

Expert: A 2nd Robin Thicke song resembles another Marvin Gaye ballad

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A music expert testified Friday in a federal copyright infringement trial that performer Robin Thicke's song "Love After War" was similar in multiple ways to Marvin Gaye's 1976 ballad "After the Dance."

Ingrid Monson, a musicologist called by Marvin Gaye's family, said the rhythm and chord progressions of the two songs were very similar.

The testimony came during a federal court trial in Los Angeles in which Gaye's family has sued Thicke, singer and producer Pharrell Williams and rapper T.I., alleging that their 2013 summer hit "Blurred Lines" infringes on Gaye's 1977 song "Got to Give It Up." The suit also includes a similar claim about the title track to Thicke's 2011 album, "Love After War."

At one point during Friday's testimony, Monson stepped down from the stand and sat behind a keyboard to play portions of each song. Both are structured similarly, she said, and share what is known as a "ii-V-i" chord progression.

"If you placed a mirror in between, they'd be a reflection of each other," Monson, a professor of African American music at Harvard University, testified.

Monson followed Judith Finell, a New York-based music expert, who testified there were multiple similarities between "Blurred Lines" and "Got to Give It Up."

"I found so many overriding similarities that the differences were diminished," she said.

Attorneys for Thicke and the other musicians are expected to call their own expert witness to the stand next week to dispute Monson's analysis, as well as the analysis of other experts called by the Gaye family.

Thicke and the other defendants contend that the similarities between the songs are coincidental and that there is much that musically distinguishes the two pieces.

Thicke took the stand this week and said "Blurred Lines" and "Got to Give It Up" were not similar because the rhythmic structures were different.

He testified that he had lied in media interviews when he recounted writing the song after telling Williams they should write something like "Got to Give It Up," a story he said he concocted to exaggerate his role in the song's creation.

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