

Snipes acquitted of some tax fraud charges

by UPI

OCALA, Fla. - A Florida jury Friday acquitted U.S. movie star Wesley Snipes of felony tax fraud and conspiracy charges. However, in a split verdict, Snipes was found guilty on three misdemeanor charges of failing to file tax returns and faces a maximum one-year sentence on each. He would have faced up to 16 years in prison if he had been convicted of the more serious charges. Co-defendants, Douglas Rosile, Snipes' accountant, and anti-tax advocate Eddie Ray Kahn, each face up to 10 years in prison on fraud and conspiracy convictions, the Orlando Sentinel said. "Filing taxes is not optional. It is a legal requirement. Mr. Snipes now faces up to three years in federal prison for his willful failure to comply with the law," U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill said in a statement. "There are no legal grounds for failure to file or pay federal taxes. There is no secret formula that eliminates a person's tax obligations -- the law is very clear: people must pay their taxes," added acting IRS Commissioner Linda Stiff. Snipes, 45, the star of the "Blade" trilogy, "White Men Can't Jump" and "New Jack City," is expected to be sentenced to less than the maximum on the misdemeanor charges, CNN said. He was charged with evading taxes on \$38 million he earned from films and investments from 1999 to 2004. The U.S. Department of Justice said a sentencing date for Snipes has not been set.

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