

Woman: Murphy left me with a baby

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Melanie Brown says Eddie Murphy left her with a baby, a tattoo of his name and no explanation for their sudden split.

The former Spice Girl, in an interview with *OK!* magazine, said she and Murphy were "soul mates" who got tattoos to proclaim their love and were mutually delighted with her pregnancy — until Murphy said on TV they were through and asked for a paternity test.

"A friend of mine called me to tell me. I was shocked, then I felt disgusted. We were madly in love with each other, and then this happens,"

Brown told the magazine. Brown, 31, known as Scary Spice when she performed with the '90s hit pop group, gave birth to Angel Iris Murphy Brown on April 3 in Santa Monica.

She listed Murphy's name on the birth certificate. Murphy, 46, has said he's not sure he's the father.

Brown said she and Murphy were introduced by a mutual friend.

"There was this electricity between us. Within half an hour, we were holding hands. We were soul mates. We were like each other in so many ways. It was electrifying," she said.

"After three days, we both got tattoos. I had his name in his handwriting on me, and he had my name in my handwriting on him. Everybody around us was quite sick of us lovebirds.

"It felt like we had known each other for years," Brown said.

Murphy was "over the moon" about the pregnancy and discussed getting married after the baby was born.

Then came his bombshell during a TV interview, about five months after their relationship started, she said.

"I tried to call Eddie and I couldn't get through. Then I

got through, and he said he would call me back and that was it. He never called back," Brown said.

That was four months ago and the two haven't spoken since, she said.

"I don't feel humiliated. I think the only person who has humiliated themselves is Eddie. His behavior was unacceptable," Brown said. "Maybe one day Eddie will tell me why this happened."

Murphy, whose screen credits include "Dreamgirls," has five children from his marriage to Nicole Mitchell Murphy. Brown has an 8-year-old daughter.

Jazz Fest gets major sponsor

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - An energy development company said Saturday it would sponsor the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival through at least 2010, a decision organizers said would guard against scaling back the popular event in a city slowly recovering from Hurricane Katrina.

Terms of the deal with Shell Exploration & Produc-

tion Co. were not released, though Jazz Fest producer Quint Davis said it is the first time the event — traditionally driven by ticket sales — will have a long-term corporate sponsor. "It changes a lot of things," Davis told a news conference. "We're able to make long-term plans for the festival now."

Shell was a major sponsor of last year's Jazz Fest,

the first since Hurricane Katrina, Davis likened Shell's support to putting a floundering goldfish back into a fishbowl.

Before the storm, it cost about \$10 million to put on a festival of this size — spanning two, three-day weekends. After Katrina, organizers were concerned about the diminished city population, how many people would

come from out of town and just how any future Jazz Fests would look.

Jazz Fest has not released crowd estimates.

Frank Glaviano, a vice president of production for Shell, said the company wanted to help the city.

"We wanted to give a gift to the people of New Orleans after all that they had gone through," he said.

Music

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leased by him and Simmons.

"As of last Monday, these three words were still heard on the airwaves. So, if we can get these three words off of the airwaves — and that would be voluntarily done by the industry as a means of corporate social responsibility, then we feel that we've made an important contribution to this discussion," said Chavis.

"We in the Hip Hop Summit Action Network have a profound respect for the national organizations headed by women and particularly those national organizations headed by women who have addressed this sensitive issue."

One of those leading organizations is the National Congress of Black Women, now headed by E. Faye Williams who succeeded the late Dr. C. Delores Tucker, a champion against the derogatory lyrics. Williams says in an interview that she is glad to see at least the HSN's movement in the right direction.

"I think what Ben and Russell said was a good start. We're glad they're thinking about it," said Williams, president of NCBW.

"I think what Russell and Ben did would be considered moving the ball down the field. We're not yet across the gold post, but we're moving in the right direction and I thank them for the progress that they've made," said Williams.

Chavis stressed that the HSN directive is not for rappers to stop using the words. "We don't want to violate their First Amendment rights to free speech," he said in an interview.

"We made the recommendations to the people who have the power to implement them."

Meanwhile, Sharpton says he will turn up the heat by holding mock funerals in front of the record headquarters and going to stockholders meetings.

He said, "I'll put pressure on the record company so it's not up to the radio stations and video companies."

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