

# 1993 Michael Jackson sexual abuse allegations

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In 1993, **Evan Chandler**, a dentist and screenwriter based in Los Angeles, accused the American singer Michael Jackson of sexually abusing his 13-year-old son, **Jordan Chandler**. Jackson had befriended Jordan after renting a vehicle from Jordan's stepfather. Though Evan initially encouraged the friendship, he confronted his ex-wife, who had custody of Jordan, with suspicions that the relationship was inappropriate.

Chandler demanded money from Jackson, threatening to go to a criminal court, but no agreement was reached. After Jordan told a psychiatrist that Jackson had molested him, the Los Angeles Police Department began a criminal investigation. The investigation found no physical evidence against Jackson. In August 1993, as the second leg of Jackson's Dangerous World Tour began, news of the allegations broke and received worldwide media attention. Jackson canceled the remainder of the tour, citing health problems arising from the scandal. Jackson's sister La Toya Jackson said Jackson was a pedophile, but produced no evidence and withdrew the accusation, saying she had been forced to make it by her husband.

In September 1993, the Chandlers filed a lawsuit against Jackson. They and Jackson reached a financial settlement in January 1994; Jackson and his legal team stressed that this was not an admission of guilt. In September 1994, the investigation closed after the Chandlers declined to cooperate, leaving the case without its main witness.

The allegations damaged Jackson's public image, health, and commercial standing. Several of his endorsement deals were canceled, including his decade-long Pepsi endorsement. Further allegations of abuse by Jackson led to the People v. Jackson trial in 2005, in which Jackson was acquitted.

## Background

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According to *Consequence of Sound*, in 1993, Jackson was the most popular singer in the world.<sup>[i]</sup> That February,<sup>[ii]</sup> Jackson's car broke down and was towed to a local garage, Rent-a-Wreck. Rent-a-Wreck owner David Schwartz called his wife, June Chandler-Schwartz, to meet Jackson. She brought her son from a previous marriage, Jordan Chandler. Jordan's father, Evan Chandler, was a dentist who treated Hollywood celebrities. He was also a screenwriter who co-wrote the 1993 comedy Robin Hood: Men In Tights.<sup>[i]</sup>



Jackson with Jordan (right) in 1992.

Jackson and Jordan became close; the *National Enquirer* ran a featured story titled "Michael's New Adopted Family", implying that Jackson had "stolen" Jordan from Evan. Jackson invited Jordan, his stepsister and his mother to visit his home, Neverland Ranch,

on the weekends. They would also take trips to Las Vegas and Florida.<sup>[I]</sup> These trips interfered with Jordan's scheduled visits with Evan, with Jordan preferring to visit Neverland Ranch.<sup>[II]</sup>

In May, Evan encouraged Jackson to spend more time with Jordan. Evan suggested that Jackson should build an extension onto Jackson's house; when they were denied planning permission, Chandler suggested Jackson buy him a house. In the same month, Jordan and June flew with Jackson to Monaco for the World Music Awards.<sup>[III]</sup> According to June's lawyer, Michael Freeman, Evan was jealous and felt left out. Upon their return, Jackson stayed in the Schwartz-Chandler home for five days; Jackson slept in a room with Jordan and his stepbrother.<sup>[IV]</sup> Chandler said this is when he became suspicious of sexual misconduct by Jackson, although he said that Jackson and Jordan were clothed when he saw them in bed together, and never claimed to have witnessed sexual misconduct.<sup>[IV]</sup> Jordan and Jackson's contact ended in June 1993.<sup>[ii]</sup>

## Allegations

On July 8, 1993, Schwartz phoned Chandler to discuss Jordan's relationship with Jackson. Unbeknownst to Chandler, Schwartz recorded the phone call.<sup>[iii]</sup> Chandler was hostile about Jackson, describing him as "evil". He said he had hired "the nastiest son of a bitch he could find", the lawyer Barry Rothman, to humiliate Jackson, and said:<sup>[i]</sup>

Once I make that phone call, this guy's just going to destroy everybody in sight in any devious, nasty, cruel way that he can do it. And I've given him full authority to do that. ... If I go through with this, I win big time. There's no way that I lose. ... I will get everything I want, and they will be totally—they will be destroyed forever. ... Michael's career will be over. ... This man is gonna be humiliated beyond belief. ... He will not believe what's going to happen to him. Beyond his worst nightmares. He will not sell one more record.



Jackson's Neverland Ranch home, where the sexual abuse was alleged to have taken place

—Evan Chandler, excerpt from taped telephone conversation between Chandler and David Schwartz (1993)<sup>[a]</sup>

When Schwartz asked how this would affect Jordan, Chandler replied:<sup>[i]</sup>

It's irrelevant to me. The bottom line to me is, yes, June is harming him, and Michael is harming him. I can prove that. ... It cost me thousands, tens of thousands of dollars to get the information I got, and I—you know I don't have that kind of money and I spent it, and I'm willing to spend more, and I'm willing to go down financially...

—Evan Chandler, excerpt from taped telephone conversation between Chandler and David Schwartz (1993) <sup>[a]</sup>

On August 2, Chandler extracted one of Jordan's teeth. While Jordan was under the effects of Amytal, a sedative with hypnotic properties, Chandler asked him if Jackson had ever touched his penis; Jordan said yes.<sup>[V]</sup> Chandler and his legal team approached Jackson asking for \$20 million, threatening to take the dispute to a criminal court. A few weeks later, Jackson's legal team made a counter-offer of \$1 million; this was declined by Chandler, who then requested \$15 million. Jackson refused and lowered his offer to \$350,000, which Chandler also refused.<sup>[VI][VII]</sup> According to some sources, Evan unsuccessfully sought a \$20-million film production deal with Jackson to avoid going to court.<sup>[iv]</sup>

On July 15, the child psychiatrist Mathis Abrams wrote to Rothman, who was seeking an expert opinion to help establish the allegations against Jackson. Abrams wrote that there was "reasonable suspicion" of sexual abuse without having met Chandler, Jordan or Jackson. He also said that, if this were not a hypothetical case, he would be required by law to report the matter to the Los Angeles County Department of Children's Services.<sup>[VIII][IX][X]</sup> On August 17, Chandler took Jordan to Abrams and told him Jordan had been molested. Over a three-hour session, Jordan told Abrams that Jackson had sexually abused him for months and gave graphic accounts of masturbation and oral sex.<sup>[i]</sup> Jordan repeated these allegations to police and described Jackson's penis.<sup>[XI][XII]</sup> According to the county's DCFS reports, Jordan had difficulty remembering the times and dates of his alleged molestation, but was consistent in his story.<sup>[v]</sup>

## Investigation

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On August 18, the Los Angeles Police Department's Sexually Exploited Child Unit began a criminal investigation into Jackson. June Chandler-Schwartz initially told police that she did not believe Jackson had molested her son; however, her position wavered a few days later.<sup>[XIII]</sup> On August 21, a search warrant was issued, allowing police to search Neverland Ranch. Police questioned 30 children who were friends of Jackson; all stated that he was not a child molester.<sup>[vi][XIV]</sup> Gary Hearne, Jackson's chauffeur, testified in his deposition to driving Jackson to Jordan's house at night and collecting him in the morning for a period of about 30 days.<sup>[XV]</sup>

On August 24, the day the allegations were made public, Jackson began the third leg of his Dangerous World Tour in Bangkok. That day, Anthony Pellicano, a private detective hired by Jackson, held a press conference accusing Chandler of trying to extort \$20 million from Jackson. He did not mention that Jackson had made several counter-offers.<sup>[vi][XVI]</sup> The Jackson family also held a press conference, saying it was their "unequivocal belief" that Michael was a victim of extortion.<sup>[XVII][XVIII]</sup> On August 26, Jackson's promoters released an audiotape of him apologizing to his fans for cancelling his second show in two days.<sup>[iv]</sup>

On August 31, the attorney Gloria Allred held a press conference stating she had been retained on behalf of the Chandlers, and implied a civil suit against Jackson would be made.<sup>[vii]</sup> On September 10, Allred said that she was off the case, without saying why.<sup>[viii]</sup> On September 13, the Chandlers hired

Larry R. Feldman, the former president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association.<sup>[ix]</sup>

On October 6, 1993, Jordan Chandler underwent a psychiatric interview with Dr. Richard Gardner in New York. Gardner had formulated parental alienation syndrome (PAS) in 1985, a disorder that arises primarily in the context of child-custody disputes.<sup>[XIX]</sup> Jordan gave his account of what allegedly happened between him and Jackson in May 1993, during their trip to Monaco for the World Music Awards.<sup>[XX]</sup> On November 8, police searched the Jackson family home, Hayvenhurst.<sup>[vi][XXI][XXII]</sup>

The Schwartzes gave the tape of Chandler's July conversation with Schwartz to the authorities, who leaked it to the press.<sup>[i]</sup> The recorded conversation was a critical aspect of Jackson's defense against the allegations made against him.<sup>[x][xi]</sup> Jackson and his supporters argued that he was the victim of a jealous father whose only goal was to extort Jackson.<sup>[XXIII][xii]</sup> The tape was publicly released by Pellicano, after edits had been made.<sup>[xiii]</sup>

## Testimony from staff and other children

Brett Barnes, aged 11, publicly stated that he had shared a bedroom with Jackson, and insisted that no sexual abuse had taken place. The dancer and choreographer Wade Robson, then aged 10, told Fox Television that he too shared a bedroom with Jackson and that nothing sexual had happened. Several parents presented details of aggressive investigative techniques by police; they explained that the police had frightened their children with lies such as "we have nude photos of you",<sup>[xiv]</sup> and told parents their children had been molested even though their children had denied it.<sup>[XXII]</sup>

In September 1993, police officers traveled to the Philippines to interview two of Jackson's ex-housekeepers. However, the ex-employees lacked credibility due to a back salary argument they had with Jackson.<sup>[xv][XXII]</sup> A former security guard made various allegations about Jackson, saying he had been fired because he "knew too much", and alleged that he was ordered by Jackson to destroy a photo of a naked boy. Instead of reporting this alleged event to the police, he sold the story to Hard Copy for \$150,000. On December 13, 1993, Jackson's maid, Blanca Francia, alleged that she "quit in disgust" after seeing Jackson in a shower with a child, but did not inform the police. Lisa D. Campbell reported that Francia had been fired in 1991 and had sold her story to Hard Copy for \$20,000.<sup>[XXIV][xvi]</sup> However, when Diane Dimond interviewed Francia on the show, she denied being fired but acknowledged being compensated by Hard Copy.<sup>[XXV]</sup>

On December 2, 1993, attorney Charles Mathews held a press conference about his clients allegedly being threatened and harassed by Pellicano's machinations. Mathews was representing Jackson's former security guards in a wrongful termination lawsuit filed on November 22. The lawsuit alleged wrongful termination due to "firsthand personal knowledge of many of [Michael Jackson's] nighttime visits with young boys".<sup>[xvii]</sup>

## Investigation into Chandler

The police also began an investigation into Evan Chandler for extortion, finding that he was \$68,400 behind in his child support payments despite being well-paid as a dentist.<sup>[XXVI]</sup> Following a five-month investigation, deputy Los Angeles County District Attorney Michael Montagna released a public statement stating no charges had been brought against Chandler, citing Jackson's lawyers'

failure to file for extortion in a timely manner and Jackson's willingness to negotiate with Chandler for several weeks. Montagna explained that settlements were encouraged as they were favored by the law. Montagna also said the discussions between Jackson's representatives and Barry K. Rothman, Chandler's attorney at that time, appeared to have been attempts to settle a possible civil case, not efforts to extort money.<sup>[xviii]</sup> Pellicano vehemently rejected that the discussion was to settle a civil claim, noting that no lawsuit was mentioned and Chandler's lawyer threatened if they do not get what they want, they will go public with accusations.<sup>[xix]</sup>

## Use of sedatives

Chandler admitted he had used the sedative sodium amytal during Jordan's dental surgery, during which Jordan said Jackson had touched his penis.<sup>[i]</sup> Sodium amytal is a barbiturate that puts people in a hypnotic state when injected intravenously. Studies carried out in 1952 demonstrated that it enabled false memories to be implanted.<sup>[XXVII]</sup> According to Alison Winter, a science historian at the University of Chicago, these types of drug place people in a state of "extreme suggestibility ... People will pick up on cues about what questioners want to hear and repeat that back."<sup>[i]</sup>

Mark Torbiner, the dental anesthesiologist who administered the drug, told GQ that if sodium amytal was used, "it was for dental purposes".<sup>[XXVII]</sup> According to Diane Dimond of the tabloid TV program *Hard Copy*, Torbiner's records show that Robinul and Vistaril were administered instead of sodium amytal.<sup>[XXVIII]</sup> The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration was investigating Torbiner's administration of drugs during house calls, where he mostly gave patients morphine and Demerol.<sup>[XXVII]</sup> Torbiner's credentials with the Board of Dental Examiners indicated that he was restricted by law to administering drugs solely for dental procedures, but he had not adhered to those restrictions; for example, he had given general anesthetic to Barry Rothman during hair transplant procedures.<sup>[XXIX]</sup> Torbiner had introduced Chandler and Rothman in 1991, when Rothman needed dental work.<sup>[XXVII]</sup>

## Strip search

On February 10, 1993,<sup>[xx]</sup> Jackson had revealed in a televised interview that he had vitiligo, a skin disorder that destroys skin pigmentation and creates blotches. The interview was watched by 90 million viewers, and after it aired expert information on vitiligo was widely shared in the media.<sup>[XXX]</sup> According to Pellicano, Jordan Chandler said in July 1993 that Jackson once lifted his shirt to show the blotches on his skin.<sup>[XXXI]</sup>

On December 20, 1993, investigators for the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and the LAPD issued Jackson with a warrant for a strip search, as police wanted to verify Jordan's description of Jackson's private anatomy. The officers photographed Jackson's entire body.<sup>[xxi][xxii]</sup> The police were looking for discoloration, any signs of vitiligo that Jordan had spoken about, or any other skin disorder. Refusal to comply would have been used in court as an indication of guilt.<sup>[XXXII]</sup>

Those present for the prosecution were District Attorney Tom Sneddon, a detective, a photographer, and a doctor. Those present on behalf of Jackson were his two attorneys, a physician, a detective, a bodyguard, and a photographer. The attorneys and Sneddon agreed to leave the room when the

examination took place. At Jackson's insistence, the prosecution detective also left. In an emotional state, Jackson stood on a platform in the middle of the room and disrobed. The search lasted for approximately 25 minutes. He was never touched.<sup>[XXXIII]</sup>

On January 27, 1994, Reuters reported that a source said the pictures did not match Jordan's description.<sup>[XXXIV][XXXV][XXXVI]</sup> Jordan claimed that Jackson was circumcised; however, Jackson's autopsy report showed that he had not been circumcised.<sup>[xxiii][XXXVII][b]</sup> In 2009, Ian Halperin wrote that "USA Today and Reuters cited law enforcement sources confirming that 'photos of Michael Jackson's genitalia do not match descriptions given by the boy.'" In March 1994, Jackson's mother, Katherine, was called to testify in front of the LA County Grand Jury. Investigators asked whether her son changed his appearance so that it does not match the accuser's description.<sup>[xxiv]</sup>

On January 4, 1994, Larry Feldman filed a court motion in an effort to obtain the police photographs of Jackson. The motion stated a "multiple choice" request: either provide copies of the photographs, submit Jackson to a second search, or the court could bar the photographs from the civil trial as evidence. Feldman said that the district attorney's office previously refused the request of these photographs.<sup>[xxv]</sup> Jackson's lawyers asked a Santa Barbara County judge to order prosecutors to return the photographs, fearing they would become public, but were denied.<sup>[xxvi]</sup>

## Allegations by La Toya Jackson

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On September 2, 1993, as a guest on the Today show, Jackson's sister La Toya Jackson expressed support for her brother, stating: "I stand by [Michael] one thousand percent... If you think about it, he has been convicted before a trial." In the same interview, she said she could not tell if the allegations were true. A few weeks later, on the Mauri show, La Toya said Jackson was being convicted by the public without having been charged with any crime. She said there was nothing inappropriate about his relationship with children and that she would never believe such allegations.<sup>[XXXVIII]</sup>

On December 8, 1993, La Toya, who had been estranged from the Jackson family and not seen her brother for several years, said Jackson was a pedophile.<sup>[XXXIX][XL]</sup> She said she had seen checks made out to different boys' families and that Jackson's abuse as a child had turned him into an abuser. She and her then-husband Jack Gordon also said that Jackson had tried to kidnap and kill her.<sup>[xxvii][xxviii]</sup> On December 9, La Toya repeated her suspicions to Katie Couric on Today: "I do know he'd have boys over all the time and they'd stay in his room for days. Then they would come out ... There'd be another boy and he'd bring someone else but never two at a time."<sup>[xxix][xxx]</sup>



Jackson's sister La Toya Jackson in 2010

La Toya said she had proof of Jackson's pedophilia and offered to disclose it for \$500,000. A bidding war between US and UK tabloids began, but fell through when she did not produce the proof.<sup>[XLI]</sup> The Jackson family disowned her. In later years she recanted the allegations, saying she had been forced to make them by her husband.<sup>[c]</sup> Prior to making the allegations, Gordon had been arrested for

assaulting her, and the couple divorced three years later.<sup>[XLII]</sup> By 2003, Jackson had forgiven his sister.<sup>[XLIII]</sup> In 2009, when recanting her 1993 statements to the broadcaster Barbara Walters, she said that Jackson had not been a pedophile and had never indulged in improper relations with a child.<sup>[xxx1]</sup>

## Lisa Marie Presley

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According to Chris Cadman, Jackson met singer Lisa Marie Presley in October 1974, during a Jackson 5 engagement at the Sahara Tahoe. Her father, Elvis Presley, was closing a two-week engagement at the Sahara Tahoe while the Jackson 5 were just about to begin one.<sup>[XLIV][XLV]</sup> In November 1992, Jackson was reconnected with Presley through a mutual friend, and they talked almost every day by telephone.<sup>[xxxii]</sup> As the abuse accusations became public, he became dependent on Presley for emotional support; she was concerned about his faltering health.<sup>[XLVI]</sup> She stated, "I believed that he didn't do anything wrong, and that he was being wrongly accused and, yes, I started falling for him. I wanted to save him. I felt that I could do it."<sup>[XLVII]</sup> She described him in one call as high, incoherent and delusional. He proposed to her over the phone in late 1993, saying, "If I asked you to marry me, would you do it?"<sup>[XLVIII]</sup> They divorced less than two years later.<sup>[XLIX]</sup> They maintained an on-and-off relationship for roughly 4 years after the divorce.

## Jackson's health

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Jackson took painkillers for his scalp surgeries following an accident while filming a Pepsi commercial in 1984, and became dependent on them to deal with the stress of the allegations.<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> Within a few months of the allegations becoming news, he lost approximately 10 pounds and stopped eating.<sup>[L]</sup> According to Jackson, he had a tendency to stop eating when "really upset or hurt" and his friend Elizabeth Taylor had to make him eat: "She took the spoon and would put it into my mouth." He said that he eventually became unconscious and had to be fed intravenously.<sup>[xxxiv]</sup>

While in Mexico City on November 8, 1993, in a court deposition unrelated to the alleged child abuse, Jackson appeared drowsy, lacked concentration, and slurred while speaking. He said he could not remember the dates of his album releases or the names of people he had worked with, and took several minutes to name some of his recent albums.<sup>[LI]</sup> On November 12, Jackson canceled the remainder of his tour and flew with Taylor and her husband to London. When Jackson arrived at the airport, he collapsed and was rushed to the home of Elton John's manager and afterward to a clinic. When he was searched for drugs on entry, 18 vials of medicine were found in a suitcase. Jackson booked the whole fourth floor of the clinic and was administered Valium to wean him from painkillers. While in the clinic, he took part in group and one-on-one therapy sessions.<sup>[LII][LIII]</sup>

On November 15, Jackson's lawyer, Bert Fields, spoke publicly of their last meeting in Mexico City and Jackson's painkiller addiction: "[Michael's] life was in danger if he continued taking these massive quantities of drugs. He was barely able to function adequately on an intellectual level."<sup>[xxxv][LIV][xxxiii]</sup> Fields said a U.S. drug rehabilitation center would not have the privacy Jackson wanted, and that

Jackson was not trying to evade investigation: "If Michael Jackson wanted an excuse to stay out of the United States, all he had to do is stay on his tour."<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> On November 23, Fields resigned from the case.<sup>[xiii]</sup>

## Jackson's response

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On December 22, 1993, Jackson responded to the accusations for the first time via satellite from Neverland Ranch. He denied all the allegations and stated his intent to prove his innocence. He accused the media of manipulating the allegations to "reach their own conclusions", and described the "dehumanizing" police search as "the most humiliating ordeal of my life".<sup>[xxxvi][xxxvii]</sup> On January 5, 1994, a few weeks before the settlement, Jackson gave a five-minute speech at the 26th NAACP Image Awards asserting his innocence and received a standing ovation. During the ceremony, one presenter had included Jackson in a list of names, calling him "Michael (Innocent Until Proven Guilty) Jackson".<sup>[xxxviii]</sup>

## Media reaction

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Most of the information available on the allegations was released (officially or unofficially) by the prosecution and unchallenged by Jackson. He was largely portrayed as guilty by the media, which used sensational headlines implying guilt when the content itself did not support the headline.<sup>[xxxix]</sup> Stories were purchased of his alleged criminal activity,<sup>[LV]</sup> police investigation material was leaked,<sup>[LVI]</sup> and unflattering photographs of Jackson were printed.<sup>[LVII]</sup>

Two weeks after the allegations were reported, the headline "Michael Jackson: The Curtain Closes" reflected the attitude of most tabloid media.<sup>[LVIII]</sup> The *New York Post* ran the headline "Peter Pan or pervert".<sup>[xl]</sup> *Hard Copy* ran a story stating it had acquired "new documents in the criminal investigation of Michael Jackson, and they are chilling; they contain the name of child movie actor Macaulay Culkin". In fact, the document stated that Culkin denied being abused by Jackson.<sup>[LIX]</sup>

Two tabloid media outlets bought confidential leaked documents from the LAPD for \$20,000.<sup>[LX]</sup> A number of Jackson's former employees—most of whom had worked at Neverland—sold stories which alleged prior sexual misconduct on Jackson's part, instead of reporting their claims to police. One couple asked for \$100,000, claiming that Jackson had sexually caressed Culkin. For a fee of \$500,000, they would also allege that Jackson put his hands down Culkin's pants. Culkin strongly denied the allegation and did so again in court during Jackson's 2005 trial.<sup>[LXI]</sup>

When Jackson left the US to go into drug rehabilitation, the *Daily Mirror* (UK) held a "Spot the Jacko" contest, offering readers a trip to Disney World if they could correctly predict where he would appear next.<sup>[xli]</sup> A *Daily Express* headline read "Drug treatment star faces life on the run", while a *News of the World* headline said Jackson was a fugitive. These tabloids also falsely alleged that Jackson had traveled to Europe to have cosmetic surgery that would make him unrecognizable.<sup>[LXII]</sup> Geraldo Rivera set up a mock trial, with a jury made up of audience members, even though Jackson had not been charged with a crime.<sup>[LXIII]</sup> A poll at the time, conducted by *A Current Affair*, found that nearly 75 percent of Americans believed Jackson was telling the truth.<sup>[LXIV][xlii]</sup>

# Lawsuit

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On September 14, 1993, Jordan Chandler and his parents filed a lawsuit<sup>[note 1]</sup> against Jackson.<sup>[xliii]</sup> The lawsuit claimed that Jackson had committed sexual battery, seduction, willful misconduct, intentional infliction of emotional distress, fraud and negligence.<sup>[xliv][xlv]</sup> In November, Jackson's lawyers asked the case be put on hold for as long as six years or until the criminal case was concluded.<sup>[xlvi][xlvii]</sup> Concerns about a civil trial during an ongoing criminal investigation, and prosecutors' access to plaintiffs' civil trial information, stemmed from Jackson's Fifth Amendment rights. Since two grand juries deemed there was insufficient evidence for criminal charges by the end of the investigation, the prosecution could have been able to form the elements of a case around the defense strategy in the trial, creating a situation akin to double jeopardy.<sup>[LXV][xlviii]</sup>

Superior Court Judge David M. Rothman ordered Jackson's deposition scheduled before the end of January 1994 but said he might reconsider if Jackson was indicted on criminal charges. Jackson agreed to be deposed on January 18. His attorneys said he was eager to testify, but also said they might oppose the deposition if criminal charges were filed or were still under consideration on his deposition date. They said if charges were filed, they would want the criminal trial to go first.<sup>[xlviii]</sup> However, when authorities notified Jackson's lawyers that they expected their investigation to continue at least through February, Jackson's team failed to win a delay of the civil case. Rothman denied the motion to delay the civil proceedings until the criminal investigation had been completed, and set March 21, 1994, as the trial start date.<sup>[xlix]</sup>

Pellicano said Chandler's negotiations had been an attempt to extort Jackson. To try to demonstrate this, he produced illicit recordings of his negotiations with Rothman. Illicit recordings are generally not admissible as evidence, but may be used in California where extortion is threatened. Jackson's lawyer Howard Weitzman turned over the tapes to the district attorney's office.<sup>[l]</sup>

On December 17, 1993, Rothman allowed the prosecutors to receive information from Jackson's lawyers and approved discovery information for media disclosure. Both Feldman's and Jackson's camps expressed concerns about Jackson's right to a fair trial being compromised by publicly discussing discovery results. Johnnie Cochran and Weitzman, attorneys representing Jackson, argued that investigators were trying to use the suit to advance their criminal investigation, a technique that should not be allowed.<sup>[li]</sup>

On January 24, 1994, prosecutors announced that they would not bring charges against Chandler for attempted extortion, as Jackson's camp had been slow to report an extortion claim to the police and had tried to negotiate a settlement for several weeks.<sup>[xviii]</sup> Chandler had made his settlement demand in early August 1993, and the Jackson camp had filed extortion charges against the Chandler camp in late August.<sup>[x]</sup> In the extortion investigation, a search warrant was never sought to search the homes and offices of Chandler and Barry Rothman. No grand jury convened when both men refused police interviews.<sup>[LXVI]</sup> In contrast, the police had searched Jackson's residences solely based on Jordan's allegations,<sup>[XIV][LXVII]</sup> and taken lengths to interview or intimidate witnesses.<sup>[xiv]</sup> Weitzman said they had not gone to the police earlier because "It was our hope that this would all go away. We tried to keep it as much in-house as we could."<sup>[lii]</sup>

## Settlement

Jackson's legal team met three times a week at Taylor's home to discuss the case.<sup>[LXVIII]</sup> Eventually, they agreed that Jackson was too sick to endure a lengthy trial and that he should settle out of court.<sup>[LXIX]</sup> The lawsuit was settled on January 25, 1994, with \$15,331,250 to be held in a trust fund for Jordan, \$1.5 million for each of his parents, and \$5 million for the family's lawyer, for a total of approximately \$23 million.<sup>[liii]</sup> According to a motion passed to Judge Melville in 2004, "the settlement was for global claims of negligence and the lawsuit was defended by Mr. Jackson's insurance carrier. The [carrier] negotiated and paid the settlement, over the protests of Mr. Jackson and his personal legal counsel."<sup>[d]</sup>

On January 29, 1994, the Associated Press reported that Jackson had requested his insurance company, Transamerica Insurance Group (TIG), contribute to the settlement. A lawyer for TIG, Jordan Harriman, had made a "one-time-only" offer to Jackson on January 13 to resolve his claim. Jackson refused that offer but further negotiations followed. Russ Wardrip, a TIG claims analyst, had sent a January 13 registered letter to Jackson's lawyer, Howard Weitzman:<sup>[liv][lv]</sup>

...acts of sexual activity do not constitute [accidental] bodily injury. Further, acts of sexual activity, especially those against a minor, are inherently intentional, wrongful and harmful. Coverage for such acts is precluded by [the] California Insurance Code.

According to Jackson's attorney Thomas Mesereau, Jackson's insurance company was "the source of the settlement amounts", as noted in a 2005 memorandum in *People v. Jackson*. The memorandum also noted that "an insurance carrier has the right to settle claims covered by insurance where it decides settlement is expedient and the insured may not interfere with nor prevent such settlements", as established by a number of precedents in California.<sup>[d]</sup> Defeating the right would involve convincing a court with the power to overrule the precedent that the earlier decision was either wrongly decided or more often, "clearly" wrong (depending on the criteria of the court) or the court must be convinced to distinguish the case. That is, to make the ruling narrower than that in the precedent due to some difference in facts between the current and precedent case while supporting the result reached in the earlier case.<sup>[lvi]</sup>

In 2004, Mesereau said: "People who intended to earn millions of dollars from [Jackson's] record and music promotions did not want negative publicity from these lawsuits interfering with their profits. Michael Jackson now regrets making these payments. These settlements were entered into with one primary condition—that condition was that Mr. Jackson never admitted any wrongdoing. [He] always denied doing anything wrong ... Mr. Jackson now realizes the advice he received was wrong."<sup>[lvii]</sup> Jackson explained why he had settled: "I wanted to go on with my life. Too many people had already been hurt. I want to make records. I want to sing. I want to perform again ... It's my talent. My hard work. My life. My decision."<sup>[LXX]</sup> He also wanted to avoid a "media circus".<sup>[lviii]</sup> Mesereau later said Jackson regretted settling.<sup>[lix]</sup>

The settlement cannot be used as evidence of guilt in future civil and criminal cases.<sup>[LXXI]</sup> In 1994, Larry Feldman said "nobody bought anybody's silence" with the civil settlement.<sup>[lx]</sup>

## Closure of investigation

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District Attorney Gil Garcetti said that the settlement did not affect criminal prosecution and that the investigation was ongoing.<sup>[lxi]</sup> Jordan Chandler was interviewed after the settlement by detectives seeking evidence of child molestation, but no criminal charges were filed.<sup>[LXXII]</sup> On May 2, 1994, the Santa Barbara County grand jury disbanded without indicting Jackson, while a Los Angeles County grand jury continued to investigate the sexual abuse allegations.<sup>[lxii][lxiii]</sup>

On April 11, 1994, the grand jury session in Santa Barbara was extended by 90 days, allowing DA Sneddon to gather more evidence. Prosecution sources said they were frustrated in their grand jury probe, failing to find direct evidence of the molestation charges.<sup>[lxiv]</sup> The final grand jury disbanded in July without returning an indictment against Jackson.<sup>[lxv]</sup>

The Chandlers stopped co-operating with the criminal investigation around July 6, 1994.<sup>[lxvi]</sup> Until that time, Jordan Chandler had indicated his possible willingness to testify according to prosecutors.<sup>[lxvii]</sup> The police never pressed criminal charges.<sup>[lxviii]</sup> Citing a lack of evidence without Jordan's testimony, the state closed its investigation on September 22, 1994.<sup>[lxviii]</sup> District attorney Sneddon and Lauren Weis, head of the county DA's Sex Crimes Unit, said that ending the investigation did not reflect any lack of faith in the alleged victim's credibility. The entire investigation involved two grand juries and more than 400 people interviewed over a period of 13 months.<sup>[ix][xliv]</sup>

Sneddon said several leads were explored which were later discovered to be false.<sup>[lxix]</sup> According to the grand juries, the evidence presented by the Santa Barbara police and the LAPD was not convincing enough to indict Jackson or subpoena him,<sup>[lxii]</sup> even though grand juries can indict the accused purely on hearsay evidence.<sup>[e]</sup> According to a 1994 report by *Variety*, a source in contact with the grand juries said that none of the witnesses had produced anything to directly implicate Jackson.<sup>[xlix]</sup> According to a 1994 report by *Showbiz Today*, the grand jurors claimed that "no damaging evidence was heard" and they "did not hear any damaging testimony" during the hearings.<sup>[f]</sup>

In February 1994, the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury convened to assess whether criminal charges should be filed. The Los Angeles County Grand Jury began in March 1994.<sup>[ix]</sup> By 1994 prosecution departments in California had spent \$2 million and convened two grand juries, but Jordan Chandler's allegations could not be corroborated.<sup>[LXXIII]</sup> In September, Sneddon and Garcetti admitted the 18-month investigation had produced no evidence against Jackson.<sup>[lxx]</sup> The FBI files on Michael Jackson, released after Jackson's death, also noted that the prosecution had no outstanding leads.<sup>[g]</sup>

## Aftermath

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A week after the settlement in January 1994, L.A. District Attorney Garcetti announced that he supported amending a law that prohibited sexual assault victims from being compelled to testify in criminal proceedings.<sup>[LXXIV]</sup> The amendment, introduced into the state assembly in February, would have immediately allowed Garcetti to compel Jordan Chandler's testimony.<sup>[lxxi]</sup>

On February 15, 1994, *PBS Frontline* aired the documentary *Tabloid Truth: The Michael Jackson Story* about the tabloid sensationalism, more preoccupied with selling papers than reporting an accurate narrative of the scandal. The documentary reported Jackson's housekeepers Mark and Faye Quindoy selling stories about Jackson for money, and bargaining for more money regarding child abuse allegations. They were depicted as untrustworthy. Phillip and Stella LeMarque, another pair of former employees to Jackson, sold a child abuse story to tabloids through pornographic film actor Paul Barresi, who once successfully sold a story to the *National Enquirer*. At the opportunity of the scandal, Barresi made a taped recording of alleged evidence and told the *Globe* that he intended to turn it over to the district attorney. The *Globe* and Barresi agreed on \$15 000 for his story. *Splash News* journalist Kevin Smith said, "A lot of people who claimed to have witnessed Jackson doing this, that or the other—they weren't going to the police first. Their main interest was money, and they would come to journalists who could give them money. So in those circumstances, journalists know more about what happened than the police do."<sup>[lxxii]</sup>

Three years later, Víctor Gutiérrez self-published a book on the relationship between Jordan Chandler and Jackson. Gutiérrez claimed that the book is based on a diary Jordan had kept at the time and included details of alleged sexual encounters with Jackson.<sup>[vi][lxxiii]</sup> According to German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung*, Gutiérrez attended meetings of North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), a group advocating the decriminalization of pedophilia and pederasty, as a reporter in the 1980s. He said the group thought of Jackson as "one of us" and they insisted that the relationship between Jordan and Jackson was romantic.<sup>[lxxiii]</sup>

In 1997, Jackson filed a civil suit against Gutiérrez for slander after the writer claimed that he had a tape of Jackson molesting his nephew Jeremy, son of Jermaine Jackson. The jury ruled in Jackson's favor, awarding him \$2.7 million. Gutiérrez fled to Chile after the suit.<sup>[lxxiii]</sup> Jackson's attorney Zia Modabber said: "Jurors told us that they not only wanted to compensate Mr. Jackson and punish Víctor Gutiérrez, but to send a message that they are tired of tabloids lying about celebrities for money."<sup>[lxxiv]</sup> Jackson also filed a \$100 million lawsuit against Diane Dimond after she appeared on KABC morning show *Ken and Barkley* to discuss Gutiérrez's alleged tape. After the report was broadcast, Jackson announced he would sue members of the media who "spread vicious lies and rumors about me in their attempts to make money, benefit their careers, sell papers or get viewers to watch their programs." It was dismissed in 1997.<sup>[lxxv][lxxvi]</sup>

Jordan Chandler legally emancipated himself from his parents in 1994, at age 14.<sup>[lxxvii]</sup> In 1996, Evan Chandler sued Jackson for around \$60 million, claiming Jackson had breached an agreement never to discuss the case "in his interview with Diane Sawyer and in the lyrics of a song from the *HIStory* album".<sup>[LXXV]</sup> In 1998, at age 18, Jordan filed a complaint against Jackson for the same reason.<sup>[h]</sup> The arbitrations were consolidated. In 1999, a court ruled in Jackson's favor and threw out the lawsuit.<sup>[vi]</sup> In 2006, Jordan accused his father of attacking him with a barbell, choking him and spraying his face with mace. The charges were dropped.<sup>[lxxviii]</sup> On November 5, 2009, 14 weeks after Jackson's death, Evan Chandler was found dead from suicide.<sup>[lxxix]</sup>

## Effect on Jackson's career

Jackson's commercial standing and public image declined in the wake of the allegations. The government of Dubai forbade him from performing in response to an anonymous pamphlet campaign that attacked him as immoral.<sup>[lxxx]</sup> Jackson backed out of a deal to create a song and video for the film *Addams Family Values*, returning an estimated \$5 million,<sup>[lxxxii]</sup> and a brand of fragrances was canceled because of Jackson's drug problems.<sup>[LXXVI]</sup> Jackson completed the video once planned for *Addams Family Values* and released it as *Ghosts* in 1996, with a framing story about an eccentric maestro who entertains children and is pursued by a bigoted local official.<sup>[LXXVII]</sup> On November 14, 1993, PepsiCo dropped their nine-year partnership with Jackson, causing some fans to boycott the company.<sup>[LXXVIII][lxxx]</sup> Jackson composed music for the video game *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*, but left the project and went uncredited, possibly due to the allegations.<sup>[lxxxii]</sup>

Jackson produced a special show for the premium cable network HBO, *For One Night Only*, to be recorded in front of a special invited audience at New York City's Beacon Theatre for broadcast in December 1995. The shows were canceled after Jackson collapsed at the theater on December 6 during rehearsals. Jackson was admitted overnight to Beth Israel Medical Center North. The shows were never rescheduled. The following year, Jackson began the HIStory World Tour. The only concerts in the US were two shows at the Aloha Stadium in Honolulu, Hawaii.<sup>[LXXIX]</sup>

Jackson's album *HIStory: Past, Present and Future, Book I*, released shortly after the allegations, "creates an atmosphere of paranoia," according to critic Stephen Thomas Erlewine. Its content focuses on the public struggles Jackson went through prior to its production. In the songs "Scream" and "Tabloid Junkie", Jackson expresses his anger and hurt at the media. In the ballad "Stranger in Moscow", he laments his "swift and sudden fall from grace".<sup>[lxxxiii][lxxxiv]</sup> In "D.S.", he attacks a character identified as Tom Sneddon, the District Attorney who requested his strip search. Jackson describes the person as a white supremacist who wanted to "get my ass, dead or alive". Sneddon said: "I have not, shall we say, done him the honor of listening to it, but I've been told that it ends with the sound of a gunshot."<sup>[lxxxv]</sup>

According to *The Washington Post*, the O.J. Simpson trial overshadowed Jackson's scandal. A source from the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office said the scandal took "a back seat" once the Simpson case emerged.<sup>[xxi]</sup> In 2021, a judge noted that Jackson had earned no money from his image and likeness between 2006 and 2008, and said this demonstrated the effect of the allegations on his career until his death.<sup>[lxxxvi]</sup>

## Further allegations

### 2005 trial

On December 18, 2003, Jackson was charged with seven counts of child sexual abuse and two counts of administering an intoxicating agent to commit a child sexual abuse felony against Gavin Arvizo.<sup>[lxxxvii]</sup> Jackson denied the allegations. Sneddon again led the prosecution.<sup>[lxxxviii]</sup> The *People v. Jackson* trial began in Santa Maria, California, on January 31, 2005.<sup>[lxxxix]</sup> The judge allowed testimony about past allegations, including the 1993 case, to establish whether the defendant had a propensity to commit certain crimes.<sup>[lviii][xc]</sup> However, Jordan Chandler left the country to avoid

testifying. Thomas Mesereau, Jackson's defense attorney, later said: "The prosecutors tried to get [Chandler] to show up and he wouldn't. If he had, I had witnesses who were going to come in and say he told them it never happened and that he would never talk to his parents again for what they made him say."<sup>[lxxvii]</sup>

June Chandler testified that she had not spoken to her son in 11 years. During her testimony, she claimed that she could not remember being counter-sued by Jackson and that she had never heard of her own attorney. She also said she never witnessed any molestation. Jackson was found not guilty of all 14 charges on June 13, 2005.<sup>[lxxvii]</sup>

## Posthumous allegations

See Michael Jackson#Posthumous child sexual abuse allegations

# Timeline of the allegations between the Chandler family and Michael Jackson

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- July 8, 1993 – David Schwartz tapes a couple of long telephone conversations he had with Evan Chandler in which Chandler threatens to "destroy" Jackson's career with the help of a carefully planned plot and people who are only waiting for his phone call to set everything in motion if the star refuses to communicate with him and refuses to give him what he wants.<sup>[x][LXXX]</sup>
- July 9, 1993 – Anthony Pellicano meets Jordan in Jackson's Century City condo without the singer being present. He asks the boy very specific questions about whether he has ever been molested or inappropriately touched by Jackson. Chandler denies all accusations.<sup>[LXXXI]</sup>
- July 14–15, 1993 – Chandler's lawyer calls Beverly Hills psychiatrist Dr. Mathis Abrams and presents him with a hypothetical situation. In reply and without having met either Jordan Chandler or his parents, Abrams sends **Roth**man a two-page letter in which he states that "reasonable suspicion would exist that sexual abuse may have occurred".<sup>[LXXXII]</sup>
- July 16, 1993 – After receiving the letter from psychiatrist Dr. Abrams, Evan Chandler allegedly receives a confession from his son detailing abuse from Jackson.<sup>[LXXXII]</sup>
- August 4, 1993 – Evan Chandler seeks a \$20 million settlement in return for not suing without informing law enforcement agencies of the abuse that he later claimed to have taken place. Jackson however refuses to pay and in late August sues Evan for extortion.<sup>[x]</sup>
- August 4, 1993 – At a meeting at the Westwood Marquis Hotel, Evan Chandler and his son Jordan met Michael Jackson and Anthony Pellicano without Evan's lawyer, Barry **Roth**man, present. According to Pellicano, Evan greeted Jackson with a hug and then pulled out a letter from Dr. Mathis Abrams and read its allegations of child molestation aloud. The encounter concluded with Evan pointing at Jackson and declaring, "I'm going to ruin you."<sup>[LXXXIII]</sup>
- August 9–13, 1993 – Evan Chandler and his legal team make various counter offers hoping to secure a payment from Jackson, prior to public accusations of sexual abuse.<sup>[LXXXIV][xci]</sup>
- August 17, 1993 – Jordan Chandler is the first to tell a psychiatrist about sexual assault, which is reported to Child Welfare Services and prosecutor Thomas W. Sneddon Jr. begins an investigation.
- August 24, 1993 – After being rejected of various offers from Jackson and his legal team, the Chandler's accusations towards Jackson are made public.<sup>[LXXXV]</sup>

- August 27, 1993 – Prosecutors raid Neverland Ranch and other places of residency while Jackson was on tour, but no leads were found as the investigators ruled that there was no medical evidence or physical evidence. Additionally hundreds of children were investigated but all of them stated no abuse or improper behavior had taken place.<sup>[iv]</sup>
- September 1993 – Evan Chandler files a civil suit demanding \$30 million from Jackson due to alleged damages and harm caused towards himself and his family.<sup>[LXXXVI]</sup>
- November 1993 – Jackson requests that the civil trial be postponed until after the Criminal hearing is completed due to a violation of his civil rights, under the circumstances of having to defend himself under double jeopardy. This motion was denied.<sup>[xcii]</sup>
- December 1993 – Prosecutor Tom Sneddon files a strip search on Jackson based on the drawing obtained by Jordan Chandler. Prosecutors sought out Jackson's doctors and family inquiring about the possibility the singer had altered his physical appearance so as not to match Jordan's description.<sup>[xciii][xxiv]</sup>
- January 25, 1994 – The civil lawsuit is settled out of court between Jackson and the Chandler family. The total amount paid to the Chandlers is \$15,331,250, The document shows that the Chandlers dropped the child molestation allegations from their complaint with Jackson's settlement being filed over claims of negligence. It was later revealed that this settlement did not prevent the Chandlers from testifying in the criminal case.<sup>[xciv][lxi]</sup>
- January–June 1994 – The prosecution continues to investigate Jackson, Jordan continues to cooperate with the criminal investigation.<sup>[lxi]</sup> By the end of this period multiple grand juries had been called however jurors remarked that no damaging evidence was heard against Jackson. "The [Santa Barbara] grand jury in Michael Jackson's case was dismissed and one juror said he heard no evidence against [Jackson]... Another juror told CNN that he heard no evidence against him [Jackson] during the hearing."<sup>[lxv]</sup>
- August 1994 – The prosecution questions whether or not to continue with the criminal investigation into Jackson as FBI documents detail that at the time they still had not produced any clues regarding potential abuse or criminal activity on his behalf.<sup>[g]</sup>
- September 1994 – After a year, with over 400 witnesses called during the initial investigation and 30 more later in front of grand juries, the investigation was closed. A few potential leads were found, but all turned out to be false.<sup>[xcv]</sup>

## Notes

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1. The lawsuit is distinguished from the criminal investigation, which happened simultaneously. The ending of a lawsuit does not preclude the continuation of an investigation.

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