



HBO Can't Shake the Michael Jackson Estate's \$100 Million Lawsuit Over Leaving Neverland

Marsha Silva • September 20, 2019



Just hours ago, federal judge George Wu tentatively ruled against HBO in its motion to dismiss a \$100 million defamation lawsuit filed by Michael Jackson's estate, which relates to HBO's *Leaving Neverland* documentary.

Legal experts, though, insist that Judge Wu has in the past changed his mind in cases such as these. The judge is expected to issue a final decision on the motion sometime this month. Interestingly, it was Judge Wu who a couple of months ago suggested to HBO's lawyers that they should file the motion.

A spokesperson for HBO commented on the tentative ruling by saying that the company would wait until the judge makes his final decision before commenting further.

[Leaving Neverland](#) controversially detailed claims made by both James Safechuck and Wade Robson, who insist Michael Jackson sexually molested them when they were kids. This led the estate of Michael Jackson to file the defamation suit, as they believe the allegations are false and unproven.

Bryan Freedman, who is a lawyer representing Michael Jackson's estate, said in response to the judge's ruling that HBO has been doing everything they possibly can to prevent the case from coming to trial. He added that if HBO is so certain that "its actions were proper," then they should welcome a trial instead of trying to avoid it through the use of technicalities. He further predicted that Jackson's estate would ultimately hold HBO accountable for "its wrongful conduct."

On August 15th, HBO's legal team filed the motion to dismiss the lawsuit. This came after Judge Wu in May denied a motion made by Jackson's estate to have the trial conducted behind closed doors and adjudicated by the American Arbitration Association. The judge also dismissed a motion to have the suit returned to the state court where the proceedings began.

In addition to these motions, Jackson's estate also failed to get an injunction against HBO showing the film, which debuted in March.