

Joplin heirs face countersuit

Producers of 'Janis' fight to keep play running

SEATTLE (AP) — Janis Joplin's heirs were hit with a \$3 million counterclaim Thursday by the playwright and director of a musical play based on the blues and acid-rock legend.

The play, "Janis," opened May 30 at the New Orleans Performance Hall in Seattle and was closed Aug. 18 because of a lawsuit seeking unspecified damages on claims of unfair competition, unjust enrichment and infringement of copyright and publicity rights.

The heirs claim exclusive rights to depict Joplin's bluesy, boozey, hot-mama style, defined in the suit as her "voice, delivery, mannerisms, appearance and dress, and the actions accompanying her performances."

The suit was filed July 24 in U.S. District Court by Joplin Enterprises; Strong Arm Music, a division of Joplin Enterprises, and Texas Lion Productions, a joint venture formed to produce a Broadway musical, movie and special radio show.

Joplin Enterprises includes the singer's sister, Laura Joplin of Denver; brother, Michael Joplin, and mother, Dorothy Joplin, of Port Arthur.

Named as defendants were Gaye Anderson and James Allen, owners of the New Orleans Restaurant and producers of the play, and playwright Susan Ross.

"We couldn't support the play, and the (fight against the) suit, and I think it's a real important

suit," said Anderson, co-producer with her husband, James Allen.

Joplin, a native of Port Arthur, rocketed to stardom with Big Brother and the Holding Company in 1966, belting out gut-bucket renditions of songs like "Me and Bobby McGee," "Ball and Chain" and "Piece of My Heart."

She died in 1970 of a heroin overdose, alone in a Hollywood motel.

The play, featuring a local club singer, Duffy Bishop, in the title role, got mixed reviews.

Act I was largely a dream sequence in which a drugged-out Joplin talks with beat writer Jack Kerouac, actress Mae West, blues singer Bessie Smith and the flamboyant Zelda Fitzgerald, wife of author F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Act II, set in Seattle, was a series of Joplin's greatest hits and concert banter.

"Janis Joplin is a part of our national heritage," playwright Ross said. "Her influence on us today, on the music business and on the way women in music perform is tremendous. She is not a part of someone's personal property."

Ross' counterclaim accused the heirs and their business allies of malicious prosecution and unfair competition. She asked that damages be set at a minimum of \$1 million dollars and be tripled under state and federal antitrust law.

A response to the original suit from Anderson and Allen probably will be filed Friday, said Melvyn J. Simburg, Ross' lawyer.

Police search for motive in recent killing

GULFPORT, Miss. (AP) — Authorities are still searching for a motive in the death of a woman found after a three-day search, said Gulfport police.

The body of Brenda Kay Collins, 33, was discovered in Desoto National Forest off Mississippi 15 just inside Harrison County, said police. She was a native of Cisco, Texas, which is about 70 miles west of Fort Worth.

An autopsy to determine the cause of death has not been completed, said the Harrison County coroner.

Police had interviewed Collins' estranged husband, William "Bill" Collins, of Biloxi, in connection with the case, but early Thursday morning, (he) committed suicide. Everything pointed to him but interviews (of people connected to the case) are still being conducted," said Gulfport Detective Ed Twomey.

Twomey would not speculate on a motive but police said the couple had filed for divorce.

Police, Harrison County deputies and Keesler Air Force Base authorities had been searching "wooded" areas for Brenda Collins, an Air Force technical sergeant.

Police believe Collins, who taught electronics at Keesler in Biloxi, disappeared from her east Gulfport trailer park about 3 a.m. Sunday, when two neighbors heard loud banging noises.

Neighbors called police after finding her son, Jared, 3, playing naked and alone in the front yard.

Although police would give no specifics on what Jared said about his mother's disappearance, "He did help direct the investigation," said Twomey, "by verbalizing what he saw."

Panel criticizes media for releasing rape victim names

AUSTIN (AP) — A Corpus Christi nurse, who was raped in 1987 and has recently allowed her name to be used in news reports, said Thursday that such disclosure should be the victim's choice, not that of the media.

"When you are raped, your life will never, ever be the same ... It is a survivor's decision when and if she wants her story told," said Juli Bliskey, who participated in a panel discussion during the Governor's Annual Training Conference on Crime Victim Assistance.

Rape victims generally have not been named in news stories. However, debate on the issue was sparked this year after a few news organizations identified a Florida woman who has accused William Kennedy Smith of rape, and after the Des Moines Register won a Pulitzer Prize for its report on a rape victim who permitted use of her name.

Bliskey is part of a coalition that is pushing for a state law to require landlords to provide tenants with door bolts that can be operated only from the inside.

She said she was raped, robbed and kidnapped by a man who stole the key to her townhome from the leasing office.

Going public was a positive move for her,

Bliskey said.

"I wanted to stand up and say I didn't do anything wrong, and there's nothing for me to be ashamed of," she said.

But she was critical of news media that used the woman's name in the Smith case.

"She's been scandalized, and in my opinion, she's been re-raped by the media," Bliskey said.

Smith, who has pleaded innocent, has not been tried in the case. Reasons given for using the woman's name in the Smith case have included that other media previously identified her, or that withholding rape victims' names perpetuates the idea that the crime damages a woman's reputation.

Sherri Sunaz, president of the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, agreed that the stigma attached to rape is a problem.

"However, I don't believe that the answer ... is that we put the responsibility for solving that on the people who have already been victimized," she said.

Sunaz said that a sexual assault victim can feel empowered by deciding to be publicly identified. But she stressed that the victim should be allowed to make that choice after thinking through its ramifications.

Search continues for jet carrying Conoco executives

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Rescue teams scoured thick jungle areas on Borneo Island on Friday on the third day of their search for a Du Pont company jet carrying 12 people, most of them executives and their spouses.

Search officials were concentrating on Hulu Kimanis, an area about 18 miles south of Kota Kinabalu airport, after several villagers there reported sighting a plane flying very low Wednesday afternoon, said Mohd Adnan Yahya, director of the Department of Civil Aviation.

The Grumman Gulf Stream 2 aircraft was carrying nine passen-

gers and three crew — 10 Americans and two Britons. Passengers included four executives of Conoco Inc. of Houston, Texas, and their wives. Conoco is an oil subsidiary of Du Pont.

The plane disappeared from radar screens Wednesday afternoon as it prepared to land in Kota Kinabalu for refueling on its way from Tokyo to Jakarta, Indonesia.

On Wednesday, search pilots reported seeing sheared-off trees and other signs of a possible crash in the area, but investigators said Thursday the plane had not crashed there.

Searchers were covering a 30-

mile radius around Kota Kinabalu, especially to the south, the direction from which the plane was approaching.

Adnan said the reason for the disappearance was not known and that the weather was fair at the time. Traffic controllers reported no anxiety on the pilot's part during radio contact and said no distress signal was sent.

Besides four helicopters and fixed wing planes, search officials also deployed paramilitary police on the ground in the Kimanis area on Friday. Villagers were helping.

The flight originated from Houston on Aug. 29.

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