



12-Year-Old Sued for Music Downloading

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NEW YORK —

The music industry has turned its big legal guns on Internet music-swappers — including a 12-year-old New York City girl who thought downloading songs was fun.

Brianna LaHara said she was frightened to learn she was among the hundreds of people sued yesterday by giant music companies in federal courts around the country.

"I got really scared. My stomach is all turning," Brianna said last night at the city Housing Authority apartment where she lives with her mom and her 9-year-old brother.

"I thought it was OK to download music because my mom paid a service fee for it. Out of all people, why did they pick me?"

The **Recording Industry Association of America** ([search](#)) — a music-industry lobbying group behind the lawsuits — couldn't answer that question.

"We are taking each individual on a case-by-case basis," said RIAA spokeswoman Amy Weiss.

Asked if the association knew Brianna was 12 when it decided to sue her, Weiss answered, "We don't have any personal information on any of the individuals."

Brianna's mom, Sylvia Torres, said the lawsuit was "a total shock."

"My daughter was on the verge of tears when she found out about this," Torres said.

The family signed up for the **Kazaa** ([search](#)) music-swapping service three months ago, and paid a \$29.99 service charge.

Usually, they listen to songs without recording them. "There's a lot of music there, but we just listen to it and let it go," Torres said.

When reporters visited the apartment last night, Brianna — who her mom says is an honors student — was helping her brother with his homework.

Brianna was among 261 people sued for copying thousands of songs via popular Internet file-sharing software — and thousands more suits could be on the way.

"Nobody likes playing the heavy and having to resort to litigation," said Cary Sherman, the RIAA's president. "But when your product is being regularly stolen, there comes a time when you have to take appropriate action."

At the same time, the RIAA offered amnesty to file-swappers who come forward and agree to stop illegally downloading music over the Internet.

People who already have been sued are not eligible for amnesty.

Brianna and the others sued yesterday under federal copyright law could face penalties of up to \$150,000 per song, but the RIAA has already settled some cases for as little as \$3,000.

"It's not like we were doing anything illegal," said Torres. "This is a 12-year-old girl, for crying out loud."