

Michael Jackson Estate Wins Copyright Battle

By: Sheldon Mak & Anderson

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Amidst rumors of infighting among the Jackson family, the estate of Michael Jackson recently won a key victory in a [copyright infringement lawsuit](#). The court granted an injunction prohibiting Canadian memorabilia dealer Howard Mann from profiting on the singer's name through websites including "michaeljacksonsecretvault.com" and "MJgives.com."

"There is undisputed evidence that Defendants intended in bad faith to profit from use of Jackson's name, by registering multiple domain names containing his name or the initials 'MJ' to sell Jackson-related products," U.S. District Judge Dean Pregerson wrote.

The estate holds the copyright to Jackson's image and music for the benefit of Katherine Jackson and the late singer's three children. However, Mann also has a relationship with Katherine Jackson, having worked with her on several projects since 2009, including a 2010 "Never Can Say Goodbye" coffee table book.

In defense of the lawsuit, Mann also contended that the estate's copyright infringement lawsuit was barred by a ruling in a prior lawsuit brought by Michael Jackson. As reported by the [Los Angeles Times](#), Michael Jackson sued Mann's company, Vintage Pop, for IP infringement in 2004, but then refused to submit to a deposition. A judge dismissed the case in 2006 "with prejudice," which barred Jackson from pursuing the same claims in another lawsuit.

However, Judge Pregerson ultimately concluded that the executors could bring the current lawsuit. All "of the misconduct alleged in this suit took place long after the 2004 action, and the claims from the two suits therefore do not arise from the same transactional nucleus of facts," the judge wrote.

A hearing on damages is scheduled for this fall.

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