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ARTS, BUSINESS

Bang Bang! Braswells' Auction Hammer Makes Sure They're in Lawsuit

The Beatles' "You Never Give Me Your Money" may foreshadow something in a lawsuit involving John Lennon's white suit.

By **Nancy Burton** | January 22, 2011

John Lennon's white suit—auctioned off for \$46,000 in Norwalk on New Year's Day—is the centerpiece of a lawsuit involving a New York landlord-tenant dispute that has nothing to do with music.

Lennon famously wore the white knit suit on the cover of the Beatles' *Abbey Road* album, released in 1969—which included the song, "You Never Give Me Your Money." Braswell Galleries auctioned off the clothing on Jan. 1 at the auction house's headquarters in the old Norwalk Lace Factory at the end of Sniffen Avenue to an undisclosed, remote buyer.



Mannequin wearing Lennon's suit was wheeled around the showroom floor for bidders to examine.

Apparently it will take more than Maxwell's silver hammer to put an end to this dispute.

According to legal papers obtained by Patch, Braswell had been put on notice days before the auction that the sale of the Lennon white suit as well as the brown velvet "Imagine" jacket Lennon wore at a recording session would violate the terms of a restraining notice under New York law.

The lawsuit filed on Jan. 11, 2011 in New York Supreme Court in Manhattan claims the seller of the Lennon white suit, Biond Fury, a collector of celebrity memorabilia, owes his former landlord, Mark Arrow, \$64,400 in rent payments.

The suit seeks to recover proceeds from the sale of the Lennon garments from the gallery to discharge the debt.

The owners of the Braswell Gallery did not answer a request for comment.

Fury, who had previously owned and sold the white suit, rented an apartment at the landmark Ansonia building on Broadway at 79th Street, blocks away from the Dakota on Central Park West at 72nd Street where Lennon was gunned down on December 8, 1980.

Fury fell behind in rent payments and took the long and winding road to North Carolina, according to the lawsuit (which described his actions in different language).

When landlord Arrow learned of the impending auction of the white suit from news media accounts, he had his attorney, real estate specialist **Adam Leitman Bailey**, serve Kathy Braswell, a co-owner of the auction house, with legal papers on December 20, 2010. The gallery also has a New York office.

The papers contained a “restraining notice” forbidding the gallery to dispose of the Lennon memorabilia at the upcoming auction on grounds they were property of a judgment debtor against whom Arrow had obtained a court judgment.

At the well-attended auction, the gallery owners did not disclose the name of the owner and made no mention of the legal dispute. The auction attracted Lennon fans from near and far, many of whom recalled the original release of the *Abbey Road* album, with its indelible recordings of “Here Comes the Sun,” “Mean Mister Mustard,” and “Something”, in addition to “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer.”

When the Lennon white suit and Imagine jacket were previously auctioned in 2005, they brought in \$120,000 in proceeds, about double the New Year’s Day sale.