

Rap Artist Countersuit 'Has No Legal Basis

Written by Robert ID1388

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A judge in New York has thrown out rap artist Jay-Z's countersuit against R. Kelly, ruling that the charges hip-hop superstar Jay-Z leveled against Kelly had no legal basis.

Rap artist Jay-Z filed the suit in February, three months after he was sued by R. Kelly for deliberately sabotaging the two artists' "Best of Both Worlds" tour, which began in Chicago late last September and ended prematurely in New York at the end of October.

"We're gratified but not surprised by the judge's decision," said lead trial attorney Peter Parcher of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, Kelly's longtime lawyers. "When all the legal smoke clears, we're confident R. Kelly will collect substantial damages from Jay-Z and the other defendants."

Kelly's lawsuit seeks \$75 million in damages from Jay-Z and his Marcy Projects production company for intentionally causing a series of production snafus on the tour and then physically assaulting R. Kelly and some members of his entourage with pepper spray. It also levels breach-of-contract charges against Jay-Z, Marcy Projects, and Atlanta Worldwide Touring Company, the tour promoter.

The lawsuit was filed last Nov. 1, two days after the promoter, acting on instructions from Jay-Z and Marcy Projects, cancelled the "Best of Both Worlds" tour and barred R. Kelly from further performances. The cancellation followed a Madison Square Garden show at which R. Kelly spotted what appeared to be two men with guns in the audience and briefly left the stage.

R. Kelly agreed to resume his performance after police were called, but on his way back to the stage he and members of his entourage were assaulted with pepper spray wielded by an associate of Jay-Z identified as Tyran (Ty Ty) Smith, the lawsuit charges.

Smith, a childhood friend of Jay-Z's and a longtime member of his entourage, has since been arrested by New York police

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and charged with assault.

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