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Thursday, January 29, 2004

ENTERTAINME

THE BATTAL

Father of Michael Jackson's accuser loses visitation rights with children

By Tim Molloy
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — The father of Michael Jackson's young accuser appeared on the verge of tears Wednesday as a judge denied his request to see his children.

Barred from contacting the boy and his brother and sister, the father had asked to visit his son because of rumors the boy is sick and because he hoped to determine if Jackson molested him.

Although he denied the request, Superior Court Judge Richard E. Denner scheduled a Feb. 24 hearing to hear any additional evidence showing why the

father should be allowed to have contact with the boy.

Jackson has pleaded innocent to seven counts of performing lewd or lascivious acts on a child under 14 and two counts of administering an intoxicating agent, reportedly wine. He is free on \$3 million bail pending trial.

The father pleaded no contest to child cruelty in 2002 and spousal abuse in 2001 and was barred from seeing his children. The boy's mother filed for divorce in October 2001. The father's attorney, Russell Halpern, said he has since completed classes in parenting and anger management.

The father has said that if rumors about the boy's health are true, then it is important

his side of the family get back in touch available as potential organ donors.

William Dickerman, a former attorney for the family, told the AP last week the boy was ill. Jamie Masada, a friend of the family, said in November the boy's remaining kidney was failing, though said last week his condition was improving.

Halpern said the mother's attorney produced doctors' letters saying the boy was in stable condition. It was unclear whether that meant the boy had been hospitalized.

The boy has lost a kidney to cancer surgery, but law enforcement officials have suggested the boy is healthy.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

R&B singer Faith Evans, husband face drug possession charges



EVANS

ATLANTA, Ga. (AP) — R&B singer Faith Evans and her husband were arrested on drug possession charges after police say they found marijuana on the couple during a traffic stop in an Atlanta suburb.

Evans and Todd Russaw, a record executive, were charged with possession of cocaine and marijuana and booked at the Fulton County Jail. Evans was released on \$12,000 while Russaw was released on \$11,000. A judge scheduled a preliminary hearing for Feb. 11.

The couple's vehicle was pulled over around 7:50 p.m. Tuesday in Hapeville for an improperly displayed temporary license plate. During the traffic stop, officers found a "minimal amount" of marijuana on both of them as well as cocaine residue on Evans, said Hapeville police spokesman Capt. William Lyons.

Neither were under the influence at the time, Lyons said. Evans' attorney, Vincent L. Dimmock, said his client never was in possession of any drugs or narcotics.

"These are absolutely ridiculous charges that authorities have leveled against Faith. She was never in possession of any drugs or narcotics whatsoever," her attorney, Vincent L. Dimmock, said after the bond hearing Wednesday. "We believe that she will be vindicated completely of these charges when we get into court."

Evans, 30, is best known for hits such as "You Gets No Love" and "Soon As I Get Home." She earned a Grammy nomination for her duet "Can't Believe" with Carl Thomas, recorded on her 2001 album, "Faithfully," and recently appeared in the film "The Fighting Temptations" with Cuba Gooding Jr. and Beyonce Knowles. Evans also has worked with Whitney Houston and Sean "P. Diddy" Combs,

who signed Evans to his Bad Boy label.

Evans is the widow of the late rapper Christopher Wallace, known as The Notorious B.I.G. Wallace who was killed in a drive-by shooting in March 1997. Evans is the mother of Wallace's young son, Christopher Wallace Jr. Evans, a native of Newark, N.J., recently moved to the Atlanta area.

Art Garfunkel apparently contesting marijuana possession charge



GARFUNKEL

HURLEY, N.Y. (AP) — Folk-rock legend Art Garfunkel apparently is contesting a marijuana possession charge he faces in upstate New York. Settling the matter Wednesday could have been as easy as paying a \$100 fine, but instead a judge set a Feb. 11 hearing after Garfunkel's attorney Michael Federoff appeared in court.

Federoff declined to discuss the case and said he had hired a publicist for Garfunkel who was not immediately available.

Garfunkel, 62, of Manhattan, was charged with marijuana possession Jan. 17 after state police stopped his limousine for speeding in Hurley, 55 miles southwest of Albany.

Police said a trooper smelled marijuana when he approached Garfunkel's limo and found 6 grams of marijuana in Garfunkel's jacket pocket. Garfunkel faces up to a \$100 fine, unless he has had a criminal conviction in the past three years. Authorities won't say whether Garfunkel has a prior record.

Garfunkel recently completed a U.S. concert tour with Paul Simon, their first in 20 years. Simon and Garfunkel produced a string of hits in the 1960s, including "The Sound of Silence," "Mrs. Robinson," "Old Friends" and "The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy)."

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