



George Clinton to Pay His Lawyers in Song

Jun 24, 2014

Reading Time : **1 min**

By: Daniel L. Moffett

The underlying appeal surrounds the court's enforcement of the arbitration award and assignment of master recordings of Clinton's performances with the group Funkadelic to receivership ("Masters"). The Masters songs at issue are "Hardcore Jollies," "One Nation Under a Groove," "Uncle Jam Wants You," and "The Electric Spanking of War Babies"—all with registered copyrights. The copyrights were originally obtained by Warner Bros. and subsequently transferred to Clinton. Clinton alleges that the assignment of the Masters to receivership was improper and in violation of Copyright Act § 201 (e) which serves as protection to authors for involuntary transfer of their copyrights. The panel reasoned that Clinton was not an "author" of the Masters within the meaning of the act since all four Masters were created under agreements with Warner Bros. The Copyright Act provides that "[i]n the case of a work made for hire, the employer or other person for whom the work was prepared is considered the author for purposes of [the Copyright Act]..." § 201 (b)

Therefore, the district court reasonably concluded that Warner Bros. was the initial author and owner of the Masters, and § 201 (e) is not available to Clinton. Subsequently, the panel found that it was not an abuse of discretion to appoint a receiver to manage or sell ownership of the copyrights, to satisfy judgments. "Clinton's copyrights in the masters are subject to execution to satisfy judgments entered against him," the panel said.

Hendricks Lewis, PLLC v. George Clinton, No. 1335010 (9th Cir., June 23, 2014).

Categories

District Court

© 2025 Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP. All rights reserved. Attorney advertising. This document is distributed for informational use only; it does not constitute legal advice and should not be used as such. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Akin is the practicing name of Akin Gump LLP, a New York limited liability partnership authorized and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under number 267321. A list of the partners is available for inspection at Eighth Floor, Ten Bishops Square, London E1 6EG. For more information about Akin Gump LLP, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and other associated entities under which the Akin Gump network operates worldwide, please see our Legal Notices page.