

MPBalekar

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

CONTEMPT PETITION NO. 195 OF 2026

Agastya Kapoor S/o Mahendrapal
Kapoor ... Petitioner
V/s.
Elghtyeight Pictures Media and
Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. and Ors. ... Respondents

Priyanka Pandit a/w Shailesh Rai for the petitioner.
Vimal Sanghavi for the respondents.

CORAM : AMIT BORKAR, J.

DATED : MARCH 25, 2026

P.C.:

1. The petitioner has come before this Court with a grievance that there is willful disobedience of Clause (vi) and Clause (vii) of the judgment and order dated 16 September 2025. The substance of the allegation is that the respondents have not completed the process within the time indicated, and further, that the procedure adopted is not in accordance with the principles of natural justice. However, it is necessary to notice the sequence of events which led to filing of this petition. The petitioner had already approached the Industrial Court with similar grievances. The Industrial Court, after considering the material placed before it, has recorded a prima facie view that there is no sufficient material on record which would justify making a report to this Court for initiating contempt action. It therefore directed the petitioner to approach this Court.

Even after such observation, the petitioner has chosen to file the present petition alleging willful disobedience.

2. At this stage, it becomes necessary to read the directions issued by this Court in proper perspective. Clause (vi) directs the respondents and the Internal Committee to complete the process within three months. Clause (vii) requires that the procedure to be followed shall be guided by the principles of natural justice. These directions are in the nature of guidance to ensure fairness and timely completion. They are not to be read in a rigid or mechanical manner.

3. When the Court directs that a process should be completed within a particular time, such direction has to be understood reasonably. In practical working, some amount of delay can occur due to administrative reasons, availability of parties, or other circumstances beyond immediate control. Every delay cannot be treated as deliberate or intentional. For an action to amount to willful disobedience, there must be clear material to show that the respondents have consciously and deliberately chosen not to follow the order. Mere lapse of time, without anything more, cannot lead to such conclusion. In the present case, there is no material placed before this Court to indicate that the delay, if any, is intentional or with a view to defeat the order of this Court.

4. So far as the allegation regarding violation of principles of natural justice is concerned, that issue stands on a different footing. If the petitioner is aggrieved by the manner in which the disciplinary inquiry is conducted, or if it is shown that reasonable

opportunity is not given, or that bias has affected the proceedings, the law provides an appropriate remedy. The petitioner can challenge such inquiry or its outcome before the competent forum. However, every procedural irregularity or alleged violation of natural justice does not automatically amount to contempt of Court. Contempt jurisdiction is limited. It is meant to address clear and willful disobedience of Court's orders. It cannot be converted into a forum for examining the correctness of disciplinary proceedings.

5. In view of the above discussion, this Court finds that the essential requirement of establishing willful disobedience is not satisfied. The petitioner has other remedies available in law for redressal of his grievances. The present proceedings, therefore, do not warrant continuation. The contempt petition accordingly stands disposed of.

(AMIT BORKAR, J.)