

Suit Against Dr Dre Dismissed

Written by Robert ID1121
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West coast gangsta rap artist / hip-hop producer Dr. Dre won a legal victory Monday over former Detroit officials who said he violated eavesdropping laws by videotaping them as they demanded he not show a controversial video during a 2000 concert at Joe Louis Arena.

U.S. District Judge Paul Gadola of Flint dismissed the city officials' federal lawsuit, saying Wayne County Circuit Judge John Murphy, who ruled in Dr. Dre's favor in a separate lawsuit in August 2003, had already resolved the dispute.

The "state court determination that plaintiffs did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy precludes plaintiffs from relitigating that issue before this court," Gadola said in a 15-page decision. "This conclusion disposes of all of plaintiffs' claims before this court."

The former city officials sued Dr. Dre and Aftermath Entertainment in Wayne County Circuit Court claiming the entertainers videotaped the Joe Louis exchange without their knowledge. The footage was later used in a behind-the-scenes DVD of the rapper's Up in Smoke tour. The ex-city officials lost that suit and are appealing.

The former officials then sued in federal court in April 2002, claiming a violation of federal wiretapping laws.

Dr. Dre's lawyer said he was pleased with the decision.

"This case was much ado about nothing," said Detroit attorney Herschel Fink. "Hopefully, this will put an end to three years of litigation over groundless claims that the cameras were hidden and the plaintiffs didn't know the cameras were taping." Fink also represents the Free Press in First Amendment matters.

Glenn Oliver, the lawyer for the former Detroit city officials, remains positive despite Monday's decision. "Everyone is waiting for the state Court of Appeals decision. And we feel very strongly the state Court of Appeals will rule in our favor. And at that point the case will be back on," said

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Oliver.

One of Oliver's clients, former Detroit Police Commander Gary Brown, said he was disappointed with the ruling. "It's unfortunate, because what this case was about was kids watching pornographic and violent videos," Brown said. "It was never about the money. It was about protecting kids from viewing inappropriate content."

The legal disputes began when the former city officials -- Brown, former mayoral press secretary Greg Bowens, and former Second Deputy Police Chief Paula Bridges -- met with Dr. Dre's concert staff on July 6, 2000, to prevent it from showing a sexually explicit video at the Up in Smoke concert. Dr. Dre's real name is Andre Young.

Dr. Dre's staff agreed to pull the video at the Joe Louis event, but showed it the next night at a concert in the Palace of Auburn Hills. His staff later filed a federal lawsuit in July 2000, which resulted in him being paid \$25,000 and a letter of apology from the City of Detroit for infringing on his free speech rights.

Dr. Dre included the footage as a bonus track on a DVD of the concert, which prompted the state and federal lawsuits by the former city officials.

Both sides asked Gadola to summarily rule in their favor in a court hearing late last month.

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