

# 'Blurred Lines' Trial: Robin Thicke Performs Piano Medley In Court

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**The artist testified on the second day of the trial, with Pharrell and several members of Marvin Gaye's family present in court.**



Getty Images  
Robin Thicke

The "Blurred Lines" trial on Wednesday included a bit of unusual testimony: a short piano medley performed by **Robin Thicke**.

The singer, on the witness stand in the second day of the Los Angeles federal trial, played and sang a medley of U2's "[With Or Without You](#) [3]," The Beatles' "[Let It Be](#) [4]," Alphaville's "[Forever Young](#) [5]," **Bob Marley's** "[No Woman No Cry](#) [6]" and **Michael Jackson's** "[Man In the Mirror](#) [7]."

Why? It's part of his legal team's effort to demonstrate that Thicke, **Pharrell Williams** and **T.I.**'s huge hit "Blurred Lines" isn't improperly derived from **Marvin Gaye's** "Got To Give It Up."

The musicians [sued Gaye's family](#) [8] to get a declaration that their multiplatinum hit doesn't infringe on Gaye's song. [In counterclaims](#) [9], the singer's children **Frankie** and **Nona Gaye** fired back that it does. What's more, they claim Thicke copied Gaye's "After the Dance" on his track "Love After War."

In [recent motions](#) [10], Thicke and Williams' attorney introduced a complication to the case. They argued that, according to copyright law prior to 1978, the Gaye children only hold the copyrights to the sheet music for their late father's soul hits, not the recordings themselves. Judge **John Kronstadt** [agreed in a ruling](#) [11] last month (which the Gaye family [fought](#) [12] in an [unsuccessful appeal](#) [13]) that only the music as written was at issue, and only stripped-down versions of Gaye's compositions could be heard in court.

**Read more** [Robin Thicke Admits Drug Abuse. Lying to Media in Wild "Blurred Lines" Deposition](#) [14]

That's why Thicke's testimony on Wednesday included singing and playing the keyboard. To demonstrate the differences of "Blurred Lines" and "Got To Give It Up," Thicke's attorney **Howard King** had the singer compare phrases of the songs — jurors were treated to Thicke's "I'm gonna take a good girl" refrain and the line "I used to go out to parties" from Gaye's song — and compare the chord structures of the songs. (Thicke claimed "Blurred Lines" uses only an E-major and an A-major chord, while "Got To Give It Up" uses eight chords). The medley was meant to show that many songs share similar chords and melodies without copying one another.

The trial is expected to run for eight days and include testimony from Williams, T.I. (a.k.a. **Clifford Harris Jr.**, who is a plaintiff) and Thicke's ex-wife **Paula Patton**, who co-wrote "Love After War." Following Tuesday's opening statements, Thicke was one of the first witnesses to take the stand.

The Gayes' attorney **Richard Busch** asked the singer, who seemed to be in a cheerful mood again Wednesday, whether there are structural similarities in "Blurred Lines" and "Got To Give It Up." For instance, T.I.'s rap verse and the spoken "parlando" section start and end on the same measure in both songs. That's coincidental, said Thicke. "It's a standard format" that's used in "just about every song on the radio," he said. When pressed for examples, Thicke, grinning, would only name two of his own other songs.

Busch asked about how the sales of the "Blurred Lines" single compared to sales for Thicke's other work. This line of questioning had an eye to potential damages — if the Gaye family prevails, the more they can claim Thicke made from "Blurred Lines," the more they could demand in

compensation. Busch asked Thicke to confirm the "Blurred Lines" single had sold more than 15 million copies worldwide, and Thicke brightened. "I didn't know that!" he replied. Busch compared the figure to the *Blurred Lines* record's 3.3 million sales worldwide and the notoriously poor sales [15] of Thicke's follow-up record, 2014's *Paula*. He asked if Thicke agreed *Paula* was unsuccessful due to its sales. "I wouldn't say that's the only way for an album to be successful," Thicke said.

The attorneys on both sides spent time going over Thicke's deposition, in which the singer addressed media interviews he'd done where he claimed Marvin Gaye and "Got To Give It Up" specifically inspired "Blurred Lines." In the extraordinary deposition [14], Thicke claimed he lied in the interviews — and was drunk and high on Vicodin during every one. "The state of my personal life, I was recently separated and having the toughest time of my life when I was doing the deposition," he testified.

King had the singer describe the songwriting and recording process for both tracks to demonstrate the non-influence of Gaye's songs. In the case of "Blurred Lines," the song came out of three days Thicke and Williams spent in the studio. But they spent the first two days on other songs — "I remember bouncing ideas back and forth with him, but we didn't keep any of mine. His were better," Thicke testified. On the third day, Thicke left in the afternoon, according to his testimony, and Williams had completed the instrumentals for "Blurred Lines" when he returned at night. Thicke said he recorded the vocals in an hour.

He said he took credit despite his relatively minimal role in the songwriting because he was jealous of Williams' work. "I felt it was a little white lie that didn't hurt his career but boosted mine." He said he changed his story when he heard Williams' account. "A lightbulb went off in my head and I realized I was not present when he created the song. I was living in revisionist history," he said.

He testified that "Love After War," which has barely been addressed in the trial so far, came from an argument Thicke had with Patton. Afterward, he went to his piano and wrote the song in "ten minutes," and a year later Patton had helped him write new verses. At King's prompting, he clarified that he meant he'd just thought of the melody, not written it down. He can't read music, he testified.

Earlier in the day, **Janis Gaye** — the mother of Frankie and Nona and wife of Marvin from 1977-81 — testified that she was surprised Williams, Thicke and Harris didn't license the "Got To Give It Up" composition from Gaye's music publisher, the Sony-owned EMI [16]. When she and her children first heard "Blurred Lines," they were happy. "We thought 'Blurred Lines' was breathing new life into 'Got To Give It Up,'" she said. She testified that the latter was one of her and her late husband's favorite of his tracks, and she sang on it.

Under cross-examination by King, she said her family didn't dislike "Blurred Lines" (which has courted controversy [17]). "We enjoyed the song, I won't say we didn't," she testified. "We felt like 'Got To Give It Up' is the blueprint for 'Blurred Lines,' but not in a bad way."

But she refused to separate the composition from the recorded version of "Got To Give It Up" to which she compared Thicke's song. "To my understanding, the composition is part of the recording and there's nothing out there to compare to," she said. "That would be the only way we could have heard the composition. You can't hear a piece of paper. The ears tell the story."

The trial will continue on Thursday at 11:20 a.m. with testimony from musicologist **Judith Finell** and **Harry Wenger**, a Universal Music executive who handles Motown recordings.

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  - [2] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/blurred-lines-trial-jury-selection-777503>
  - [3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmSdTa9kaiQ>
  - [4] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJCYQL8ouqw>
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  - [6] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3ISL\\_BY6lw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3ISL_BY6lw)
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  - [10] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/will-a-jury-get-hear-761443>
  - [11] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/marvin-gayes-family-doubts-fair-767568>
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  - [15] <http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/the-juice/6165304/robin-thicke-flop-2014>
  - [16] <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/07/02/business/berry-gordy-sells-emi-a-stake-in-catalogue-of-motown-songs.html>
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