

Beat: News

Journalist who brought down U.S. general killed in car wreck

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USPA News - American journalist Michael Hastings, whose `Rolling Stone` magazine article led to the dismissal of U.S. Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal as the commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan, was killed in a car wreck on Tuesday.

He was 33. Hastings was killed at around 4:15 a.m. local time on Tuesday when his Mercedes-Benz crashed into a tree in Hollywood and caught fire. Police said the lone occupant of the vehicle had not yet been formally identified, but the journalist's employers confirmed Hastings had died in the accident. "We are shocked and devastated by the news that Michael Hastings is gone," said Ben Smith, editor-in-chief of the online news outlet BuzzFeed. "Michael was a great, fearless journalist with an incredible instinct for the story, and a gift for finding ways to make his readers care about anything he covered from wars to politicians." BuzzFeed hired Hastings in February 2012 to cover the re-election campaign of U.S. President Barack Obama. He was also a contributing editor for Rolling Stone magazine, for which he wrote a history-making piece called "The Runaway General" that prompted Obama's dismissal of McChrystal as commander of all U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Rolling Stone managing editor Will Dana also praised Hastings' work. "Great reporters exude a certain kind of electricity, the sense that there are stories burning inside them, and that there's no higher calling or greater way to live life than to be always relentlessly trying to find and tell those stories," he said. On the magazine's website, Dana added: "I'm sad that I'll never get to publish all the great stories that he was going to write, and sad that he won't be stopping by my office for any more short visits which would stretch for two or three completely engrossing hours. He will be missed." Hastings' explosive magazine article in July 2010 revealed the strategic discrepancies and political infighting that underlies the American military mission in Afghanistan. It depicted Gen. McChrystal as an outsider who didn't get along with many top officials in the Obama administration. "How'd I get screwed into going to this dinner?" McChrystal was quoted as saying in the magazine article that sparked widespread condemnation in the United States. He made the comments in Paris where he was going to meet a French minister and added: "I'd rather have my ass kicked by a roomful of people than go out to this dinner." Hastings, after McChrystal left, asked one of the general's aides who he was going to dinner with. "Some French minister. It's fucking gay," he was told. Other comments quoted in the article, which earned Hastings a George Polk Award for Magazine Reporting, mocked top U.S. officials, including Vice President Joe Biden. "Are you asking about Vice President Biden? Who's that?" McChrystal said as he laughed. A top adviser replied to him: "Biden? Did you say, `Bite me`?" Hastings is survived by his wife, writer Elise Jordan.

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