

# RAP SOURCECERESS GETS \$15M



Rex Dittman

**MAGA-ZINGER:** Kimberly Osorio was fired as editor of The Source by co-owner Raymond Scott after she alleged sex discrimination.

## Jury slaps mag's ax

By LEONARD GREENE

The hip-hop bible must repent.

So says a federal jury that yesterday ordered The Source magazine and its foulmouthed founders to pay its first female editor \$15.5 million for firing her after she charged them with sexual discrimination.

Though the jury ruled that Kimberly Osorio, 32, was not discriminated against and had not worked in a hostile environment as she claimed, it maintained that the magazine — the so-called bible of hip-hop — was vindictive in its retaliation and fired her unjustly.

"This verdict shows that all women must be treated with dignity and respect no matter what industry they work in — even rap music," Osorio said. "Whether it's hip-hop, rock 'n' roll or the post office, there are laws that a company needs to abide by."

Osorio told jurors that in February 2005, she was terminated over the phone in an angry, curse-laden tirade by co-owner Raymond "Benzino" Scott.

While working at the mag, Osorio said, she had to endure toiling under pictures of G-string-wearing women that hung on the walls and tolerate regular cursing.

At times, the trial was every bit as raunchy as a music video.

Witnesses testified about computer screen savers featuring nearly naked women and magazine covers with endless cleavage, as both sides traded sordid tales about alleged sex romps with the industry's hottest rappers.

But the most damning evidence proved to be a voice-mail tape of Scott cursing a female reporter from another hip-hop publication.

"The tapes were damaging," admitted Mercedes Colwin, a lawyer for the magazine.

She said the company would appeal the verdict.

The Source and co-owners Scott and David Mays contended that Osorio was fired for missing deadlines and for being a poor leader.

But the jury took just four hours to reach its verdict, which hit Mays, Scott and The Source each with a \$4 million judgment.

Scott, who is also a rap artist, was directed to pay Osorio an additional \$3.5 million for defamation stemming from an interview in which he alleged the editor was sleeping with industry power brokers.

The jury also urged federal Judge Jed Rakoff to impose punitive damages, but he declined.

"I cannot imagine that this doesn't send a very substantial message to the public," Rakoff said.

Osorio — whose lawyer, Kenneth Thompson, is a former federal prosecutor — said the verdict was a victory for women and the rap-music industry.

"I felt like I was defending hip-hop," Osorio said. "I hope that people in hip-hop will understand the significance of this."

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