

Lawsuit claims concert promoter was defrauded

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BRIDGEPORT -- A concert promoter claims he was defrauded by a Stamford talent agent who he had paid to have Justin Timberlake perform in the Philippines.

In a lawsuit filed at U.S. District Court here, Arnold Vegafria, president of ALV Events International, contends he paid Kofi Degraft Johnson of Shagbark Road in Stamford a deposit of \$437,500 to showcase Timberlake at a concert in Manila in November 2008. But the singer never appeared. "My client spent a lot of money to promote the concert and ended up with a lot of disappointed people," said Vegafria's lawyer, Russell Green of Milford.

Johnson, who has not been charged criminally, could not be reached for comment.

According to the suit, Vegafria and ALV Events tried to arrange for the singer Rihanna to perform a concert in Manila in September 2008. He was put in touch with Johnson, who allegedly said that not only could he have Rihanna perform at the event, but would have Chris Brown there as well.

The suit states ALV paid Johnson a binder of \$100,000 to secure the singers' performance on Sept. 25, 2008, and Johnson faxed Vegafria a letter confirming them for a concert on Nov. 15, 2008.

ALV began promoting the concert, but on Oct. 1, 2008, received a letter from the William Morris Agency stating it represents Rihanna exclusively and she would not be available for the Manila concert.

In lieu of returning the \$100,000 binder, the suit claims Johnson offered Timberlake as a replacement for the event. Vegafria said he later met with Johnson in Las Vegas to work out details of the concert. Vegafria claimed to have paid Johnson another \$337,500 to secure Timberlake for the show.

But as the time for the concert grew near, the suit states Vegafria became concerned because he had not heard from Johnson. After trying to contact Johnson without success, Vegafria learned Johnson had no authority to schedule concerts for Timberlake.