

Entertainment Briefs

P. DIDDY BUYS \$10 MILLION
NEW JERSEY ESTATE

ALPINE, N.J. (AP) - Hip-hop star and entrepreneur Sean "P. Diddy" Combs has purchased a 21-room Bergen County mansion for more than \$10 million, a publicist for the seller told The Associated Press. Combs bought the 17,000-square-foot home from financier Mark Arzooonian. The brick colonial home is set on 3.5 acres with a gated, tree-lined driveway that winds to a circular courtyard. The Alpine house has three bedroom suites with sitting rooms, five additional bedrooms with private baths and a six-car garage. It also has an outdoor pool with a waterfall and separate spa; a movie theater; tennis, racquetball and basketball courts; a wine cellar, and a 700-gallon aquarium. The sale was reported Friday. Arzooonian is chairman of two firms: Airtite Inc., a company that makes golf products, and Black & White Solutions, an information technology staffing organization.

PERJURY TRIAL FOR RAPPER
LIL' KIM DELAYED

NEW YORK (AP) - A federal judge Wednesday postponed the trial of rapper Lil' Kim on charges she lied to a grand jury to give her lawyers more time to review the prosecution's evidence. Prosecutors objected to the delay from November to Feb. 28. The rapper, whose real name is Kimberly Jones, is charged with conspiracy, perjury and obstruction. Prosecutors have accused Jones of lying to a grand jury investigating a 2001 shooting allegedly involving members of her entourage. One man from a rival rap group was injured. Jones' former manager and co-defendant, Damion Butler, has been indicted for allegedly shooting a weapon during the incident. Jones is accused of telling the grand jury that Butler was not present. Butler, escorted into the courtroom in handcuffs by federal marshals Wednesday, is serving a prison term on unrelated weapons charges. Also Wednesday, Jones restated her not guilty plea to address updated charges against some of her co-defendants.

REPORT: BRANDY, NBA'S QUENTIN
RICHARDSON ENGAGED

NEW YORK (AP) - "Talk About Our Love" singer Brandy is engaged to pro basketball player Quentin Richardson, People magazine reported. Richardson, 24, surprised the 25-year-old Brandy with an 11-1/2-carat diamond ring valued at \$1 million at a reception Tuesday at Los Angeles' Century Club, the magazine said Thursday. "It was a total surprise for her," said jeweler Jason Arasheben, who designed the ring. The former "Moesha" star and Richardson were surrounded by their families, close friends and rose petals during the reception. Richardson's proposal came at time when Brandy's last relationship has been talked about in the media. Music producer Robert Smith said last week the two were never wed, as she had claimed. Speaking to Wendy Williams, Smith said their supposed marriage was a ruse to protect the image of Brandy, who was then pregnant with their daughter, Sy'rai. Brandy released a statement saying she was "deeply hurt and shocked" by what Smith had said, adding: "We had a spiritual union and true commitment to each other." In February 2002, Brandy declared that she and Smith had been secretly wed in 2001. She gave birth to their daughter in June 2002.

RAPPER 'BABY' WILLIAMS SETTLES
JEWELRY LAWSUIT

MIAMI (AP) - Grammy-nominated rapper Bryan "Baby" Williams has settled a lawsuit alleging he failed to pay \$85,000 for jewelry he ordered, court records show. Williams and King's Jewelers in Bay Harbor Islands, near Miami Beach, settled for \$57,500, according to the records available Friday. Williams gets the jewelry and neither party admits liability or wrongdoing under the settlement. Williams, also known as Birdman, ordered a \$23,500 pendant made of 18-karat White gold and large diamonds to form the initials BM, along with nine White gold, diamond-studded pendants inscribed with the name of his record label, Cash Money Records, worth \$54,000 total, the lawsuit in October alleged. King's Jewelers alleged Williams ordered, approved, and suggested modifications for the custom jewelry but then failed to pick up or pay for his order.

Chappelle's rich: Inks \$50 million deal

NEW YORK - Dave Chappelle has signed a massive deal with Comedy Central that will return the comedian's hit series to the network for two more seasons.

Sources familiar with the deal indicate it could be worth about \$50 million, vaulting Chappelle, 30, into the rarefied realm of television's top earners. The new contract is believed to mark not only a steep increase for Chappelle as star, writer, co-executive producer and co-creator of "Chappelle's Show," but more significantly, reward him with a hefty chunk of the series' robust DVD sales.

Increasing the pressure on Comedy to close a megadeal with Chappelle was interest from other programmers eager to tap his talents, including NBC Universal Television Group, according to sources, which ultimately deemed Chappelle too expensive. FX is said to have made an eight-figure offer to lure Chappelle to the network, but to no avail.

The deal also has implications beyond Comedy for Chappelle within the network's parent company, Viacom, sources said. Another component sets up Chappelle with a multimillion-dollar deal at Paramount Pictures to star in an adaptation of the autobiography of Rick James, the funk veteran whom Chappelle has lampooned on "Chappelle's Show." He may also be tapped for a different film project.

In addition, the contract is said to establish a development deal for Chappelle's



Actually, he's richer. Languishing for years on Comedy Center, Dave Chappelle struck fame with his own TV show.

production company, Pilot Boy Prods., with managing principal Mustafa Abuelhija. The pair already has a project under consideration at Comedy featuring "Chappelle's Show" contributor Paul Mooney.

Also reaping the benefits of the deal was Chappelle's longtime partner, Neal Brennan, a director, executive producer, co-creator and writer of the series. While terms of the deal for Brennan were not disclosed, it is one of the richest deals in basic cable for a multihyphenate.

"I knew we could continue at Comedy Central," Brennan said. "We weren't thinking of going anywhere else." Chappelle, who is vacationing in Paris, was not available for comment.

"Chappelle's Show" has become an important series for Comedy, scoring a trio of Emmy nominations last month and ranking as the highest-rated cable program for the network's demographic sweet spot, men 18-34, who comprised much of the 3.1 million total viewers the series averaged in its second season.

The ratings for "Chappelle's Show" not only held up well in reruns, but boosted other longtime Comedy staples including "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" and "South Park" — not to mention the network's strong primetime performance in the first and second quarter of the year.

"Life without 'Chappelle's Show' would not have been very bright as far as getting or exceeding those numbers again," said Lauren Corrao, senior vp original programming and head of development. "It means a great deal to growing our schedule. We're thrilled to have him back."

More important, "Chappelle's Show" has become a juggernaut on DVD, selling 1.7 million units to date of a collection of first-season episodes — the most successful television-related DVD of the year despite minimal marketing.

Chappelle's original deal reaped barely a fraction of DVD revenues — a source of frustration to the comedian as his second one-year deal

with Comedy expired. The new deal cuts Chappelle not only a larger portion of DVD sales — including retroactively to the first and second seasons — but revenue from merchandising and events as well.

As DVD becomes an increasingly lucrative revenue stream for networks and studios, the format is taking a place next to syndication as a crucial deal point for profit participants. In HBO's contentious renegotiation with "The Sopranos" star James Gandolfini last year, DVD also emerged as a thorny issue.

Combining Chappelle's DVD take with his per-episode salary (estimated to be in the low-middle six figures) puts him in the league of Gandolfini and fellow Comedy executive producers Matt Stone and Trey Parker of "South Park." He is also slated to partake of a syndication sale of "Chappelle's Show," which may be a remote possibility given the series' raunchy content.

Chappelle has already turned down an offer to host the upcoming sister network MTV's Video Music Awards but is said to be considering a second installment of the stand-up special he filmed for another Viacom property, Showtime, that debuts next month.

The first of 26 new episodes of "Chappelle's Show" is expected to premiere in the first quarter of next year. Each 13-episode season will consist of 10 original episodes, plus two "best-of" episodes and another devoted to music performances.

Political pundit strikes out at president

Top Ten Reasons Why George Bush Doesn't Deserve a Second Term

Bush Must Go, by Bill Press; Dutton Publishing; 290 pp., illus.; Hardcover, \$21.95;

ISBN: 0-525-94840-6.

Book Review

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

"I do not hate George W. Bush. I just think he's a sad, sorry excuse for a president. His policies have ruined the economy, pitted Americans against each other, destroyed the environment, taken us into an unwise and unnecessary war and made enemies around the world... Both at home and abroad, he has steered this nation in radical and dangerous new direc-

tions. He has betrayed our trust. He has adopted policies that are antithetical to our core national values." — Excerpted from the Introduction

There are so many anti-Bush books coming onto the market nowadays, it's hard to distinguish the ones with much substance from the ones just looking to cash-in on the latest cultural craze. One of the better entries in the Presidential bashing parade is "Bush Must Go" by Bill Press. You may remember Mr. Press as the former co-host of both CNN's Crossfire and of MSNBC's Buchanan and Press, and he

is still a popular guest on political debate programs.

This dyed-in-the-wool Democrat has written a relatively mild-mannered indictment which offers ten cogent reasons not to re-elect the President. He builds his case not on partisan politics, but on what comes across as a heartfelt belief that another four years of Bush might do irreparable harm to the Union.

He points out that the burgeoning anti-American sentiment which has strained relations with many of our allies has been tempered by the fact that they "know we didn't really elect George Bush in 2000." So, their ire is pres-

ently directed at him. However, Press warns that, if we do vote him into office this year, "they will start to blame us."

I can't honestly say that I found any of Mr. Press' ten arguments to be particularly novel, though each gets its own chapter and is well-supported by facts, notes and quotes. The allegations include the notions that Bush stole the election, that he lied to get us into the war in Iraq; that he's made us less safe from terrorism; that he put millions of Americans out of work; that he stripped us of fundamental freedoms via the

(See Review, Page 9)