

# Knight pleads guilty to battery

LAS VEGAS — Marion “Suge” Knight has pleaded guilty to misdemeanor battery for beating a woman in a local parking lot last year.

The 43-year-old rap producer entered the plea in Las Vegas Justice Court Tuesday in a deal that dismissed two felony drug charges and one felony coercion charge stemming from the August incident.

Police said officers witnessed the co-founder of Death Row Records striking Melissa Isaac while holding a knife in a parking lot near the Strip.

They said Knight was carrying Ecstasy and hydrocodone when they arrested him.

Justice of the Peace Eric Goodman ordered Knight to receive counseling and pay a \$340 fine. He’s due back in court in August for a status check.

Earlier this week, police using Tasers broke up a morning fight that sent Knight to an Arizona hospital for treatment of face injuries, authorities said Monday.

Scottsdale police arrested two men after the fracas, which occurred at a private party in a Scottsdale hotel.

Robert Carnes Jr., 38, of Bethlehem, Pa., one of the men arrested, identified him-

self as the business manager of hip-hop star Akon, said police spokesman Sgt. Mark Clark. Akon, who was in Phoenix for the NBA All-Star Game on Sunday, was not present during the fight, he said.

Officers arrived to see Carnes twice punch the 43-year-old Knight in the face, Clark said.

Knight sustained broken facial bones, he said.

Police booked Carnes and

a man identified as Thomas Anderson Jr., 33, of California, on suspicion of assault and disorderly conduct.

Knight was co-founder of Death Row Records, a label that featured such gangsta rap artists as Dr. Dre, Tupac Shakur and Snoop Dog. New York-based Global Music Group Inc. said on June 24 it purchased Death Row for \$24 million.

Knight had filed for bankruptcy in April 2006, claim-

ing debts of more than \$100 million.

Knight has a history of legal problems.

He 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.

# United States to help plan racism conference for UN

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration said late Saturday it would participate in planning for a UN conference on racism despite concerns the meeting will be used by Arab nations and others to criticize Israel.

The U.S. will decide later whether to participate in the conference.

The State Department said it would send diplomats next week to participate in preparatory meetings for the World Conference Against Racism, which is set to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in April and which some countries including Israel have already decided to boycott.

During the Bush administration the United States and Israel walked out the first UN conference on racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001 over efforts to pass a resolution comparing Zionism — the movement to establish and maintain a Jewish state — to racism.

Those efforts failed, but there are signs the resolution may be reintroduced at the so-called “Durban 2” meeting in Geneva and Israel has been actively lobbying the United States and European countries to stay away from this year’s meeting.

In a statement released late Saturday, the State De-

partment said the U.S. delegation to the planning discussions would review “current direction of conference preparations and whether U.S. participation in the conference itself is warranted.”

“This will be the first opportunity the (Obama) administration has had to engage in the negotiations for the Durban Review, and — in line with our commitment to diplomacy — the U.S. has decided to send a delegation to engage in the negotiations on the text of the conference document,” the department said.

“The intent of our participation (See Conference, Page 11)

# Black Pullman porters get due

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — In an era when America traveled by train, one of the best jobs an African-American man could land was working as a Pullman porter. It also was one of the worst.

The hours were grueling — 16 hours a day, seven days a week. The pay was poor and the work menial at best. Porters cleaned toilets, made beds and satisfied the whims of passengers who sometimes called them “boy” or worse.

Still, Pullman porters saw the country, met famous people and supported families. Recently, Amtrak honored the legacy of Pullman porters, who formed the first Black labor union in the country in 1925.

“It was a wonderful life,” recalled 98-year-old Lee Gibson, who traveled from Los Angeles to join four other members of The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The group bashfully accepted awards at the Oakland Amtrak station, thanked their proud families and shared memories. Similar gatherings were held in Chicago and Washington last year. The porters were named for the sleeping-car trains invented by Chicago industrialist George Pullman. The first Pullman porters, hired after the Civil War, were former slaves. Their ranks swelled until they reached 20,000 in the early part of the 20th century, making them the largest group of African-American men employed in the country.

The Pullman porter faded into history in the 1970s. “They stopped using ‘porter’ when Amtrak took over the trains in 1971,” said Troy Walker, 90, of Seattle. “The White people they hired didn’t want to be called ‘porter’ and they didn’t want to wear the uniform.”

Standard uniform was a starched white jacket, black tie and visor cap. Walker fondly recalled donning the uniform and serving what he called the finest meals on some of the finest trains in the world during his 30 years on the Pullmans.

The oldest living porter is 107, the youngest 70, said Lyn Hughes, founder of the A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum in Chicago. Randolph was a New York pamphleteer and civil rights leader who organized the porters’ labor union.

“They are a very interesting piece of history that has been mostly forgotten,” she said. “And my hope is that what we’re doing introduces this history to other generations and makes them understand the significance of what these men did.”

Hughes created a National Historic Registry of Pullman Porters in 2000 and was able to track down 7,000 former porters. “They all say the same thing,” she said. “We didn’t think we were doing anything special.”

James Smith started working on the train in 1943. “I’m one of the babies here,” he said, “I’m only 83.” The retired Simi Valley engineer recalled serving Negro League ballplayers, heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey and Hollywood starlets.

Thomas Henry Gray, 71, remembered working summers on the train as a college student before becoming an engineer for Boeing Co. in Seattle. He recalled waving to his father, also a Pullman porter, and grandfather, a brakeman, as their trains passed one another across the Northwest and Southwest.



## RAISING THE BAR

Members of the National Bar Association presented the Rainbow Dreams Academy with a \$25,000 check that will go toward the purchase of computers and books for the library. Pictured for Wednesday’s presentation are: Back row: L-R: lawyers Kimberly Phillips, Gregory Wesley, Dawn Tezino and David Cade, Rainbow Dreams Academy principal Carol Threats, along with lawyers Demonica Gladney and Vickie Turner, Rainbow Dreams Academy president Diane Pollard. Front: L-R: Andrew Mason, Mykala Hammond, Aaliyah Torres, Nia Muhammad, Raven Green, Samiya Hall, Geb Newton, Rebecca Jackson, Jada Meddley, Clyde Harris, Jonathan Cogs and Mia Littles.

Sentinel-Voice photos by Marty Frierson

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