

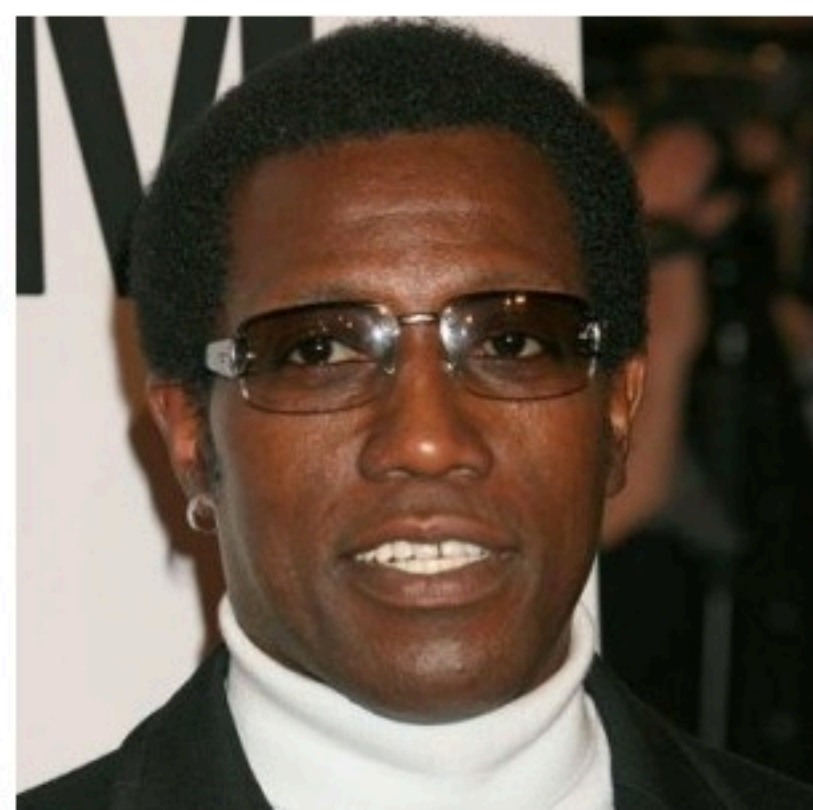
# Judge rules Wesley Snipes must answer more lawsuit questions

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John Moreno

## Judge rules Wesley Snipes must answer more lawsuit questions

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By WAVE WIRE SERVICE | 0 comments

"Blade" trilogy star Wesley Snipes will have to answer more questions stemming from a talent agency's lawsuit alleging that the actor owes more than \$1.4 million in commissions, a judge ruled Friday.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Elizabeth Allen White granted a motion by attorneys for Beverly Hills-based United Talent Agency, allowing them to further probe Snipes' involvement with Amen Ra Films, a movie production company.

"Anything relevant or likely to lead to admissible evidence is fair game," White said.

The judge also ordered Snipes and his lawyers to pay \$2,000 to compensate the UTA legal team for attorneys' fees.

UTA sued Snipes in July 2006, alleging breach of an oral contract. According to the complaint, Snipes and the agency entered into a verbal agreement in November 2002 in which UTA was to be paid 10 percent of any money the actor received for movie roles that UTA obtained for him.

UTA, which maintains it has received only partial payment of the commissions, says Snipes received \$21.4 million for four films, including \$13 million alone for his role in "Blade III." UTA claims four former talent agents with the company were principally responsible for him getting the role.

The firm also helped Snipes land parts in the movies "Chaos," "Middle Man" and "The Shooter," but the actor did not pay the commissions he owes for those performances either, and parted company with UTA in February 2006, according to the agency's lawsuit.

When Snipes was first deposed by UTA lawyers in November, his lawyers objected to him answering additional questions about Amen Ra after he said he worked with the production company from 1989 to September 2001.

With Friday's order, the agency's lawyers will be able to further explore information Snipes has about Amen Ra and its officers in order to question them about other production companies the actor associated himself with both before and during his representation by UTA.

The actor's attorneys maintain Amen Ra had no involvement with UTA or the four films at issue, but UTA lawyer Bryan J. Freedman on Friday scoffed at that argument.

"We couldn't be more pleased with the ruling," Freedman said. "If Amen Ra had nothing to do with this case, then why did Snipes refuse to answer the questions?"

Noting the judge's order to pay UTA lawyers \$2,000, Freedman said, "We look forward to getting the answers at his expense."

In a countersuit filed Feb. 20, Snipes alleges that UTA's contract was not with the actor but instead with two companies, Swiss Sterling Trust and Kymberlyte, through which he could receive payments from movie studios on his behalf.

The countersuit asks that a judge determine the rights and obligations between Snipes and the company.

The trial of both suits is scheduled to begin June 8.

Snipes was found guilty in Florida in February 2008 of failure to file tax returns and sentenced to three years in prison, but a federal court judge ruled last May he could remain free on bail pending an appeal of the conviction and sentence.