

Ludacris, West: No infringement

NEW YORK (AP) - Kanye West gave a lesson in hip-hop to federal judge Thursday as he testified at a copyright infringement trial that a 2003 tune he worked on was nothing like a not-so-successful New Jersey group's song.

During West's testimony, U.S. District Judge Kevin Castel asked him to say the first two lines of "Stand Up." West created the beat and opening two lines of the song, and Ludacris finished it.

West hesitated but finally blurted out a line laced with a harsh profanity that struck the judge as out of place in the dignified Manhattan courtroom.

"I'm sorry I asked," the blushing judge said with a chuckle as nearly everyone in the courtroom, including the jurors, laughed out loud. "I think I'm going to withdraw my question."

West, who has won six Grammy Awards for his two multiplatinum albums, "The College Dropout" and "Late Registration," told the court that it was not unusual that "Stand Up" and "Straight Like That" by the East Orange, N.J., group I.O.F. would both repeatedly use the words "like that."

"There's a lot of rap songs that say, 'like that,' 'yo, what's up?' or 'throw your hands high,'" he said. "Whatever people say in the 'hood,

it ends up on records. That's what hip-hop does."

Earlier in the day, Ludacris, whose real name is Chris Bridges, testified that he had never heard the expression "straight like that" or the song by that title until he was sued. He said he had used "like that" in a 1999 song.

"I never heard anyone use the term," Ludacris told lawyer Mel Sachs.

Sachs said the words "like that" were repeated more than 80 times in each song. Ludacris testified that he believes the words are repeated fewer than 80 times in his song.

Ludacris has been praised for his music and his acting

roles as Anthony in the Oscar-winning "Crash" and as Skinny Black in "Hustle and Flow."

A lawyer for the rappers and EMI April Music Inc., Christine Lepera, has asked the jury to reject the claims of BMS Entertainment/Heat Music LLC. The trial is to determine liability. If liability is found, a second phase of the trial will assess damages.

"Straight Like That" never made it beyond some air time on college radio after copies of it were released in September 2001. "Stand Up" was released in the fall of 2003 on Ludacris' album "Chicken and Beer," and became a huge hit.

Ice Cube newest Oprah detractor

NEW YORK (AP) - Rappers Ludacris and 50 Cent have dissed Oprah Winfrey. Now, Ice Cube has a beef with the talk show queen.

"I've been involved in three projects pitched to her, but I've never been asked to participate," the rapper-tor tells FHM magazine in its July issue, on newsstands June 6.

"For 'Barbershop,' she had Cedric the Entertainer and Eve on, but I wasn't invited," says the 36-year-old rapper, referring to his 2002 movie. "Maybe she's got a problem with hip-hop."

Cube adds: "She's had damn rapists, child molesters and lying authors on her show. And if I'm not a rags-to-riches story for her, who is?"

A call by The Associated Press to Winfrey's spokeswoman at her production company, Harpo, was not immediately returned Friday.

Last month, 50 complained that Winfrey rarely invites rappers on her talk show: "I think she caters to older White women." Ludacris, whose real name is Chris Bridges, told GQ magazine that the media mogul was "unfair" to him during a show he appeared on last October with co-stars from best-picture Oscar winner "Crash."

Earlier this month, Winfrey defended herself in a surprise appearance on New York City-based radio station Power 105.1.

"I listen to some hip-hop," she told DJ Ed Lover. "You know, I've been accused of not liking hip-hop and that's just not true. I got a little 50 (Cent) on my iPod. I really do. Love 'In Da Club.' ... Love that, and you know, love Jay-Z, love Kanye (West), love Mary J. (Blige)."

Ice Cube, whose other films include "Friday" and "Three Kings," will release his latest album, "Laugh Now, Cry Later," on June 6.

Chris Tucker tackles Bollywood film

BOMBAY, India (AP) - Hollywood actor Chris Tucker is set to star in a Hollywood remake of a Bollywood hit about a mafioso who enrolls in medical school, an Indian newspaper reported Monday. "Munnabhai MBBS" was a hit in India and among South Asians living abroad, and will be remade as "Gangster M.D.," the remake's director, Mira Nair, was quoted as telling the *Mumbai Mirror* newspaper.

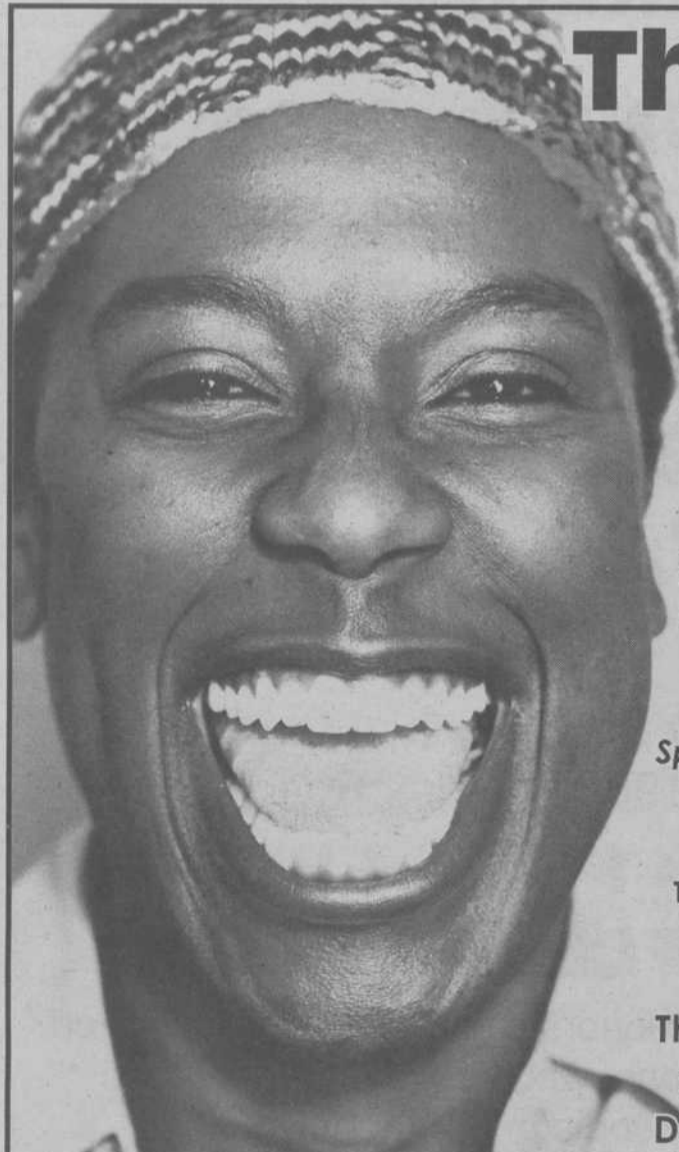
"Chris Tucker will be playing the main character in the film," said Nair, adding that filming should begin after Tucker finishes making "Rush Hour 3."

Munnabhai MBBS tells the story of a mafia leader who pretends to be a doctor whenever his parents visit him from

their village. But when his cover is blown, he decides to better himself by trying to become a doctor — which he hopes will also prove himself to the woman he loves and her father, a hospital superintendent.

Nair said she may cast some actors from the Bollywood original, and is on the lookout for an Indian woman to star opposite Tucker. Nair, who splits her time between homes in New York and Uganda, has made movies including "Vanity Fair," "Monsoon Wedding" and "Mississippi Masala."

Her 1988 film, "Salaam Bombay!" — about the city's street children — was nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign language film.



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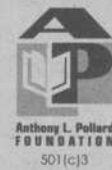
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