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Lawyer: James Brown estate shortchanged

- Story Highlights
- Lawyer: James Brown Enterprises didn't get money it was supposed to
- Former trustee accused of misappropriating \$7 million from the singer
- "I Feel Good Trust," helps poor children attend school, out of money

BAMBERG, South Carolina (AP) -- A company that handles royalties and income from commercials and other projects for James Brown's estate has significantly less money than it should, a lawyer for the late soul singer's family said.

Much of the money that was supposed to be going to James Brown Enterprises Inc. instead ended up in a company established by a former trustee accused of misappropriating \$7 million from the singer, attorney Louis Levenson said Thursday after a court hearing to sort through Brown's finances.

The company collected money earned by Brown's endeavors while he was alive and continued to do so after he died on Christmas, but never gave the money to the singer, Levenson said.

"That probably the greatest entertainer of all time should be essentially working as an indentured servant for a company that he has no ownership of is absolutely irresponsible and insulting," he said.

David Cannon, who quit working for the estate in August after being accused of taking money from it, testified that Brown's work earned millions of dollars a year.

He said he would give Brown \$100,000 a month for "walking-around spending money" because the singer had difficulty managing his finances. Cannon said his company would pay expenses such as plane tickets and equipment needed when the singer went on tour.

Cannon told the judge his attorney advised against answering several questions, including how much he made during the nearly 16 years he worked for Brown.

Judge Jack Early ordered Cannon to pay \$373,000 to Brown's estate within five days, but Cannon said he couldn't afford that. He instead offered his beach property in South Carolina, which he said was valued at nearly \$2 million.

Cannon acknowledged that in August he made an \$866,000 deposit to build a house in Honduras, where he planned to retire next year. He said he was currently unemployed and being audited by the IRS.

"You're treading on very, very, very thin ice," Early said as he questioned Cannon about the deposit on the house.

The judge ordered Cannon to provide all of his financial records within 10 days.

The hearing also revealed other financial problems facing Brown's estate.

The "I Feel Good Trust" established by Brown to help poor children attend school in Georgia and South Carolina has run out of money, said Levenson, the family attorney.

The hearing is to continue next week as Brown's trustees and family wrangle over the total value and ownership of his estate.

Several people claiming to be Brown's previously unacknowledged children, and at least two women who say they were married to him, have come forward wanting a piece of his estate.

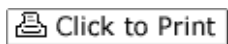
The judge ruled that former backup singer Tomi Rae Hynie, who claims she was the singer's fourth wife, could return to Brown's Beech Island home next week.

Hynie has said she hoped to retrieve some personal items from the home, but that trustees were stalling her.

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