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## HBO And Jackson Estate Continue Legal Dispute Over 'Leaving Neverland'



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LOS ANGELES (CelebrityAccess) HBO and the legal team behind the Michael Jackson Estate continue to battle it out in court regarding the controversial documentary "Leaving Neverland," with HBO holding now bars in the most recent filing.

HBO recently attempted to shut down a shift to arbitration with Jackson's attorneys regarding the \$100 million lawsuit, stating, "Optimum Productions and John Branca and John McClain, in their capacities as co-executors of the Estate of Michael Jackson, ask this Court to order arbitration of a poorly disguised and legally barred posthumous defamation claim against Home Box Office, Inc. that arises from HBO's exercise of its First Amendment rights to exhibit an expressive work on an issue of public concern—the documentary *Leaving Neverland*," according to Deadline Hollywood.

HBO's attorneys, Daniel Petrocelli and Theodore Boutrous, added, "Petitioners' purported basis for their claims is a single non-disparagement sentence buried in a confidentiality rider to a more than 26-year-old expired and entirely unrelated contract," and added, "Petitioners do not, and cannot, allege that any information HBO obtained during the course of performing the 1992 Agreement, let alone any confidential information or trade secrets, was provided to the filmmakers."

Attorneys for Jackson fired back with the following:

"HBO's opposition clearly shows that they are afraid to have this matter adjudicated," Bryan Freedman told Deadline. "The Jackson Estate wants an arbitration open to the public for all to see. If HBO thinks the contract does not apply or is expired then why are they opposing adjudicating it?"

"The reason why is because they know they were complicit in this one-sided farce of a money grab that clearly violates the agreement," Freedman added. "Now they are trying to delay the inevitable beating that they will suffer when this matter is adjudicated. It won't work."

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