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The Deadbeat Powerbroker

Al Sharpton pretends to a position of stature in the Democratic Party. He may even run for president.

But before he begins blowing hard about city, state and national budgetary matters, maybe he might want to give a thought to paying his own bills.

The Millennium Hotel New York has filed suit against Rev. Al and his National Action Network over more than $25,000 left outstanding from a Sharpton-sponsored event nearly two years ago.

According to the lawsuit, Sharpton & Co. rented the hotel's theater for their "Invitational Summit on Multicultural Markets and Media" — in the process, racking up tens of thousands of dollars in room, food and drink charges.

Sharpton reportedly "gave his word" that the bill would be paid by June, 2000.

To date, no dice.

Now, Sharpton's lawyer claims unnamed freeloaders told the hotel to put their unauthorized expenses on Al's tab. Right. That's slightly more imaginative than "the check is in the mail" — but only slightly.

OK, so Sharpton's a chiseler.

What else is new?

His perceived position as a powerbroker in the Democratic Party: He who bends not a knee to Al Sharpton in October, loses in November. (Or so goes the current media line. It may even be true.)

Just how far has the party of Al Smith, Franklin D. Roosevelt, W. Averell Harriman, Hugh Carey and Mario Cuomo fallen, when its go-to guy of the moment has to be *sued to settle a hotel bill?*

Pretty far, we'd say.

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