

Alexandre

Last night, as we were returning from the June fest on the riverfront of the Tocantins, enjoying a Tacacá stew, we learned that Alexandre had been executed in his rusty old wheelchair. We were devastated. He was one of fifteen special needs young people from our community who had received a gift of 100 Brazilian Dollars from the artists of our youth-band during the final cultural fest of 2011, after they and their mothers decided to recycle a performance fee of \$1500 from the global Brazilian mining company *Vale do Rio Doce* into a currency of solidarity.

The next morning, the streets revealed more detail. Alexandre had been playing with his one-year old son on his lap. As a car drove at him to tip him into the street, Alexandre had thrown his child onto the sidewalk. He was shot in the head and died instantly.

Alexandre had been paralyzed from the waist a year earlier in a drug-trafficking feud, but had continued to command the circulation of *oxy* (a lethally addictive, cheap derivative of crack-cocaine), and even executions, from his wheelchair. *Alexandre simply met our 'Rivers of Meeting' project a little too late*, our emerging artist-leaders said, *at the crossroads between two worlds: a midnight project of death and a dawn project of life*. Was he crossing their threshold? He knew he would end up on the front-page of the local newspapers, but was not yet aware his death would be used to promote the industrialization of the Amazon, to fuel 'electricity for all'.

His days were numbered, the street whispered, *and it's good that he died. Now we will all sleep easier*. If Alexandre had known how his death would be used to justify the accelerated development of the riverside and dispersal of its Afro-Indigenous community to make way for a luxurious international resort – financed and powered by Vale do Rio Doce, would he have made other choices? What was he singing to his son as they played at midnight? Will *he* grow up gasping for refuge from putrid river highways in evergreen shopping-centres, consuming his own ancestral memory as 'Amazon cool'?

Alexandre's rusty wheelchair offers insight into all that we face in the Amazonian State of Pará today.

Dan Baron

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Transformance Institute

Tocantins and Itacaiunas Rivers