



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice
Death Row Records CEO Marion 'Suge' Knight is serving a nine-year prison sentence.

Unleashing doom on Death Row

Once powerful label in jeopardy

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The first lady of Death Row Records unleashed her long-awaited debut album earlier this summer, but the lack of record company promotion has left her critically-acclaimed record off the Billboard music charts before Labor Day.

The Afro-puffed 25-year-old Lady of Rage, from Farmville, Va. is keeping faith in Death Row as the label becomes further bogged down in business and legal chaos.

"Just because things are going bad now doesn't mean I'm going to leave. I wasn't trying to leave when things were going good," she said.

The going was good when Death Row Records was making \$100 million a year. Dr. Dre, Snoop Doggy Dogg, the late Tupac Shakur, Nate Dogg and the Dogg Pound were putting out hit records that seemed to define black music for the '90's.

But now Death Row's controversial leader

Marion "Suge" (short for Sugar Bear) Knight is serving a nine-year prison term for violation of probation and just last week New York newspapers reported that Death Row's distributors Interscope Records and Universal Music Group are planning to cut their ties.

With no major distributor for their records, Death Row's future is unclear, music insiders say.

Only adding to their woes, is the Justice Department's reported probe investigating whether Los Angeles drug dealers provided the initial money to launch Death Row Records.

The officials are seeking evidence to prove that Death Row may be guilty of tax violations and money laundering.

Death Row, and its remaining assets, might be seized by the government due to the ongoing probe. If that happens the fate of the record label's artists and unreleased albums may be tied up in legal wrangling for years.

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