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# Lawyer: Kid Rock defending himself in '07 fight



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By KATE BRUMBACK, Associated Press Writer – Tue Sep 14, 5:45 pm ET



AP – Robert James Ritchie, better known as Kid Rock, makes a court appearance in DeKalb County Tuesday Sept. ...

DECATUR, Ga. – [Kid Rock](#) and his entourage were trying to defend themselves from another customer at a suburban Atlanta Waffle House when a fight broke out in 2007, said a lawyer for the musician who was in court Tuesday.

The entertainer, whose real name is Robert James Ritchie, and five people who were with him that night are being sued over the fight. Harlen Akins claims the group beat him for no reason and is seeking [unspecified punitive damages](#) and \$6,000 in medical fees, according to his lawyer.

The entertainer and his party behaved "like a pack of wild animals," starting a fight inside the restaurant and pursuing [Akins](#) into the parking lot to beat him up before leaving in their tour bus, Akins' lawyer Eric Hertz said in his opening statement in a DeKalb County court.

Akins demonstrated "a pattern of provocation and escalation," while Kid Rock and his party consistently tried to defuse the situation, said William Horton, a lawyer for Kid Rock and five others being sued.

Akins arrived at the restaurant alone shortly after 5 a.m. on Oct. 21, 2007. Kid Rock, who had given a [concert in Atlanta](#) earlier, arrived in his tour bus around the same time.

Akins and two women in Kid Rock's party, one of whom he had known for years, began talking. Kid Rock was either jealous that Akins was getting the attention or was insulted by what Akins was saying to the women, but either way, a physical attack was unjustified, Hertz said.

[Horton](#) countered that Akins got into an argument with the women and with Kid Rock, who tried to calm things down by offering to buy Akins' breakfast. It was Akins who kept trying to provoke an argument, Horton said.

As witness testimony got under way, the jury saw parts of a Waffle House surveillance video of the fight. The video shows the parties fighting, but there is no sound so jurors couldn't hear what was being said.

Kid Rock pleaded guilty in March 2008 to a misdemeanor charge of simple battery in the fight.

The civil trial is expected to wrap up Wednesday or Thursday, Judge Johnny Panos said.

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