

Hip-hop mag bagged

Ex-Source editor gets \$14.5M for firing after harass charges

BY JOSE MARTINEZ
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THE BIBLE OF HIP HOP is out a lot of Benjamins.

A federal jury in Manhattan yesterday ruled that The Source magazine and its two founders must pay \$14.5 million to a former top editor who described a raunched-out workplace where executives watched porn, smoked pot and called female employees "b-----."

"I feel like I've been vindicated," said Kimberly Osorio, who was canned last year. "Whether it's hip hop, rock 'n' roll or the post office, there's still laws a company needs to abide by."

The jury took just four hours to find that Osorio was fired in retaliation for complaining about sexual shenanigans at the magazine.

It also found that co-owner Raymond (Benzino) Scott defamed her during a radio interview when he accused the single mom of bed-hopping with hip-hop honchos.

"This verdict shows that all women must be treated with dignity and respect, no matter what industry they work in," said Osorio's lawyer, Kenneth Thompson.

In his closing argument, the former federal prosecutor told jurors that the

"eyes of the hip-hop community are upon you" while urging them to hammer Scott and co-founder David Mays.

Thompson also replayed a vile telephone tirade in which Scott called a music journalist an "ugly butch pig" and a "slut monkey."

But an attorney for The Source — who admitted the tape hurt the magazine's case — insisted the workplace wasn't an X-rated rap video come to life.

"It's quiet, it's people working hard," said Mercedes Colwin, adding that she plans to appeal the verdict.

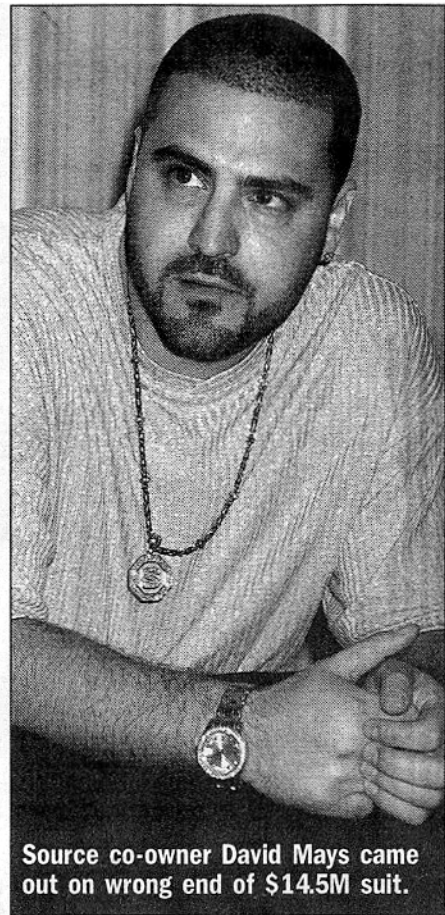
In her closing, Colwin admitted that four-letter words were often flung around at The Source — just not directly at Osorio.

"They used the 'f---' word, the 's---' word, the 'damn' word," she said. "It was not a gender-specific conduct whatsoever."

Osorio, 32, was formally appointed the magazine's first female editor in chief in November 2003. At a salary of \$130,000, she presided over a best-selling issue that had Jay-Z on the cover before being fired in February 2005.

"She climbed to the top of the corporate ladder at The Source — only to be knocked down by men who believe women are inferior," Thompson said.

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Source co-owner David Mays came out on wrong end of \$14.5M suit.

RICHARD COKERY DAILY NEWS

Kimberly Osorio won gender-bias lawsuit.



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