

Notorious B.I.G. slapped with \$17,000 judgement

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAMDEN, N.J. - Gangsta rapper Notorious B.I.G. was found responsible Friday in the beating a Camden man in a dispute over a canceled performance and ordered to pay nearly \$17,000.

A jury in the civil case in U.S. District Court in Camden deliberated for about an hour before returning the verdict against the Brooklyn rapper, also known as Biggie Smalls.

The eight-member jury acquitted Smalls on charges of robbing Nathaniel Banks, 31, of Cherry Hill during a brawl in Camden on May 6, 1995. Smalls had denied any wrongdoing.

Smalls - whose real name is Christopher Wallace - was not in the courtroom when the verdict was announced. He still faces a disorderly person's charge pending in municipal court.

The jury - in finding Smalls liable - awarded Banks \$15,000 in compensatory damages and \$1,700 for his medical bills. Banks had sought unspecified damages.

"The truth is coming out," Banks said after the verdict. "I don't really care about the money."

Banks, an aspiring entertainment entrepreneur, required surgery for a broken jaw. He also claimed that he lost his money, jewelry, cellular phone and beeper, but the jury ruled that Smalls was not responsible.

The jury also found that Banks should be awarded punitive damages for his injury. U.S. District Judge Joseph Irenas told the panel to return Monday to determine what amount Banks should receive.

Both sides in the case agreed that Banks was beaten, but

differed on who was responsible for the assault. Banks was sent to Elizabeth by a Camden music promoter to pick up Smalls and his entourage for a performance in Camden.

The show, however, was cancelled by the time the entourage of more than a half-dozen cars arrived at the Club Escape in South Camden, according to testimony. Banks said he was beaten when the entourage tried to collect the balance of a \$7,500 performance fee, but the promoter was not at home.

Smalls, who lives in Teaneck, was later arrested in Pennsylvania on a fugitive warrant charging him with aggravated assault and robbery. His attorney Robert Kalina said prosecutors dismissed the charges and the case was transferred to municipal court where a disorderly person's charge is pending.

Smalls built his gangsta rap persona around authenticity, making much of his past as an ex-crack dealer from Bedford-Stuyvesant, one of the toughest neighborhoods in Brooklyn.



CONCERTS

The Public Library Presents "An Evening With James Earl Jones," 7 p.m. February 20, Spirit Square Center for Arts and Education, 345 N. College St. Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased at the Main Library, 310 N. Tryon St., or by calling 336-2945 with Mastercard or VISA.

The Beta Nu Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha presents "Lift

Every Voice," a musical program featuring ensembles from graduate African American Greek sororities and fraternities, 4 p.m. Feb. 9 in Biddle Auditorium on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University, \$10 adults, \$5 students. Monies will go to benefit JCSU United Negro College Fund drive.

A benefit concert for the new Genesis Park Community Center featuring the Williams Brothers with special guests Paul Hicks and the Community Choir, Eugene Hash, ChristSent and Co-Mission is 8 p.m. Feb. 7, Owens Auditorium, 2700 E. Independence Blvd. Tickets are available at all TicketMaster locations, Owens box office, Community Outreach Church, Simmons Restaurant, Logos Bookstores and Dorothy's Music Network.

If you have information about black entertainment events, meetings, lectures or any other events of interest, send it to What's Up! The Charlotte Post, 1531 Camden Road, Charlotte, N.C. 28203. Deadline is 5 p.m. Fridays.

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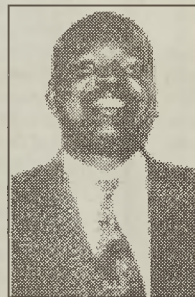
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