

31-22-22. Distribution of money received as result of crime; escrow account.

A. Every firm, person, corporation, association or other legal entity contracting with a person or the representative or assignee of any person charged or convicted of a violent crime in this state, with respect to the reenactment of the crime in a movie, book, magazine article, tape recording, phonograph record, radio or television presentation or live entertainment or with respect to the expression of the accused or convicted person's thoughts, feelings, opinions or emotions regarding the crime shall submit a copy of the contract to the crime victims reparation commission and pay to the commission any money that would otherwise by terms of such contract be owing to the accused or convicted person or his representatives. The commission shall deposit the money in an escrow account.

B. Money placed in an escrow account pursuant to this section shall be available to satisfy a civil judgment against the convicted person or the accused person, if eventually convicted of the crime, in favor of a victim of the crime if the court in which the civil judgment is taken finds that the judgment is for damages incurred by the victim caused by the commission of the crime.

C. Upon dismissal of charges or acquittal of any accused person, the commission shall immediately pay over to the accused person the money in the escrow account.

D. For purposes of this section, a person found not guilty by reason of insanity at the time of commission of an offense shall be deemed to be a convicted person.

E. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsections A through C of this section, the commission shall make payments from the escrow account to any person accused or convicted of a crime upon the order of a court of competent jurisdiction after a showing by such person that the money shall be used for the exclusive purpose of retaining legal representation at any stage of the criminal proceedings against such person, including the appeals process.

F. Upon a showing by any accused or convicted person that five years have elapsed from the establishment of the escrow account, that any claims brought pursuant to this section have been disposed of and that no such claims are pending against him, the commission shall immediately pay over to such accused or convicted person any money in the escrow account.

G. Any action taken by any person accused or convicted of a crime, whether by way of execution of a power of attorney, creation of corporate entities or otherwise to defeat the purpose of this section, shall be null and void as against the public policy of the state.

History: 1978 Comp., § 31-22-22, enacted by Laws 1983, ch. 321, § 1.