

50 Cent chides Oprah Winfrey

NEW YORK (AP) - He usually saves his beefs for other rappers; this time, 50 Cent is going after Oprah Winfrey. In an interview with The Associated Press, 50 complained that Winfrey rarely invites rappers on her talk show: "I think she caters to older White women."

"Oprah's audience is my audience's parents," the 29-year-old rapper said. "So, I could care less about Oprah or her show."

He's not alone in his resentment toward the talk show host cum media mogul.

Rapper-actor Ludacris, aka Chris Bridges, said in the May issue of GQ magazine that Winfrey was "unfair" during a show he appeared on last October with co-stars from best-picture Oscar winner "Crash."

"She edited out a lot of my comments while keeping her own in," he said. "Of course, it's her show, but we were doing a show on racial discrimination, and she gave me a hard time as a rapper, when I came on there as an actor."

Winfrey's representative at her production company, Harpo, told the AP that Winfrey was unavailable for comment. But, as 50 Cent said, Winfrey's purported disapproval might enhance a rap star's street cred.

"I'm actually better off having friction with her," he said.

The crack-dealer-turned-rapper has sold millions of records gleefully flaunting his gangsta image, explicit lyrics and bulletproof vest (he was famously shot nine times). He has his own record label, G-Unit, the G-Unit clothing line, his own sneaker line with Reebok and a videogame, "Bulletproof."

And he wears his rough-and-tumble reputation proudly: "I don't mind it. I've actually accepted it."

The rapper, who's signed to close pal Eminem's Shady/Aftermath label under Interscope Records, said he recently attended Proof's wake with Eminem. Proof, a friend of Eminem's, was shot and killed earlier this month during a dispute in a Detroit nightclub.

"He's coming along," he said of Eminem. "He's gonna be all right. I mean, it was definitely a big loss for him. Proof was actually his best friend in the world from forever."

On the heels of Proof's death, a study released last week by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation — a nonprofit public health research group — suggested that young people who listen to rap music are more prone to alcohol and drug use and aggressive behavior.

But 50's not buying it. He points a finger at parents, who he thinks should explain to their children that his music is a form of entertainment, not a license to break the law. "I think that the violence that happened to Proof and the violence that's happening across America right now has nothing to do with hip-hop," he said. "It has something to do with the people — the state of them — and the music doesn't alter that."

Snoop Dogg flies after arrest

LONDON (AP)-U.S. rapper Snoop Dogg flew out of Britain Friday following his arrest over a fracas at London's Heathrow Airport which left seven British police officers nursing injuries.

The musician and five other men were arrested Wednesday on charges of "violent disorder and affray" — or starting a brawl — and spent the night in police cells, London's Metropolitan police said.

Police said Snoop Dogg — real name Calvin Broadus, 34 — and the other men, all U.S. citizens in their 30s, had not been charged with any offenses and released Thursday, but must return to London in mid-May for further questioning.

Trouble began late Wednesday when members of the star's entourage were de-

nied entry to British Airways' first class lounge at Heathrow Airport. A disturbance involving 30 people followed, police said.

When officers told the group that they would not be allowed to board their flight, "a number of the group became abusive and pushed officers," a police spokeswoman said on the force's customary condition of anonymity.

She said seven officers received cuts, bruises and other minor injuries.

British Airways said they have since banned the rapper from future travel on the airline, a company spokesman said.

Broadus boarded a Virgin Atlantic flight bound for Johannesburg, South Africa, late Friday and is due to perform in Durban on Saturday.

'United 93' great tribute to heroes

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

Curiously, all the pre-release buzz about this flick revolved around the question of whether or not 9-11 was still too sensitive a subject to make a movie about five years after the fact. The cynic in me suspects that this brouhaha might have been baked-up by a cagey publicist in search of a little headline-grabbing controversy. After all, a trio of TV docudramas specifically about United Flight 93 have already been very well received.

First came, "Let's Roll: The Story of Flight 93" (2002), followed by "The Flight That Fought Back" (2005), and then by "Flight 93" (2006). So, rather than wondering if this picture might be arriving too soon, any speculation probably should have centered on whether the public would even want to endure yet another chronicling of the same tragic series of events aboard this ill-fated airliner.

Fortunately, "United 93" does depart significantly from those earlier offerings in a couple of critical respects, namely, it avoids the tempting trap of trading in sentimentality or in symbols of patriotism. Ironically, by not wrapping itself up in the American flag, demonizing the evildoers, canonizing the heroes, or focusing on their tearful telephone farewells to family and friends, this relatively-sophisticated film actually ends up being a far more effective enterprise, emotionally.

For it telescopes tightly on the tragedy, not as a rallying cry for the war on terror, but from the plausible perspective of 40, otherwise ordinary people simply reacting and responding to the shocking realization that their jet has



"United 93" recounts the heroism of passengers on the hijacked plane of the same name.

just been hijacked.

This hyper-realistic approach was the brainchild of Paul Greengrass, the acclaimed British writer/director who adopted the same verisimilitude in making "Bloody Sunday" (2002) a documentary-style drama recounting the massacre of 13 peaceful, Irish protesters by British troops. Greengrass is credited with imbuing each of his socially-relevant recreations with that trademark dynamic intensity, so "United 93" should come as no surprise to those familiar with his earlier work.

As everyone knows, four aircraft were seized by Muslim extremists on 9-11, but only Flight 93 failed to hit its target. It departed from Newark Airport at 8:42 with 44 aboard: 33 passengers, 7 crew members, and 4 hijackers.

From the transcript of the plane's black box voice recorder, as well as from phone calls placed by a dozen victims, we know that the conspirators stormed the cockpit at 9:26 A.M., just two minutes after the captain had

been warned of a possible intrusion.

And the nation is also well aware of the valiant attempt of the passengers to retake the plane a half-hour later, once they had learned from operators and loved ones of their captors' intention to turn the aircraft into a weapon of mass destruction. Armed with cutlery, boiling water and a food cart, they charged up the aisle, inspired by Todd Beamer's rallying cry of "Let's roll!" But the Arabs at the controls decided to crash the plane before the passengers could wrest control back.

In crafting "United 93," director Greengrass remained painstakingly faithful to these known facts, though he does take considerable liberties in filling in the cracks with likely scenarios. The film unfolds in real-time on that fateful September morning, initially inter-cutting staged shots of terrorists, travelers and air traffic controllers with now familiar TV-footage of the Trade Center and the Pentagon in flames. We also see the rank

ineptitude of the FAA, and the utter unpreparedness of NORAD to defend the country from the air.

But once the terrorists take charge of Flight 93, the movie turns terribly claustrophobic, concerning itself solely with the point-of-view of those inside the plane. So, for instance, we only hear the passengers' half of their phone conversations, and how they came to decide to hatch a plan after cobbling together the somewhat unreliable information they were receiving from the outside world.

It is noteworthy that the cast is comprised of a capable ensemble of accomplished actors augmented by actual airline personnel, including some of the air traffic controllers on duty during 9-11. A gut-wrenching, chillingly profound profile in courage of forty strangers who bonded under incomprehensible circumstances to face an unspeakable evil.

Excellent (4 stars). Rated R for profanity, and for intense sequences of terror and graphic violence.

Lawrence Brownlee wins prestigious tenor award

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawrence Brownlee, the 33-year-old tenor who makes his Metropolitan Opera debut next year, has won the 2006 Richard Tucker Award, worth \$30,000.

Brownlee, who specializes in the high bel canto tenor roles of Rossini and Donizetti, is the first African-American to win the prize, the Richard Tucker Foundation said last week. He also was recently named the winner of the 2006 Marian Anderson Award.

Brownlee began singing professionally more than four years ago and has made

debut at La Scala; the Vienna State Opera; Royal Opera House, Covent Gar-

den; and the Teatro Real in Madrid, Spain.

(See Brownlee, Page 9)



Lawrence Brownlee captured the Richard Tucker Award.