

# Rapper 50 Cent says he's broke after losing lawsuit

He calls himself 50 Cent, but the hip-hop mogul says he may not be worth even that. The rapper known for the album and movie "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" filed for bankruptcy protection Monday as he faced a hefty payout in a lawsuit related to a sex tape. In a document filed with a federal bankruptcy court, the rapper whose real name is Curtis James Jackson III listed both his assets and liabilities at between \$10 million and \$50 million. 50 Cent insisted in a published interview that he was "taking the precautions that any other good businessperson would take in this situation."

"Walt Disney has filed bankruptcy. Donald Trump has filed bankruptcy," the entertainment site E! News quoted him as saying. "It means you're reorganizing your finances, but it does stop things from moving forward that you don't want moving forward." 50 Cent insisted that he did not want to be a "bull's eye" for someone with "astronomical claims" against him.

## Facing more penalties for sex tape

The bankruptcy filing, which would protect 50 Cent from paying creditors, came days after a jury ordered him to pay \$5 million to a woman who appeared in a sex tape that went online in 2009. In the video, 50 Cent poses as his alter ego Pimpin' Curly, sporting a wig and speaking in an artificially high voice, as he narrates the Florida woman's sexual encounter and mocks fellow rapper Rick Ross, who has a child with her. 50 Cent's lawyers said that he was not responsible and that Ross or Ross's associates released the video, in which the woman has sex with another man.

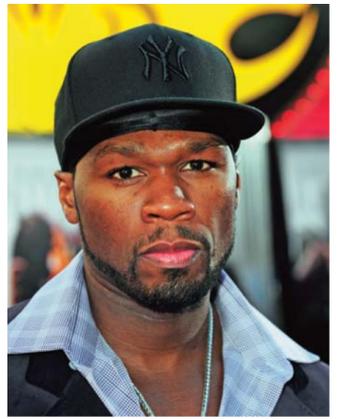
But a New York jury sided with the woman, holding 50 Cent responsible for violating her civil rights and inflicting emotional distress. He filed for bankruptcy just as the court was determining whether he owes further punitive damages. The woman's lawyer had reportedly asked for total damages of \$20 million. It was the latest costly settlement for 50 Cent. Last year, he was ordered

to pay \$16 million to Sleek Audio, a headphone maker with which he was once affiliated, after the company accused him of spreading trade secrets and other misdeeds. As the sex tape case went forward, 50 Cent in May put into bankruptcy protection a boxing promotion company he owns, SMS Promotions LLC. The bankruptcy filing said that 50 Cent owed "primarily consumer debts" rather than business-related costs.

## Rapper turned businessman

50 Cent was born in poverty in New York, the son of a 15-year-old mother who was dealing cocaine and was murdered when he was a child. The 40-year-old achieved success after being championed by two of hip-hop's biggest names, Eminem and Dr Dre. He has not retired from rapping, with his latest album "Street King Immortal" still awaiting release, but in recent years has competed with Dr Dre and Jay-Z as a rapper turned businessman.

Forbes magazine estimated earlier this year that 50 Cent was worth \$155 million, having made \$100 million in 2007 by selling his stake in energy drink VitaminWater. He has also invested in the mining of platinum and other heavy metals in South Africa. The New York-born rapper listed his address as a mansion in Farmington, Connecticut. The home was once owned by boxer Mike Tyson. According to various accounts, it has around 20 bedrooms, an eight-car garage and its own disco. — AFP



Rapper 50 Cent arrives at the premiere of DreamWorks Pictures' 'Real Steel' at the Gibson Amphitheatre in Universal City, California.—AFP



Blues music legend BB King performs on Frampton's Guitar Circus 2013 Tour at Pier Six Pavilion, in Baltimore. — AP

# Blues legend BB King found to have died from natural causes

Veteran blues musician BB King died of natural causes primarily stemming from Alzheimer's disease, Nevada officials said Monday, putting to rest accusations by his two daughters that he was murdered. King's death at age 89 in May was also attributed to coronary artery disease, diabetes, heart failure, high blood pressure and brain damage from low blood flow, the Clark County Coroner's office said in a press release.

Coroners said they determined King's cause of death after conducting an autopsy, toxicology tests and consulting a neuropathologist. The examination also concluded that while King had suffered strokes, they did not kill him. Officials had said a homicide investigation would be conducted at the time of King's death after two of his children, Karen Williams and Patty King, alleged that the musician was poisoned by longtime associ-

ates. An attorney for King's estate said the allegations were unfounded. "At this point we can say with confidence that Mr King died of natural causes," John Fudenberg, the Clark County coroner, said.

"Our condolences go out to the family and many friends of Mr King, and we hope this determination brings them some measure of closure," King, a prolific and celebrated musician who was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, was placed in hospice care after being hospitalized in April this year from complications related to diabetes. He died shortly after, on May 14. Hundreds of mourners gathered for his funeral in Memphis, Tennessee, bidding him a musical farewell. — Reuters

# Isbell nails follow-up to career-making disc

His mother's tears upon hearing Jason Isbell's new song "Children of Children" were evidence that he'd nailed the complex emotions involved. The song about sacrifices made by a teenage mother is also the moment where the new album, "Something More Than Free," becomes something special, when it is clear that the career-defining achievement of Isbell's 2013 disc, "Southeastern," wasn't a fluke. The new album comes out Friday. The narrator singing about "all the years I took from her just by being born" isn't just telling a story. It's Isbell's story. His mother was 17 when he was born and his father was 19, and he was raised in Greenhill, Alabama.

"The older you get the more you realize the stuff that my mom missed because I was there, because she chose to put all her energy into raising me," said the 36-year-old Isbell. "Obviously, I don't feel like I'm to blame for that, but still there's something in there that I feel a little apologetic for." Isbell and his wife, singer-songwriter Amanda Shires, are expectant parents themselves. That forced him to change one line in the song from "never had a baby" to "late to have a baby on the way."

## A victim of nostalgia

"Children of Children" is one of several finely etched new stories he tells in song. There's the son of a dying state trooper, itching to leave his "Speed Trap Town"; the man grateful for, but trapped in his menial job; the couple sitting in a hotel lobby "a thousand miles apart"; a man pining for an old love while recognizing he's "a victim of nostalgia, maybe Tanqueray." "Southeastern" wasn't Isbell's first solo album. It was his fourth, but the first sober. While fear of losing Shires led him to rehab, what made it stick was how it changed his life. In the old days, he'd try to fit three or four hours of work between his hangover and return trip to the bar.

"Before that happened, I thought the music business, the climate, was keeping me down, that I was as good as anyone out there and I wasn't getting what I deserved," Isbell said. "I didn't realize that there were many more layers to writing songs that I could unearth if I actually spent the time on it." The songs on "Something More Than Free" show that effort, the polish on a turn of phrase, the relatable images. Isbell swept the Americana Music Association's big awards last year, winning album and artist of the year, and best song for "Cover Me Up." The album sold more than 150,000 copies, solid for a "non-commercial" artist. His concert audiences increased by about 60 percent and, for the first time, Isbell heard more enthusiasm for his solo songs than for the handful in his set he wrote as a member of the Drive-By Truckers.

Now he's playing in theaters, with better equipment. "We have sound people and good monitors," he said. "That sounds sort of basic, but it's a big thing for me. Being able to hear what I'm singing and playing each night is a really, really big

deal. That's the thing I'm most excited about, everything else I can handle. I was getting to the point where if I had to scream in rock clubs anymore, something would have had to change." Isbell put out "Southeastern" on his own label, striking his own distribution deal. Its success brought offers from major labels. Isbell considers himself a rock artist, but with his Alabama accent and the way that mainstream country has absorbed the rock sound of a band like the Eagles, it's not hard to imagine him in that world. He said no.

## Long-term success

"I don't have that ability to pander to an audience and for that reason, I'll probably never be a big star in any format," he said. "I just can't do it. What else would be the reason? If I did what people told me to do, I'd be a huge star. I firmly believe that, but I don't want that." He believes a major label deal would have compelled him to repeat "Southeastern," only a slicker version with choruses and bridges exactly where a listener would expect them. He'd have people questioning what topics he could address. "He's more Neil Young than he is Jason Aldean," said Jed Hilly, executive director of the Americana Music Association. "He's a fine artist and not a commercial artist."

He credits his former partners in Drive-By Truckers for teaching him to stand up for himself. He's glad he was a member of that band and equally glad he left. Being constantly drunk and in a crumbling marriage with the bass player wasn't a recipe for long-term success. Isbell would also probably forever be the George Harrison in the band, the junior partner to the older, established team of Patterson Hood and Mike Cooley. "Personality-wise, I was more like John (Lennon) on a bender," he said.

Don't schedule any benefits, though. By owning his work, Isbell can earn more money than some artists who sell more discs while on major labels. Come up with the goods and integrity can pay off. Isbell, who lives in Tennessee, is quietly proud of how he responded to the challenge of following up what had been his best work. "I wanted to surprise people by making a record that's just as good or even better," he said. "Nobody thinks that's going to happen, right? So I just said I'm going to do more work." — AP



American singer-songwriter Jason Isbell poses for a portrait in promotion of his upcoming solo album 'Something More Than Free' at the NYLO hotel, in New York. — AP

# Guardian of Sugar Hill hip-hop label dies at 53

Joey Robinson Jr, the surviving guardian of Sugar Hill Records which helped bring hip-hop into the mainstream, has died at age 53, associates and reports said Monday. Lady Luck, a rapper and relative, posted about his death on social media. The Record, a newspaper in New Jersey's Bergen County near New York City, said Robinson died of cancer in his town of Tenafly. Sugar Hill Records in 1980 put out "Rapper's Delight" by the Sugarhill Gang, which became the first hip-hop song to break into the mainstream Top 40 chart in the United States.

Rap was born in the 1970s in New York's Bronx borough but it had rarely been recorded until Robinson's mother Sylvia—a former R&B singer—put together the Sugarhill Gang. Legend holds that Joey Robinson Jr had encountered one of the rappers, Big Bank Hank, as he was working as a dough kneader at a New Jersey pizza parlor, and the family organized the trio with members Wonder Mike and Master Gee. "Rapper's Delight" was like nothing many listeners outside of New York had heard before but its format-verses by rappers boasting of their exploits set to a music sample—remains the basis for much hip-hop.

Sugar Hill Records went on to sign artists including Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, who are often credited with coining the term hip-hop to describe the genre. The Robinsons eventually sold Sugar Hill Records to mainstream label MCA and became mired in debt. After his parents' death, Joey handed royalties for the former label but had a poisonous relationship with many of the former artists. Joey and his two brothers, who helped him run the business, pleaded guilty in 2012 to charges of tax evasion. But a judge spared them prison as he cited their charitable work. One of the brothers, Rhonda, and Big Bank Hank both died last year. — AFP

# Iglesias to headline new US Latin festival

Pop star Enrique Iglesias will headline a new festival of Latin American music and art near Los Angeles, organizers announced Monday. The October 24-25 event at the Orange County Fair and Event Center, called the "L Festival - Feria Cultural Latinoamericana," comes amid a proliferation of live music happenings across the United States. Iglesias, the Spanish-born singer and major crossover figure in Latin pop, will be among acts from 10 countries spanning genres including tropical and electronic dance music.

Other performers will include veteran Mexican acts such as 65-year-old crooner Juan Gabriel and La Arrolladora Banda El Limon. Victor Gonzalez, president of Universal Music Latin Entertainment, a division of music giant Universal that is leading the festival, said the event was "crafted for the Hispanic family, where music, art and gastronomy will converge." The label is running the festival with CMN, a Latino-oriented event company in Chicago. The organizers said the festival would be the first of its kind in the United States to be run entirely by



Latin entertainment companies. Live music events have rapidly grown in number in the United States in recent years, following the success of major festivals such as Coachella in southern California. — AFP

# 'Minions' second to none with \$115.7 million domestic haul

Universal's "Minions" emerged from their supporting role to take command of theaters over the weekend with a \$115.7 million box office haul. The spinoff of the "Despicable Me" franchise focuses on the evolution of the subservient sidekicks from micro-organisms to henchmen to the world's most evil villains. The animated movie easily beat out "Jurassic World," another Universal film, which is in its fifth weekend of release and ranked a distant second with \$18.2 million. This coming weekend, the "Minions" face a horde of insects in the Marvel superhero film, "Ant-Man." The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Rentrak:

1. "Minions," Universal, \$115,718,405
2. "Jurassic World," Universal, \$18,151,275
3. "Inside Out," Disney, \$17,665,796

4. "Terminator Genisys," Paramount, \$13,830,369
5. "Gallows," Warner Bros, \$9,808,463
6. "Magic Mike XXL," Warner Bros, \$9,582,350
7. "Ted 2," Universal, \$5,666,310
8. "Self/Less," Focus Features, \$5,403,460
9. "Max," Warner Bros, \$3,542,406
10. "Baahubali (Telugu)," BlueSky Cinemas, \$3,068,964
11. "Spy," 20th Century Fox, \$3,052,681
12. "Amy," A24 Films, \$1,799,780
13. "San Andreas," Warner Bros., \$1,231,228
14. "Me And Earl And The Dying Girl," Fox Searchlight, \$661,177
15. "Dope," Open Road, \$624,894
16. "Mad Max: Fury Road," Warner Bros, \$617,148
17. "Avengers: Age Of Ultron," Disney, \$455,764
18. "Love & Mercy," Roadside Attractions, \$430,977
19. "I'll See You In My Dreams," Bleecker Street, \$353,055
20. "Pitch Perfect 2," Universal, \$274,060. — AP

# M.I.A. heads to Indian temple, Ivory Coast for video

The hip-hop star M.I.A. has gone to an Indian temple and the Ivory Coast to direct her first videos, as she announced a new album on the theme of a world without borders. The outspoken artist on Monday released a video of two songs including the new track "Swords," which begins with the clanking of swords before M.I.A.'s signature heavy beats kick in. The video shows a spirited dance among girls wielding swords and sticks, as well as a performer who smashes plantains lodged under the chin of a supine woman.

"Swords" is full of Hindu imagery including temple scenes and a flame Sanskrit script for the holy mantra "Om." M.I.A., who was born in London to Sri Lankan Tamil parents, did not specify where in India she filmed but the video shows riverside ghats reminiscent of the sacred city of Varanasi. The song also references the high-tech southern city of Bangalore, as M.I.A. raps, "Highly explosive, ready and raw / Everything banging like we're in Bangalore." The video, released on the new Apple Music streaming site, transitions to Ivory Coast where a man in a shiny golden outfit and red tutu dances at fast pace to "Warriors," a song from M.I.A.'s last album "Matangi" that came out in 2013. M.I.A. said she discovered the Ivorian dancer on YouTube and tracked him down in the West African country.

## Concept of borders

"He is a spiritual warrior and communicates through dancing. It's a lifelong commitment for him to be the designated spiritual body that channels that dance," M.I.A. said in a statement. M.I.A. said she had held off on releasing the video for "Warriors," which was the first she directed, as the experience inspired her to "make a whole series of songs and videos on the concept of borders."

"There's 10 more of these countries coming and I haven't chased where to go yet, so who knows where this project will take me," she said. M.I.A. said that "broader than a border"—written at the start of the video—would be the concept of her next album.



British singer-songwriter, rapper and record producer M.I.A. performs on stage. — AP

The album will be entitled "Matahdatch" but she did not specify the release date. In May, M.I.A. said that unspecified forces had stopped her from releasing a video with a dancer from Ivory Coast—presumably the one in "Warriors"—due to concerns over "cultural appropriation." M.I.A.—whose father was a Tamil Tiger activist—won critical acclaim for her 2005 debut album "Arular," which brought a punk edge, reggaeton and developing-world politics to dance music. — AFP