

# Shooting victim sues Remy Ma

NEW YORK (AP) - Rapper Remy Ma is being sued for \$20 million by the woman she is suspected of shooting in a dispute over money.

Makeda Barnes-Joseph was shot twice in the abdomen on July 14, after leaving a party in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. Authorities said the shooting occurred after Remy Ma, whose real name is Remy Smith, accused Barnes-Joseph of taking \$2,000 that was missing from her purse.

The lawsuit says the shooting left her disabled, anxious and depressed.

The suit also named as defendants Universal Music Group, and individuals who play important roles in Remy Ma's career, because they should have known she "had a history of unlawful, violent and anti-social behavior."

The defendants "encour-

aged her to engage in a pattern of harassment, threats, intimidation, physical violence and illegal acts which were designed and calculated by these defendants to enhance, market and promote the persona of 'Remy Ma,'" according to the suit.

A spokeswoman for Universal Music Group in Manhattan did not immediately return a call for comment.

Barnes-Joseph, a Bronx resident hospitalized for more than two weeks after the shooting, said in the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Manhattan that she was leaving a birthday party for a friend when Remy Ma, who also attended the party, approached her car with a handgun.

According to the recent lawsuit filed, the 26-year-old rapper opened the passenger door of Barnes-Joseph's car, pointed a gun at her and de-

manded that Barnes-Joseph dump the contents of her pocketbook.

When she did not release it, Barnes-Joseph was shot in the stomach and abdomen by the rapper, who then searched the pocketbook while Barnes-Joseph bled, the lawsuit said.

Finding nothing, she tossed the purse and contents aside and left without summoning medical assistance, the suit said.

Remy Ma has pleaded not guilty to criminal charges filed in connection with the shooting.

Her lawyer, Ivan Fisher, said the lawsuit "appears to be a publicity stunt consistent with the way Ms. Barnes and her lawyer have, together with their publicist, been attempting to claim 15 minutes of fame on account of a terrible accident."

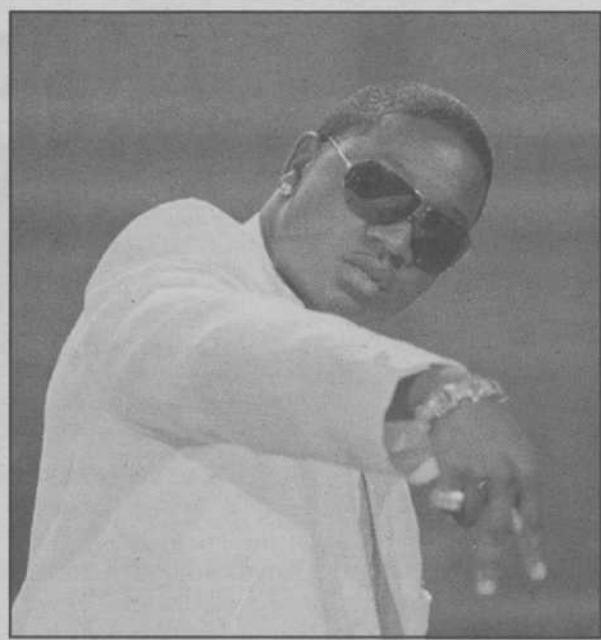
Fisher has said that since

her arrest, Remy Ma has been unable to get sufficient U.S. bookings, and a proposed recording contract has been put on hold. She is free on \$250,000 bail.

As she recovered, Barnes-Joseph had to undergo surgery and blood transfusions and remains disabled, fearful, anxious and depressed and still unable to return to work, the lawsuit said.

Because her injuries will require continuing medical treatment, Barnes-Joseph is entitled to at least \$20 million in damages, the lawsuit said.

Smith was nominated for a Grammy as part of the Terror Squad for the 2004 summer smash "Lean Back." Besides her solo career, Remy Ma has appeared on recordings with performers Busta Rhymes, Fat Joe, Eminem and R. Kelly, her website says.



Atlanta-based rapper Yung Joc performs in a show.

## Joc faces arrest for not showing

CLEVELAND (AP) - Yung Joc failed to show up at his arraignment on a felony charge of carrying a concealed weapon and was considered a fugitive, a prosecutor said.

A judge issued an arrest warrant Wednesday for the rapper, whose real name is Jasiel Robinson. Robinson, 27, of Atlanta, was accused of attempting to take a loaded gun onto a Delta Air Lines flight Sunday and was charged with carrying a concealed weapon, police said.

Cuyahoga County assistant prosecutor Gayle Williams said Robinson was considered a fugitive.

Robinson's attorney, Stanley Jackson Jr., told the court Robinson had personal financial and family obligations. Jackson has said his client maintains his innocence.

Robinson was arrested early Sunday at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport at a standard security checkpoint as he was heading to a departing flight. Police said they found a semiautomatic handgun and ammunition in his carry-on bag.

He told police he didn't know the weapon was there and was released Monday on \$50,000 bond, authorities said.

"This court is well aware of the environment of every airport across this nation with those very safety issues," Williams said, emphasizing the serious nature of the charge, which carries a possible jail sentence of up to 18 months.

"He is alleged to have taken a loaded firearm with 20 rounds of ammunition into the airport. It is also alleged that some of the ammunition in his possession was armor piercing."

Municipal Judge Michael John Ryan doubled Robinson's bail to \$100,000.

Robinson's website says he spends much of his time in Atlanta and has 11 brothers and sisters.

## Police

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ago. Jacobs handled the Watts area, and the public housing developments (called projects, in my day) were the source of astronomical crime levels and violently expressed community animosity toward the police.

Jacobs reached out to the mothers in the projects and formed the Watts Gang Task Force, which joined the police in turning the area around. There's been a double-digit drop in crime in Watts over the past two years. For example, in the housing complexes last year, there was a 36 percent drop in crime in Nickerson Gardens, a 40 percent decline in Jordan Downs and a two percent increase in Imperial Courts. However, this year, Imperial Courts experienced a 20 percent reduction in crime.

For homicides alone, Nickerson Gardens had a drop of 40 percent in 2006 and maintained that percentage this year. Homicides dropped 33 percent last year and another 50 percent in Jordan Downs this year. But, alas, Imperial Courts recorded a 300 percent increase in murders in 2006, but this year they had an 88 percent decline. Jacobs said that so far this year, only five homicides have occurred in those three projects. That's saying a lot for an area in which a homicide a day was not unusual.

"A lot of work is being done by the community and the police in those housing developments and the relationship between us is continuing to improve," Jacobs said. "We understand that we — the community and the police — are here for the same thing and we work together to achieve it."

### Changing Opposition to Allies

Bratton said recently that the key to his program of changing the culture of the police is to bring police critics into the department to help him. He called it "bringing the fox into the hen house."

The biggest fox of them all is in the hen house now: John Mack, the former executive director of the Urban League and the most vocal anti-LAPD activist in the Black community.

The mayor appointed Mack to the Police Commission, where he serves as vice president.

"Overall, Chief Bratton is an outstanding police chief; one of the top police chiefs in America," Mack said. "He has a real strong commitment to make sure the LAPD is tough on crime, and at the same token, I've found him to be committed to transforming the LAPD."

"The officers now go out and police the African-American community with respect and they do not stereotype every Black male as a gangbanger," Mack continued.

"Having said that, we have to keep in mind that we have over 9,500 sworn police officers and it is quite a challenge to make sure that every single officer shares the chief's vision because, realistically, many of them do not. And in that regard, I think Chief Bratton is working very aggressively to create a new mindset within the department. As far as I'm concerned, Bratton is about as progressive as a policeman can be."

Activist Najee Ali, who has been fighting the department's policies and practices for 10 years, also has a favorable opinion of Bratton, despite the fact that he called Ali a "nitwit" on national television following one of Ali's protests.

"I think Bratton has done an excellent job in engaging residents in his community policing programs, as well as his attempts to change the culture of the LAPD," Ali said. But what about that nitwit crack?

"Well, Bratton was new to

town and he didn't realize I was in the forefront of police protests for years. And to Chief Bratton's credit, he did apologize," Ali continued.

"And besides, I'd rather be called a nitwit by Bratton than to have Parks in the job. I respect Bratton because he's been much better than Parks. I'll never forget that Chief Parks defended the police killing of Margaret Mitchell, the elderly homeless woman, and then shortly thereafter proclaimed that racial profiling was non-existent in the LAPD. I knew then that Parks was nothing more than a Black Daryl Gates," Ali said, visibly perturbed.

Civil rights attorney Connie Rice created a cottage industry of suing the LAPD. She had been doing it for 20 years until Bratton tapped her to assist him in creating changes in the department. She has always held that the city needs problem-solving police officers rather than containment-oriented "Robocops."

"I tried to talk to Parks about it, but he didn't want to hear it. He wouldn't even listen," Rice said.

"Bratton does agree that the mindset of the officers has to change and we're hammering out the details of how you do that. Bratton is interested in moving to where cops are seen as assets of the community and not just suppressers and containers of chaos."

Betty Pleasant writes for the Wave Community Newspapers.

## Legislators

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years for people with poor credit facing possible foreclosures. "The [NBCSL] commends the president on taking such steps to give families the opportunity to stay in their homes, as well as to stop the malaise in the housing and subprime loan market," Smyre said.

It is imperative on the Black legislators gathered at the convention to keep the vital issues before the presidential candidates in the upcoming year, Smyre said.

"As state legislators and elected officials, we are re-

sponsible for making a significant difference in the equality of all Americans," he said. "We believe that improving the financial stability of our country, we can begin to close the gap on these disparities. As we approach the 2008 primary season, it is imperative that our presidential hopefuls realize that the issues that are being addressed at this conference are not just issues of the Black community. They are issues facing American people."

Sean Yoes writes for Afro-American Newspapers.

the nation.

"According to the Center for Responsible Lending, 2.2 million families since 1998 have faced or are expected to face foreclosure because of predatory lending practices," he said. "Furthermore, studies have consistently shown that African-Americans and Latino borrowers are more likely to pay subprime interest rates than most borrowers."

Smyre praised President George Bush for his plan to freeze mortgage rates on subprime loans for up to five