

Jay-Z Associate Arrested

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A longtime associate of rapper Jay-Z has been arrested in New York in connection with the Oct. 29 pepper-spray assault on R&B artist R. Kelly and several of his security guards.

Tryan (Ty Ty) Smith, a childhood friend of Jay-Z's and currently a member of his entourage, was charged with assault in the third degree, an A-class misdemeanor that carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail. Smith is accused of assaulting security guards Ronald Hardy and Martin McKinley with pepper spray as they accompanied Kelly back to the stage at an interrupted Oct. 29 concert in New York's Madison Square Garden.

Kelly, who was performing at the Garden with Jay-Z on their since cancelled "Best of Both Worlds" concert tour, had stopped his show about 30 minutes before the incident because of security concerns. He was mounting the stage to resume performing when an individual identified as Smith blocked his way and sprayed both Kelly and several of his security guards in the face with pepper spray.

As a result of the attack, Emergency Medical Service personnel rushed Kelly and his security guards to St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan, where they were treated in the emergency room and later released.

Despite the assault, Kelly declared he was "ready, willing, and able" to continue with the "Best of Both Worlds" tour. Jay-Z, however, refused to perform, as a result of which the promoter cancelled the tour.