

## The Perez Hilton-will.i.am feud, digitally direct to the masses

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When Perez Hilton was allegedly assaulted on Sunday night by the manager of Black Eyed Peas singer will.i.am and didn't get an immediate response from police, the famed celebrity blogger felt he had only one place to turn: the Internet.

In an age when even gossip blogs are becoming too slow and perhaps too filtered for Internet-savvy celebrities, Hilton's feud with will.i.am exploded on Monday over Twitter and in a series of competing online videos. Corporate gossip blogs like TMZ were left playing catch-up with the celebs' direct communications to the world and each other.

"When the police are taking their time and not coming, I am freaking out, I took to Twitter," Hilton explained on his website. "Because I was in shock and I felt helpless. That was my very public cry for help."

According to Hilton, the dispute started during a dress rehearsal for the MuchMusic Video Awards in Toronto Saturday when Black Eyed Peas singer Fergie approached the blogger about his recent criticisms of the band's new album "The E.N.D." After the ceremony on Sunday, will.i.am confronted Hilton at a nightclub. The altercation led to the band's manager, Liborio "Polo" Molina, allegedly hitting Hilton.

The world learned of the events soon after via Twitter.

"I was assaulted by Will.I.Am of the Black Eyed Peas and his security guards," Hilton wrote at about 1 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time Monday. "I am bleeding. Please, I need to file a police report. No joke."

By the morning, will.i.am had posted a video on his website Dipdive denying the charge and accusing Hilton, whose real name is Mario Lavandeira, of seeking attention. Hilton posted his own video in response, an 11-minute-plus tirade full of tears and profanity in which he specified that he hadn't been directly assaulted by will.i.am, but by Molina.

According to the Associated Press, Molina has been charged with assault and will have his first court hearing on Aug. 5.

In an interview with The Times on Monday, a lawyer for Hilton said the blogger is planning to sue "at least" Molina.

"It's going to become a civil matter as quickly as I can type," attorney Bryan Freedman said. "This is certainly about showing Mr. Molina and will.i.am that violence is not the answer." The attorney said it "seems pretty apparent" will.i.am encouraged the altercation.

A representative for will.i.am did not respond to a request for comment.

Hilton has increasingly become the subject of news lately, most notably when he asked then-Miss California USA Carrie Prejean for her view on same-sex marriage during the Miss USA pageant telecast.