

Hot 97's Landlord Reacts

Written by Robert ID982

Tuesday, 08 March 2005 23:09 -

The new order from Hot 97's furious landlord, which is cracking down on visiting hip-hop / rap stars after last week's shoot-"em-up between 50 Cent and The Game's crews; 'artists will be allowed to bring only one person into the radio station with them'.

In an angry letter to the Manhattan broadcaster, the city's carpenters union, which owns the SoHo building has layed out the new 'rules' to Hot 97.

The union also wants to know who is appearing on Hot 97 a week in advance so it can call in the cops, hire extra security or rent a metal detector if necessary.

"We are deeply concerned about the safety of our tenants and their employees," said union lawyer Brian O"Dwyer.

"We've received numerous complaints from other tenants that they fear for their safety."

The rules were sparked by the Feb. 28 shootout outside Hot 97 headquarters at 395 Hudson St. following interviews with rapper 50 Cent and his former protégé The Game.

Declaring Hot 97 in violation of its lease, the union gave the radio station until Friday to agree to the new rules, including the anti-posse clause.

The union noted that the gunplay was only "the latest in a series of extremely serious incidents."

In February 2001, bullets flew outside the building when the crews of Lil' Kim and rap duo Capone-N-Noreaga clashed following back-to-back appearances at the station.

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A witness testifying at Kim's trial this week faulted the station for putting the battling stars on a collision course by booking them for the same day.

A year after the Lil' Kim incident, popular DJ Funkmaster Flex got into a scrape with rival host Steph Lova outside the station and eventually pleaded guilty to harassment.

The landlord said Hot 97 visitors have also harangued building security and blocked tenants from entering and leaving the building. The union wants the right to force some visitors to use a different entrance to the building - and the right to bar some celebrities altogether.

Employees who work in the building rallied behind the landlord yesterday - but were skeptical the new measures would keep the peace.

"They can't get rid of a rapper's entourage," said Marc Hsu, 30, of Manhattan, who works in human resources for a company in the same building.

"It's part of the image, and they're not going to come here without them."

No arrests have been made in the latest shootout.

But yesterday 50 Cent, aka Curtis Jackson, announced he had hired Manhattan celebrity attorney Ben Brafman, perhaps best-known for winning a gun-case acquittal for rapper Sean (P. Diddy) Combs.

"It makes perfect sense for Mr. Jackson to have experienced defense counsel by his side ... despite the fact that Mr. Jackson had nothing to do with the incident," Brafman said in a statement.

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A Hot 97 spokesman said the broadcaster's lawyers were reviewing the union's letter and had no comment.

The dispute is just the latest fallout from last week's gunplay. The duel prompted the Rev. Al Sharpton to call for radio stations to impose a 90-day ban on rappers who resort to violence. At a press conference yesterday, Sharpton said the nation's top three broadcasters, including Hot 97's parent company, have agreed to meet with him.

"It is one thing to rap a lyric," he said. "It is another thing ... where we are getting used to people being shot and act like there is nothing wrong with it."

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