

# Whirlwind of Celebrity Legal Woes

By Reg P. Wydeven  
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I remember December 4, 1998, like it was yesterday. We were watching "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" when my sister called, informing us that she gave birth to a healthy baby girl named Katrina. While I love the name, because of the devastation caused by the recent hurricane, many people don't have such fond memories associated with the name 'Katrina.'

The government has pledged over \$10 billion in emergency aid. Therefore, writing a typical business law article about ways to minimize taxes just doesn't seem right. So, what better way to temporarily distract ourselves from the carnage of Katrina than to relish in the legal woes of celebrities.

First, Cameron Diaz helped the police arrange a sting operation to nab John Rutter, a photographer who was blackmailing the actress. In 1992, Rutter took pictures of the then-19-year-old model while posing topless, wearing leather boots and fishnet stockings and leading a male model around an abandoned warehouse by a chain attached to his neck.

Rutter claimed that Diaz signed a release form for the photos, giving ownership to him. He offered to sell the pictures to Diaz for \$3.5 million or he would release them to the public. A jury recently convicted Rutter of attempted grand theft for blackmailing the actress, of forgery for signing the release form himself and of perjury for claiming Diaz signed the release. He faces up to six years in prison.

Supermodel Kate Moss successfully sued a British newspaper that published a story claiming she lapsed into a cocaine-induced coma in 2001 while visiting Spain and had to be revived. The paper admitted the allegations made against the model were false, apologized, and agreed to pay Moss undisclosed damages.

Fellow supermodel Niki Taylor sued the Irene Group and Fortune Hills International for using sexy photos of her from the 1998 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition to market their own beauty products without her permission. A Tennessee court issued a temporary restraining order against the companies, stopping them from using Taylor's photos. Taylor anxiously awaits the court's final decision that will come in October, because she is currently launching her own beauty products line.

Rap artist Lil' Kim, whose real name is Kimberly Jones, is trading in her famous skimpy and revealing wardrobe for a prison jumpsuit. Jones was sentenced to 1 year and 1 day in prison for lying to a federal grand jury about her role in a 2001 gunfight outside a Manhattan radio station. Her conviction was sealed by the incriminating testimony of James "Lil' Cease" Lloyd, a man she is now suing.

Jones filed a \$6 million lawsuit against Lloyd for releasing an unauthorized DVD, "The Chronicles of Junior M.A.F.I.A. Part II: Reloaded." Jones alleges she left Junior M.A.F.I.A., which included Lloyd, in 2001, and that the DVD, like its predecessor, was unauthorized and improperly uses her name, image and likeness, amounting to false advertising and false endorsement.

Finally, country star Gretchen Wilson, the self-proclaimed 'Redneck Woman', is being targeted by the Tennessee Attorney General for violating the 1998 settlement with the tobacco companies. At concerts, Wilson pulls a tin of smokeless tobacco from her jeans pocket before she performs her song 'Skool Ring', named after the impression that tin leaves in a pair of jeans. The stunt violates the \$206 billion settlement, which Skoal joined, that prohibits tobacco companies from targeting young people, which make up a sizeable portion of Wilson's audience.

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