

Did Music Superstar Enrique Iglesias Pin Traffic Infraction on Someone Else?

Samantha Joseph, Daily Business Review

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Enrique Iglesias
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Just when you thought dancing around in skin-tight leather pants was Enrique Iglesias' biggest sin, the sexy Spanish crooner is accused of trying to pin the blame for an alleged traffic infraction on one of his employees.

The Grammy Award-winning singer and his high-profile lawyers have a hearing Friday before Miami-Dade Circuit Court Judge Betty Capote to answer charges stemming from a May 6 traffic stop by the Florida Highway Patrol.

Iglesias is charged with three misdemeanors. Officers say he crossed a barricade to use closed Express lanes on Interstate 95 while driving with an expired license, then obstructed the investigation by switching seats and pretending to be the passenger, not the driver.

He's hired Black Srebnick Kornspan & Stumpf—the firm whose partner Roy Black famously represented Justin Bieber when the young singer was arrested for DUI and drag racing in Miami last year and whose client roster includes actor Kelsey Grammer, talk show host Rush Limbaugh and "Girls Gone Wild" producer Joe Francis.

"I do not believe that Enrique's conduct constituted obstruction of justice," his attorney Howard Srebnick told the Daily Business Review. "He did not lie; he did not interfere; he did not resist. He was polite and courteous."

Srebnick is gearing to ask for a dismissal, arguing that Iglesias went to the Miami-Dade courthouse on May 26, about three weeks after the traffic stop, to reinstate his driver's license.

"We intend to present all the documents to the judge on Friday and hopefully have this matter closed out," Srebnick said.

Iglesias' arrest stems from an afternoon traffic stop on May 6. He was traveling around 5:30 p.m. in a white Escalade SUV headed north on I-95 between Northwest 62nd and 79th streets in Miami when he crossed into Express lanes that were closed for construction, according to the Florida Highway Patrol arrest affidavit.

"What he did was drive over the delineators," FPH spokesman Lt. Julio Pajon told the Daily Business Review. "One of our officers witnessed him do that and attempted a traffic stop."

But Iglesias, 40, is accused of switching seats with his passenger, tour manager and Miami resident Abel Tabuyo.

"That's a misdemeanor—swapping seats," Pajon said. "The officer approached the car, took the people out of the car not knowing who they were, and physically handcuffed the subjects."

A license check revealed the singer's license had been suspended and expired more than six months earlier, but Srebnick says it was partly a case of mistaken identity and the suspended license belonged to another motorist with name a similar to the famous singer's.

"The real Enrique never had a suspended license," he said. "It was just expired."

Iglesias was charged with driving with an expired license and driving with a suspended license. He and Tabuyo also face one count of obstructing an officer without violence for switching seats. Both were released on-scene after signing a notice to appear in court.

"The officer said he was a very nice person, very good demeanor, very humble," Pajon said. "The officer did not know he was a celebrity."

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