

Sharpton rebukes rappers linked with violence

By Zenitha Prince
Special to Sentinel-Voice
 BALTIMORE (NNPA) — Civil rights leader Al Sharpton has proposed a disciplinary “rap” on rappers whose hands are tainted with violence, fanning the flames on an already smoldering industry.

Sharpton on March 8 said such artists use violence to sell records and should be denied airplay on radio and television for 90 days, alluding to an incident involving the meteoric rapper 50 Cent.

“There’s a difference in having the right to express yourself and in engaging in

violence and using the violence to hype record sales and then polluting young Americans [with the idea] that this is the key to success — by gunslinging and shooting,” he was quoted as saying in an Associated Press article.

Sharpton’s rebuke came mere days after bad blood erupted between the notorious 50 Cent and former G-Unit member, The Game. A member of Game’s clique was wounded during a shooting outside of New York radio station Hot 97, where 50 was announcing the ouster of his protégé from the label.

Both artists are known for their hardcore image: both were drug dealers and were shot several times.

Since its inception, the rap industry has been plagued by an image of violence and crime, with feuds like those between Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls, and that between Death Row Records CEO Shug Knight and former colleague Dr. Dre, as well as violent incidents involving the likes of Sean “P Diddy” Combs, Ja Rule and Lil’ Kim, dominating media coverage of the industry.

Newsweek recently reported that the industry has

now come under intense federal scrutiny, and one arrest has already been made. Irv Gotti, head of the former Murder Inc label, known for backing artists like Ashanti and Ja Rule, was arrested earlier this year on charges of money laundering.

The label is also charged with a number of assassinations associated with an alleged crack and cocaine enterprise.

Ja Rule, whose real name is Jeffrey Atkins, was another rapper with whom 50 had “a beef,” a feud which reportedly began when 50 made disparaging remarks about the

artist in his song “Life’s on the Line.”

Ja Rule publicly apologized to the city of Toronto on March 7 after pleading guilty to assault in a 2004 incident that had overtones of his feud with 50. Ja said a crowd had gathered around the nightclub where the altercation occurred, shouting “derogatory” comments about his public war with the rising star, and that he hit a bystander while he was trying to leave.

Though Ja Rule apologized, and 50 Cent and The Game have since kissed and made up, such gestures will likely do little to assuage or change the minds of a public that may view the industry as beyond redemption, though that does not stop people like Sharpton from trying.

“Black kids are expected to shoot each other, and nobody cares?” Sharpton questioned. “Well I care, and I think somebody should do something about it.”

King Center struggles amid money woes

ATLANTA (AP) - The King Center, one of the most revered sites in the civil rights movement and the final resting place of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., is struggling amid reports of financial woes and questions about possible mismanagement.

Now, some are asking the slain civil rights leader’s family to relinquish some control over the memorial site and seek federal help to main-

tain the nonprofit center.

“It’s the only way realistically that the King Center can remain intact and receive the kind of maintenance and upkeep that it deserves,” said state Rep. Tyrone Brooks of Atlanta, who worked with King during the civil rights movement.

Reports that the King Center requires \$11.6 million in repairs while its top two executives — King’s sons —

earn six-figure salaries have raised questions about how the center is being managed.

Founded by King’s wife, Coretta Scott King, in the basement of her home in 1968, the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change moved into its current site in 1981. The \$8 million complex includes Freedom Hall, an administrative and archives building, and King’s tomb, which lies on top of a reflective pool.

The center, which draws more than 650,000 visitors a year, sits within blocks of King’s birth home, the church where he preached and a visitor’s center, which are all run by the National Park Service. Together the

properties make up the King National Historic Site.

The King Center and the Park Service have had a rocky relationship, highlighted in 1994 when King family members tried to halt construction of the visitor’s center because they wanted to build a for-profit museum there instead.

Nevertheless, the Park Service gives the center about \$1 million in grants per year for maintenance.

But between 1996 and 2003, the King Center had an operating loss of more than \$1 million, and it has taken out loans and lines of credit totaling \$1.6 million since 2000 to pay bills, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* has reported.

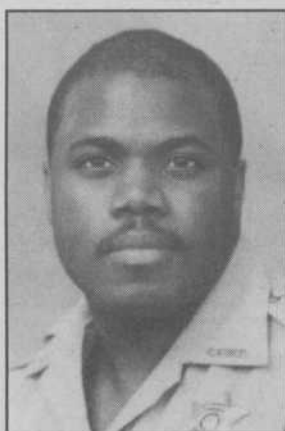
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 that term ended.

“It was just the right time,” Sarbanes said. “We think we’ve served long and well and honorably, and we’re very comfortable with this decision.”

Maryland traditionally votes Democratic, and went for John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election. Sarbanes, the longest serving senator in Maryland’s history, is serving alongside outspoken Democratic Sen. Barbara Mikulski.

Four of Maryland’s six Democratic congressmen, Ben Cardin, C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, Chris Van Hollen and Al Wynn, said when Sarbanes announced his retirement that they were considering running for his seat.



Fulton County (Ga.) Sheriff’s Sgt. Hoyt Teasley, left, is shown in an undated photo from the department. Teasley was shot and killed March 11 in Atlanta, when Brian Nichols, who was being escorted into court for his rape trial, stole a deputy’s gun, killed the judge, Teasley and shot another Fulton County deputy, Cynthia Hall.

Suspect

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 receive a \$10,000 reward.

After Nichols’ hearing, defense attorney Chris Adams told reporters “this is a time of grief and mourning” for the courthouse community.

That grief was apparent during an afternoon memorial service across the street from the courthouse. About 200 people packed in and around the building’s atrium, and an additional 100 or so watched from the three levels of balconies overlooking it.

Many wept as friends and co-workers shared thoughts and anecdotes about the victims. Deputies wore black bands across their badges in honor of their fallen comrade, Sgt. Hoyt Teasley, who was gunned down outside the courthouse.

Chief Deputy Michael Cooke hailed Teasley as a hero. “When everyone was running away from the danger, Hoyt, responding to the distress, ran to the danger,” Cooke said.

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Rap radio landlords want more security

NEW YORK (AP) — Owners of the building where the Hot 97 hip-hop radio station has sparked two shootings want less posses and more advance warning.

“Our tenants have all come to us and said they are basically in fear of their lives to come to work,” said Brian O’Dwyer, attorney for the city carpenters’ union, which owns the 10-story Manhattan building and is headquartered there.

The carpenters said rappers will be allowed to bring only one person into the WQHT studios with them — and they want a week’s notice of radio appearances so extra security or metal detectors can be deployed.

“We have a problem with the number of people who come with them — their posses,” O’Dwyer said. “Sometimes there are 20 or 30 people coming in and obviously some of them are armed coming through the door.”

The union’s letter came in the wake of a Feb. 28 shooting outside the building, which took place as 50 Cent was on the air saying he was dropping The Game from his G-Unit clique. A member of Game’s crew sustained a gunshot wound.

In February 2001, the crews of Lil’ Kim and rap duo Capone-N-Noreaga traded bullets outside the station. Kim is currently being tried on perjury charges for allegedly lying to a grand jury about the gun battle.

The union gave the radio station until Friday to agree to the new rules.

In a statement, station spokesman Alex Dudley said they were trying to reach a mutually acceptable resolution with the landlord. “However,” he added, “it is important to remember that there has been no incident inside the building.”

Second Baptist Church Celebrates it’s 63rd Anniversary

Friday, March 18th at 7 pm
 with the Vesper Choir under the direction of Dr. Michael Bates of the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff

Sunday, March 20th
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