

## Few clues in Jam Master Jay's death

NEW YORK (AP) - At his platinum-selling peak, when rap pioneers Run-DMC were a worldwide sensation, Jam Master Jay still drew musical inspiration from the gritty streets of his native Queens. Two years after a mystery gunman walked into Jay's recording studio and pumped a bullet into his head, those same streets have offered few clues about his killer.

On the anniversary of his death on Oct. 30, 2002, family members and investigators say the case has been hampered by dead-end leads, reluctant witnesses and bad publicity.

Investigators say they are certain that Jay, whose real name was Jason Mizell, knew his killer. But they know little else. Not even a \$60,000 reward for information leading to an arrest has elicited a response.

"The case is progressing at a slow rate," said Lt. Richard Bellucci of the Queens Homicide Task Force.

One theory—that the rapper was involved in a drug deal gone bad—has cast enough of a cloud over his legacy to stall a proposal that would rename a portion of a Queens street to Jam Master



A mural to deceased Run-DMC deejay Jam Master Jay.

Jay Way.

"It's not a top priority," said Yvonne Reddick, manager of a community board that received a request for the name change.

Family members acknowledge that Jay, the founding member of Run-DMC, left behind a mountain of debt. But they insist he was not mixed up in drugs. Police "never found any proof of that," said his mother, Connie Mizell-Perry.

During the 1980's, Mizell made rap music history working the turntables as Joe

"Run" Simmons and Darryl "DMC" McDaniels rapped on hits like "King of Rock," "It's Tricky" and a Top 40 remake of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way."

Mizell's last moments were spent at the 24/7 recording studio. According to a performer working in the studio, a man wearing a Black sweat suit appeared, embraced Mizell, pulled out a .40-caliber pistol and opened fire.

A first round missed Mizell and injured performer Urieco Rincon. A second

bullet, this one fired from point-blank range, entered the left side of Mizell's head. The shooter vanished.

Speculation followed that Mizell was killed because he owed money in a drug deal. Some authorities also suggested that Mizell was caught in the crossfire of a rivalry between rap figures who associate with known criminals.

Rincon has told investigators he did not recognize the shooter. Others in the studio were of little help and some even have hired lawyers, said Derrick Parker, a retired detective who monitored the rap world for the police department. "Everybody has counsel," Parker said. "It makes it complicated."

But police officials say some witnesses who were at first too scared to talk have started to open up, and detectives remain hopeful the killer will be caught.

Meanwhile, Mizell's mother has busied herself by raising money for a charitable foundation named after her son. She prefers to focus on his successes in life, not his violent end.

"There's always a good feeling when I think about Jason," she said. "He's here in spirit."

## Steve Harvey visits Atlanta race track

HAMPTON, Ga. (AP) - Steve Harvey never felt more overdressed. When the actor-comedian showed up at Atlanta Motor Speedway to promote the movie "Racing Stripes," he was decked out in a brown suit with a matching brimmed hat and a bright yellow tie.



STEVE HARVEY

"They didn't tell me I was coming to the race track. Me and my entire crew are dressed like pimps," Harvey quipped Saturday. "I've never wanted a T-shirt badder in my entire life than I do today."

The movie, set to be released in January, chronicles an abandoned zebra who longs to race. Harvey provides the voice of Buzz, an animated horsefly who wants to break free of the barnyard life.

As part of the promotional effort, Jeff Gordon donned a zebra-striped race suit and unveiled a No. 24 car that carries the same paint scheme. Proceeds from the movie's premiere will go to the Jeff Gordon Foundation and benefit charities for children.

"It's really something for all ages," said Gordon, who got a special viewing of the movie before a race at Talladega. "I don't want to give too much away about the movie, but it is a great message, a great inspiration and certainly plays a great role in what we do out there on the racetrack."

Harvey drew plenty of laughs as he discussed his first appearance at a NASCAR race. He was especially amazed at all the giant campers packed into the infield.

"I don't know what y'all are going to be doing with your spare time, but I'm opening up a bus company," he said. "I'm going to be selling buses and RVs."

Harvey said he was eager to fit in at the track.

"I am going to get me one of those shirts with a logo on it, get me some jeans and just get out there in the middle of it," he said. "If I can just wear my hats, I'll be cool. As long as I can wear a brim instead of a baseball cap, I'll be fine."

Harvey has a new appreciation for demands of the sport.

"I have been booed before, but I ain't never been run into a concrete wall," he told Gordon. "I can take a little booing, but if somebody runs me in a wall and I survive, there's going to be some problems in the pits."

Gordon took his turn at comedy.

"I just want to know where you guys thought you were going that you thought it was OK to wear the pimp suits," he said. "I want to wear one, but I want to know where I've got to go to wear one."

## R. Kelly, Jay-Z in legal dispute over spite

### Special to Sentinel-Voice

It seems R. Kelly is not a happy person at present, and, as a result, Jay-Z has some problems on his hands.

After their joint Best of Both Worlds tour came to a crashing halt on Friday, Kelly filed a breach of contract lawsuit against Jay-Z and concert promoter Atlanta Worldwide, seeking damages of at least \$90 million.

The lawsuit, filed Monday in Manhattan Supreme Court, alleges that Jay-Z deliberately sabotaged the tour out of "spite and jealousy" toward Kelly's "superior audience draw and tour profit share."

The Best of Both Worlds tour had been rumored to be on shaky ground over the past several weeks, after reports surfaced that the two artists were on increasingly bad terms with each other.

On Friday, emotions came to a head at a sold-out performance when a member of Jay-Z's entourage purportedly pepper-sprayed Kelly and two of his bodyguards

after Kelly walked off the Madison Square Garden stage mid-set, claiming that he saw two audience members waving guns.

Security staff searched the arena for the alleged gunmen, but found nothing suspicious; Kelly later admitted in a post-concert radio interview that he didn't actually see weapons.

Kelly and his bodyguards were treated at an area hospital and released, while Jay-Z and guest artists, including Mary J. Blige and Usher, continued performing.

The "I Believe I Can Fly" singer was subsequently fired from the tour by the promoter, having already walked off the stage during a performance in St. Louis, shown up two hours late for a performance in Chicago and caused concert delays in several other cities.

Kelly's breach of contract suit alleges that Jay-Z resorted to underhanded techniques, such as providing Kelly with poor onstage lighting to force him off the tour,

before finally resorting to violence. Entourage member Tyran "Ty Ty" Smith was fingered as the man responsible for pepper-spraying Kelly, allegedly on instructions from Jay-Z himself, per Kelly's suit.

The court documents contend that the source of the animosity between the two performers was Kelly's supposedly larger cut of the profits—60 percent of the first \$15 million earned to Jay-Z's 40 percent.

On Saturday, Kelly's publicist, Alan Mayer, claimed Kelly was "ready, willing and able" to continue with the tour, but that Jay-Z refused to perform with him.

"The fans deserve better than this," Kelly said in a statement.

"I'd like the show to go on. It's really disappointing that Jay-Z and the promoter don't."

Jay-Z released a statement through his publicist on Monday blasting Kelly's "lack of professionalism and unpredictable behavior."

Jay-Z was scheduled to perform a final concert Monday with as-yet unannounced special guest stars taking Kelly's place. The Best of Both Worlds tour had originally been scheduled to run through Nov. 28.

It was unclear whether Jay-Z intended to try and fill the remaining dates with solo performances. Fans who were only interested in seeing Kelly perform were told they could return their tickets at the point of purchase for a refund.

The two artists have had a difficult relationship. They initially teamed up for 2002's joint album, *The Best of Both Worlds*. But Jay-Z vetoed a tour and skipped out on promotional appearances shortly afterward, once Kelly's infamous sex tape surfaced, eventually leading to charges of kiddie-porn possession. Kelly has pleaded innocent to the charges, but sales of the album tanked.

With Kelly's commercial appeal rebounding, the two (See *Lawsuit*, Page 9)


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