmy amongst all the British rock stars she knew. Chas Chandler -- bassist with the Animals -- likewise agreed that Jimmy was a full-on rock star just waiting to be nurtured, packaged, and launched. He convinced Jimmy to fly with him back to London where he would quit the Animals and manage the guitarist's future career. Aboard that September 23rd flight Chandler informed his protégé that he was to be marketed with an intriguing new name: Jimi Hendrix. Once in London, auditions were held and bass guitarist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell were selected to form the Jimi Hendrix Experience, and gigs and tours commenced after minimal rehearsals. Rock 'n' roll was forever transformed by Hendrix's mind-blowing psychedelic guitar pyrotechnics and beautiful song-writing. The debut single, "Hey Joe," was an instant hit that was quickly followed by the ground-breaking masterpiece, "Purple Haze," and the Summer of Love classic album Are You Experienced. Initial Brit media coverage was a mixed bag: Some critics were duly agog over the band's virtuosity, while others couldn't get over Hendrix's wild appearance and lobbed racial insults like "Mau Mau" towards the emerging star. As word began to leak back stateside, a few folks in Seattle began to puzzle as to whether this "Jimi" guitar hero was in fact, the town's own Jimmy Hendrix. That mystery was deepened when Chandler -- employing every possible opportunity to hype the musician as exotic and entirely different than any other rocker in England -- really began playing up the fact that Hendrix was an American. In June 1967 the Jimi Hendrix Experience was booked to perform at the highly publicized Monterey International Pops Festival. It was there that their music and Jimi's stage show (famously featuring a guitar-smashing, flambe finale) catapulted them to the top of the pop charts. Within weeks the first advertisements for a Seattle concert date were published -- albeit with the majorly embarrassing typographical hometown error which announced that "Jimmy Hendricks" would soon appear at the Eagles Auditorium (7th Avenue and Union Street) along with San Francisco's Moby Grape (Helix). Back Home The year 1968 saw two additional album releases by the Jimi Hendrix Experience: Axis: Bold as Love and Electric Ladyland. Both proved to be critical and commercial successes. On February 12, 1968, Hendrix performed at the Seattle Center Arena, a venue not renowned for its acoustic qualities. Tom Robbins wrote in the Seattle countercultural newspaper Helix, "Listening to rock in the Arena is like making love in a file cabinet. It's a study in frustration." The next time the band returned to town they played on September 6, 1968, at the somewhat better Seattle Center Coliseum -- a venue they returned to on May 23, 1969.. But by June, the Experience had dissolved and Jimi began playing with varying lineups of other musicians sometimes billed as the Gypsy Suns and Rainbows or as Sky Church (which included Billy Cox, Mitch Mitchell and other players), which headlined the Woodstock rock festival in 1969. Jimi then formed a new trio, the Band of Gypsys, with Cox and ace drummer Buddy Miles (formerly with Akron, Ohio's soft soul hitmakers, Ruby and the Romantics). Jimi also invested in his future by building a new facility, Electric Lady Studios, in New York City -- making him one of the very few young pop musicians to have his own recording studio. Then on July 26, 1970, he returned home to play one final gig here at Seattle's outdoor baseball park, Sicks' Stadium. Although there were reports that Hendrix held mixed feelings about his hometown, he always made a point of visiting local musician pals when visiting, and he even penned lyrics to an original song titled "West Coast Seattle Boy." I Don't Live Today The brutal life as a rock star -- constant touring, endless hassles, over-indulging in food, drinks, and recreational drugs -- finally took its greatest toll on the man. On September 18, 1970, James "Jimi" Marshall Hendrix died at age 27 while asleep in London, not of an overdose as has been so often reported, but by choking on vomit while under the influence of barbiturates and red wine. He was buried on October 1, 1970, at Greenwood Cemetery (today's Greenwood Memorial Park, 350 Monroe Avenue NE), in Renton, Washington. A memorial service was cancelled because of lack of time and because of official concerns about problems with crowds, but Seattle's music community came together on January 22, 1971 with with a three-day tribute jam/concert with over 30 bands -- to benefit the hastily organized and scandal-plagued Jimi Hendrix Memorial Foundation -- at the Eagles Auditorium (7th Avenue and Union Street) to honor a lost native son. In retrospect it is clear that Hendrix's contributions to music cannot be overstated. He was the magic missing link between existing traditional R&B forms and progressive interstellar acid rock of the Aquarian Age; the one guitarist who sent shivers of envious fear coursing through the veins of rock 'n' roll's leading guitar gods: Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Pete Townshend; an undeniable instrumental genius who harnessed feedback, fuzztone, and wah-wah sounds to positive and influential effect. He was a major force in twentieth century music. The high level of esteem his music is still held in by generations not yet born at the time of his death can be partially gauged by the estimated value of his estate -- which was reported as $40 million to $100 million back in 1995 when Al Hendrix succeeded in a legal brawl to regain control of it from various music biz entities. Since 1970 scores of books have been written about the man, movies have been screened, countless artists have covered his songs, and in June 2000 Seattle saw the Grand Opening of a $250-million music museum, the Experience Music Project (EMP, 325 5th Avenue N), founded in honor of Jimi Hendrix. Jimmy Hendrix, Seattle, ca. 1958 Courtesy Al Hendrix Thomas and his Tomcats, Nolta Records RB 22 single, 1961 Courtesy Peter Blecha Collection Jimi Hendrix (left) with guitar, ca. 1961 Jimi Hendrix's distinctive left hand technique with a right-hand guitar, ca. 1966 Courtesy Al Hendrix Handbill, Jimi Hendrix concert, Seattle Center Coliseum, 1968 Courtesy Peter Blecha Collection Jimi Hendrix with Sky Church, Woodstock Rock Festival, 1969 Poster, Jimi Hendrix concert, Seattle, 1969 Courtesy Peter Blecha Collection Radio station KZOK pin-back button, Jimi Hendrix memorial project, Seattle, 1981 Courtesy Peter Blecha Collection Poster, Jimi Hendrix memorial project benefit event, Seattle, June 7, 1981 Courtesy Peter Blecha Collection Experience Hendrix: The Best Of Jimi Hendrix album cover, 2010 Courtesy Experience Hendrix, L.L.C. Official Jimi Hendrix Memorial Foundation pin-back button distributed at Jimi Hendrix Memorial concert, January 22-24, 1971 Courtesy Jim Tomisser Ayako "June" Hendrix, stepmother of legendary Seattle-born guitarist Jimi Hendrix, worked hard to make a cozy home for her family. She was adept at cooking both her traditional Japanese fare and her adopted African-American soul food. She encouraged her children in all their endeavors. And she sewed and crocheted clothes for everyone. But the woman who spent World War II in a relocation camp also made time for laughter, shopping and talk with the friends she made wherever she went. Mrs. Hendrix died of cancer Friday (Aug. 20). She was 79. She had fought back from a 1980 stroke. Born in Puyallup to Kimiko Shimamura and Kumaichi Fujita, she went to Japan at age 7 to live with her grandparents and go to school. At 22, she returned to the U.S. and spent World War II interned with others of Japanese ancestry at Idaho's Minidoka Relocation Camp. There she married Satoshi Jinka, whom she later divorced. After working as a dry cleaners' tailor and presser, then as a housekeeper, she met James "Al" Hendrix, Jimi's father. She wed Hendrix in 1966. She considered his children by another marriage as her own. She also persuaded him to adopt her youngest child, Janie. "Friends introduced us. We just hit it off," said James Hendrix. "She was a Buddhist and I was a Methodist, but it didn't make any difference. "She and Jimi got along fine. Jimi was glad that I got married again . . . and Jimi and June got real close. Jimi enjoyed having a baby sister again." Mrs. Hendrix learned to love Jimi's music. Her favorite tunes were "Foxy Lady," "Purple Haze" and "All Along the Watchtower." "Oh, wow, she loved it," said her son, Willie Jinka of Edmonds. "There will be a rock band playing `Foxy Lady' at the funeral. She always called herself a foxy lady. She was pretty much a character." She wore purple dresses, purple hats and glasses with a purple tint. James Marshall "Jimi" Hendrix died in 1970 at age 27 of a drug overdose. Mrs. Hendrix acquired her nickname of "June" while working at the dry cleaners, where co-workers could not pronounce her name. "She was born in June," said Hendrix, "so she told the other women to call her June." Also surviving are her other children, Marsha Lake, Kent, and Linda Jinka, Donna Jinka and Janie Hendrix, all of Seattle; her siblings Hiroshi Fujita, of Tacoma, and Kazuma Fujita and Kikuko Morita, both of Seattle; and numerous grandchildren. Services are scheduled at 2 p.m. Sunday at Columbia Funeral Home, 4567 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle. Interment will be next to Jimi Hendrix at Greenwood Memorial Park, Renton. Carole Beers' e-mail address is cbeers@seattletimes.com VārdsAyako "June" Fujita Dzimums Sieviete Alias Ayako Hendrix Apraksts Ayako "June" Fujita was the second wife of James Allen Hendrix, the father of Jimi Hendrix. Miršana 1999 Laulības Dzīvesbiedrs: James Allen Hendrix1966 Nokopē šo tekstu un ielīmē to savā ģenealoģijas programmā vai vietnē Šis ieraksts tika saglabāts pie Ayako "June" Fujita, the stepmother of the iconic guitarist Jimi Hendrix, dedicated herself to creating a warm and loving home for her family. Despite experiencing World War II in a relocation camp, June found joy in laughter, shopping, and engaging conversations with friends she made