

## Wesley Snipes, talent agency settle suit

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Wesley Snipes and a talent agency have reached a preliminary settlement of a lawsuit alleging the "Blade" trilogy star owed more than \$1.4 million in commissions, an attorney in the case said today.

Bryan J. Freedman, who represents Beverly Hills-based United Talent Agency, said a resolution was reached "in principle" on Monday with the help of a mediator. He said it could take another three months for all the details to be worked out.

"I believe both parties are happy to have this case resolved," Freedman said.

Snipes' lawyer, Jeffrey M. Singletary, did not immediately return a call for comment.

UTA sued Snipes in Los Angeles Superior Court 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 maintained it had 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 claimed 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.

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In a countersuit filed Feb. 20, Snipes alleged 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 asked that a judge determine the rights and obligations between Snipes and the company.

Judge Elizabeth Allen White today scheduled a hearing for Oct. 9. She said if the settlement is finalized by then, she will dismiss the UTA case and the countersuit.

Snipes, 46, was found guilty in Florida in February 2008 of failure to file tax returns. He was sentenced to three years in prison, but a federal judge ruled in May 2008 that he could remain free on bail pending an appeal of the conviction and sentence.