

Mistrial declared in Notorious B.I.G. case

Special to Sentinel-Voice

A federal judge on Wednesday declared a mistrial in the Notorious B.I.G. wrongful death case, attorneys on both sides said.

U.S. District Judge Florence-Marie Cooper's ruling came after she expressed concern at a hearing Tuesday that the Los Angeles Police Department had deliberately withheld evidence from the court.

There were only three days of testimony in the trial, which began June 21 but was interrupted when an anonymous tip led to the discovery of large numbers of LAPD documents that hadn't been turned over to attorneys for the rap star's family.

B.I.G., born Christopher Wallace, was 24 when he was gunned down in 1997 while leaving a crowded late-night party in Los Angeles. He was one of the most influential hip-hop artists of the 1990s and his two albums are regularly listed among the best in the genre.

His family's lawsuit against the city and LAPD claimed corrupt police of-



The 1997 murder of Brooklyn rapper Christopher Wallace, known as Biggie Smalls and the Notorious B.I.G., remains a mystery. Wallace was gunned down in Los Angeles.

ficer David Mack arranged to have Wallace killed at the behest of Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight, and that LAPD officials covered up Mack's involvement.

Family attorneys had declared their intention to refile the suit with new allegations against the LAPD and

against Mack's one-time partner, Rafael Perez.

The city had previously asked the judge to continue with trial, arguing that any new documents largely revolved around hearsay. Assistant City Attorney Don Vincent said Wednesday he would still like "to try the case on the merits."

Family attorney Perry Sanders Jr. said the family — including Wallace's mother Voletta and widow R&B singer Faith Evans — didn't want to have to go through another trial but would do so. He said the case would now delve into a corruption scandal in the LAPD's Rampart division dating to the 1990s.

"We're about to get to the bottom of Rampart," Sanders said. "We're about to peel the onion back to its rotten core."

Perez was a central figure in the scandal, which involved alleged misconduct or

brutality by corrupt officers in an anti-gang unit at Rampart. More than 100 criminal convictions possibly tainted by police misconduct were reversed. Perez alleged (See B.I.G., Page 4)

Notorious B.I.G. to be honored at VH1 show

NEW YORK (AP) - Both Big Poppa and Big Daddy Kane will get their props from VH1 this year. The late Notorious B.I.G. — also known as Biggie Smalls, also known as Big Poppa — and old-school rapper Kane will be feted at the second annual VH1 Hip-Hop Honors on Sept. 22 at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York. The show will air Sept. 26.

Other honorees include LL Cool J, Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five, Ice-T, Salt-N-Pepa and the 1991 film "Boyz n the Hood."

"Our first Hip-Hop Honors proved to be an incredible success not only for the channel but also within the hip-hop community. It was a long overdue celebration of the genesis and roots of a genre that has permeated world culture," said the show's executive producer, Lee Rolontz, in a statement Tuesday to The Associated Press.

"This year's honorees run the gamut from MCs to trailblazing duos to an iconic motion picture — all of which have had a massive impact on the hip-hop music landscape."

Last year's honorees included the late Tupac Shakur, Public Enemy and rap pioneers Run DMC.

Expertise

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young women and men are successful in their future endeavors. It's extremely important for us to give back. We've been in this community for quite a long time, and we've seen people who would like to go into business, but they don't have support."

She continued, "By being in business myself for such a long time, I know the hardships of trying to go into business. But in order to go into business, you must be prepared. This is one of the things that we do here at Expertise: We prepare our young people and train them well. So when they leave here, they will be salon-ready and qualified to enter the workforce. We also teach them what they need to know financially if they want to pursue opening their own business in the future."

Braimoh explained, "Every student attending Expertise School of Beauty must have a high school diploma or GED to apply for one of the three programs — cosmetology, hair design, or manicuring. Each student must possess a state of Nevada identification card, and pay a \$5.00 enrollment fee to the

Nevada Board of Cosmetology."

She further explained that the cost of attending the school is based on the course of study plus an additional cost for the supply kit, registration and application fees. Many students are eligible for financial assistance and the school will work with all students on job placement after they graduate; however, Braimoh said that there is no guarantee that students will get employment through the school.

Concluding their remarks, Weekly was called back to the front of the room and announced that the City of Las Vegas had donated an acre of land located in the Enterprise Zone at 1911 Stella Lake Drive, near Lake Mead and Martin Luther King Boulevard where they plan to construct a new building at a cost of \$1.4 million.

Braimoh stated, "It was a blessing from God to be associated with Councilman Weekly and the entire city council of Las Vegas in this endeavor, and [they have all been] supportive in this developmental process. This means that we will be able to offer new courses, teacher training for licensed cosme-

tologists to become instructors, more training for skin care and night classes in our program."

Two of the graduates spoke about their experience participating in and completing the program.

Rotina Manuel said, "It feels really great when you set your mind to something and you finally succeed. It's fabulous. I'm planning now to go out and work at a salon like Supercuts and just cut hair for the moment. We've attended different shows and learned what we need to do to become successful in this great big world out there. Today, I am walking away with an education. I'm a cosmetologist, so I can do just about anything now and make a lot of money."

Natasha Sanders said, "I am happy and so proud of this accomplishment right now. This is my all-time dream of becoming a cosmetologist. Now that I have graduated, with God's help, I can go anywhere and do my best. My next step will be to take the State Board Examination and get my license. Eventually, I want to open up my own business, but now I want to get as much experience as I can at a salon."

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