

**DINER RAPE GANG
NEAR PAROLE**

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**CIG FIRM SAYS
SMOKING HARMFUL**

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DAILY NEWS

**BROOKLYN
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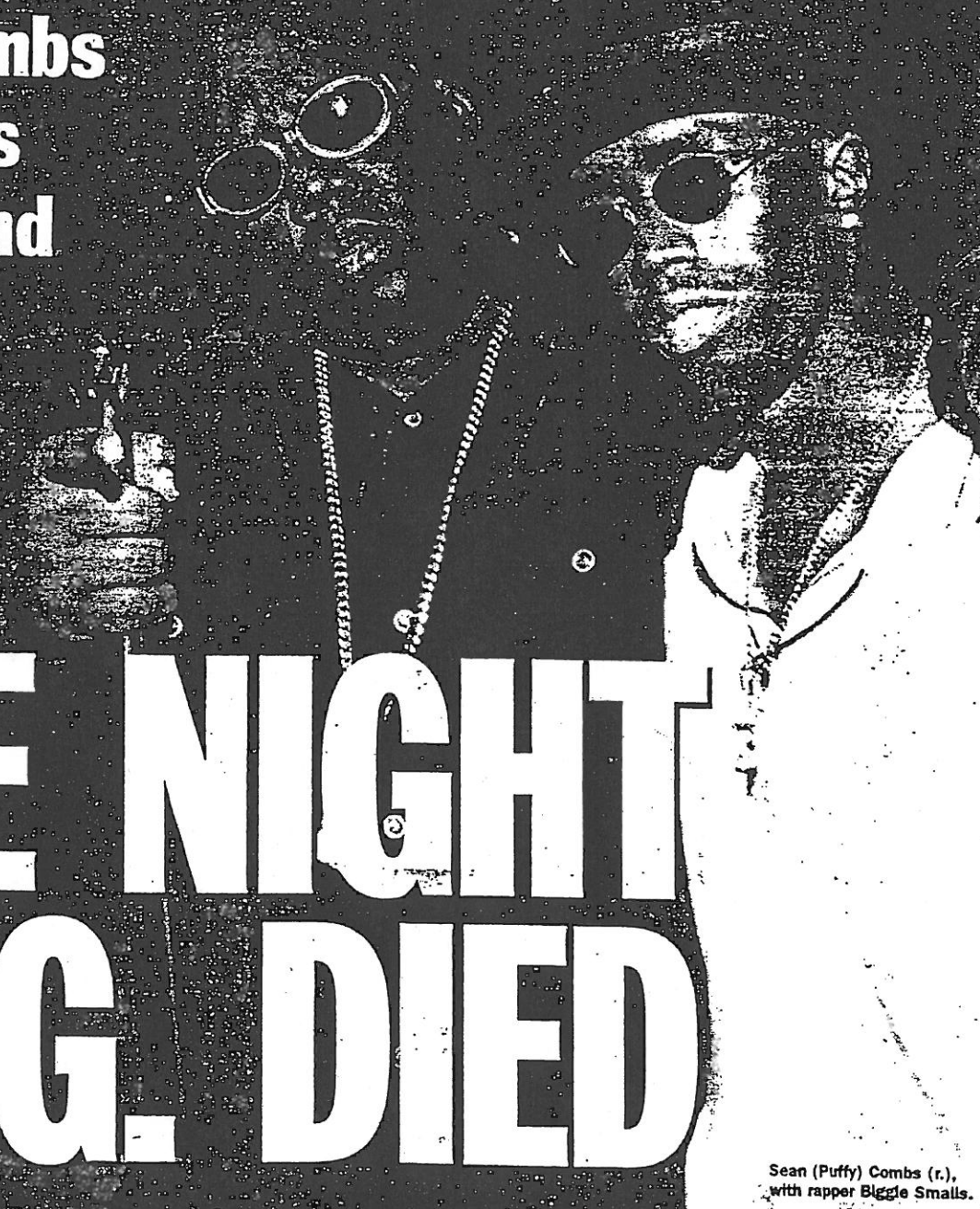
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NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Friday, March 21, 1997

EXCLUSIVE

**Puffy Combs
breaks his
silence and
tells the
NEWS
about...**



THE NIGHT B.I.G. DIED

Sean (Puffy) Combs (r.),
with rapper Biggie Smalls.

SEE STORIES ON PAGE 5

Biggie's final minutes



PARTY TIME: Biggie Smalls (l.) and Sean (Puffy) Combs at fete in L.A. Biggie was killed as he left the party.

Pal recalls gunfire & desperate prayers

By ANITA M. SAMUELS
Special to The News

Music mogul Sean (Puffy) Combs has described for the first time the terrifying midnight shooting that killed his friend, rap superstar Biggie Smalls.

Combs, at 25 one of the youngest and most successful producers in the industry, told the Daily News in an exclusive interview that he was in a car just feet from Biggie's after a Vibe magazine party in Los Angeles when he heard the crack of gunfire.

Combs said he was "scared, real scared" in the frantic moments after Biggie's body was brought to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He dropped to his knees in prayer, but his friend — Christopher Wallace, also known as Smalls and the Notorious B.I.G. — already was dead.

"I was just praying over him,



praying to God to please pull him through."

He didn't see the killer but doesn't believe his friend's slaying was a result of what he called the nonexistent East Coast-West Coast feud between Biggie and Tupac Shakur, who was gunned down six months ago in a drive-by shooting.

It was one day after Biggie's funeral, and Combs sat in a posh suite at the Surrey Hotel on the upper East Side of Manhattan. He was hunched in the corner of a sofa Wednesday, still trying to make sense of the slaying.

Combs, now president of Bad Boy Entertainment, had used his knack for recognizing raw musical talent and his street savvy to introduce a new generation of music that includes such artists as Mary J. Blige and Jodeci. He combined rap and rhythm and blues to create a new genre.

The night Biggie died began with a party sponsored by Vibe in Los Angeles. It was Sunday, March 9.

Combs said he and Biggie had been told it would be a private party, but when they arrived at the Petersen Automotive Museum on Wilshire Blvd., that clearly wasn't the case.

Nearly 2,000 people were there, so many that the number exceeded the building's legal capacity. For the most part, Biggie sat in a corner, because a leg he had broken was still healing.

"It wasn't like he was 'flossin'," Combs said, using the current slang for showing off. "He was over in that corner talking to me about how glad he was that he finished recording and how he couldn't

Bad Boy big man

NAME: Sean (Puffy) Combs
AGE: 25

JOB: President of Bad Boy Entertainment

CAREER: At 19, he does internship at Uptown Records in 1990 that launches career.

TRAGEDY: On Dec. 28, 1991, Combs hosts a charity concert with rapper Heavy D, at City College gymnasium where nine people die in stampede.

Creative differences with mentor, then-Uptown head Andre Harrel, cost him his job.

COMEBACK: Combs rebounds and signs reported \$10 million deal to head the newly created Arista label, Bad Boy Entertainment. There he nurtures the rap acts that make him famous.

Now Combs is breaking out as a performer. His first single, "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down," rocketed to the top of the rhythm and blues, and pop charts and quickly went gold, selling more than 187,000 units. His first rap album is due later this year.

Rapper was silent type

Sean (Puffy) Combs says his friend the Notorious B.I.G. wasn't the brash guy he appeared to be.

In fact, Christopher Wallace as at first rather shy.

"When I first met him, he was so quiet he wouldn't say anything," Combs said. "But a few days later he changed from being a silent type to not saying anything, to being three years down the line, begging him to go onstage at the Soul Train music awards."

Combs said the man who called himself Biggie Smalls was far more talkative than — and he complained he couldn't go onstage because his shoes weren't right.

"I'm saying to myself, 'I can't believe that this was the same person that when I first met him wouldn't say anything, and now here I am... begging him to go onstage, telling me that millions of people were waiting for him to perform,'" Combs said.

He told that story Tuesday at Biggie's private service at Frank E. Campbell Funeral Home on Madison Ave. "I wanted to take them into the world that Biggie and I lived in," Combs said.

Anita M. Samuels



AT BENEFIT: Sean (Puffy) Combs leaving Garden in October 1995.

wait for his leg to get better. . . . People were going over to him, sitting on his lap, taking pictures, and he was signing autographs. He was very calm and laid back."

About midnight, the fire marshals came. The crowd was told to leave. Outside in the parking lot, Biggie was still upbeat, saying again how happy he was to have finished recording his second album, "Life After Death," which will be released Tuesday.

The two years he'd worked on it, Biggie told Combs, had been a strain on him. "But he said he was so happy to be getting some love from people at the party," said Combs.

Finally, the two got into their GMC Suburbans, but they hadn't decided whether they'd go to a recording studio or head home.

Combs' car was first in line. Biggie's car followed, with a friend behind the wheel and Biggie in the passenger seat. They had just turned right, out of the museum's parking lot,

DAILY NEWS
Friday, March 21, 1995

Rudy's welfare plea

Urges Congress not to cut off immigrants

By JOEL SIEGEL

Daily News City Hall Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON — Mayor Giuliani took his advocacy for immigrants to Congress yesterday, trying to derail the planned August cut-off of federal welfare benefits to legal immigrants — including more than 135,000 in New York City.

He said the abrupt end of food stamps and Supplemental Security Income payments would inflict severe and unfair hardships on legal immigrants and impose financial pain on cities like New York that will be forced to step in and help those who lose aid.

The cut-off was a key provision of the sweeping federal welfare reform approved last summer. Some immigrants will begin losing their benefits in June, with all benefits to be halted by Aug. 22.

"All of these people would [lose assistance] all at once, not phased in, not done in some kind of sensible way in which citizens and states could assess,

"How do we replace these benefits?" Giuliani said.

The mayor said 135,000 legal immigrants receive SSI in the city, most of them elderly or disabled, and that 70,000 immigrants draw food stamps. He estimated it would cost the city nearly \$400 million a year to keep the benefits.

In meetings with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, Giuliani urged that such immigrants be "grandfathered" into the welfare system. That would mean the cut-off would apply only to immigrants who entered the U.S. after the bill was passed.

At a minimum, Giuliani urged Congress to delay the cut-off.

Sentiment in Congress has been strong in favor of keeping the cuts, and it was not clear whether Giuliani's lobbying would have major impact.

But the trip gave the reelection-seeking mayor another opportunity to

highlight his advocacy for immigrants — a role that has allowed Giuliani to soften his image and court U.S. newcomers who may provide crucial votes in November.

While in Washington, Giuliani delivered the keynote speech at the annual conference of the Staten Island-based Center for Migration Studies and picked up its 1997 award for immigration and refugee policy.

Immigrant-aid groups agreed with Giuliani that the cut-off date must be averted.

"Many of these people are in nursing homes. . . Without SSI they would be thrown out into the cold," said Peter Fiumefreddo of the Bronx-based Federation of European American Rights.

But Ira Mehlman of the Federation for American Immigration Reform said Giuliani "talks about how great immigrants are for New York City, but then turns around and wants everybody else to pay the costs."

Subway car ads replace graffiti

Graffiti is coming back to city subway cars — but now it's called advertising.

The Transit Authority, which spent a decade removing paint and scrawls from the subways, plans to let advertisers emblazon entire cars with their logos in a bid to bring in cash.

Officials said NYCE, the cash card company, is the likely advertiser for a six-month pilot program that will see an 11-car No. 7 train turned into a rolling billboard. The New York Mets also expressed interest.

"The point is, when you're faced with a \$3 billion dollar deficit, you get a little creative," said Stephen Reitano, chief financial officer for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which handles subway advertising.

The pilot program will reap \$200,000 in revenue, part of a \$5 million windfall expected from new advertising that includes murals at Grand Central Terminal.

— Lisa Rein

Noriega: Feds offered deal if he linked Castro to drugs

By CATHERINE WILSON

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega claims federal prosecutors offered him a lighter sentence if he implicated Fidel Castro in drug smuggling, a charge the prosecutors denied yesterday.

Noriega, who is serving a 40-year sentence for protecting U.S.-bound cocaine shipments through Panama, made the Castro claim in a prison interview that aired Wednesday on CBS' Spanish-language network Telenoticias.

"They would need testimony against Fidel," Noriega said of the Cuban

president. Without offering any details of the government offer, he said, "In the legal field, it sounds like a cruel joke."

Noriega's claim was denounced by Myles Malman, a former assistant U.S. attorney who prosecuted the Panamanian general.

"That's ridiculous," Malman said. "There were some plea negotiations early on in the case, and [Castro] was never mentioned at all. He never ever mentioned cooperation in any form, shape or fashion."

But Noriega's attorneys said Castro's name came up in pre-trial discussions that never went anywhere because Noriega had no information to reveal.

Rapper's last minutes recalled

PUFFY FROM PAGE 5

and were driving straight ahead when shots rang out.

"Everyone in my car ducked down; it was like a natural reaction," Combs recalled.

He thought someone was firing shots in the air, something he said happens at parties.

But then he heard people in the other cars begin yelling: "They hit up Biggie's car!"

"I jumped out of my car and ran over to his," said Combs. Biggie was slumped in his seat, as if he had tried to duck.

"I tried to pick him up, and some other people came over to the car and tried to pick him up and turn him over, but he was too heavy, so I pushed him to the side and closed the door."

Combs didn't see a gun, or a gunman, or a getaway car. Other witnesses said Biggie was the victim of a drive-by assassination.

A security officer jumped into Biggie's car and drove him to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Combs followed, and as he helped put his friend's body on a stretcher, it hit him. Combs felt the intense chill of fear.

"I was scared, real scared. I was just praying, and for some reason I just

dropped to my knees right there and I prayed that he was going to be all right, that he was going to make it. We really didn't see a lot of blood or anything, but he was not conscious," Combs said.

"I was saying The Lord's Prayer and Hail Marys. I was talking to God, asking Him to help him and be strong for him. I was begging God to help him out. I was touching him and talking to him in his ear."

Biggie never heard those prayers. "They told me that he was already deceased, that he had died immediately," Combs said quietly.

"I really don't know who killed him," Combs said. "I would be just like the media if I speculated. The honest answer is that I have no idea, I can't go on rumors and speculation."

He said the fictionalized feud had been nothing more than an embarrassment to him and Biggie.

"Me and Biggie have been fighting to let people know from the very beginning that we were never with that whole East Coast-West Coast thing, we were not about that," Combs said.

Biggie's slaying, he said, could have been a random act.

"Although this was a violent incident, what needs to be noted is that people fear for their lives every day."

Anita M. Samuels is an assistant editor at B.E.T. Weekend Magazine, which appears the first Sunday of every month in the Daily News.

DEATH NOTICES

Death Notices, In Memoriam and Acknowledgment Notices

Notices may be telephoned to "THE NEWS" by your Funeral Director, Monday thru Friday, 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., to appear in the A.M. edition the following day. Our Saturday hours are 9 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. Sunday Notices must be placed in by 2 P.M. on Saturday. Monday notices must be placed in by 3:30 P.M. on Saturday.

CALL

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ANDERSON—Mary Elizabeth on March 19, 1997, entered Care L.I. Beloved wife of the late Charles W. Anderson. Loving mother of Kathleen, Elizabeth and Jeanne Kelly. Survived by O.B. Davis Inc. Funeral Home 2226 Middle Country Rd., Amherst. Visitation Friday 2-4 & 7-10 P.M. Saturday 10 A.M. Assumption BVM RC Church Int. Holy Road Cem.

CACcese—Anthony, formerly of Brooklyn, on March 21, 1997. Husband of Rosanne (Maeda). Son of Vincent and Catherine. Brother of Irene, Vincent and Albert Caccese. Visiting Friday at F. ANTONI MALPINO'S BROOKLYN FUNERAL HOME, 1294 Broad St., Bloomfield, N.J. Funeral Mass will be offered at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Bloomfield at 9:30 A.M. Donations for the American Cancer Society in his memory would be preferred.

COLLINS—Marion on March 20, 1997. Beloved wife of the late Joseph Scarpelli. Barbara Zeno and Michael. Cherished grandmother of Nicole, Jessica, and Jonathan. Dear sister of Thomas and Peter Borziani and the late Lillian Borz and Helen Dowd. Residing at CUSIMANO & RUSSO FH INC., 2005 West 6 Street, Bklyn, Funeral Mass Saturday 9:30 A.M. at St. Simon & Jude RC Church.

DILEONARDO—Maude, on March 20, 1997 of Malverne, formerly of Long Beach, California. Husband of Joseph, Gory and Jo-Anne DeBenedi. Survived by 4 Grandchildren. Visiting hours at MALVERNE FUNERAL HOME, (514) 993-7220.

HARTNETT—John J. Native of Tualatin, Ore. Husband of the late Della (nee Mulroy) and the late Linda (nee Flynn). Devoted father of Timothy, Kathleen, Bobucki, Mary and James. Also survived by 13 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Residing at MARTIN A. GLEASON, INC. FUNERAL HOME, 10-25 150th St., Whitestone, Mass. Christian Burial St. Luke's RC Church on Saturday 10:15 A.M. Visiting 2-5 and 7-10 P.M.

KEAVNEY—Francis X. (Frank). Beloved husband of Anna M. (nee Coffey). Devoted father of Jane A. Oikewski and her husband Chuck and the late Kevin Francis Keavney. Graveside services will be held Monday at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Vauxhall at 12:00 P.M. Arrangements by THE RUC TOWNSHIP FUNERAL HOME, INC., TOWSON, MD.

KENNEY—Bernard James on March 19, 1997. Retired NYC Fire-fighter of 32 years. Devoted father and friend of James and John. Dear brother of Marguerite, John, Kathleen Green, Patricia Reynolds and Thomas. Survived by Robert, Loving grandfather of Catherine and James Jr. Fond uncle of many nieces and nephews. Funeral Monday 9:00 A.M. from the MC ANANUS FUNERAL HOME, 2001 Flatbush Ave. Funeral Mass 9:45 A.M. St. Columba Church, Interment Calvary National Cemetery, Visiting Saturday & Sunday 2-5 & 7-9 P.M. in lieu of flowers donations to the NYC Burn Center or the Dynamic Youth Center, 1830 Coney Island Ave., Brooklyn, NY.

LOPILATO—Anna, on March 18, 1997. Loving wife of Serafino. Devoted mother of Joseph, Marie Piccininni, Rita Lopilato-Roth and Lisa Soleo. Also survived by her ten grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Family will receive friends Thursday 2-4 & 7-9 P.M. at F. RUGGIERO & SONS INC., 725 Yonkers Ave., Yonkers, N.Y. Burial at Holy Rosary of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on Saturday 9:30 A.M. Entombment will follow at Forest Hill Mausoleum.

MADER—Margaret T., on March 13, 1997 in Augusta, Ga. Most of her life was spent in Brooklyn. A memorial service will be held at Church of the Holy Shepherd, 1920 Batchelder St., Brooklyn Saturday March 22 at 10:15 a.m.

MARTIN—Mary (nee Carney). On March 19, 1997. Native of County Limerick, Ireland. Resident of Astoria and Northport, N.Y. Beloved wife of the late John Martin, O.P., John James, Helen, and Ann. Survived by her sister-in-law of Elaine Martin, Corrine Martin, and Daniel Makowski. Devoted mother and grandmother of 3 dear sons: Ann Marina of Staten Island, Carlotta Love of New Jersey, Peggy Murphy of Ireland, and the late Tom Michael, Jim, Pat, Joe, Dennis and Nicholas. Burial at R.P. DRAGO FUNERAL HOME, 43-10 39th Avenue, Astoria, N.Y. Mass of the Dead at St. Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale, N.Y. Visiting hours Sunday 2-5 & 7-9 P.M.

McKNIGHT—Regina M., resident of Sheepshead Bay, died on March 20, 1997. Loving wife of the late Frank McKnight. Sister of James, Edward, mother of Patrick, Maureen, Kathy, Tim, Dennis, Mary, Michael, Tom, Geri, and Jim. Devoted grandmother to 14 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Residing JOHN J. BAILEY FUNERAL HOME, 2777 Ocean Ave. (corner of Ave 23) Fri 2-5 and 7-10. Funeral Mass Sat. St. Mark's RC Church, 9:30 a.m. Interment Calvary Cemetery.

RAGO—Peter M. III, Suddenly on March 19, 1997. Loving son of Peter and Marlon Rago (nee Horvath). Dearest brother of Leslie and John Gigante, Michael, Ann, Frank, Jodi and Gus Tsalkar. World's best uncle to Anthony and Marissa Gigante, Nicholas and Marissa Gigante and Peter Sacramone. Residing at BERGREEN FUNERAL HOME, 1311 Bklyn Ave., Bklyn, Funeral Monday at 9:00 A.M. Solemn Requiem Mass St. Stanislaus Kostka A.M. Interment Calvary Cemetery. Visiting hrs Fri 7-9:30 P.M., Sat & Sun 2-5 P.M., 4-7:30 P.M.

ROCCO—Richard A. Beloved husband of Ann. Adored father of John, Richard & Linda Arriaga. Cherished Grandfather of 15 grandchildren & 3 great-

ROMANUK—Alice on March 19, 1997. Beloved daughter of the late Antoni and Sophie. Loving sister of Michael, Roman, Albin, Scott, John, James, Steve and Paulie Sheridan. Funeral Sat. 9:00 A.M. from THE SHEW FUNERAL HOME, 2001 Flatbush Ave., Bklyn, Funeral Mass 9:45 St. Vincent Ferrer Church, 11th St., Charles Cemetery, Visiting Friday 2-5 & 7-9 P.M.

SPINELLI—Charles John. Beloved husband of Rose Patrono. Devoted father of Barbara Natori and the late Frank. Also survived by 7 children, 12 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. Residing SCOTT'S FUNERAL HOME, 105 1st Pl., Bklyn, N.Y. Visiting hrs. Sat. Mass of Christian Burial Sacred Heart and St. Stephen's R.C. Church, 10:15 A.M. Visiting hrs. 2-5 & 7-9:30.

IN MEMORIAM

BAUER—Daniel F. Happy Birthday in Heaven Daddy. Your loving son, Danny.

BAUER—Daniel F. Happy Birthday in Heaven, Daddy. Always in my heart. Love, Peggy and Frank.

MALFRONTE—MILLIE BORN 4/19/8 DIED 3/21/97

MILLIE: TOOK 32/97 IS YOUR 5th ANNIVERSARY IN HEAVEN. MILLIE: AS ALWAYS YOU CONSOLATED MY EVERY THOUGHTS AND ALL MY LOVE IS YOURS FOREVER. TOMORROW 3/27/97 AT 10:00 AM AT COLGATE BAR CLC CHURCH (CORNER OF KIMBALL STREET AND AVE. 136) VISITING HOURS: ANTHONY CASEY PH-D. WILL CELEBRATE A MASS IN YOUR HONOR. WE LOVE YOU. LOVE YOU AND OUR SON, VINCENT, JR. ALWAYS.

MONTEMARANO—Joyce Happy Birthday in Heaven. We love and miss you. Mommie, Daddy, JoAnn, Janice and Jackie.

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Puffy's taking a breather

Combs devoting time to Biggie memorial

By ANITA M. SAMUELS
Special to The News

With the shooting deaths of two of rap's biggest stars, Sean (Puffy) Combs says he isn't thinking in terms of "being next."

"I don't carry a gun," said Combs, 26, the president of Bad Boy Productions and one of the last people to see rap superstar Christopher Wallace, aka Biggie Smalls and the Notorious B.I.G. alive. "I haven't thought about stuff like that."



Sean (Puffy) Combs

What he is thinking about is honoring the life of Wallace — gunned down March 9 in Los Angeles, seven months after rapper Tupac Shakur was killed in Las Vegas — and taking a short retirement from the recording industry hustle and bustle.

"In light of all that has happened, I am taking an indefinite breather," said Combs. "Right now, I don't have the desire to think about business or party and hang out. That's not on my agenda."

As an added effort to back up his words, Combs said that some of the profits from Biggie's album, "Life After Death," to be released on Tuesday, will be used to open the Christopher Wallace Youth Center, an education and recreational facility in Brooklyn.

He also plans on taking care of Wallace's family. "I'm going to hold down his children like they were my own," Combs said.

Combs denied reports he has refused to cooperate with police in the investigation into the Wallace killing.

"Me not cooperating with the police is definitely false, because they kept trying to question me that night, and I told them that I was very upset, but I gave them all of my numbers and told them to contact me," Combs said.

He added that he met with two Los Angeles detectives last Thursday to discuss the slaying, which remains unsolved.

If Combs seems relaxed, however, his mother most certainly is not.

"I am very afraid for his life, because people just can't stand to see you do good,"

Janice Combs told the Daily News. "I pray nothing else will happen, but I don't want to take that for granted," she said.

Although the music mogul plans to take some time to regroup, Combs had a number of projects already in progress before the killing. He was just about to release his own debut album, "Hell Up In Harlem," with its hit single, "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down," featuring his new artist, Mace.

The song, which is about to become double platinum, is simultaneously No. 1 on the pop, rhythm and blues, and rap industry music charts. The album still will be released this year, but at a later date. It is said to include a tribute to Wallace.

Combs will also be expanding his music roster to include rhythm and blues singer Tony Thompson, the former lead singer of the group Hi-5, rhythm and blues and pop singer Tanya Blout (co-star of "Sister Act II"), and the 11-year-old Jerome Childers.

Biggie's wife, mom share pain

By ANITA M. SAMUELS
Special to The News

The slaying of Biggie Smalls left a wife and a mother grieving for the man they knew as Christopher Wallace.

"He didn't deserve it; he wasn't even into guns," said Faith Evans, Biggie's wife.

Evans was nearby when the 24-year-old rap artist was shot dead in a Los Angeles parking lot on March 9. She wonders about the killer.

"Obviously, the person didn't know him for who he was, which was a person who had a hard demeanor but, at the same time, a good heart, with a sense of humor that made everybody laugh," Evans said.

She has withheld the details from her 3-year-old daughter, Chyna, but senses the girl understands what happened.

"She was really upset, and called me at the hotel, telling me that 'Daddy got shot,'" said Evans.

Then, she said, her daughter told her: "He'll come back when God comes back."

Evans said she will pass on her husband's love to their children, Chyna and a baby son, C.J. "I won't have them subjected to any more negativity," said Evans.

Voletta Wallace, Biggie's mother, said her son's death has brought her even closer to Evans.

"The first time, I really laughed since Christopher's death was when I heard that Faith and I were supposed to be fighting and going to court over it," Wallace said. "We actually consulted each other on every aspect of the funeral; I chose for him to be cremated and Faith never objected."

She said she is healing slowly from the loss of her son.

"I cannot conceive a human being taking another's life," she said.



FAITH EVANS, wife of Biggie Smalls, with their daughter Chyna at benefit in February.

MUNCHKIN LAND



PITTER-PATTER of little dancing feet echoed through The Theater lobby at Madison Square Garden yesterday when youngsters 8 to 14 and little people showed up for auditions as munchkins for the upcoming production of "The Wizard of Oz" starring Roseanne. Presented by The Dime, the show will run from May 7 to June 1. Two requisites for would-be munchkins: They must not be over 4-feet-10 and should have a munchkin-like voice. This show will be Roseanne's theatrical stage debut. (No, she's not playing Dorothy.) She'll play the Wicked Witch (what else?) of the West.

COREY SIKKIN

