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## Nappy Roots Sued Over "Folks"

St. Louis musician says he wrote band's hit single

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By **Christina Sarenco**  
JANUARY 23, 2003 12:00 AM ET

On the heels of the Nappy Roots' Grammy nomination for Best Rap/Sung Collaboration for "Po' Folks," the Kentucky rap outfit has been hit with a copyright lawsuit over the song. St. Louis, Missouri musician and producer Willie Woods filed suit on January 23rd against the Nappy Roots -- Skinny DeVille, B. Stille, Ron Clutch, Big V., R. Prophet and Scales -- Atlantic Records, and Track Boyz, the production company that received a songwriting credit on "Po' Folks."

Woods claims that in November of 2000 he composed and performed four of the five guitar and bass parts that were eventually used on "Po' Folks" with the understanding that he would receive full credit and compensation for his work. The song made it onto the group's 2002 Atlantic Records debut, *Watermelon, Chicken and Gritz*, which has since gone platinum.

"Take away what Woods did and you have an electronic drumbeat," says his attorney, Pete Salsich III of the firm Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin. "There's no music whatsoever; it would be an *a capella* rap. He wasn't handed any music. His parts were completely out of his head -- that's what makes it original. And since he wasn't an employee of any producers or the record label, it remains his as far as the law."

Salsich emphasized that Woods bears no ill will towards the Nappy Roots or Atlantic, who received Woods' guitar parts from Mark Allen Williams of Track Boyz, and that they are named in the suit because they hold copyright interests.

Atlantic Records did not return phone calls by press time.

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