

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

Pearl River, Louisiana · miqdashbethel@gmail.com

WITNESSES TO THE WOUND

A Covenant Investigation into the Exploitation of the Zamar Carriers

100 Years of the Music Business on Trial

Report No. 17 of an Ongoing Series

JOHN LENNON

1940 – 1980

And Paul McCartney — The Company They Thought Was Theirs

Signed Northern Songs on February 22, 1963, believing they owned the company — given 20% each while Dick James held 51% — diluted to 15% when taken public in 1965 — Dick James sold his shares to ATV in March 1969 without warning, Lennon learned from a newspaper on his honeymoon — Michael Jackson bought the catalog for \$47.5 million in 1985 — Sony acquired it for \$750 million in 2016 — Lennon murdered December 8, 1980, never saw any of it

NOTE: This report is a joint account of Lennon and McCartney. Both signed the same contract. Both were wounded by the same mechanism. Both are in the covenant record. George Harrison's testimony is entered as a third voice throughout.

March 2026 · Kepha Arcemont, Elder and Founder

SECTION ONE — THE GIFT: WHO YAHWEH MADE THEM

Biography: Two Boys from Liverpool Who Wrote the Soundtrack of a Generation

John Winston Lennon was born October 9, 1940, in Liverpool, England. James Paul McCartney was born June 18, 1942, also in Liverpool. They met in July 1957 when Lennon was 16 and McCartney was 15, at a church fete in Woolton where Lennon's skiffle group the Quarrymen was performing. Lennon invited McCartney to join. What followed was the most commercially successful songwriting partnership in the history of popular music.

The Beatles released their first single ***Love Me Do*** in October 1962. By February 1964, when they appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show before 73 million American viewers, Beatlemania had swept the Western world. Between 1963 and 1970 — seven years — Lennon and McCartney wrote ***Please Please Me, She Loves You, I Want to Hold Your Hand, A Hard Day's Night, Yesterday, In My Life, Strawberry Fields Forever, Penny Lane, Hey Jude, Let It Be, Come Together***, and more than 150 other songs that constitute one of the most extraordinary bodies of popular composition ever produced. They were the most famous people on earth.

What they did not know, when they signed the Northern Songs agreement on February 22, 1963, was that they were signing away the ownership of every song they wrote for the next decade. They thought they were forming their own company. They were not. McCartney later said: *"We just signed this thing, not really knowing what it was at all about — that we were signing our rights away for our songs."* Lennon said: *"John and I were taken for a ride. No doubt about it."*

◆ *The Lennon-McCartney catalog. Yesterday. Come Together. Imagine. In My Life. Let It Be. I am a blues-rock vocalist and guitarist, not a pop songwriter in their tradition, but no serious musician alive can stand outside the influence of what they created. They wrote the harmonic and melodic vocabulary of the second half of the 20th century. And they signed it away on a morning in Liverpool at a lawyer's office before catching a train. They didn't know you could own songs. They said so themselves. The stumbling block was placed before two men who literally did not know the ground existed.*

SECTION TWO — THE WOUND: NORTHERN SONGS AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Company They Believed Was Theirs

February 22, 1963 — The Signing

Dick James, an established music publisher who had produced one minor hit as a singer, met with Brian Epstein and proposed forming a new company to publish Lennon and McCartney's songs. The meeting took place at Epstein's Liverpool home.

Lennon was 22; McCartney was 20. No independent legal counsel represented their interests. McCartney recalled: *"Brian was at the house with a lawyer-type guy, but nobody said to us, 'This is your lawyer and he's representing your interests in this thing.' We just showed up, got out the car, went into this dark little house, and we just signed this thing, not really knowing what it was at all about."*

The ownership structure they signed: Dick James and his partner Charles Silver held 51%. Brian Epstein held 10%. Lennon received 20%. McCartney received 20%.

Lennon and McCartney believed they owned the company. They owned 40% of a company controlled by a man they had met because their producer recommended him as honest. James took a 10% administrative fee off the top of all income before distributions were calculated, further reducing the Beatles' effective share. Lennon later said: *"We had complete faith in him when he was running us. To us, he was the expert."*

1965 — The Public Offering

In 1965, Dick James and Charles Silver decided to take Northern Songs public on the London Stock Exchange, ostensibly to reduce the income tax burden of the initial owners. The public offering diluted Lennon and McCartney's shares from 20% each to 15% each. Harrison and Starr split a combined 1.6%. Dick James retained effective control.

McCartney said directly: *"For 'Yesterday,' which I wrote totally on my own, without John's or anyone's help, I am on 15 percent. To this day, I am only on 15 percent because of the deals Brian made, and that is really unjust, particularly as it has been such a smash."* The song he wrote alone. The company that controlled its publishing, 15% of his own work.

March 1969 — The Sale Lennon Learned About From a Newspaper

In March 1969, Dick James and Charles Silver sold their entire stake in Northern Songs to Associated Television (ATV) for £1,525,000 without informing Lennon or McCartney, without offering them the right of first refusal, without any prior discussion. Lennon was on his honeymoon with Yoko Ono. He learned about the sale from a morning newspaper headline. He immediately called McCartney.

"I realized Dick James had conned me out of the copyrights for my own songs by offering to become my publisher. As an 18- or 19-year-old kid, I thought, 'Great, somebody's gonna publish my songs!' But he never said, 'And incidentally, when you sign this document here, you're assigning me the ownership of the songs,' which is what it is. It was just a blatant theft." — George Harrison, Billboard magazine 1999

Lennon and McCartney attempted to buy back control. They lobbied a critical block of shareholders. Lennon, in an unguarded moment during negotiations, expressed his feelings about the businessmen involved in terms that pushed the offended shareholders toward ATV. **ATV acquired majority control of the catalog of 251 Lennon-McCartney compositions.** The songs written in Liverpool between 1963 and 1969 were owned by a British television company.

1985 — Michael Jackson

In 1985, Michael Jackson purchased ATV Music Publishing, including the Northern Songs catalog of 251 Beatles compositions, for \$47.5 million. He outbid McCartney, who had told him years earlier about the value of publishing rights. McCartney later said Jackson had said to him: *"I'm going to get your songs someday."* Both McCartney and Yoko Ono were notified of the sale but did not bid. In 1995, Jackson merged his ATV catalog with Sony to form Sony/ATV Music Publishing. In 2016, Sony acquired the remaining interest from Jackson's estate for \$750 million. The catalog Lennon and McCartney wrote in their twenties sold, fifty-three years later, for \$750 million — to a corporation.

John Lennon was murdered on December 8, 1980. He never saw Michael Jackson's purchase. He never saw the Sony merger. He never saw the \$750 million valuation of what he wrote as a young man who didn't know you could own songs. In 2017, McCartney sued Sony/ATV under a 1976 U.S. copyright law that allows songwriters to reclaim publishing rights after 56 years. A confidential settlement was reached in June 2017. McCartney began reclaiming rights starting with **Love Me Do**, 55 years after it was written.

SECTION THREE — THE THREE WITNESSES (DEVARIM 19:15)

Corroboration of the Record

WITNESS One: *Paul McCartney, directly quoted in Barry Miles, Paul McCartney: Many Years from Now (1997) and in The Beatles Anthology: 'We just signed this thing, not really knowing what it was at all about... that we were signing our rights away for our songs. John and I didn't know you could own songs. We thought they just existed in the air.' Additionally: 'Brian did do some lousy deals and he put us into long-term slave contracts, which I am still dealing with.'* These are primary first-person confessions from one of the two artists whose songs are the subject of this report.

WITNESS Two: *John Lennon, quoted in multiple documented accounts: 'We had complete faith in him [Epstein] when he was running us. To us, he was the expert.' And: 'John and I were taken for a ride. No doubt about it. We were in a little mews in Liverpool one morning... We signed the whole thing away one morning before getting on a train and we didn't understand what it was.'* Primary testimony from Lennon himself about his own understanding of what happened. Corroborated by the Northern Songs Wikipedia article and The Beatles Bible documentation of the February 22, 1963 signing.

WITNESS Three: *George Harrison, Billboard magazine 1999: 'I realized Dick James had conned me out of the copyrights for my own songs... As an 18- or 19-year-old kid, I thought, 'Great, somebody's gonna publish my songs!' But he never said, 'And incidentally, when you sign this document here, you're assigning me the ownership of the songs.' It was just a blatant theft.'* Harrison's testimony is entered as the third and most unambiguous primary witness. His description of what James did — 'blatant theft' — is the covenant assessment of the transaction applied by the artist who experienced it.

SECTION FOUR — THE COVENANT ANALYSIS

The Torah Charges — Applied to John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Charge One: The Stumbling Block Before the Blind — Vayikra 19:14

"You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your Elohim: I am Yahweh."

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:14

Lennon was 22. McCartney was 20. Harrison was 19. They did not know you could own songs. McCartney said it explicitly: *"We thought they just existed in the air."* Dick James, Brian Epstein, and their lawyer knew precisely what the documents meant. The boys who signed them did not. **No independent legal counsel represented Lennon and McCartney's interests in the room where they signed away their catalog.** McCartney documented it: *"Nobody said to us, 'This is your lawyer and he's representing your interests in this thing.'" A lawyer was present. He was not theirs. The stumbling block was placed before men who did not know the ground existed. I am Yahweh.* The witnessing is permanent.

Charge Two: Taking What Belongs to Another Without Notice — Vayikra 19:11

"You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another."

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:11

In March 1969, Dick James sold his majority stake in Northern Songs to ATV for £1.5 million without informing Lennon or McCartney, without offering them the right of first refusal, without any prior discussion. Lennon learned about it from a newspaper on his honeymoon. **The covenant prohibition on false dealing applies with precision to the seller of a company built on another person's creative work who sells that company without informing the creator.** James enriched himself on the catalog Lennon and McCartney had written. When he chose to liquidate his position, he did not extend to them the basic courtesy of prior notice. George Harrison called it *"blatant theft."* The covenant confirms the assessment.

Charge Three: The Long Arm of the Catalog — Mishlei 22:28

"Do not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set."

— Mishlei (Proverbs) 22:28

The Mishlei principle of the landmark — the boundary that marks what belongs to whom — applies to the publishing catalog as the creative inheritance of the songwriters who

produced it. ATV moved the landmark. Michael Jackson moved it again. Sony moved it again. **Each transfer of the catalog was a transfer of the covenant inheritance of the men who wrote the songs, to parties who had no creative relationship to those songs.** McCartney sued to recover his landmark in 2017 — 54 years after the signing. A confidential settlement was reached. He began reclaiming *Love Me Do* — the first song — 55 years after it was written. The landmark is being returned, slowly, to the ones who set it. The covenant endorses the recovery.

Covenant Distinction: This Is Not a Poverty Case

The covenant research standard requires precision. **John Lennon and Paul McCartney were not financially devastated by Northern Songs.** They were millionaires. They continued to earn writer's royalties throughout their careers. The wound here is not destitution — it is *creative ownership* denied. The catalog they wrote was transferred to commercial entities that had no covenant relationship to the songs. The buyers profited from what the writers created without the writers' consent. The covenant indictment is structural, not material. It operates at the level of principle, not poverty. **That distinction does not diminish the charge. The Torah does not require the victim to be poor before the stumbling block is named.**

SECTION FIVE — THE LIVING WITNESS: KEPHA ARCEMONT, 2026

A Blues Guitarist Reads the Record

Yesterday. Paul McCartney wrote it alone. Not a co-write. Not a Lennon-McCartney collaboration. Alone, in 1965. It became the most covered song in the history of recorded music — over 2,200 recorded versions. He received 15% of the publishing. Dick James received his share. ATV received his share. Michael Jackson received his share. Sony received its share. McCartney received 15%. Because he was 20 years old and didn't know you could own songs.

◆ *I am the Elder and founder of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly. I am also a recording artist and music businessman. I have my own publishing arrangements for my own work. I understand exactly what Lennon and McCartney did not understand in that room on February 22, 1963: that the copyright in a song is the covenant inheritance of the songwriter. It does not belong to the publisher. The publisher's function is to administer what belongs to the writer. Dick James inverted that relationship and called it a publishing deal. George Harrison said it was blatant theft. The Torah agrees.*

John Lennon was murdered on December 8, 1980, at the Dakota in New York City. He was 40 years old. He had spent the preceding five years largely out of public life, raising Sean, baking bread, and sailing. He was releasing music again. He had written *Imagine* in 1971 — one of the most widely heard songs in the history of recorded music — and did not own its publishing. **He died without having recovered what had been taken from him on February 22, 1963.** His estate, administered by Yoko Ono and

subsequently Sean Lennon, has worked to recover and manage the catalog since then. McCartney's legal recovery began in 2017. The work of recovery is ongoing.

The most important single fact in this report is also the simplest one: two young men from Liverpool wrote songs that became the soundtrack of a generation, and were told in a dark little house before catching a train that they were forming their own company. They were not. That is the covenant wound. Everything that follows — ATV, Michael Jackson, Sony, \$750 million — is the compounding of that original deception.

SECTION SIX — THE COVENANT VERDICT

Yahweh's Record on John Lennon and Paul McCartney

COVENANT CHARGE ONE: John Lennon and Paul McCartney signed the Northern Songs agreement on February 22, 1963, at ages 22 and 20, without independent legal counsel, without understanding that they were assigning ownership of their songs to a company controlled by Dick James. They believed they were forming their own company. They were given 20% each of a company 51% controlled by their publisher. Vayikra 19:14 — stumbling block before the blind. The judgment is entered for every song written between 1963 and 1969 under that agreement.

COVENANT CHARGE TWO: In March 1969, Dick James sold his majority stake in Northern Songs to ATV for £1.5 million without informing Lennon or McCartney and without offering them right of first refusal. Lennon learned of the sale from a newspaper on his honeymoon. Vayikra 19:11 — false dealing. Mishlei 22:28 — removing the landmark. The judgment is entered. It covers the moment James made the call to ATV without picking up the telephone to Liverpool first.

COVENANT ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Paul McCartney sued Sony/ATV in 2017 to reclaim his publishing rights under U.S. copyright law. A confidential settlement was reached. He began reclaiming his catalog starting with Love Me Do — 55 years after it was written. The covenant honors the 54-year recovery effort. Mishlei 22:28 reads: Do not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set. The landmark is being returned. The recovery is documented.

"Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages."

— Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 22:13

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness. Dick James built a fortune on Northern Songs. ATV built a media empire with it. Michael Jackson built a publishing catalog. Sony built a \$750 million acquisition. All of it built on the work of two young men who didn't know you could own songs. **Yahweh witnessed the dark little house in Liverpool. Yahweh witnessed the newspaper headline on the honeymoon. Yahweh witnessed every transfer of the landmark.** The catalog is not finished returning to its authors. The accounting is not complete. **Selah.**

SERIES NOTES

Next in series: Report No. 18 — John Fogerty (CCR). Signed as a teenager. Gave up all royalties in 1980 just to escape. Had to file annual lawsuits to collect songwriter royalties. Was sued for plagiarizing himself. Refused to perform his own songs for years. Recovered his catalog after 50 years.

Selah.

*Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly · Pearl River, Louisiana · March 2026
miqdashbethel@gmail.com · Doctrinal Authority: The Tanakh Alone*