



Fired Disney Soundtrack Exec Says Studio Broke Contract

By Django Gold

Law360, New York (January 30, 2012, 2:08 PM ET) -- A former [Walt Disney Pictures](#) music executive on Friday hit his erstwhile employer with a breach of contract suit accusing the film studio of going against the terms of his employment agreement when Disney fired him last year.

Glen Lajeski, who developed motion picture soundtracks for such feature films as "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Armageddon," "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" and "Cars," sued Disney in California state court, accusing his former employer of violating a five-year employment contract when it gave him the boot.

Though Lajeski "at all times fulfilled his duties and conditions under the employment agreement and has been ready, willing and able to continue performing them in a competent and satisfactory manner," Disney fired the executive prior to completion of his contract term, "without specifying any cause for the termination and providing no opportunity to cure," Lajeski said in his complaint.

"Lajeski's been there a long time," the former executive's counsel James A. Janowitz of [Pryor Cashman LLP](#) told Law360 on Monday. "But Disney decided to reduce costs, and they decided that they could fire him with impunity."

Lajeski joined the Hollywood studio in 1996 as vice president of music marketing, where he was charged with putting together film soundtracks for the studio's features, according to the complaint.

Though Disney initially set Lajeski on live-action feature films, his success in that capacity led him to take on projects in the studio's animation and direct-to-video branches, and eventually he worked to coordinate the entire studio's music efforts, leading to cost savings for Disney and a promotion for Lajeski to executive vice president of Disney's music creative and marketing divisions, according to his complaint.

In his new position, Lajeski entered into a series of employment agreements with his employer, the most recent of which began in January 2008 and was to continue through Jan. 1, 2013, Lajeski said Friday.

Under the terms of the contract, Disney could fire Lajeski only for good cause, and was required to explain its reasoning for termination, according to the complaint.

But Disney pink-slipped Lajeski in June, failing to provide any reasoning as to why he was being let go, according to the complaint. Janowitz said that though his client was offered a severance payout, the offer was insufficient.

"My client was an outstanding executive," Janowitz said. "He was not being let go because he did anything wrong. A lot of the studios have decided to cut back on costs, and Mr. Lajeski was unlucky enough to be in that position."

Lajeski seeks general and compensatory damages, as well as interest on damages, and legal costs.

A Disney representative was not immediately available for comment on Monday.

Lajeski is represented by Michael J. Niborski and James A. Janowitz of Pryor Cashman LLP.

Counsel information for Disney was not immediately available.

The case is Glen J. Lajeski v. Walt Disney Pictures et al., case number BC477909, in the Superior Court for the State of California, County of Los Angeles.

--Editing by Cara Salvatore.

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