# Mickey Rourke faces backlash over offensive remarks on Celebrity Big Brother



In the latest series of Celebrity Big Brother, which returned to ITV in 2023 after its original run ended in 2018, the show has come under significant scrutiny following alarming remarks made by contestant Mickey Rourke. The 70-year-old American actor, whose glory days in Hollywood have faded, has drawn condemnation for what many are calling profoundly offensive comments directed at JoJo Siwa, a 21-year-old influencer and pop artist known for her advocacy of LGBTQ+ rights.

During a conversation with Siwa, Rourke joked that she "wouldn't be gay anymore" if he remained in the house with her for four days. He further compounded the situation by stating, "I'm going to vote the lesbian out real quick,” and later referred to going outside to smoke a “fag,” which is a term commonly seen as derogatory in this context. Reports suggest that he then said, “I’m not talking to you,” when addressing Siwa.

This incident marks the second major controversy surrounding Rourke within a mere few days, as he faced backlash previously for allegedly "ogling" and "groping" the show’s presenter, AJ Odudu. Critics point to these actions as indicative of a troubling attitude the actor has displayed since joining the reality series, where he has often appeared disorientated and disconnected from the proceedings.

ITV responded to the backlash with a statement, indicating that all housemates undergo training in Respect and Inclusion, in addition to receiving comprehensive briefings from the Big Brother Senior team. The purpose of this training is to prepare them for communal living and establish expectations for behaviour and language. The network affirmed that all contestants are monitored around the clock and that instances of inappropriate conduct are addressed as they arise.

Despite these assurances, Rourke's outburst has renewed debate over the ethical implications of reality television, particularly following promises made by producers that past transgressions, such as the racial abuse faced by Indian contestant Shilpa Shetty during the 2005 series, would not be repeated. Many view Rourke’s comments as a setback, casting doubt on the authenticity of those commitments and suggesting that past failings are still reflected in the current programming.

Critics have voiced strong opinions regarding ITV’s decision to include Rourke in the cast. They argue that his conduct necessitated immediate action during the episode, with many calling for his removal from the show rather than allowing him to remain in the house post-incident. Some believe that even a reprimand from the series' "Big Brother" figure, which reportedly occurred, is insufficient and that ultimately, the incident highlights ongoing issues regarding accountability in televised reality formats.

Others have expressed disillusionment with Celebrity Big Brother, suggesting that the show may need to reconsider its format entirely. Earlier in the week, Independent columnist Katie Rosseinsky noted the series' grim atmosphere and suggested there were growing concerns over its revival, asking whether it should be allowed to continue in the future.

As the series progresses, there are expectations that Siwa may become instrumental in determining Rourke's fate within the house, having been granted the power to nominate housemates for eviction. Regardless of the resolution, the recent events have reignited critical discussions surrounding the responsibility of networks in curating content that fosters inclusivity and respect, especially on high-profile platforms.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.nbcrightnow.com/lifestyles/entertainment/celebrity-big-brother-mickey-rourke-uses-gay-slur-toward-jojo-siwa-gets-formal-warning/article_30a15d4f-fb25-5232-9c41-d2ffce2fdd23.html> - This article corroborates Mickey Rourke's use of offensive language towards JoJo Siwa in Celebrity Big Brother, including a gay slur and other derogatory comments, which drew significant backlash.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrity_Big_Brother_(UK)> - This Wikipedia page provides information on Celebrity Big Brother's history, including its return to ITV in 2023 after a previous run ended in 2018, which supports the context of the recent controversy.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JoJo_Siwa> - This Wikipedia page details JoJo Siwa's background as an influencer and pop artist known for her advocacy of LGBTQ+ rights, which is relevant to her interaction with Mickey Rourke.
* <https://www.itv.com/news/2023-01-27/celebrity-big-brother-returns-to-itv-after-five-year-absence> - This ITV news article announces the return of Celebrity Big Brother and could provide context on ITV's approach to reviving the show, although it does not address the controversy directly.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/celebrity-big-brother-2023-contestants-lineup-b2283335.html> - This Independent article discusses the lineup and issues surrounding Celebrity Big Brother's 2023 season, which aligns with concerns about the show's content and format.