

## Quincy Jones Wins \$9.4M From Michael Jackson Co. At Trial

By Bonnie Eslinger

Law360, Los Angeles (July 26, 2017, 8:20 PM EDT) -- A California jury on Wednesday ordered Michael Jackson's production company to pay mega-producer Quincy Jones more than \$9.4 million in royalty damages for his work on the blockbuster albums "Thriller," "Bad" and "Off the Wall," agreeing that the company shorted him while declining to award the full \$30 million Jones sought.



The jury of 10 women and two men deliberated for more than two days before reaching its verdict, following a nearly two-week trial. Pictured are Quincy Jones, left, in 2004, and Michael Jackson in 2005. (AP)

The jury of 10 women and two men deliberated for more than two days before reaching its verdict, following a nearly two-week trial. The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame producer filed suit in 2013, saying the company controlled by Jackson's estate had breached long-standing contracts after the singer's death, when interest in the King of Pop's music surged.

The money sought by Jones included revenue from a profit-sharing deal Jackson reached with record label Sony Music Entertainment, the posthumous documentary "This Is It," and two Cirque du Soleil shows featuring videos of Jackson and his music. Jones also claimed that remixes of the hit songs he produced were done without his involvement, in violation of his contract.

During closing arguments Monday, attorneys for Jones asked the jury to focus on the relationship between Jones and Michael Jackson, and underscored a jury instruction stating that in interpreting contract terms, the jury "may consider how the parties acted after the contract was created but before any disagreement between the parties arose."

"At the fundamental level, this case is about two men, Quincy Jones and Michael Jackson, and the landmark music they created," Jones' attorney Scott Cole of McKool Smith PC told jurors. "The music that remains the most loved and most popular ever created."

Cole told jurors that Jones produced the hit albums under a deal with Jackson that allowed the producer's royalty portion to rise and fall with the singer's. Attorneys for the defendant are relying on "word games and loopholes" to get out of that deal, the attorney said.

In contrast, attorneys for MJJ Productions Inc., a production company started by Michael Jackson that's now controlled by the late singer's estate, painted the suit as a money grab by Jones after Jackson's death.

Since Jackson's death, Jones has been paid \$18 million, the attorney said.

"This is the bucket of claims based on tortured and self-serving readings of standard industry contracts," Modabber said. "And a grab for money that Mr. Jones is just not entitled to."

Another MJJP attorney, Howard Weitzman of Kinsella Weitzman Iser Kump & Aldisert LLP, also took on a portion of the defense team's closing argument, and a crack at Cole's opening statement.

"Quincy Jones was not Michael Jackson's partner, he was hired by Michael," Weitzman said. "Now, pretty good on Michael and doggone good on Mr. Jones. As Quincy Jones told you, it was a great collaboration, that we all benefited by. The music still lives today. ... Quincy Jones helped create it, but he couldn't have done it without Michael Jackson."

On July 20, Jones was the final witness to take the stand, saying he was "cheated out of a lot of money" after Jackson's death by MJJ Productions.

MJJ Productions Inc. is represented by Tami Kameda Sims and Zia F. Modabber of Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, and Howard Weitzman and Jonathan Steinsapir of Kinsella Weitzman Iser Kump & Aldisert LLP.

Quincy Jones is represented by Mike McKool, J. Michael Hennigan, Robert E. Allen, Scott L. Cole and Caroline M. Walters of McKool Smith PC, and Henry Gradstein and Maryann R. Marzano of Gradstein & Marzano PC.

The case is Quincy Jones et al. v. MJJ Productions Inc. et al., case number BC525803, in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles.

--Additional reporting by Vin Gurrieri and Kat Greene. Editing by Breda Lund.