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Focus



"Gotti is the public face of Murder Inc., McGriff is the true owner of the company ... It is well-known in the music industry that McGriff has provided Murder Inc. with 'muscle.'"
— an informant to federal investigators looking into music industry drugs and violence

Murder Inc.

Investigation Connects Music Label, Drug Money

(AP) Rap industry insiders have told investigators that the successful Murder Inc. music label was bankrolled by a notorious drug dealer who also was involved in the shooting of hip hop superstar 50 Cent.

The allegations were detailed in a newly unsealed affidavit obtained Thursday by The Associated Press. The document was filed under seal in January in a federal money-laundering investigation of Murder Inc.

and other rap industry enterprises. The affidavit, signed by an Internal Revenue Service agent, accuses Kenneth McGriff the convicted leader of a murderous drug gang in Queens of forming an illicit partnership with Murder Inc. owner and longtime friend Irv Gotti. It alleges McGriff provided drug proceeds as "start-up money" for the label in the late 1990s.

Murder Inc. is now home to top-selling recording artists such as Ja

Rule and Ashanti. Neither McGriff nor Gotti have been charged in the money laundering case, which prosecutors have refused to discuss.

The affidavit was filed in support of a warrant authorizing seizure of bank accounts related to the straight-to-video film "Crime Partners." McGriff helped produce the movie, starring Ja Rule, Snoop Dogg and Ice-T, with Murder Inc.

According to the affidavit, one

informant told federal investigators that while "Gotti is the public face of Murder Inc., McGriff is the true owner of the company ... It is well-known in the music industry that McGriff has provided Murder Inc. with 'muscle.'"


The unnamed informants also linked McGriff to acts of violence, "including the shooting of a rap artist named 50 Cent who wrote a song exposing his criminal activities," the court papers allege.

The Portland Observer

World of Autos

REVIEWS ON EXCITING NEW VEHICLES BY THE WORLD'S LEADING MANUFACTURERS

2003 Cadillac CTS



Price tested..... \$38,765.00
Engine..... 3.2L DOHC V6
Transmission..... GETRAG 5-Speed Manual

The CTS stands for Cadillac Touring Sedan definitely stands out. It's the new C-series for Cadillac model line up replacing the Catera. The change of model also bought the change of manufacturing it in the United States instead of Germany. It's the first Cadillac to offer rear-wheel drive since 1952. The CTS starts under 30,000 looking to compete with Lexus, Lincoln LS and other in the sports sedans line-up.

The first impression is "bat mobile." It has a new crisp and dramatic style leaping into the future making heads turn. Company officials expect the percentage of buyers to women.

It has an expansive list of features. The center console fully loaded comes with an optional DVD Navigation system with a Bose Audio and 6-Disc CD Changer deleting the cassette player. The front seat is roomy for above average however there a limited amount of leg room for the rear passengers, which has become more common in luxury vehicle trying to offer the full package in a small design. The ride of the vehicle is smooth with limited vibrations felt. The steering offers the driver precision and stability in the winding of the road. The CTS offers efficient road handling on either wet or dry pavement. Braking provides a short distance stopping range with a straight line. The noise of the cabin is comparable to that of the European competition. The V-6 engine leaves nothing to question for the driver, it delivers outstanding performance from take off. The automatic transmission works fast and precisely with the engine. Driving the Cadillac CTS is a very satisfying experience.



Actress and singer Anise Ritchie on the set of a recent production with her director Buddy Butler (left) and actor Danny Glover. Ritchie grew up in Portland and is an accomplished performer in the San Francisco area.

Theater Stage Keeps Actress-Singer Busy

A break between theater productions gave a former Portland resident a chance to catch up with friends and family.

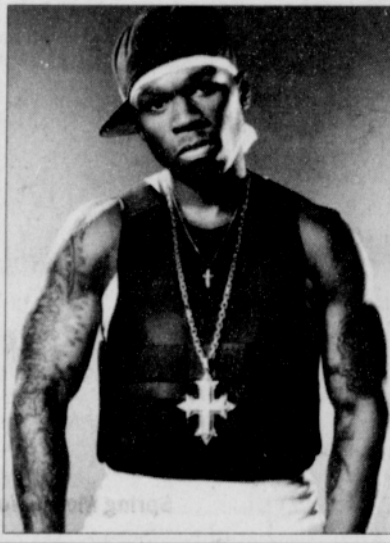
Anise Ritchie stopped by the offices of the Portland Observer recently during a trip to the Rose City to visit her son and granddaughter.

Ritchie is an accomplished actress and singer in the San Francisco area. She recently starred in the production of "The Dance on Widow's Row" at the Hansberry Theatre in San Francisco. She will

begin rehearsals soon for a musical revue called "Black and Blue." Ritchie's roots go deep in Portland. She was born in the city and is a former Cleveland High School Rose Festival Princess. She began her stage career playing the part of Crystal in Little Shop of Horrors, which was later performed in Ashland's famed Shakespeare Theater.

Ritchie has performed in Europe. She is currently working on her CD featuring smooth jazz tunes.

50 Cent to Publish Life Story



Rapper 50 Cent has found a home for his life story at MTV Books. Although hip-hop writer Vanessa Satten was to have worked with the Eminem protégé on the book, initially titled No. 1 With Nine Bullets, both she and the title have been dropped. MTV Books said it is looking at writers and possible titles and expects the hardcover book in stores by December.

Franklin Told to Clean Up Mess

(AP)—After a six-month investigation into the cause of a fire at her Michigan mansion in Oakland County, Aretha Franklin now has 10 days to clean up the mess.

"The investigation is complete, and now it is time to clean up the property," Kaye Chartier, Bloomfield Township's code and ordinance director, told The Oakland Press for Thursday's editions.


Investigators earlier this year ruled the Oct. 25 fire at the Bloomfield Township mansion was arson. No charges have been filed.

Franklin, who was in Texas at the time of the fire, has 10 days to clean up the site and 30 days to inform the township of her plans to either renovate or demolish the house, Chartier said.

"If she doesn't cooperate, the township can take legal action," said Chartier, adding that she expects the singer to fully cooperate.




Singer Aretha Franklin is under a 10-day notice to clean up her property after the completion of an arson investigation into an Oct. 25 fire of her mansion in Oakland County, Michigan.



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Documentary Features Former Supreme

(AP)—Mary Wilson hopes more people will pay attention to soul greats of the 1950s and '60s with the release of the documentary "Only the Strong Survive," which pays tribute to her, Isaac Hayes, the Chi-Lites and other classic soul acts.

"This is a music of America right here, this is R&B music, that people tend to forget," the former Supreme said after the film's premiere Tuesday night.

"We in America have become so commercialized... the turnover is so fast that there's not enough room



Soul great Mary Wilson will be the subject of the documentary "Only the Strong Survive" which comes out Friday, May 9.

after-party at B.B. King's got a chance to experience some of that music as Wilson, Ann Peebles, Sam Moore of Sam & Dave fame and the Chi-Lites performed some of their hits.

"I hope that it (the movie) starts a trend that will help people to look back and bring some of these great performers to the front so people will know who they are today," Wilson said.

"Only the Strong Survive," directed by documentary veterans D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, comes out Friday, May 9.

New Magazine for Fashionable Teens

New and talented fashion designers are featured in a new magazine for African American girls and young women.

ZURI, which is Swahili for beautiful, aims to increase awareness of stylists and designers of color, such

as celebrity stylist Misa Hylton-Brim and the collections of Vusi Mchunu and Tyrell.

Another goal is to encourage young women to be fashionable and stylish while maintaining a ladylike appearance.

The current issue of Zuri, featuring actress Kyla Pratt of UPN's One on One.

