

Bankruptcy filing will save 'Suge,' his label

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rap music mogul Marion "Suge" Knight staved off receivership for Death Row Records by seeking bankruptcy protection for himself and the record company Tuesday, claiming debts of more than \$100 million in each filing. Knight also avoided a criminal contempt citation.

The bankruptcy filings were reported to a judge during a Los Angeles Superior Court hearing on Knight's debts.

At issue is an unpaid judgment against Knight for \$107 million that was awarded to Lydia Harris, a former Knight associate who claimed she helped start the rap record empire with her former husband, Michael Harris.

Lydia Harris' attorney, Rex Beaber, sought the contempt citation on grounds that Knight had failed to appear at court-ordered debtor hearings, but Judge Ronald Sohigian said there were no grounds for such a finding because Knight had never been served with a notice to appear.

Knight, whose Death Row artists in the 1990s included Snoop Dogg and the late Tupac Shakur, was not

present.

The bankruptcy filings thwarted an effort to put Death Row Records into receivership, in which a court appointee would have held the business in trust pending resolution of the claim.

Sohigian had previously ordered receivership but stayed implementation pending Tuesday's hearing. But the filings in federal bankruptcy court halted any state-court actions involving receivership.

Knight's attorney, Laurence Strick, said his client will continue to operate the company while the bankruptcy matter goes forward in federal court.

Strick said his client was attempting to reorganize his financial affairs.

"Mr. Knight doesn't have \$107 million," Strick said.

"It remains to be seen what becomes of Death Row."

Strick said Knight was "optimistic" and "focused."

"He's doing great. He's remarkable in his ability to handle stress," he said.

Knight was convicted of assault in 1992 and placed on probation, then jailed for five years in 1996 for violating that probation.

He was returned to jail in

2003 for again violating parole, this time by punching a parking attendant at a Hollywood nightclub.

He was released the next year.

In the current case, Michael Harris, an imprisoned drug dealer serving a 28-year sentence at San Quentin Prison, is claiming half of the \$107 million as community property in his divorce from Lydia Harris.

Michael Harris also claims he put up \$1.5 million from behind bars to help start the record label, a contention that Knight has repeatedly denied.

Beaber said the bankruptcy move by Knight was not a surprise.

"Bankruptcy is by its nature the last and final step in these games of delay," he said.

Both Death Row Records Inc. and Knight filed for protection under Chapter 11 of federal bankruptcy law.

Knight signed Death Row's filing as president of the label.

It estimated assets of \$1 million to \$10 million and debts of more than \$100 million. Knight's personal filing estimated assets of zero to \$50,000 and debts of more than \$100 million.

Fats Domino inducted

FERRIDAY, La. (AP) - Antoine "Fats" Domino didn't attend his induction Saturday into the Delta Music Museum Hall of Fame, but he said he was deeply touched by the honor.

"I have received many honors in my lifetime, however none touch my heart as much as being recognized by the people of my home state Louisiana," the musician known for "Blueberry Hill" and "Ain't That a Shame" wrote in a letter.

Family friend Cleo Banquer delivered the letter, saying Domino didn't feel up to the 150-mile trip from Harvey, where he is living with his wife and daughter.

Domino still plans to perform at the 2006 Jazz & Heritage Festival in New Orleans this

May, Banquer said.

Hurricane Katrina seriously damaged the Ninth Ward home where Domino rode out the storm before being rescued.

"Hurricane Katrina led a path of destruction through my home," Domino wrote. "However, she would not destroy my faith in God and my love of music and my fans."

A display about Domino's life, including album covers and a brief biography, occupied a third of a museum wall. A special citation of appreciation from the Broadcasting Music Industry accompanied the exhibit.

The legendary Domino has been a member of the respected Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame since it began in 1986, and of the Songwriters' Hall of Fame since 1998.

LaBelle weeps over her effort

RIVIERA BEACH, Fla. (AP) - Rhythm-and-blues diva Patti LaBelle struggled through a weekend show after taking the stage at midnight, at one point sitting down and crying.

"I've never been this embarrassed in my life," LaBelle told the crowd Saturday at the Riviera Beach Jazz and Blues Festival. "This sucks. It's the worst show I've ever done in my life."

As temperatures dipped into the low 50s, LaBelle explained that she's nearly 62 and has diabetes and a heart murmur, and the cold weather simply wasn't agreeing with her.

The Grammy-winning singer tried to belt out a few notes, then told fans huddled under blankets that she understood if they walked out on her.

A steady stream of people

left the show during her 45 minutes on stage after having waited hours through opening acts.

"I've never ever given you less than I can give. I'm gonna give you everything you deserve," she said.

LaBelle struggled through "Lady Marmalade" with assistance from a few in the crowd, sang some gospel songs and "On My Own" before retreating.

Star Jones disputes dangers of nip, tuck

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Star Jones Reynolds said last week's reports of her plastic surgery perils were greatly exaggerated.

Jones Reynolds, a host of "The View," called the daytime talk show to discuss her breast-lift surgery and to dispute what another host, Meredith Vieira, described as "rumors circulating that she almost died."

"How are you, Star?" Vieira asked her in the on-air conversation.

"Well, can we first start with... I did not almost die," Jones Reynolds replied. "I mean there is nothing worse than sitting in a bed watching a scroll across the TV that says 'Star Jones faces death.' I went, 'Oh, my God, I did?'"

Joking that she wanted to keep the show "abreast" of the situation, Jones Reynolds said she merely required a blood transfusion because of the March 17 surgery at a Santa Monica hospital.

The doctors "all knew that I was anemic and just in case I ended up needing some blood, which I did, they were prepared. They gave me the blood and, literally, I was fine right afterwards," Jones Reynolds said, adding she was conscious during the transfusion.

Vieira asked her to describe the operation, which Jones said included receiving implants.

"It's a little bit of a hoist because after you lose some weight you sometimes go real flat, and I really wanted to lift them



STAR JONES REYNOLDS

up," said the once-heavyset Jones Reynolds, who has slimmed down considerably.

Asked by guest host Tisha Campbell-Martin if her bosom was "perky," she replied: "Well, let's just put it like this: Friday was my 44th birthday, but my (breasts) think they're still 20."

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