



Dr. Neil Ratner(MJ Dr.)

Q. Good morning, Dr. Ratner.

A. Good morning.

Q. As you just heard, my name is Kathryn Cahan. I represent the defendants in this action, which are AEG live, LLC, Anschutz Entertainment Group, Inc., AEG live productions, LLC, Brandon Phillips, otherwise known as Randy Phillips, Paul Gongaware, and Timothy Leiweke. Do you know who any of these defendants are?

A. I'm aware of who they are. I do not know any of them.

Q. Have you ever gone by any name other than Neil Ratner?

A. No.

Q. And is that your full name?

A. Neil Warren Ratner is my full name.

Q. You're a physician, sir?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And I understand that you attended the University of Vermont for a few semesters; is that correct?

A. A few semesters.

Q. And did you complete an undergraduate degree at Hofstra University?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. What year did you receive that degree?

A. I believe it was 1975 or '6.

Q. And what degree were you granted? A BS, a BA?

A. BS

Q. Did you have a major?

A. Probably.

Q. And then you subsequently attended medical school at the University of Autonoma of Guadalajara in Jalisco?

A. University of Guadalajara, Guantnamo. Yes.

Q. Okay. And you graduated in 1980?

A. Yes.

Q. And you received an MD degree?

A. Their equivalent of an MD degree.

Q. And then did you move on to a pathway program?

A. A Fifth pathway program, yes.

Q. I'm sorry. A -- fifth.

A. It was called a fifth pathway program.

Q. Okay. And is that a program that allows you to be licensed as a physician in the United States?

A. It allows you to take the licensing exams.

Q. Understood. Did you complete an internship?

A. Yes.

Q. Was that as part of a residency, or did you do a separate intern year?

A. I think it was part of a residency.

Q. Okay. And you began a residency in General Surgery at Long Island Jewish Medical Center; is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. And then at some point circa 1983, you changed to a residency in anesthesiology at Beth Israel Medical Center?

A. That's correct.

Q. And did you complete the residency in anesthesiology at Beth Israel?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did you do any fellowships?

A. I did not.

Q. Are you board—certified?

A. I am not.

Q. Were you ever board-certified?

A. I was not.

Q. Do you have any other special licenses degrees or certifications relating to the medical profession, setting aside CMES or other --

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Okay. Do you currently practice medicine?

A. I do not.

Q. When did you stop practicing medicine?

A. I stopped practicing medicine in July of 2002.

Q. Did you ever provide medical treatment to Michael Jackson?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you first meet Michael Jackson?

A. As a patient in a doctor's office.

Q. Which doctor?

A. Dr. Lawrence Reed.

Q. The day that you met Mr. Jackson at Dr. Reed's office, were you there to provide anesthesia?

A. Yes.

Q. And you're an anesthesiologist, correct? Or you practiced medicine as an anesthesiologist, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. And you were there to provide anesthesia to Mr. Jackson for a procedure?

A. Yes .

Q. Did you speak with Mr. Jackson before you met him the first time by telephone?

A. Yes .

Q. And was that to do a pre—anesthesia check with him? .

A. Yes .

Q. Did you speak with him for any other reason prior to the first time you met him?

A. No.

Q. Is the first time you spoke with him the evening before you met him in person at Dr. Reed's office?

A. I don't recall exactly when it was.

Q. Do you remember anything specifically with regard to your first conversation with Mr. Jackson?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you remember?

A. Mr. Jackson —if you can give me more of a specific question, I can give you a better answer.

Q. Did you ask Mr. Jackson questions about his health?

A. Yes.

Q. And do you remember what he said in response?

A. No. I don't remember anything particular.

Q. Okay. Did you ask Mr. Jackson — did Mr. Jackson ask you any questions that you recall?

A. Yes.

Q. And what did he ask you?

A. He asked me to please get in touch with this office in California where he had previous anesthesia because he had a good experience and he wanted a repeat of that experience.

Q. Do you remember the name of the physician?

A. Which physician?

Q. The physician in California he asked you to contact.

A. Yes.

Q. Who?

A. Not — he asked me to contact the office of Dr. Steven Hoefflin.

Q. And did you understand Dr. Steven Hoefflin to be a plastic surgeon in Los Angeles?

A. Yes.

Q. And he said — Mr. Jackson said he wanted a repeat of the experience he had had under anesthesia with Dr. Hoefflin. Did he give you any understanding as to what he meant by that?

A. No.

Q. Okay. So having established your first meeting with Mr. Jackson in the early '90s, when was the last time you had contact with Michael Jackson?

A. You know, I can't be sure, again, of the date, but it was sometime early 2000—something. In the early 2000s.

Q. And was that also the last time you administered a medical — medical care to Michael Jackson?

A. Yes.

Q. So from the early '90s to the early 2000s, if you can estimate, approximately how many times did you treat Michael Jackson?

A. No idea.

By Ms. Cahan:

Q. I understand. What types of medical treatment did you provide to Michael Jackson over that period of time?

A. You know, that's way too general. You have to be specific.

Q. Did you provide anesthesia to him?

A. When?

Q. At any time between 1990 -- the early '90s and the early 2000s.

A. Yes.

Q. Was every time you administered anesthesia to Michael Jackson in connection with a surgical procedure?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever give Michael Jackson any medical treatment for insomnia or another sleep disorder?

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Did you ever give Michael Jackson treatment for pain?

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Did you ever administer medical treatments to Michael Jackson outside the US?

A. I did go outside the US with him on two occasions.

Q. And did you administer any medical treatments to him on those occasions?

A. I don't recall any specific treatments.

Q. Do you recall whether or not you administered medical treatments to him?

A. I don't recall any specific treatments.

Q. Okay. Did you ever treat —— give Michael Jackson medical treatment at his home or apartment or a hotel where he was staying at the time?

A. Not that I specifically recall.

Q. Other than the surgeons or physicians who were performing procedures on Mr. Jackson and other —— their medical staff, do you remember anyone else ever being present at a time when you administered medical treatment to Michael Jackson?

A. I would not allow anybody to be present at a time other than medical people in a legitimate medical center.

Q. In your experience, was Michael Jackson a private person?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever have any communication with Michael Jackson outside of your medical treatment of him?

A. Yes, occasionally.

Q. Okay. Did you have a social relationship with him?

A. Yes. He was my friend.

Q. Did you accompany Mr. Jackson on the History tour?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Did you ever accompany Michael Jackson on a tour?

A. Yes.

Q. What tour was that?

A. I never went on a tour. I went —I --- he —— I was in South Africa for about three weeks, and then later, many years later or a few years later, I was in Germany and Korea for a week or two. And that was the extent of my traveling with Michael Jackson.

Q. Okay. And did you understand that he was on tour at the times that you interacted with him in South Africa, Germany and Korea?

A. I don't know if I'd call Germany and Korea a tour, but yes.

Q. Okay. Did you understand that he was in Germany and Korea to perform?

A. Yes.

Q. Approximately when were you in South Africa with Mr. Jackson?

A. Sometime in the late '90s.

Q. Was that during the time period when Mr. Jackson was on the History tour?

A. Again, I didn't pay attention to names of tours, but it may have been.

Q. Does October 1997 sound like the right time frame?

A. Could be.

Q. And were you in cape town'?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you in Johannesburg?

A. Yes, I think.

Q. And were you in Durbin?

A. I know there was a show in Durbin. There was a show in Durbin.

Q. Do you remember whether you went to Durbin?

A. I think I might have gone to the show. I don't think I stayed there. I can't —— again, it's a lot of years.

Q. And how did you come to meet up with Mr. Jackson in South Africa? Did he invite you or was it some other --

A. I got a call from somebody in his office saying he would like me to be there.

Q. Did Mr. Jackson contact you personally himself?

A. No.

Q. Were you told why Mr. Jackson wanted you to be there?

A. No.

Q. Did you ask?

A. No.

Q. Were you asked to bring any equipment with you?

A. Not that I can specifically recall.

Q. Did you bring any equipment with you?

A. Not that I can specifically recall.

Q. Did you understand that you were going to South Africa to provide medical treatment to Mr. Jackson?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Have you ever worked with another performing artist as a physician during a tour?

A. No, but I was in the music business.

Q. You did production and promotion, right?

A. I did production and management, yes.

Q. Were you ever concerned about Michael's health during a performance that you witnessed?

A. Yes.

Q. When?

A. Germany.

Q. Is that the time that he fell off a stage?

A. Yes. He didn't fall off the stage.

Q. The stage collapsed?

A. The proscenium arch. He had a proscenium arch at the end when he did the Earth Song, and it had hydraulics. The brakes failed, and it came crashing down at the end of the show with him on it.

Q. And he injured his back fairly severely?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you provide medical treatment to Mr. Jackson in connection with that fall?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And were you present in Germany - strike that. How did you come to be present in Germany for that concert?

A. I was asked again by his people to come.

Q. And that time, were you asked to come in your capacity as a physician or was it not specified?

A. Not specified.

Q. Were you asked to bring any equipment with you?

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Do you remember whether you did, in fact, bring any equipment with you?

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Did you — I'm sorry. You said you administered medical treatment to Michael Jackson after the stage collapsed.

A. Yes.

Q. What medical treatment did you render?

A. Well, I went and made sure he was alive and his vitals were stable, and we got him quickly into a car and drove him to the hospital.

Q. Did you give him any — administer any medication? I'm sure he was in a lot of pain. Did you give him any --

A. No.

Q. Okay. Were there any other physicians present?

A. When?

Q. When you were administering medical treatment to Michael after he fell off the stage, I'm sorry — after the stage collapsed in Germany.

A. There were physicians present in the emergency room.

Q. What were the circumstances of the money being provided to you by Michael Jackson's production company?

A. There were no circumstances. There was no contract. There were no prescribed duties.

Q. Did you ask for payment from Michael Jackson or his company at some point?

A. Yes. And what did you ask for payment for? Leaving my practice. Leaving your practice to do what? To be with him on the road. In South Africa? At that time, yes. Was there ever another time when you asked Michael or his production company for compensation for leaving your practice to be on the road with Michael Jackson?

A. Korea and Germany.

Q. Okay. And did Mr. Jackson or his production company agree to pay the amount that you requested, if you recall?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there any back—and—forth negotiation on the amount?

A. No.

Q. Does touring tend to be physically demanding for artists?

A. Touring is physically demanding for everyone on tour.

Q. Okay. Have you ever interacted with tour doctors in any capacity?

A. No.

Q. Is it your understanding that there are physicians —— do you have an understanding as to why physicians participate in some tours?

A. Yes.

Q. And what is your understanding?

A. The physician is there to take care of anyone who gets sick on the tour.

Q. Is it typical in your experience for tours to move frequently from city to city and country to country?

A. There are no typical tours.

Q. Okay. Did you ever administer treatments to Michael Jackson for pain not associated with a surgical procedure?

A. Not that I can specifically recall.

Q. Okay. Did you ever treat Michael Jackson for addiction or drug dependency issues?

A. Not that I can specifically recall.

Q. Did you ever treat Michael Jackson for withdrawal symptoms from

A. Not that I can specifically recall.

Q. Do you remember ever speaking with a Dr. Allan Metzger with respect to Michael Jackson?

A. I may have spoken with Allan Metzger a couple of times.

Q. Do you remember the circumstances or nature of those conversations?

A. You know, over the course of time, various things may or may not have happened. But the name is familiar, and he and I may have had some conversations .

Q. Do you have an understanding as to the role, if any, Dr. Metzger played with respect to Michael Jackson's medical care'?

A. As best as I can, yes.

Q. Okay. And what is that?

A. He was one of his primary care physicians for a long period of time. But again, so many doctors involved over so many years.

Q. So many doctors involved over so many years with respect to Michael Jackson or just generally in your career?

A. All of the above.

Q. Did anyone else ever tell you that Mr. Jackson had a dependency on demerol?

A. I was aware, as was the whole world, that Mr. Jackson did have a narcotic dependency. Whether it was -- you know, there are many narcotics besides demerol. So we all had an awareness of that --

Q. And --

A. — from what we read, from what I read as opposed to a personal experience.

Q. Right. Are you referring to Mr. Jackson's public statement in 1993 that he was going to a rehabilitation program to treat a dependency issue?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall ever interacting with Allan Metzger in person?

A. We may have met once.

Q. Do you remember anything about the circumstances or timing of that meeting?

A. I think I remember meeting him possibly in New York on one occasion. I don't remember the circumstances.

Q. Okay.

A. And it was brief and not much.

Q. Are you generally familiar with the signs of someone being on an opiate?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you generally familiar with the signs of someone being on benzos, benzodiazepines?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you generally familiar with the signs of someone being intoxicated with alcohol, by alcohol?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there ever a time when you observed Michael Jackson exhibiting any of those symptoms?

A. Not that I can specifically recall.

Q. Okay. Did Michael ever ask you to give him medication to help him sleep, or treatments?

A. Not that I specifically recall.

Q. Did anyone else ever ask that you give medication or medical treatment to Michael Jackson to help him sleep?

A. Not that I specifically recall.

Q. Did Michael ever talk to you about having chronic pain? '

A. Certainly we talked about it after Germany, you know, for the rest of that trip.

Q. Okay. That was chronic pain related to his back injury?

A. Yes, I believe so.

Q. Was there ever a time when you withheld medical treatment from Mr. Jackson because you had some concern about his ability to consent or what his desires were?

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Are you aware of anyone else ever making medical decisions on behalf of Michael Jackson?

A. Not that I'm aware of.

Q. Did anyone other than Michael Jackson ever instruct you on what medical care you should provide or should not provide to Michael Jackson?

A. Not that I can specifically recall, no.

Q. Is it fair to say that in your experience with Michael, he controlled his medical treatment?

A. Yeah, I would agree with that.

Q. We spoke a little bit earlier today about your friendship with Mr. Jackson.

A. Yes. Did- you ever go to Neverland?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. How many times?

A. Few.

Q. Were those social visits?

A. Yes .

Q. Did you ever visit Michael in any of his other residences socially?

A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Other than the concerts we've already spoken about today, did Michael ever invite you to any concerts?

A. Yes.

Q. Which ones or when?

A. The 30th anniversary ones.

Q. Were those to be held in New York?

A. Yes.

Q. And that was a social invitation?

A. Yeah. -

Q. Did you ever travel with Michael Jackson other than what we've already talked about today?

A. One other time.

Q. When was that?

A. He gave me a birthday present.

Q. And what was the present?

A. Trip to South Africa.

Q. With him?

A. Yes.

Q. And this is separate and apart from the time that you --

A. Yes.

Q. And how long were you in South Africa?

A. A week maybe.

Q. And that was a purely social engagement?

A. It was to give Nelson Mandela the check for the charity concerts we did in Korea and Germany.

Q. Wow. I take it that was a good trip.

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever spend any holidays with Mr. Jackson?

A. I may have.

Q. Okay. Nothing specifically comes to mind?

A. Yeah, there is something that specifically comes to mind.

Q. Okay.

A. He was my friend, and it was Christmas. And he wasn't going to give the kids anything. And I said, "you can't do that." I said, "you've got to have Christmas with the kids." and he did.

Q. And when was that?

A. I don't know. Sometime in the '90s.

Q. You have some experience in the music industry, do you not?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. You were, in fact, a, what, tour manager for a period of time?

A. I was a tour manager for Edgar Winter. I was a co—manager for Emerson, Lake & Palmer. And then I had a production company and produced major ——— major acts.

Q. You're familiar that there are different functions within a tour in the music industry.

A. Of course.

Q. One being a producer?

A. Yes.

Q. One being a tour director?

A. Yes.

Q. One being the artist's business manager or personal manager?

A. Yes.

Q. All right. Now, when you were paid to go to South Africa toward the end of the History tour, did the — you said you were paid by MJ - Mr. Jackson's company?

A. Yes.

Q. And that was MJJ productions?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the promoter pay you anything to go on that?

A. No.

Q. Did the producer pay you anything to go on that tour?

A. No.

Q. That was done directly through you and the artist?

A. Yes.

Q. I should be clearer. The payment came directly from the artist's company?

A. Yes, it did.

Q. Did you negotiate any terms of that --

A. No.

Q. — work with either the producer or the promoter'?

A. No.

Q. Before you went to South Africa toward the end of the History tour, did you have any contact at all with either the promoter or the producer of that tour?

A. No.

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