

MIQ

MUSIC INDUSTRY QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2022

JACQUEES

*R&B's Most
Prolific Star*

BEST RAP ALBUMS OF 2022, SO FAR!

MIQ Q&A WITH TAVIS SMILEY, KBLA-AM

SUMMER READING - BOOK BAG FAVORITES

INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE PROFILES!!

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*Chapter & Verse
According to*
J. BROWN

LIVING LEGENDS FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

MUSIC FOR LOVE FOUNDATION ON A PHILANTHROPIC MISSION

INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE PROFILES!

INDIE SPOTLIGHT NEW MUSIC FROM BIG BOI, NOKISSING, RAHEEM DEVAUGHN & MORE

UP CLOSE WITH ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY RICHARD JEFFERSON



Richard Jefferson is celebrating his 20th Anniversary, as one of the entertainment industry's hardest working attorneys. His firm, m.e.t.a.l IP, is a boutique law firm that represents clients in the media, entertainment, technology, action sports, and lifestyle brands sectors. Music Industry Quarterly wanted to mark the occasion with this Q&A, not only to discuss his legal background and client base but where he sees the business of music headed. Check it out....

Where are you from, where did you attend law school?

I'm originally from Ohio. I lived in a few different cities in Ohio during my childhood and graduated from The Ohio State University. So, I'm a die-hard Ohio State Buckeye fan. After graduation, I worked in Ohio, Florida, North Carolina, and Texas as a systems engineer before moving to LA. After considering a few law schools, I decided to attend Southwestern Law School.

What prompted you to study law and why did you enter the entertainment law field?

I initially went to law school to become an advocate for music managers and recording artists. My interest in law began when I lived in Orlando, Florida. In my free time, I helped some friends who were music managers. They managed successful acts from that region, including 95 South, 69 Boyz ("Tootsee Roll"), Dis-n-Dat ("Party"), and Quad City DJ's ("C'mon N' Ride The Train" and "Space Jam"). It was a fun time, but I distinctly remember instances where the artists and managers were baffled by the contracts. Why were the artists having so much success but not making much money? I was intrigued by this dilemma and wanted to figure it out. So, I purchased Donald Passman's "All You Need to Know About the Music Business" and thoroughly read the group's contracts. I spent hours going over those contracts, and after a couple of weeks...I was still clueless. Those couple of weeks sparked my interest in entertainment law. I wanted to be the guy who could explain the contracts to people like my friends, so I began my journey toward becoming a music attorney.

Please name 4-5 of your higher profile clients or achievements over the years. Although we have represented high-profile clients over the years, most of our clients are established companies well known within the music industry. With that said, below are five notable clients and achievements:

Morris Day Entertainment, LLC – We represent one of the C-O-O-L ist legends in the business. Morris Day is currently in a very public dispute with the Prince Estate over using the band name *Morris Day and the Time*. The core legal issue involves trademark law and isn't very sexy, but recent media coverage of the dispute brought out Purple Nation and made this a top story on Billboard. Prince fans lost their minds!

Audiomachine – We represent the premier music and sound design production company in the entertainment industry called Audiomachine. It creates music for trailers, scores, and commercial music for elite studios, networks, and digital platforms, including Disney, Universal, Warner, Sony, Paramount, Peacock, Amazon, Hulu, and Netflix.

The Hit House – We represent another top-tier music production company that consistently works with the entertainment industry's upper echelon. It has a collective of some of the best composers around. Recent projects include trailers for Nope, Bad Vegan, GOT House of Dragon, Outer Range, Ice Age, and Cruella.

Freddie Perren Estate – We represent the estate of super-producer Freddie Perren. His music helped define Rhythms and Blues, Disco, and Hip Hop with hits like "ABC", "I Want You Back", "I Will Survive", "Boogie Fever", "Reunited", "Shake That Groove Thang", "It's So Hard To Say Goodbye To Yesterday", "A Little Bit of Love Is All It Takes", "More Than A Woman", "Welcome To Atlanta" (Sampled by Jermaine Dupri), "Reach Out" (Sampled by Nas), "OPP" (Sampled by Naughty By Nature) and many others.

LawyersRock.com – I'll list an achievement to round out my list. LawyersRock.com has been a rewarding project that we launched in 2013. It has been named one of the top legal blogs a few times.

Lastly, if you are interested in learning more about our clientele, check out our IG ([instagram.com/lawyersrock](https://www.instagram.com/lawyersrock)). We also have a Spotify playlist called LawyersRock (search LawyersRock) that includes many artists and projects we have worked on over the past 20 years. It is very eclectic!

What is it that your firm can offer that the larger firms don't?

When choosing a lawyer, I think the two most critical factors to consider are: 1) whether an attorney has the practical legal experience to handle your work, and 2) whether your attorney's communication style is effective for you.

What are you currently working on, and after 20 years inside the entertainment law space, where do you see yourself, personally, going?

We have a lot going on right now. Ironically, the pandemic created many opportunities for boutique law firms. It's an excellent time to be an entertainment lawyer! Personally, I am focusing on clients using their platforms to create a more socially conscious world. One truly inspiring project is serving as legal counsel for a company and movement called Barriers Worldwide. This client has been hustling for a while but has recently received national attention for its purpose of educating young people about Black history.

When artists or indie labels meet with you, what is the question you're asked most? And what advice do you offer most?

Artist and indie labels usually want my advice on prioritizing their legal needs. I start my consultations by offering the following general checklist:

1. Establish a corporation or LLC to limit your legal and tax liabilities
2. Register your sound recording and composition copyrights to protect the music.
3. Register your trademarks to protect your brand.
4. Use solid, up-to-date form contracts to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and disputes.
5. Always negotiate contracts that are presented to you by a third party.

If a limited budget prevents them from covering everything at once, I help them develop a plan. As I mentioned above, we have also created a website called LawyersRock.com that can provide an option if the potential client is not ready to retain an attorney.

Where do you see the music industry going let's say the next 3-5 years?

I think the future for the music industry looks bright. My three predictions are:

1. NFTs – non-fungible tokens may appear to be a fad, but I disagree (and so does Snoop). The industry will figure out how to use NFTs and blockchain to automate record labels.
2. Music Licensing Opportunities – New technologies (i.e., virtual platforms/metaverse) and commercial space travel are just two examples that the demand for music will increase. We can't live in a virtual world or go to space in silence.
3. Small Claims Copyright Court – The Copyright Office is launching a new Copyright Small Claims Board later this year. I predict the fight against low-level infringement will become easier, and piracy will decrease.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
[LINKEDIN.COM/IN/RICHARDBJEFFERSON](https://www.linkedin.com/in/richardbjefferson)