

Jackson to release controversial video of journalist

By Micheal McDonough
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — The makers of a documentary that dealt with Michael Jackson's controversial relationship with children defended the film Monday and said attempts by the King of Pop to discredit it were "clumsy and desperate."

Jackson last week said he felt "betrayed" by journalist Martin Bashir, who expressed concern about Jackson's treatment of his three children in voice-overs in the documentary.

The film showed Jackson dangling his infant son over the fourth-floor balcony of a hotel in

Berlin. The 90-minute program also caused controversy because Jackson said he sometimes lets children sleep in his bed.

A statement released in London on Jackson's behalf late Sunday said Jackson is set to release a video of Bashir, showing the reporter praising Jackson's skills as a parent.

Bell Yard Communications said Bashir was filmed during the making of the documentary.

"The film shows extraordinary scenes of Martin Bashir praising the way Michael treats children and commenting on how good a father he is," the statement said.

Program makers Granada dismissed the video as an attempt to discredit Bashir and said it was

"clumsy and desperate." It said Bashir was aware he was being filmed as he made the documentary and had "nothing to hide."

Granada said Bashir's documentary was "candid, revealing and honest. There is nothing misleading about it, and no lies."

Jackson's British-based lawyer said Sunday the video, no more than five minutes long, would be released within 24 hours, Britain's Press Association reported.

Jackson again denied in a statement by his lawyers that he molested a boy who had stayed at his home in 1993. No charges were filed at the time and Jackson reached a financial settlement with the boy's family.

"I have never, and would never, harm a child. It sickens me that people have written things that portray me as a child abuser," Jackson was quoted as saying.

The statement added that Jackson chose to pay a "considerable" settlement to the boy's family "to avoid being subjected to a media circus."

In the Bashir documentary, Jackson said he had slept in a bed with "many children," including actor Macaulay Culkin and his brother, Kieran.

"When you say 'bed,' you're thinking sexual," the singer said. "It's not sexual, we're going to sleep. I tucked them in. ... It's very charming, it's very sweet."

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