

# ONE LAST SHOT FOR 'VILLAGE'

**ON SCREEN:** Doc maker teams with rapper Red1 to tell story of Little Mountain housing

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JENELLE SCHNEIDER/PNG

# Red1 recalls little village he once called home

Hip hop artist Red1 gazed over the turned-over earth where his family's home once stood at the Little Mountain housing project.

"It's kind of weird," he finally said. "It's sad. There were so many families here. If they actually had a plan for the place, within a timely fashion, I could understand. Get them out, build it, get them back in. but it's been this empty field for years."

It was here, as a teen in the early 1990s, that he first bonded with the guys who became the Juno-award winning rap group the Rascalz. Red1's family moved away from the social housing project in the mid-1990s, but he comes back often to remember those days, and he still lives nearby.

"We actually came up with the name of our group, hanging out by that stump right there," he says, pointing. "We were all hanging out at the back of my house ... all kind of crazy little memories like that, that's why I still come through this place."

He first moved there with his family while he was in elementary school.

"All the kids would come here and hang out, they had big open fields, we'd play sports. By the time I left high school, being from the projects was the coolest thing. People used to lie and say they were from Little Mountain."

He was still living here while the Rascalz were doing their first late-night studio recording sessions, sneaking in through his family's basement window.

When he saw the demolitions starting at Little Mountain a few years ago, he came back to shoot pictures for the cover of a solo album, while some of the buildings still stood.

"Before they tore it down, I wanted to at least document it for myself," he says.

That's when he met documentary-maker David Vaisbord and agreed to be part of the documentary on the struggle to save Little Mountain.

"I actually care about this place," Red1 says. "Queen Elizabeth Park, that was my back yard. The community centre was nearby, older folks, young kids. There was nev-

er really much crime around this neighbourhood, a good place to grow up. A little village inside the city. I hope people still get to experience that, not just million-dollar condos at 500 square feet.”

— **Glen Schaefer**