

Rap Trial Witness Says Document False

Written by Keith ID1577

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Kevin Hackie testified today that a document he signed linking the murder of singer Notorious B.I.G. to rap competitor Death Row Records is false.

Kevin Hackie told jurors in federal court today he never told attorneys for the family of the slain rapper, Christopher Wallace, that ex-LAPD officer David A. Mack worked for the rap record label.

The family's lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles hinges on proof that Mack, who has denied any involvement, planned Wallace's murder in 1997.

Hackie is a former Death Row bodyguard and Federal Bureau of Investigation informant who, along with two others, allegedly linked Mack to Death Row.

But Hackie testified today that family lawyers misstated his comments in the document he signed on June 6, 2004. He said he never claimed, as the document states, that Mack worked security or in a "covert capacity" for the rap record label.

"I didn't put it in there," Hackie told the six-man, three woman jury in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

Hackie also repudiated portions of the document which asserted that Mack enjoyed special access to "numerous Death Row functions" reserved for Knight's close associates.

Those events, including a Mike Tyson bout in Las Vegas, a Los Angeles awards show and an MTV film shoot in Malibu, were social functions attended by hundreds of people, he said.

Hackie testified today, along with a Los Angeles County Sheriff's gang expert and former LAPD Chief Bernard C. Parks.

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Wallace was gunned down March 9, 1997, as he sat in a sport utility vehicle after a music industry party at the Petersen Automotive Museum in the Mid-Wilshire district.

Yesterday, a lawyer for the city urged the jury to reject the allegations of a conspiracy in the death of the Brooklyn-born rapper, saying there is no evidence against Mack.

The distinction is key because before the jury can find fault with city policy -- and thus find for damages -- they must consider whether Mack hatched a plot to kill Wallace, drawing on his law enforcement background.

"This is a circumstantial evidence case," plaintiffs' lawyer Robert Frank told the six-man, three-woman jury. "If you look at all the facts of this case, more probably than not, David Mack was involved in this murder and used the tools of the trade to carry it out."

But Frank also tried to prepare jurors for possible inconsistencies in this first phase, saying some witnesses could be fearful "because the people with motive to kill Wallace are incredibly violent people."

The case spawned numerous investigations and widespread speculation fueled by a cottage industry of books, documentaries and magazine articles that explored possible conspiracies involving Wallace and the death of Tupac Shakur, another leading rap artist of his generation.

Early theories by Los Angeles police detectives, and reiterated in court by plaintiffs' lawyers, center on rap mogul Marion "Suge" Knight, who allegedly enlisted Mack to kill Wallace. Wallace's death came in the midst of a violent rivalry between Los Angeles-based Death Row Records and New York-based Bad Boy Entertainment.

Mack, described by Frank as a "gang member cop associated with Death Row," was later convicted and imprisoned for an unrelated bank robbery.

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The city refused Voletta Wallace's offer to settle the case for \$105 million last year. The family later agreed to accept \$18 million, but the City Council rejected the offer.

Mack and Knight have denied the allegations, and after pretrial rulings, only the city remains as a defendant.