Beat: Arts

Pulitzer-winning photojournalist Michel du Cille dies in Liberia

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USPA News - Washington Post photojournalist Michel du Cille, a three-time winner of the esteemed Pulitzer Prize for his dramatic images of human struggle and triumph, died of an apparent heart attack on Thursday while covering the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. He was 58. Du Cille collapsed during a hike on the way back from a village in north-central Liberia where he and his colleague Justin Jouvenal were documenting the Ebola disaster for the Washington Post.

He remained unconscious and was taken to a nearby clinic, where he was found to have difficulty breathing, before being taken over dirt roads to a hospital two hours away. The Washington Post reported that du Cille was pronounced dead on arrival at Phebe hospital, having died of an apparent heart attack. "We are all heartbroken. We have lost a beloved colleague and one of the world`s most accomplished photographers," said Martin Baron, the newspaper`s executive editor, in a note to staff members. "Michel died at 58 doing the work he loved. He was completely devoted to the story of Ebola, and he was determined to stay on the story despite its risks. That is the sort of courage and passion he displayed throughout his career." Du Cille had returned to Liberia on Tuesday after a four-week break that included showing his photographs at an event in Ethiopia. He also returned to the United States in late September and made news in October when New York`s Syracuse University rescinded an invitation for Du Cille to attend a journalism workshop, citing concerns over his trips to Ebola. "It`s a disappointment to me. I`m pissed off and embarrassed and completely weirded out that a journalism institution that should be seeking out facts and details is basically pandering to hysteria," Du Cille told the Washington Post on October 17, when he had already passed Ebola`s 21-day incubation period, even if he had been at risk. Baron said the loss of du Cille`s death to the Washington Post newsroom and journalism as a whole is "incalculable." Du Cille won his first two Pulitzer Prizes while working as a photographer for the Miami Herald in the 1980s, first for his photographs of a housing project overrun by drug crack and later for his photographs of the devastation caused by the eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in Colombia. In 2008 he shared a third Pulitzer Prize for exposing the mistreatment of wounded veterans at Walter Reed Hospital in D.C. Du Cille, who was born in Jamaica, is survived by his wife Nikki Kahn, who is also a photographer for the Washington Post, and his two children.

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