

Man: Jackson hired him to adopt boys

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) - A former associate suing Michael Jackson for \$1.6 million suddenly claimed on the witness stand last Friday that he once was dispatched to help the pop star adopt boys in Brazil, but the singer's attorney denounced the story as a smear.

Even the lawyer for former Jackson associate F. Marc Schaffel said he was shocked when Schaffel blurted out the claim while being questioned about his background in the gay pornography business.

"It's not really relevant to this case," Schaffel's attorney Howard King said outside court. "I thought we were not going to go there. We've tried to be upstanding."

Jackson's lawyer, Thomas Mundell, said he had never heard the allegation during all the pretrial investigations.

"It was an effort to smear Mr. Jackson with a remark that could be interpreted to hurt him in light of the case against him last year," Mundell said. Jackson was acquitted of child molesta-

tion charges last year in Santa Maria.

Schaffel is seeking \$1.6 million from Jackson, down from the \$3.8 million his lawsuit originally claimed he was owed for unpaid loans, royalties and other debts.

Schaffel was being questioned about his personal ties in Brazil when he denied that he had been on a trip to recruit talent for gay videos.

"No, I've not used any Latin models," Schaffel said.

Mundell then asked if he had an interest in a company known as Latinboys.

Schaffel bristled and said he did not, then blurted out, "The main purpose of my trip was Mr. Jackson wanted to adopt some boys."

He had testified earlier that Jackson sent him to Brazil in 2001 to deliver \$300,000 to a "Mr. X" in Argentina and said he went to Brazil to withdraw the money from a personal account he had there.

But Schaffel never disclosed what the mission was about, and, in a videotaped deposition of Jackson that

was played Friday, the pop star denied that he ever sent Schaffel to deliver money to Argentina.

He was asked, "Have you ever asked Mr. Schaffel to make payments to third parties that you didn't want anybody else in the world to know about?"

Jackson answered "No."

"Have you ever asked Mr. Schaffel to pay \$300,000 to a family in Buenos Aires?" asked King.

Jackson, appearing taken aback, laughed and said, "No."

Also Friday, the singer's defense questioned entertain-

ment attorney Raul Perez, who represented Schaffel to record companies in the effort to release Jackson's ill-fated charity recording "What More Can I Give."

He said he was in charge of obtaining releases for some 40 artists who participated in the record and a Spanish-language version. But he said Sony, which had to sign off on the release, balked at Schaffel's involvement.

"This was a major record, with every pop star at the time," Perez said. "I don't think Sony was happy that a person no one ever heard of

named Marc Schaffel was the producer. ...There was always a sense of how the heck did Michael Jackson put this person in charge of this record?"

He indicated that once it was discovered that Schaffel's background was in pornography, the project was doomed.

Schaffel's suit claims expenses and an ownership interest in the record. But in a video deposition Jackson was adamant that Schaffel had no rights to the record because Jackson wrote the song and it was his creative product.

On the videotape Jackson also professed little memory of major financial transactions involving Schaffel and said he thought any money Schaffel gave him was his own, not Schaffel's.

"I would never ask him for his money," Jackson said. "That's ridiculous. I would never."

He also laughed when King suggested that Schaffel gave him \$375,000 to go shopping.

"It sounds spoiled, but it doesn't sound like me," Jackson said. "Give me \$300,000 to go shopping? That's not me."

Reggae

(Continued from Page 8)

announcement of the cancellation.

Earlier this week, the concert organizer rejected the anti-gay lyrics but said including the artists would help reach a larger audience thanks to the popularity of their beat-driven dancehall music.

"By both artists agreeing to perform at an HIV/AIDS prevention concert in 2006 shows they have recognized the devastation this disease has had on their communities and that they want to effect some positive change," Canelli said.

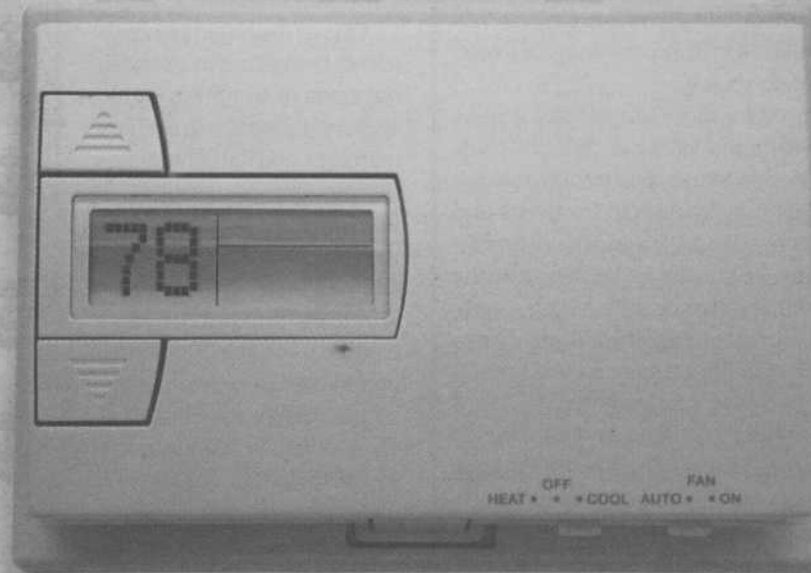
He added that the artists, who are not being paid, agreed before the protests not to use any "potentially offensive lyrics" at the show.

In statements earlier this week, T.O.K. said it had "matured over the years," and Beenie Man said, "AIDS is an epidemic that doesn't discriminate. It's not a gay or a straight thing, it is a fight for life."



RWANDA'S SAVIOR

Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr., left, recently met with Paul Rusesabagina, the man who inspired the movie "Hotel Rwanda," in his Washington office. Rusesabagina was responsible for saving more than one thousand of his countrymen during the Rwandan genocide of the 1990s.



Don't touch it.
We're not running an ice rink here.

Keep your thermostat set at 78°. You'll save energy and save up to 25% on your power bill. Visit nevadapower.com.


Nevada Power.
We're customers too.