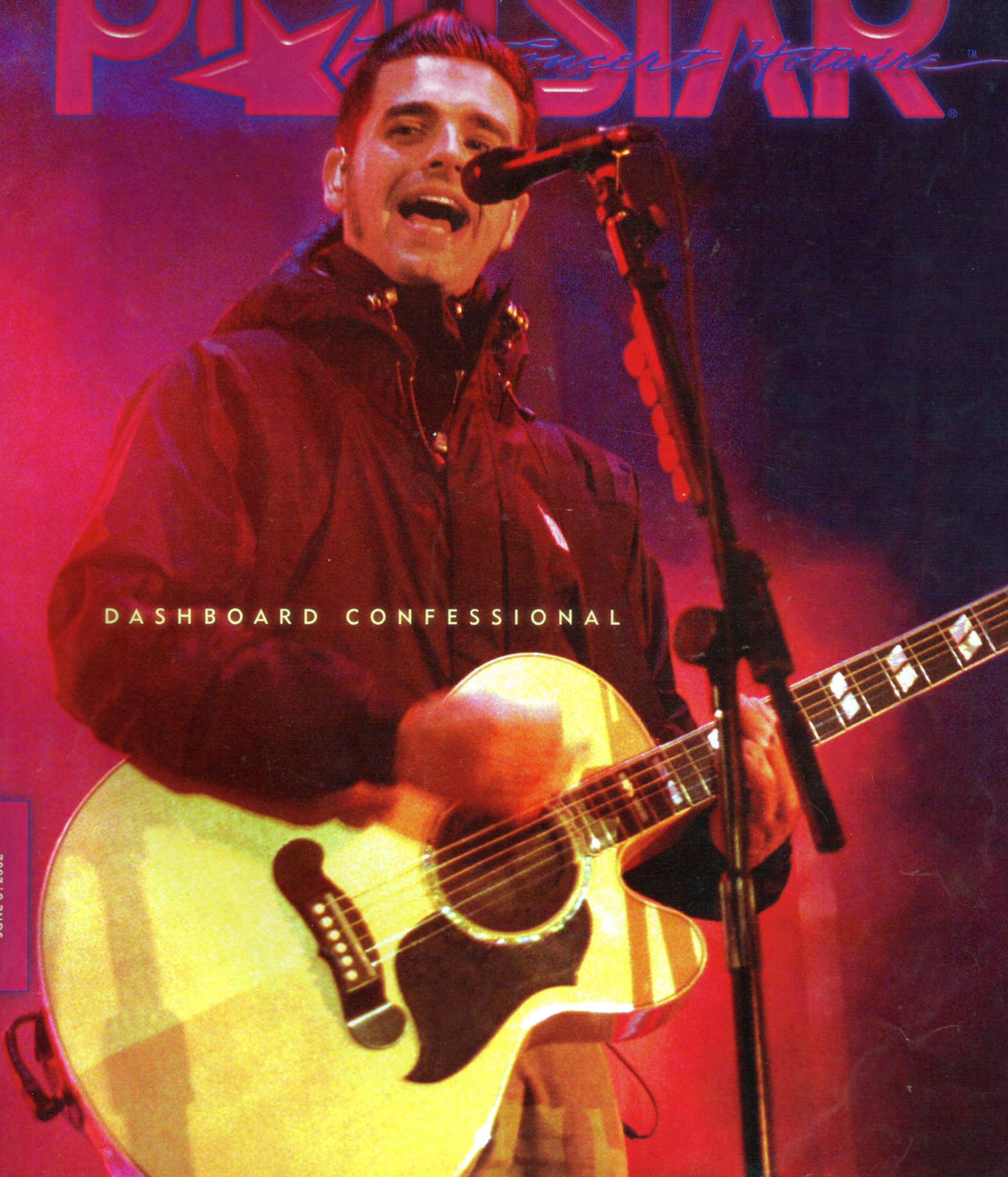


# ROCKSTAR

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2.5 million while Ewald Tatar, Thomas Zsifkovits and Paul Debnam have quit the company to set up a new one with Franz Bogner of Wiesen Festivals. It's to be called **Event & Festivals Production Austria GesmbH.**

Both Tatar and Zsifkovits booked the Wiesen site for Bogner and seem to think their future is better there, while Debnam – who had his own PSI Musik before joining APG – has decided to throw in his lot with the new organisation as well.

Everyone is staying so tightlipped about the split that there may be some legal ramifications or – at the very least – a complete restructuring of the country's music market; Tatar has already asked POLLSTAR to confirm that the May 13 story of the APG breakup wasn't a result of information directly leaked by him.

Other than that, all he would say was, "The situation isn't very easy at the moment. I'd rather say nothing," while Debnam wouldn't even say that much.

Only Richard Hoermann of Libro Entertainment, APG's founder and usually its spokesperson, was more forthcoming.

He said, "It is not true that Wiesen has left the promoters' group yet. APG is in discussions about being more independent, both legally and financially, of the Wiesen Festival Company but so far, no decision has been made.

"To avoid any misunderstandings, Ewald, Paul, Franz Bogner and myself are still very interested in cooperating to the benefit of the Austrian live music market, but do realise that this is not possible under

one legal umbrella. We are in the middle of the process to find a solution to this and we expect to have done so by the end of May."

Apparently confirming that the financial collapse of Rock Production not only affects the entire group but is also part reason for the split, he added, "The insolvency has affected Andi Egger and Wolfgang Klinger's roles as Egger had to leave the advisory board and Klinger had to leave the board of directors.

"Further steps might be taken when we have an exact knowledge of how the bankruptcy affects the group in total. This will happen after legal auditing of the books, which is currently ongoing.

"APG had one umbrella company and four 'working' companies underneath it. With the Rock Production insolvency, the companies that were managed by Klinger are now breaking away and so we have to reorganize the whole entity.

"If Wiesen totally splits, the whole group will fall apart and the 'old companies' might carry on working in their names again. I have no problem with this, neither has Wiesen, as our companies do still exist and have a high reputation within the business.

"This would be the last step we'd choose, and so we are currently working on a solution where we can combine the benefits of the group (sponsorship, marketing, etc.) and the strength of the individual companies.

"We expect the reorganisation of the companies within the next two weeks but there is no doubt that we will carry on promoting."

This year, the events on the 12,000-capacity Wiesen site have a strong look about them with Jamiroquai next up on June 9, followed by Roger Waters on June 14.

Kick Off (June 15) is a one-dayer with Die Artze, Tocotronic, Dog Eat Dog, Thomas D, and 4 Lyn, and this year's Forestglade Festival looks to have a very healthy lineup with Bush, Garbage, Die Toten Hosen, Faithless, Heather Nova, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, A, Less Than Jake, Shane MacGowan, and Mercury Rev.

It's expected that there will be a further six or seven events at Wiesen before the end of the summer.

**Russia:** TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S top promoters are growing more confident that they've prevented the Moscow authorities from doing an about-turn on policy, and there's every chance that June's Ozzfest and Rammstein shows will go ahead.

Before confirming the acts, **Alexander Strizhak** of **JSA** and **Ed Ratnikov** of **Talent Concert International** (TCI) checked that the police would be able to oversee one show featuring Ozzy Osbourne, AC/DC, Metallica, Black Crowes, and Pantera (a cooperation between JSA and Sweden's EMA Telstar) June 16 and TCI's Rammstein date on June 19. Both clashed with the CIS (Children's Olympics) June 24-25 and the promoters wanted reassurance that there would be enough police to cover the events.

However, two weeks ago, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) stepped up its patronage of the games and decided to send its president, Jack Rogge, to open them.

According to Ratnikov, this resulted in the city of Moscow deciding it could keep more money in its coffers due to the IOC support and also upgrade the sports event. This, in turn, meant that the police – who would have cost US\$3 per hour per man – simply wouldn't be available.

Private security isn't an option in Russia as the law dictates that such an open-air event must be monitored by the police. Their coverage includes putting a lot of men on the ground and a few up in the air to watch out for either dissidents or Chechnyan terrorists.

Ratnikov was furious because TCI and JSA had arranged to supply all the facilities (including the watchtowers) between them.

"We were using the same field, the same production and suddenly we ended up with the same problems," he said.



**A YOUNG WOMAN** draws the ire of software and record companies alike by displaying pirated CDs for sale in a Moscow kiosk. Media companies claim Russian piracy is costing them millions of dollars per year.

The field in question was the old aerodrome at Tushino, where more than a million people packed in to celebrate Russian democracy in September 1991. TCI and JSA would be licensed 40,000 tickets per show.

What particularly rankled Ratnikov was the fact that during the '97 celebrations of the 850th anniversary of the city of Moscow, the streets were full of drunken people for a week and the police were nowhere to be seen.

"They only want to police events that don't really need it," he said.

When questioned what he'd done to avoid canceling, he added, "We have friends in the authority and they are trying to have some influence, but we're young promoters and we don't have friends among the old farts."

Ratnikov has a reputation with not seeing eye-to-eye with Russian red tape. Recently, when asked his view on the State Duma's discussions on licensing promoters, he said, "They'll probably be available under the table for around US\$200."

**Spain:** **SANTANA** HAS CANCELED a series of dates in Spain. The tour will now play in Lisbon, Portugal, on June 12; Marseille, France, on the 14th; and Turin, Italy, on the 15th.

According to **Julio Marti** of **Collectivo**, the delay in releasing new material and the rather depressed state of the local market contributed to the dates not doing well.

The group's European tour actually started in Denmark May 16 and news of the Spanish cancellations only leaked a week earlier.

Santana has played indoor shows in Spain and done well in venues

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with capacities of around 7,500 in the past, but the success of the *Supernatural* album and the clutch of Grammy Awards it earned meant these shows were in Santiago's 15,000-capacity Compostela (June 12), Madrid's 12,000-capacity Palacio Vista Alegre (13) and Barcelona's 18,000-capacity Palau St. Jordi (14).

Collectivo was doing Santiago with the local authority, Barcelona with Tito Ramoneda of The Project and Madrid with The Project and Sandra Rotondo of Planet Events, part of the Gran Via Musicale group. Not only was it an attempt to do bigger rooms but, according to Marti, the higher fees now being asked meant that some tickets were priced at euro 42 as compared to euro 23 on the *Supernatural* dates.

A press release from The Project said the dates were canceled due to the album being delayed, although the promoters – who only put the Spanish run together about 10 weeks ago – would have known new product wouldn't be arriving before the dates.

Marti said, "We took the wrong approach from the start and, in this country these days, we can't do it without a (new) record. The ticket figures were low."

## CANADIAN NEWS

Reported by Karen Bliss  
416.944.0930 Fax 416.944.9652  
E-mail: karen@pollstar.com

• **THE EL MOCAMBO TAVERN** IS back on the commercial real estate market. After the much-publicized effort to save the historic Toronto rock venue last fall, the owner has put the club up for sale for \$1.888 million (Cdn). That's more than double the original purchase price.

For a while, amid signs advertising various dance classes, another sign declared the El Mocambo would reopen soon. That sign is now gone.

In the listing, the description for 462 and 464 Spadina Avenue reads: "Historic landmark location. Upper floors completely renovated. Over \$700,000 in upgrades. Main floors (2) can be vacant or lease back. Shows very well. Must see." Under the extras portion of the listing, it reads "Please be discreet," presumably to avoid the media coverage.

The infamous El Mocambo closed its doors November 4, 2001, after the

Toronto property was sold for \$928,000 (Cdn.) in August. New owner Abbas Jahangiri, in his many discussions with then-El Mo booker Dan Burke and with the press, always vowed to keep the first floor operating as a nightclub while he renovated the upstairs into a dance studio.

• **FORMER SQUEEZE FRONTMAN Glenn Tilbrook** serenaded Toronto police officers in the early morning hours of May 16 after he took his show – and his audience – outside in the street.

Tilbrook, who was playing solo at the **Horseshoe Tavern** May 15, played a good hour before he told the crowd he had two plans: he'd go outside and play and everyone would sing together or he'd stay inside and keep playing.

Around 1 a.m., Tilbrook and company went outside onto Queen Street. The singer encouraged everyone to sing along, dancing with their hands in the air as he skipped backwards, playing guitar and singing. The crowd directed him so he wouldn't hit any poles or walls.

For the duration of "Goodbye Girl" and "Pulling Mussels (From The Shell)," they traveled east on Queen, cut through the giant parking lot adjacent to the Bamboo club and onto the next street north, where they ran into a cop car.

Tilbrook serenaded the officers, who sang along. The entourage then went back inside the Horseshoe, where Tilbrook continued the set for another half hour or so.

• **SUM 41** WILL EMBARK ON 11 invite-only club shows across Canada in September as part of the Pepsi Taste Tour 2002. Tickets will be handed out via Pepsi Taste Challenges, radio station giveaways and at [www.pepsi.ca](http://www.pepsi.ca).

Producer of the tour is Toronto youth marketing company **Bat Cave**, which has done Pepsi's two previous win-to-get-in programs. Last year was with dance-pop group Prozzak and in 1999, it put on shows with rock acts Matthew Good Band, The Tea Party, Big Sugar and others. There was no program in 2000.

• **HOTLY TOUTED AUSSIE ROCK** band **The Vines** debuted in Toronto May 17 at the Tequila Lounge, the new spacious venue booked by Dan Burke, formerly of the El Mocambo. HoB Canada promoted the show, which sold out of all 600 tickets.

While the group's album has not yet been released in Canada, HoB's Elliott Lefko said, "They came in to prepare for the record's release. Their (North American) agent, Rick Roskin (at CAA in Los Angeles), called me to do a date. I had never heard of them, but he sent me some reviews, and I asked around and there was a little buzz. By the time of the show, there was a huge buzz.

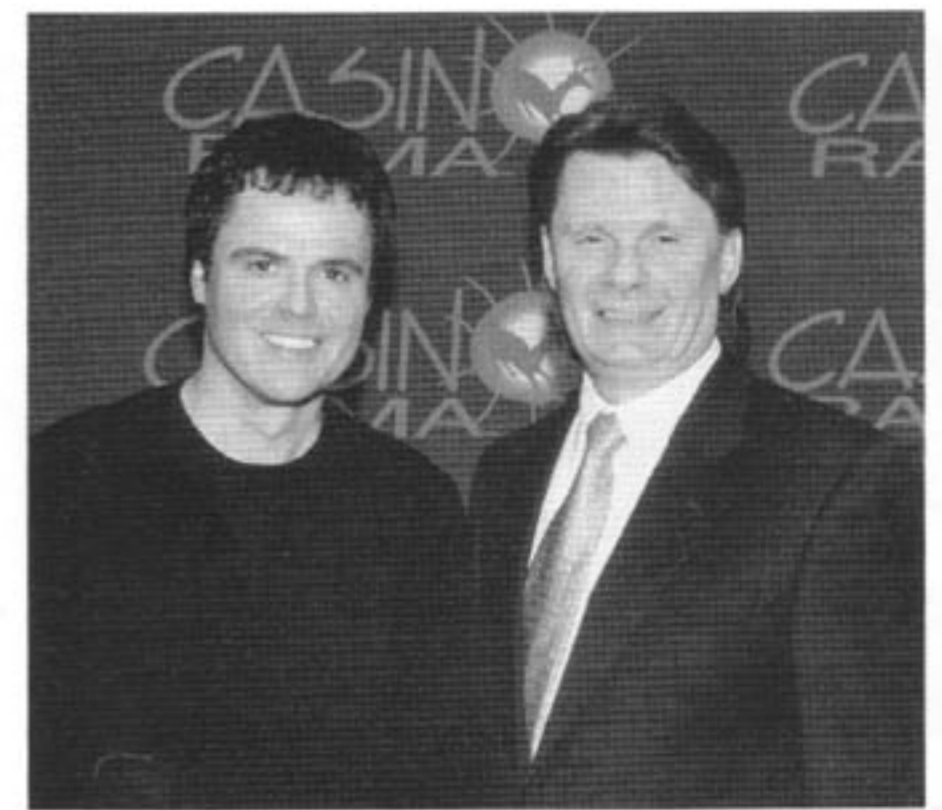
"We put them at Tequila Lounge because of the bands that Dan Burke had put in there before such as Detroit Cobras and the Geraldine Fibbers. We wanted a room that had a very street vibe. When I booked the show, Dan and I were worried about the draw so we put on a good local band (Shikasta) that would help the draw. However, when we went on sale, we sold 100 tickets right away so I knew we had something.

"By showtime," he added, "it was crazy and I wasn't surprised that there were so many people. We turned away hundreds."

The band is scheduled to return to Canada in July.

• **JUNO AWARD-WINNING R&B** singer **Glenn Lewis** was acquitted May 21 of assault charges stemming from an altercation at the **Government** nightclub in December 1998. The ruckus started when a bouncer told the performer to take off his hat.

Justice Hugh Locke of Ontario Superior Court said he believed the singer was acting in self-defense when he smashed a microphone in the face of security head Young-Ho Hwang.



**BACKSTAGE** before his sold-out show at **Casino Rama** in Ontario, Canada, April 25, **Donny Osmond** meets with the casino's **Larry Gregson**.

After the favorable decision, the 29-year-old Lewis, whose real name is Glen Ricketts, signed autographs outside the courthouse for about a dozen fans.

"I really felt like I was just doing what I had to; I was definitely not trying to start up anything," said Lewis, who was scheduled to appear on "Last Call with Carson Daly" and the CBS "Morning Show" that week. "I'm really relieved that the judge came back with the verdict that he did."

The fight started after Lewis gave a 15-minute performance shortly after midnight December 5, 1998, and went upstairs to get paid. He was told to remove his hat because the venue has a no-hats policy. Lewis tried to explain that he was given permission to wear the hat because he was performing. A fight broke out between Lewis, a friend and several bouncers.

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