

Adverse Media Monitoring Report

2024-06-11

Entity information

Entity ID	Type	Name	Year of birth	Citizenship	Resid
—	Individual	Britney Spears	1981	United States	—, U

Needs Investigation

Reviewer Comment

No comment provided.

Batch ID	Transaction ID	Media Provider
f5df95c8-d2f5-4f8e-946e-96daba6caaaa	7f995397-04e1-4b27-8ac8-348d60d05891	Google

Overview of search results - 10

[Britney Spears under investigation for alleged battery](#)

August 20, 2021 · [Google](#) · Needs Investigation (Score 0.62) [theguardian.com](#)

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Reviewed by Auto on June 11, 2024

Britney Spears under investigation for alleged battery

... Britney Spears is under investigation for alleged battery after a staff member at her home accused the singer of striking her, US authorities have said ...
... Reports taken by police would be handed over to prosecutors for consideration, the sheriff's office said. No further details were given ...

[Britney Spears busted for driving without possession of license, proof of insurance](#)

October 10, 2023 · [Google](#) · Needs Investigation (Score 0.61) [pagesix.com](#)

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[Britney Spears's Father Calls for Inquiry Into Singer's Control Claims \(Published 2021\)](#)

June 30, 2021 · [Google](#) · Needs Investigation (Score 0.56) [nytimes.com](#)

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Britney Spears's Father Calls for Inquiry Into Singer's Control Claims (Published 2021)

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[The Surveillance Apparatus That Surrounded Britney Spears \(Published 2021\)](#)

September 25, 2021 · [Google](#) · [Needs Investigation](#) (Score 0.53) [nytimes.com](#)

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... Alex Vlasov, the employee, supported his claims with emails, text messages and audio recordings he was privy to in his nine years as an executive assistant and a manager for Black Box, the security firm. He came forward for a new documentary by The New York Times, "Controlling Britney Spears," which was released on Friday.

[Britney Spears' Reproductive Freedom is a Disability Rights Issue | ACLU](#)

June 25, 2021 · [Google](#) · [Needs Investigation](#) (Score 0.46) [aclu.org](#)

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Britney Spears' Reproductive Freedom is a Disability Rights Issue | ACLU

... There were many shocking moments in Britney Spears' 24-minute statement calling for an end to her conservatorship, delivered Wednesday to a Los Angeles prosecutor who has lived under a conservatorship chiefly overseen by her father for 13 years, described grueling labor demands, constant surveillance, being cut off from friends and family ...

... Fans, onlookers, and the media seized on this revelation, many expressing shock and dismay that a conservator could require a 39-year-old woman to use birth control to keep an IUD in under her conservatorship?" asked one horrified Twitter user. "How is any of this legal/okay?" ...

[Britney Spears's Conservatorship Nightmare](#)

July 3, 2021 · [Google](#) · [False Positive](#) (Score 1.00) [newyorker.com](#)

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Britney Spears's Conservatorship Nightmare

... On June 22nd, Britney Spears's management team started getting nervous. Spears, who is thirty-nine, has spent the past thirteen years living under a conservatorship where her personal, economic, and legal decision-making power is ceded to others. Called a guardianship in most states, the arrangement is intended for people who cannot care for themselves. Since the establishment of Spears's conservatorship, she has released four albums, headlined a global tour that grossed a hundred and thirty-one million dollars, and had a Las Vegas residency ...

... Jamie had become close to Lou Taylor, a business manager who shares the Spears family's Christian faith and whose husband is a pastor at an evangelical church. In putting Lindsay Lohan under a conservatorship, according to Lohan's father; in a recent interview, Courtney Love said that Taylor tried to wrest control over her from Charles Harder, a lawyer representing Taylor, said, "At no time did Ms. Taylor ever make any effort to put anyone into a conservatorship. Not Britney Spears. Not Lindsay Taylor, sources present at the time said, began attempting to contact Spears, efforts that Spears rebuffed ...

[Britney Spears: Exploitation and Human Trafficking](#)

November 8, 2023 · [Google](#) · [False Positive](#) (Score 0.88) [laurieruettimann.com](#)

Reviewed by on June 11, 2024

Britney Spears: Exploitation and Human Trafficking

... Over the weekend, I went on a road trip and listened to "Britney Spears: The Woman in Me," narrated by Michelle Williams. ...

... You might be skeptical. Was Britney Spears truly a victim of being trafficked by her father? Is that too strong of a term? ...

[The Only Thing Comparable Is Sex Trafficking': Top Most Shocking Court Statements From Britney Spears](#)

[Google](#) · False Positive (Score 0.61) [cbsnews.com](#)

Reviewed by on June 11, 2024

'The Only Thing Comparable Is Sex Trafficking': Top Most Shocking Court Statements From Britney Spears

... **LOS ANGELES (CBSLA)** - Britney Spears asked a judge Wednesday to end the court conservatorship that has controlled her life and money since 2008 ...
... Britney Spears ...

[Britney Spears says all her jewelry has been stolen](#)

May 28, 2024 · [Google](#) · False Positive (Score 0.59) [wsaz.com](#)

Reviewed by on June 11, 2024

Britney Spears says all her jewelry has been stolen

... (Gray News) - (TMX) - Britney Spears says all her jewelry has been stolen ...
... It's unclear whether Spears reported the theft to authorities ...

[How Conservatorship Threatens Britney Spears' Civil Rights | ACLU](#)

August 20, 2020 · [Google](#) · False Positive (Score 0.45) [aclu.org](#)

False positive. Non-adverse media.

Reviewed by Auto on June 11, 2024

How Conservatorship Threatens Britney Spears' Civil Rights | ACLU

... **Q: Can you briefly explain Britney Spears' situation, and the implications of her conservatorship case?** ...

... We don't know if Britney Spears identifies herself as a person with disabilities, or what, if any, diagnoses she has received. But by virtue of being under a conservatorship, she has been determined that she is disabled, and has stripped away her civil rights because of that disability. So it's inherently a civil rights/civil liberties issue ...

Article details

Britney Spears under investigation for alleged battery

August 20, 2021 · [Google](#) · Needs Investigation (Score 0.62) [theguardian.com](#)

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[alleged](#) [abusive](#) [accusation](#) [authorities](#) [officers](#) [prosecutors](#)

Britney Spears under investigation for alleged battery

Britney Spears is under investigation for alleged battery after a staff member at her home accused the singer of striking her, US authorities have said.

Police officers attended Spears's home in southern California after the staff member reported the dispute on Monday night, the Ventura county sheriff's office said. No reports taken by police would be handed over to prosecutors for consideration, the sheriff's office said. No further details were given.

Spears's lawyer, Mathew Rosengart, said in an email that the investigation was "overblown sensational tabloid fodder, nothing more than a manufactured 'he said she said' no striking and obviously no injury whatsoever".

"Anyone can make an accusation, but this should have been closed immediately," he said.

Spears has a home in Thousand Oaks, about 40 miles (64km) west of Los Angeles.

She hired Rosengart last month as she seeks to regain greater control of her life 13 years into a court conservatorship that has power over her money and affairs. She says the arrangement is "abusive".

Rosengart has made his first priority removing her father, James Spears, from his role as conservator of her finances.

James Spears said in a court filing last week that he planned to step down from the role, but gave no timetable.

Britney Spears busted for driving without possession of license, proof of insurance

October 10, 2023 · [Google](#) · [Needs Investigation](#) (Score 0.61) [pagesix.com](#)

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violation fake concerned concerning fine officers preceded violations toxic

Britney Spears busted for driving without possession of license, proof of insurance

Police pulled over Britney Spears last month and discovered that she was driving without a license, according to court records obtained by Page Six Tuesday. The California Highway Patrol found that the pop icon, 41, allegedly committed two infractions on Sept. 10 and has a balance of \$1,140 due as a result. Per court records, Spears was issued a violation for not having a valid license in her possession and a second violation for failing to provide an officer with proof of insurance. However, her attorney Mathew Rosengart tells Page Six exclusively Tuesday, "Britney at all times had a license and insurance; this is the functional equivalent of a passport. A second insider also confirms that the "Piece of Me" singer "had and has insurance and a license." Britney Spears was pulled over by police while driving her car in September. @CelebCandidly / MEGA The pop star allegedly did not have a "valid" license on her, per court records. Britney Spears/Instagram Spears' freedom to drive her own car was reinstated only a few months prior to her controversial conservatorship being terminated in November 2021. In an explosive court testimony in June of that same year, she told Judge Brenda Penny, "All I want is to own my money and for this to end and for my boyfriend to be pointing out the controlling measures that her father and former conservator, Jamie Spears, placed on her. There is an "appearance" and "due date" listed for the "Toxic" singer for Oct. 24 – the same date her highly anticipated memoir, "The Woman In Me," is set to be released. Sources tell Page Six that Spears does have car insurance despite the violations. Instagram/@britneyspears However, a source clarifies to Page Six exclusively that there is no actual court appearance and that any outstanding payments can be made online. Despite her having a major book release that day, Page Six exclusively reported in September that the Princess of Pop won't be tied up with promotional press interviews. A source told us at the time that she has had "offers" for sit-down interviews, but she "doesn't want to do anything." Spears is due in court on Oct. 24, the same date her memoir is set to be released. Instagram/@britneyspears Spears's run-in with cops due to a traffic violation preceded a home visit from officers later in the month. Page Six confirmed in late September that police visited the "Circus" singer at her Thousand Oaks, Calif., mansion on Sept. 27 after a concerning video of her dancing. **For more Page Six you love...**

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"Somebody close to Britney had seen the video posted on social media, where she's dancing and twirling with knives in her hands, and they were really concerned for her safety. Captain Dean Worthy of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office previously told us of the person who placed the call. Spears insisted multiple times that the knives in her viral video were fake. Britney Spears / Instagram However, after police performed a wellness check, Spears's security let them know via an intercom that the Grammy winner was "fine" and "nothing was going on." Spears then took to Instagram to speak out on the entire ordeal, admitting that she knew she "spooked" her fans with her worrisome video but insisted that they were not real knives. She added, "These are not real knives. No one needs to worry or call the police. I'm trying to imitate one of my favorite performers Shakira ... a performance I was inspired by."

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June 30, 2021 · [Google](#) · [Needs Investigation](#) (Score 0.56) [nytimes.com](#)

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abused allegations

Britney Spears's Father Calls for Inquiry Into Singer's Control Claims (Published 2021)

James P. Spears, the father of Britney Spears and the man who has long had a leading role in overseeing his daughter's affairs, on Tuesday called for an investigation into a week that she had been abused under her conservatorship, including being made to perform and take medication against her will. The court filings on behalf of Mr. Spears followed the singer's first detailed public statement in 13 years about the complex legal arrangement that oversees her personal life. She called for an end to the conservatorship without having to undergo a mental evaluation. In her remarks at the hearing on June 23, which were broadcast in the courtroom and streamed online, Ms. Spears placed the blame for how she said she had been treated on caretakers and family, mentioning her father specifically. Now, lawyers for Mr. Spears have requested an evidentiary hearing and called into question the actions of both Ms. Spears's current personal conservator and court-appointed lawyer. The court critical that the Court confirm whether or not Ms. Spears's testimony was accurate in order to determine what corrective actions, if any, need to be taken." The filings, made late Tuesday in Los Angeles and obtained by The New York Times, continued: "It is also imperative for the proper functioning of conservatorship proceedings that all parties be provided a full and fair opportunity to respond to allegations and claims asserted against them."

Mr. Spears, known as Jamie, currently oversees his daughter's finances. He temporarily stepped down as a conservator of her person in 2019. Credit... Valerie Maco Images

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The Surveillance Apparatus That Surrounded Britney Spears (Published 2021)

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authority

cybersecurity

protect

violation

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Alex Vlasov, the employee, supported his claims with emails, text messages and audio recordings he was privy to in his nine years as an executive assistant and operator for Black Box, the security firm. He came forward for a new documentary by The New York Times, "Controlling Britney Spears," which was released on Friday.

Recording conversations in a private place and mirroring text messages without the consent of both parties can be a violation of the law. It is unclear if the court overseeing conservatorship was aware of or had approved the surveillance.

Mr. Vlasov's account, and his trove of materials, create the most detailed portrait yet of what Ms. Spears's life has been like under the conservatorship for the past 13 years. The relentless surveillance operation had helped several people linked to the conservatorship — primarily her father, James P. Spears — control nearly every aspect of her life. "It really reminded me of somebody that was in prison," said Mr. Vlasov, 30. "And security was put in a position to be the prison guards essentially."

In response to detailed questions from The Times, a lawyer for Mr. Spears issued a statement: "All of his actions were well within the parameters of the authority conferred. All actions were done with the knowledge and consent of Britney, her court-appointed attorney, and/or the court. Jamie's record as conservator — and the court's approval of his actions — are themselves."

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laws

courts

abuses

concern

concerning

invasive

lost

offensive

plaintiff

prisons

protective

seized

Britney Spears' Reproductive Freedom is a Disability Rights Issue | ACLU

UPDATE: After 13 years, Britney's conservatorship finally ended in November 2021, restoring her right to make decisions about her own life. But there are still over 1 million people living under some form of conservatorship or guardianship in the U.S. — people who deserve access to their civil liberties, too.

There were many shocking moments in Britney Spears' 24-minute statement calling for an end to her conservatorship, delivered Wednesday to a Los Angeles probate court. Spears, who has lived under a conservatorship chiefly overseen by her father for 13 years, described grueling labor demands, constant surveillance, being cut off from friends and family, and more. As Spears made her case for the judge, one startling detail stood out amidst the laundry list of abuses: Although she would like to have children and be married, she said, "because they don't want me to be able to have children."

Fans, onlookers, and the media seized on this revelation, many expressing shock and dismay that a conservator could require a 39-year-old woman to use birth control. "How is any of this legal/okay?" asked one horrified Twitter user.

Unfortunately, losing your reproductive freedom because you are in a conservatorship is very often legal. When a court puts a person under a conservatorship or guardianship, it strips that person's right to make their own choices. And often, that includes reproductive choices. Even though a conservatorship is a highly invasive, severe loss of rights, courts routinely, and almost always allow them to continue permanently.

Spears' experience is part of a long history of people with disabilities — most often people of color — being forcibly sterilized, forced to end pregnancies, or losing the ability to have children. Thanks to Spears' large platform and following, her demands to be freed from her conservatorship have been heard. But there are untold thousands of people living under a conservatorship, who have lost their rights to reproductive freedom, often permanently.

As the eugenics movement gained popularity in the early 20th century, numerous states passed laws allowing for the involuntary sterilization of people with disabilities. The Supreme Court approved forced sterilization laws, in a sweeping and bigoted opinion penned by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. The plaintiff in that case, *Buck v. Buck*, who challenged her forced sterilization. She had been deemed "feeble-minded" by a family that had taken her in as a servant, and whose relative had raped her. Because of her pregnancy, the family had doctors commit her to an institution where they planned to sterilize her. Justice Holmes' opinion for the court's majority stated:

"It is better for the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are mar kind."

This opinion had profound consequences. Between 1907 and 1945, upwards of 70,000 people — overwhelmingly poor people of color — were sterilized involuntarily. California's forced sterilization law was not repealed until 1979, and forced sterilization in California prisons continued even after that. *Buck v. Bell* has never been overruled. While the bald cruelty of Holmes' words may seem antiquated, the practice of controlling the reproductive choices of people with disabilities continues today. Then, as now, control is often cast by courts and conservators as a protective mechanism in the best interest of a person with a disability, or for their safety. Some guardians and conservators of these choices are certainly acting out of genuine concern and love for the person in their care. But the choice to have or not have a child, and when to do so, is a fundamental right, even for people with disabilities, even significant disabilities, have and raise children in loving, safe families. The denial of that right is too often based in stigma, paternalism, and stereotypical emotional, and physical impact on the person deprived of their reproductive autonomy.

We still don't know the specific terms or details of Spears' conservatorship. We don't know whether she identifies as a person with disabilities, or what private medical conservators have had about these choices. But we now know that she has stated that she wants to have another child and be a parent, and that she is being prevented from doing so. She has said that she wants to get out of the conservatorship. As we've said before, the ease with which people with disabilities are placed under the control of a conservator, stripped of their civil rights and liberties is a deeply concerning, systemic issue, and what Spears has shared publicly fits the pattern of harm and deprivation of autonomy across the country.

Thankfully, an IUD is not a permanent method of birth control, and Spears should be able to have a child after its removal, should she still want to. We are hopeful that the spotlight on her statement, the judge will heed her request to restore her rights. There are many less-restrictive support systems, like supported decision-making, that friends can use.

Justice Holmes' offensive and bigoted rhetoric may no longer be in use, but *Buck v. Bell* is still the law of the land, with few exceptions. As The Daily Beast reports, forced sterilization of people under conservatorships is still a thing in some capacity. And across the country, people still rely on stereotypes and assumptions to take reproductive control away from people with disabilities — especially BIPOC and marginalized people with disabilities. The coercive power and control handed to conservators is a disability rights crisis, and one that affects people with disabilities.

Britney Spears's Conservatorship Nightmare

July 3, 2021 · [Google](#) · [False Positive](#) (Score 1.00) [newyorker.com](#)

Reviewed by on June 11, 2024

abuse evidence drug emergency alleged charge concerns crisis drugs privacy protect authority c
debt died human incidents jail killing law enforcement lost murder problems sensitive shooting sh
vulnerable

Britney Spears's Conservatorship Nightmare

Photograph by Arvida Byström for The New Yorker; Source photograph from Getty

On June 22nd, Britney Spears's management team started getting nervous. Spears, who is thirty-nine, has spent the past thirteen years living under a conservatorship in which her personal, economic, and legal decision-making power is ceded to others. Called a guardianship in most states, the arrangement is intended for people who cannot care for themselves. Since the establishment of Spears's conservatorship, she has released four albums, headlined a global tour that grossed a hundred and thirty-one million dollars, and lived in Las Vegas residency. Yet her conservators, who include her father, Jamie Spears, have controlled her spending, communications, and personal decisions.

In April, Spears had requested a hearing, in open court, to discuss the terms of the arrangement. It was scheduled for June 23rd. Members of Spears's team, most of whom had worked with her for years, didn't expect drastic changes to result. Two years earlier, in the midst of health struggles and pressure from Spears, Jamie had stepped down as conservator of her personal life, and now the team thought that perhaps she wanted to remove him as the conservator of her financial affairs. Some of the team told reporters that they believed the conservatorship arrangement, as long as her father wasn't involved.

Running the business of Britney had become routine: every Thursday at noon, about ten people responsible for managing Spears's legal and business affairs, publicists, and lawyers would meet to discuss merchandise deals, song-license requests, and Spears's posts to Instagram and Twitter. ("This is how it works without her," one member of the team said.) Spears's management, typically writes the posts and submits them to CrowdSurf, a company employed to handle her social media, which then uploads them. In rare cases, posts have been deemed too sensitive to upload. "She's not supposed to discuss the conservatorship," the team member said.

On the eve of the hearing, according both to a person close to Spears and to law enforcement in Ventura County, California, where she lives, Spears called 911 to report conservatorship abuse. Calls in California are generally accessible to the public, but the county, citing an ongoing investigation, sealed the records of Spears's call.) Moments before the hearing, Spears was texting one another frantically. They were worried about what Spears might say the next day, and they discussed how to prepare in the event that she went rogue. In court, the conservatorship urged the judge to clear the courtroom and seal the transcript of Spears's testimony. Spears, calling into the hearing, objected. "Somebody's doing this to me," she said, adding, "I feel like it should be an open-court hearing—they should listen and hear what I have to say." Then, for the first time in years, Spears spoke for herself. She talked so fast that the judge interjected repeatedly to tell her to slow down, to allow for accurate transcription. "The people who did this to me should not get away," Spears said directly, she added, "Ma'am, my dad, and anyone involved in this conservatorship, and my management, who played a huge role in punishing me when I said no—Me. Emergency jail."

For the next twenty minutes, Spears described how she had been isolated, medicated, financially exploited, and emotionally abused. She assigned harsh blame to the people around her. She said let it all happen. She added that she had tried to complain to the court before but had been ignored, which made her "feel like I was dead," she said—"like I did when I was in the hospital," she said. "Instead of it being a hush-hush secret to benefit all of them." She added, "It concerns me I've been told I'm not allowed to expose the people who did this to me publicly, she said, "instead of it being a hush-hush secret to benefit all of them." She added, "It concerns me I've been told I'm not allowed to expose the people who did this to me publicly, she said, "instead of it being a hush-hush secret to benefit all of them."

Spears's remarks were incendiary but, for people familiar with the creation and the functioning of her conservatorship, not surprising. Andrew Gallery, a photographer who attended the hearing, watching the lawyers' faces on a monitor. "As she spoke, I wanted to scream, and gasp, and shout 'What the fuck is going on?'" he said. "But then she just sat there."

The conservatorship was instituted by Spears's family—in part out of real concerns about her mental health, people close to the family said. But the family was divided. Spears, in an underregulated part of the legal system, was stripped of her rights. She has fought for years to get them back.

As a pop star, Spears sustained a multinational industry of managers, agents, producers, lawyers, publicists, and assorted hangers-on. As the subject of the conservatorship, she has a livelihood of even more lawyers and other court-appointed professionals. Jacqueline Butcher, a former friend of the Spears family who was present in court for the conservatorship hearing, regrets the testimony that she offered to help secure it. "At the time, I thought we were helping," she said. "And I wasn't, and I helped a corrupt family seize all this control."

Jamie Spears, who is sixty-eight, has graying hair and a hand-dog demeanor. When he was thirteen, he endured an unimaginable tragedy: his mother committed suicide, who had died eight years earlier, at just three days old. In high school, Jamie was a basketball and football star; later, he worked as a welder and a cook. Lynne moved up with Jamie, in the small town of Kentwood, Louisiana. Sixty-six years old, she has a smile like Britney's and thick dark hair with bangs. She used to run her own dance studio as traditional and nonconfrontational. In a conversation in June, she was fastidiously polite as she declined to answer detailed questions about the case. She spoiled that she might have to hang up abruptly if other family members walked in and discovered her speaking to a reporter. "I got mixed feelings about everything," she said. "I feel a lot of pain, a lot of worry." She added, a little wryly, "I'm good. I'm good at deflecting." Jamie and Lynne eloped when she was twenty-one, and the marriage was temporarily papers filed, then withdrawn, in 1980, less than two years before Britney's birth. Lynne accused Jamie of cheating on her on Christmas Day. Jamie wrestled with alcohol, so egregiously that Lynne once shelled him cooler with a shotgun.

But Jamie and Lynne worked together to make Britney, their second child, happy and a success. She was a born performer, a scene-stealer at dance recitals starting her in small dance competitions in Lafayette, then to larger ones in New Orleans. They borrowed money from friends to pay for gas to get her to auditions. Spears snatched Broadway and then a stint in the nineties version of "The Mickey Mouse Club." When she was sixteen, she signed a six-album deal with Jive Records, thanks to an engineer named Larry Rudolph, who became her manager. A precise and commanding dancer with an unmistakable vocal tone of sugary coyness, Spears emerged as a teen-idol video for her debut single, "... Baby One More Time," featuring a sixteen-year-old Spears in a Catholic-schoolgirl outfit, exploded across American pop culture like fire. Her pleated skirt and bare midriff were her idea—a fact that's sometimes cited as evidence of her self-determination but might also suggest an intuition, common among teenagers, of the power of sex appeal.

Because Jamie and Lynne had two other children to look after, a family friend chaperoned Spears for much of her early career. But Spears remained close to her mother and a half-million-dollar estate for Lynne in Kentwood. That year, according to "Through the Storm," a memoir that Lynne published in 2008, Spears urged her mother that "years and years of verbal abuse, abandonment, erratic behavior, and his simply not being there for me had taken their toll," Lynne writes. She and Jamie divorced. *People* that it was "the best thing that's ever happened to my family."

Spears had just broken up with Justin Timberlake, a fellow teen-pop icon, whom she had met when she was eleven, when they were both cast as Mouseketeers. The close to her remember; her status as half of a golden couple had become an integral part of her identity, and after the split her sex life became a regular topic in the news and hanging out with Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton, forming a holy trinity for tabloid culture at its early-two-thousands peak. "The paparazzi were out of control," Hilton told Spears at the Beverly Hills Hotel. "Fighting over getting the shot, pushing each other against my car, scratching it with their cameras. It was overwhelming and frightening." Spears's longtime colorist, remembers how, one day, as Spears was getting her hair done, a paparazzo scaled a wall and broke a salon window with his fist.

Spears distracted herself with work—a relentless grind of dance rehearsals, studio sessions, photo shoots, stadium performances, long nights on the tour bus, and her schedule was crazier and crazier," Julianne Kaye, a makeup artist who worked with Spears in the early years, said. "She would have little breakdowns. She was always normal." Spears blew off steam by partying: she smoked weed, used cocaine, took Molly with her dancers and jumped into the Mediterranean Sea. But the machine she toured, the crew took at least a dozen buses and filled entire hotel floors.

In the spring of 2004, Spears met a dancer named Kevin Federline at a night club, and they were married within six months. Spears initially did not secure a prenuptial agreement in her family. A considerable fortune was at stake. "Lynne lost her mind," Butcher, the family friend, recalled. "They weren't gonna allow the wedding to be made unless it wasn't signed until the month after the ceremony, when Federline legally agreed to limit his stake in Spears's estate. But Spears seemed thrilled, and commissioned a French maid and served drinks to Federline, who wore a trucker hat, cargo shorts, and flip-flops. Spears wanted a family. "I've had a career since I was 16, he said back and even kissed Madonna!" she wrote on her Web site, two months after getting married. "The only thing I haven't done so far is experience the closest thing to what I can't wait!"

Spears's first son, Sean Preston, was born ten months after the wedding. "Our life was running at 150,000 miles an hour," Federline later told *Us Weekly*. "I'd walk into a \$15,000 a night with unlimited free drinking. . . . But everything got so crazy." Spears had been so sheltered that Paris Hilton had to show her how to use Google, according to her. She negotiated the hormonal and logistical turbulence of early motherhood while paparazzi, eager to monetize her mistakes, chased her down, pointing flashbulbs and cameras as she left the house. After she was photographed driving with an infant Preston on her lap, she explained that she had been trying to get away from paparazzi—and being up riding on her dad's lap on country roads. A few months later, visibly pregnant and holding Preston, she stumbled while surrounded by photographers; the paparazzo took a photo at a café, cradled her baby, and cried.

Spears had her second child, Jayden James, in September, 2006. Three weeks later, Federline took a private jet to Vegas to party with his friends. Spears filed for divorce, notifying Federline by text message. At a night club, he scrawled on a bathroom wall "Today I'm a free man—f**k a wife, give me my kids bitch!" He requested full custody, and he and Spears divided parental duties. Preston was a little more than a year old, and Spears was still nursing Jayden; she wanted to be with them all the time without them. "I did not know what to do with myself," she said later, in an MTV documentary. Spears and Federline both went out on their free nights, but Spears was a tabloid blood sport. ("MOMMY'S CRYING," *Us Weekly* blared, over a full-page photo of Preston.) In February, 2007, she shaved off her hair, at a salon in Tarzana; a paparazzo's car with an umbrella. The two incidents cemented her image as "crazy." Both were precipitated by her driving to Federline's house, trailed by photographers and her kids.

Many people who were close to Spears during her early career suspect that she was dealing with postpartum depression, but none of them remembers anyone bringing it up. Some people said that Spears was also struggling with drugs and alcohol. Her mother and Federline insisted that, if Spears wanted to spend more time with her children, she should check into a treatment center in Antigua, then checked out after just one day. The judge in the custody hearing, who had cited Spears's "habitual, frequent use of drugs, alcohol, and other substances and alcohol," gave primary custody of the children to Federline, granting Spears four days of visitation per week, under the eye of a court-ordered monitor. Around this time, Spears met Sam Lutfi, a Hollywood operator with a knack for insinuating himself into the lives of turbulent female stars. Spears had recently parted with her longtime manager, and she began to entrust her professional and private affairs to Lutfi. Now forty-six, Lutfi cuts a nondescript figure: average height, occasionally goes for black T-shirts. Over coffee at a Los Angeles restaurant this spring, he said that Spears took to him in part because he told her that she didn't have to work nearly as hard as she believed there were massive consequences if she didn't work, that she'd lose so much, and it blew her mind that she could just call the shots," he said. "You want to care about your five grand? Lose it. She'd walk into a car dealership, say she wanted something. I'd say, 'Buy it.' Her parents would say, 'Why would you let her do that? You want a dollar car, not a yacht, and she just got fifteen million from Estée Lauder. Anyway, she's an adult. I'm not gonna tell her that she can't buy a fucking yacht.'" (Lutfi later filed for bankruptcy, and Courtney Love, who called him a "street hustler," and he said that he advised Amanda Bynes's family as they placed her in a conservatorship. He is currently subject to a lawsuit filed against him, in 2019, by a conservatorship lawyer, on Spears's behalf.)

Lutfi brokered relationships with the paparazzi and on occasion invited them into Spears's home, telling her that this would make them less adversarial. Spears started dating Adnan Ghalib. Lutfi claims that Ghalib gave Spears amphetamines. (Lutfi has also been accused of giving her drugs, which he denies; Ghalib could not be reached for comment. Ghalib was a housekeeper at the time paused when asked about Ghalib: "I wouldn't be happy if my daughter dated him. That's all I will say." Other people recalled Ghalib treating Spears and her family cruelly, mocked him behind his back.)

Jamie had become close to Lou Taylor, a business manager who shares the Spears family's Christian faith and whose husband is a pastor at an evangelical church. Taylor was putting Lindsay Lohan under a conservatorship, according to Lohan's father; in a recent interview, Courtney Love said that Taylor tried to wrest control over her family from her father, a lawyer representing Taylor, said, "At no time did Ms. Taylor ever make any effort to put anyone into a conservatorship. Not Britney Spears. Not Lindsay Lohan. Not any of the sources present at the time said, began attempting to contact Spears, efforts that Spears rebuffed.

Spears had stopped sleeping and had begun behaving even more erratically. "The days she didn't have the kids with her were hard," the housekeeper said. "But, even when she had to go to work, anything to hurt anyone. It was really hard for her, having the kids for just a few hours. When she had to say goodbye, it was very sad—I would carry one to the car, and they would cry a lot, and she would cry, too." Spears grew so lonely that she would sometimes ask the housekeeper if she could bring her own children to the house. "I would ask me if I was happy," the housekeeper said. "And I used to say yes. And she would say, 'I just want to be happy. I want to have a family. I want my kids to stay with me.'"

Early in January, 2008, as a visit with her boys came to an end, Spears began to cry. "I just want to keep my kids with me," she said. "Why do they have to go?" A box of kids back to Federline's house. Every extra minute with them put her in violation of the custody agreement: she could either give up the kids at that moment or give up. Eventually, she handed Preston to the bodyguard, but she went into a bathroom with Jayden and refused to come out. According to Lutfi, Federline's lawyer called the ambulance which in turn called an ambulance. News crews gathered outside the house, with anchors reporting live on the standoff. Four helicopters circled overhead. Lutfi arrived and firemen wielding axes. "It looked like a murder scene," he recalled. "I pushed past everyone and opened the bathroom door—it was ridiculous; the locks on that door she was, standing, pacing, holding the sleeping baby. She was dressed for a night out, in Louboutins. The bath is running. You could see the light filling up the bathroom she needed to let Jayden go, and, as she's about to hand me the kid, the firemen blow things up. They take the kid and bring a gurney and strap her down. She didn't look at me, staring at me." Lutfi was later told that it was a "5150"—an emergency psychiatric hold, in which a person having a mental-health episode can be involuntarily surrounded the ambulance and followed it to Cedars-Sinai hospital. One photographer posted a photo of Spears on the gurney to his Myspace account with the caption "Britney Spears is granted immediate sole custody of the children, and Spears's visitation rights were suspended. It was widely assumed that Spears had endangered her children around them disagree. "There's nothing she'd do to endanger those kids," Lutfi said. He described her as a mother who would have breakfast made when the kids call and DVDs ready." The housekeeper said, "As a mom, I can tell you: Britney was a good mom. She didn't want to hurt or do anything wrong with her kids. No. I was there to have her kids at least another night." Robin Johnson, the court-ordered monitor, who saw Spears four times a week, said, "None of this was her fault." She was involved in her life that caused all of this craziness with her. I don't have anything derogatory to say about her. . . . It was probably one of the saddest cases that I've ever seen. After the 5150, Jamie and Lou Taylor consulted lawyers about establishing a conservatorship for Spears. (Harder, Taylor's lawyer, said that on the calls Taylor was "a non-contributor.") Jamie and Lynne were terrified for their daughter, multiple people said; they were worried that Lutfi might be siphoning money from Spears, or that he might that would leave her in serious debt. "The piranhas around Britney were fucking awful," Gallery, the photographer who worked for Spears, said, "and her parents were "seemed like an impossible dream at that point, with Sam still so entrenched in her life," Lynne wrote, in her memoir, referring to Lutfi. Jamie planned to file papers on "felt God leading them to wait, fast, and pray, despite the frustration of a phalanx of lawyers," Lynne wrote. "I shuddered to think of what depths of desperation we went through for our child."

According to Lutfi, Spears had passed regular drug tests for much of the prior year, but she had begun taking Adderall when he was away for the holidays. On January 15, 2008, Lynne called Jacqueline Butcher, the family friend, asking for a ride to Spears's residence. Lynne told Butcher that she hoped the falling out with Lutfi might reestablish contact with her daughter. Spears had been keeping her family at arm's length. Jamie, Lynne, and Spears's brother, Bryan, have all spent years on Spears's behalf. Butcher spoke with her at the time recalled, she was increasingly resentful of their efforts to influence her. Butcher, who had become friends with Lynne through the entertainment industry, had spent a decade in close proximity to the family before, during, and after the creation of the conservatorship. She remembered how, during a trip to Las Vegas without Spears's permission, she asked her for comfort. "She has anxiety," Butcher said. "She called me on that trip and said, 'Miss Jackie, come to my room.' She just wanted me to hold her hand. She sat in a chair, and I just pulled up a chair and held her hand."

Butcher was sympathetic to the idea that Spears needed to be wrested from Lutfi's influence, and she agreed to help Lynne. They drove to the house together, in Butcher's car, unbeknownst to Butcher, Jamie was following behind them. Arriving at the house around dusk, they were greeted by Lutfi, who said that Spears had left and wouldn't return. "Jamie was furious," Butcher said. "He was screaming that he wasn't going to let Sam do this." A security guard asked Jamie to leave; after he did, Spears returned home, looking odd and hyper—she was talking in a baby voice, standing up and sitting down, compulsively combing her hair, repeatedly changing her clothes and those of her dog. Butcher said. Lynne, Ghalib, and Lutfi exchanged bitter recriminations, accusing one another of being a poor influence on Spears. Finally, Spears shouted at them to leave. Lynne writes, in her memoir, that Lutfi called her two days later to tell her that "somebody was coming to try to commit Britney again." Lutfi maintains that Spears's doctors and others close to the situation speculate that Lutfi said something to the doctor to trigger the call, an allegation that he denies. Butcher, Lynne, Lutfi, and Spears were at the house, banging on the doors and then marched in. "It was a freaking circus—you would think it was a SWAT team taking down a drug ring," Butcher said. "Cops, helicopters, SWAT, Spears, Butcher added, "was cooperative but crying and shaking" as they strapped her to a gurney. At one point, Butcher said, she moved to comfort Spears, and a police officer freeze and keep her distance. Spears was loaded into an ambulance, alone, and taken to U.C.L.A. Medical Center, flanked by a police convoy the length of a football field. It was after midnight. Butcher, accompanied by Lynne and Ghalib, followed the ambulance to the hospital. At U.C.L.A., staff put them in a waiting room, where, joined by others, had not given them permission to come see her. Some time later, they found out that Lutfi had arrived and was in the room with Spears. Jamie became irate. "That's why we're getting the conservatorship," Butcher recalled him saying. The following afternoon, Butcher joined Lynne at Bryan Spears's apartment, and, at Lynne's request, she called attorney, Geraldine Wyle. Urged on by Lynne, who said her throat hurt and that she was too fatigued to provide details, Butcher spoke with Wyle for about an hour, providing details of the events at Spears's house in the previous days. Wyle said she would write up a report and submit it to the court. In retrospect, Butcher feels that she was exploited by the conservatorship worked," she said. "It was supposed to be temporary."

From that moment, the proceedings moved with remarkable speed. The next morning, with Spears still at the hospital, Jamie, Lynne, and Butcher went to a small courtroom. Butcher had been told that she would be required to give more testimony and answer questions. Instead, according to Butcher, Lynne told her, "It's taken care of." The next day, since retired, arrived and announced that the conservatorship had been granted. "The whole process was maybe ten minutes," Butcher said. "No one testified. No one testified. No one testified. Now she felt relief that she'd helped to protect Spears. Now she is haunted by the event. "A conservatorship was granted without ever talking to her," she said. "And, what she had behind the scenes, how could you have assessed her then? Shouldn't you wait a week, then interview her? She never had a chance." (Goetz disputed this as a lengthy confidential discussions addressing Spears's health, and that it was incorrect to say that Spears was not meaningfully assessed or given opportunities for input. "I unequivocally that I did not coordinate anything related to the case with anyone connected to the case before it came in.")

California requires that conservatees be given five days' notice before a conservatorship takes effect, but this can be bypassed if a judge decides that they could suffer harm." Goetz appointed a probate lawyer named Sam Ingham as Spears's advocate, and then granted the conservators' petition to waive the requirement to notify her. Ingham remains in the role; Spears covers his annual salary of five hundred and twenty thousand dollars. (Her own living expenses in 2019 were \$438,360.)

Jamie became a co-conservator, sharing duties with a lawyer named Andrew Wallet, who was appointed by the court. On the petition to establish the arrangement, Jamie checked a box indicating that Spears had dementia. Jamie also filed a restraining order against Lutfi on behalf of his daughter. In her memoir, Lynne claims Lutfi told her to leave, cut the phone lines at her house, and crushed up her medications and given them to her in her food. Butcher said that, although she saw Lutfi give Spears what she needed, she cannot corroborate the other allegations, many of which were later not supported by sworn declarations from multiple people, including Robin Johnson, Spears's assistant. But such allegations became central to the establishment of the conservatorship.

The group went from the courtroom to Wyle's law office. As Jamie spoke with Wyle in a frosted-glass conference room, and Lynne and Butcher sat in a waiting area nearby, Butcher asked, "Do you think you and Jamie should be co-conservators together?" Spears's relationship with Jamie, who could be domineering and hostile toward his daughter, was strained. Butcher replied that the conservatorship would last only a few months, and that it would be best for Spears to resent Jamie, rather than her, when it was all over. But, after the meeting, Butcher said, Lynne began talking about her hopes for how the conservatorship would be managed, prompting Jamie to shout about his control over his daughter to her. At one point, Butcher recalled him bellowing, "I am Britney Spears!" It was a refrain she would hear him repeat often during the early years of the conservatorship. Butcher remembered it, grew quiet.

Three psychiatrists were asked to provide a necessary declaration confirming Spears's lack of mental fitness. The third, James Spar, provided it. (Earlier this year, Spar didn't know why she still has a conservatorship.) As a co-conservator, Jamie reinstated Larry Rudolph as Spears's music manager and installed Lou Taylor as her business manager for her "Circus" tour and subsequently for her entire estate. Several people close to Spears said that she had disdained Taylor and expressed astonishment at Taylor's appointment. Later, some members of Spears's team raised doubts about Taylor's financial management during her tours. "I'm not saying it was like a million dollars missing—said. "Money was wasted in a particular way, and when I asked a question I got shut down, cause nobody wanted to admit fault." (Harder, Taylor's attorney, called the conservatorship. From the earliest days of the conservatorship, Spears appeared to chafe against her constraints. While hospitalized, she had contacted a lawyer named Adam Streisand, who heard her on February 4th, attesting that Spears had a "strong desire" that Jamie not be a conservator. But the judge, based on a report from Ingham and testimony from

capacity to retain an attorney. Spears spoke with another lawyer, Jon Eardley, who attempted to move the case to federal court. The lawyers for the conservatorship : capacity to hire Mr. Eardley to file the Notice of Removal on her behalf, and therefore could not have hired him.” The lawyers noted that Spears did have the right to r Ingham, who met with Spears for about fifteen minutes two days after the conservatorship was granted, when he visited her at the U.C.L.A. hospital. Several sources Ingham was loyal to the conservatorship and to Jamie, despite nominally representing Spears. Butcher recalled Jamie saying that Ingham reported to him on Spears’ (Ingham did not respond to repeated requests for comment for this story.)

Eardley filed a declaration asking that Spears be brought to court, insisting that she would “testify truthfully that she did authorize me to take action on her behalf and I Stone, Spears told Eardley, on a phone call that was tape-recorded, “I basically just want my life back.” Eardley filed another declaration, arguing, among other things due process. “It is obvious that the conservatorship was planned well in advance of its implementation as a tool to influence the custody proceedings in the family law purposes,” he wrote. In another document, he stated that, the last time Spears attempted to call him, her phone was taken away from her, and that the number was di According to Jonathan Martinis, the senior director for law and policy at a center for disability rights at Syracuse University, one of the most dangerous aspects of gua prevent people from getting their own legal counsel. “The rights at stake in guardianship are analogous to the rights at stake in criminal cases,” Martinis said. “Britney axe and a severed head, saying ‘I did it,’ and she still would’ve had the right to an attorney. So, under guardianship, you don’t have the same rights as an axe murderer Less than two months after the second 5150, Spears taped a guest appearance on the sitcom “How I Met Your Mother.” Publicly, her comeback had already begun— virtually from the outset. Butcher remembers sitting in Spears’s home office on one of the first days after she was released from the hospital. Butcher, Lynne, and Spe her knees; Jamie was sitting at a desk. A flat-screen TV was playing nearby. “Jamie said, ‘Baby,’ ” Butcher recalled, “and I thought he was going to say, ‘We love you, said was ‘You’re fat. Daddy’s gonna get you on a diet and a trainer, and you’re gonna get back in shape.’ ” Butcher felt sick. Jamie pointed at the TV and said, “You s what it’s going to say in eight weeks? That’s gonna be you on there, and they’re gonna say, ‘She’s back.’ ”

In the following weeks, Jamie wore Spears down. “He would get all in her face—spittle was flying—telling her she was a whore and a terrible mother,” Butcher said. S her kids again only if she cooperated. “Lynne was just, like, ‘Obey Daddy and they’ll let you out,’ ” Butcher added. Spears behaved, and regained limited access to he anyone his daughter had been close to. The housekeeper who worked for Spears during the custody dispute remembers being let go at this time. “Anyone that works me,” Jamie told her. When Spears called the housekeeper a few days later, asking her to come back, the two of them cried on the phone together. “I love you and I m recalled saying, “but your dad told me I’m not allowed to work for you.” After that, she said, Jamie told her not to accept Spears’s calls. Spears went back to the studio “Circus.” Drug tests were mandated in the contracts for the dancers who were hired for her next tour.

To provide evidence of her comeback, Spears spent months filming a documentary called “Britney: For the Record.” It’s a remarkable document, capturing Spears in and acquiescence. She appears clear and composed, struggling to maintain a sort of thwarted optimism. In behind-the-scenes footage of workdays and rehearsals, si Jamie is in the room. At one point, she does an impression of her father, adopting a thick Southern accent: “You know, she don’t listen to me. I scream at her and she her, but I can’t do it. You’re just gonna have to talk some fucking sense into her.” She says, wistfully, that her life is too controlled. She laments not being able to go ou and wanting to walk down the Grove and feeling the crispy air.”

“I never wanted to become one of those prisoner people,” Spears says, at another point in the documentary. “I always wanted to feel free, and get in my car and go ar I had to stay at my home.” But, she adds, “I think that was always the part of me that kinda got me in trouble. I had let certain people into my life that were just bad per consequences for that, big time. But I just feel like you do something wrong, and you learn from it, you move on. But it’s, like, I’m having to pay for it for a really long ti who was her director of content and worked on the documentary, said, “You know how you go for a hike, and get to the top of the mountain, and you have this momer the bottom of the mountain, surrounded by security guards, all this chaos.” But, on occasion, things would quiet down. “We would have these talks, and she would alw again. I want to have a husband. I want to have more kids.’ ” At the time, Gallery said, it didn’t seem as though anyone imagined that the conservatorship would be a I made permanent in October, 2008.

Over the holidays, Spears and Gallery were smoking cigarettes outside a dinner party when Spears gave him a handwritten letter on lined paper, which told her story if he could read it on TV. She had been asking Gallery to help her find another lawyer. “She was lied to and set up,” the letter read. “Her children were taken away anc any mother would in those circumstances.” Spears wrote that she “had no rights,” and that the conservatorship would go on “as long as the people are getting paid.” C this on TV, but you know I will be removed from your life immediately.” He asked her to sit on it for a couple days. “Then, all of a sudden,” he said, “every lawyer on th demanding I come in and surrender this letter.” He gave the letter to the lawyers, and soon afterward, he said, he was pushed out of her employment. (Gallery read a year.) He recalled contacting one of Spears’s managers a few years later, to see if Spears could give him a recommendation for his application to graduate school. He telling him that any such document would serve as proof that Spears was of sound mind.

In January, 2009, Christina Lutfi, Sam’s younger sister, got word that Spears wanted a phone, and that she would be at the gym of the Peninsula Hotel, in Beverly Hill pretended I was a guest,” Christina said. “She and her mom were at the gym, and so I got on a bike next to her. I was dressed to go out that night, so I took my fedora: watching her while she worked out, and then she went to the locker room, and I followed her, and the bodyguard was standing outside. Then I saw her go to the stear my shoulder and followed her in. She almost screamed—it was steamy, and I’m not sure she was wearing anything, maybe a towel, and this stranger comes in wearin Sam’s sister, and gave her the phone in a ziplock, and she thanked me and ran to put it in her locker.”

When Butcher heard from Sam Lutfi that Spears had a cell phone and was trying to contact a lawyer, she said, she decided not to alert Spears’s parents. “I didn’t rat I would suffer,” she said. “I just thought, What’s the harm if she has her own attorney?” But she also said she understood the profound risk that Spears was taking, bec: Spears was going behind his back, would “do terrible things, like withhold access to her kids.”

Soon afterward, a housekeeper overheard Spears talking on the contraband phone and alerted Jamie, who ordered the housekeeper to confiscate it. “They ended up “Looking back, I’m, like, this is effed up. I’d been to her house. She was super sweet. She was clearly functional enough to work out and put out an album. Why could understand it.” After the phone was found, Butcher said, she was exiled from Spears’s orbit. She believes Jamie discovered evidence of her complicity in the plot. “An conservatorship,” she said, “they were out.”

Jamie filed restraining orders, on Spears’s behalf, against Lutfi, Eardley, and Ghalib. In later hearings, Jamie’s lawyers alleged a conspiracy among them to undermin claimed that audio of Spears talking to Eardley had been doctored. Eardley’s career unravelled: the state bar of California filed disciplinary charges against him for att without having obtained consent to do so. He was subsequently found culpable of misconduct for writing bad checks on his client trust account, and was disbarred. Es comment. “Where is he?” Roger Diamond, a lawyer whom Eardley hired to represent him in his dealings with the Spears family, asked. “Have you talked to him? I hav Diamond added, of the conservatorship hearings, “I think Jon stumbled onto a real scandal in the probate law of California. It was shocking to me to see the way in wfi on the part of the judge. I had the feeling, in the courtroom, that there was a coverup going on, and it was my job to pierce it, and yet nobody was cooperating.”

Lutfi and Eardley got in touch with a new lawyer, John Anderson. According to Lutfi, who was involved in brokering the meeting, Spears secretly rendezvoused with a Beverly Hills, and signed papers retaining Anderson’s services. On January 27, 2009, Anderson notified Jamie’s lawyers of his petition to grant Spears the authority to The same day, he spoke to two of Jamie’s lawyers. On January 28th, Anderson sent an e-mail to Lutfi and Eardley, writing, “I can say no more; will do no more; and c in this regard any further. That is the end for me.”

In early 2009, Jordan Miller, a journalism and media-studies major in Las Vegas who ran a popular Spears fan site called BreatheHeavy, started to publicly lobby agai the reports that she didn’t have access to a cell phone that did it,” Miller, now thirty-three, said. He began signing posts on the Web site “Free Britney”—“followed by I “And I got a lot of pushback for that. People said, ‘You don’t know her situation. Her family is there for her.’ ” A few months later, Miller received a call from a person w told me he was going to destroy my ass,” Miller said. “He was on the call for probably two or three minutes, and I got no words in edgewise. I was shaking in my child! receiving a letter from Jamie’s lawyers saying that BreatheHeavy had violated copyright law, Miller took down the Web site. But he put it up again, a few days later, de

that Spears was being mistreated. Around this time, an *Elle* cover story celebrated the return of “Brit, the one we love—blond, happy, and back on top.” But the paparazzi everywhere, were catching her crying in her car and walking around looking detached and distraught. “There were probably just a couple thousand of us who around it,” Miller said.

People in Spears’s orbit also noticed changes. A producer who’d worked with her since she was in her early twenties said that she was “more distant, less present—no laughter. By the end, she was just led into the vocal booth. She never came into the room where we were.” Recording with Spears had once been effortless, he said, “impossible,” to elicit her spark in the booth. In 2012, she was hired as a judge on the TV show “The X Factor.” Billy B., her makeup artist on set, had first worked with her long before she appeared on the show. He recalled Spears seeming robotic between the commercial’s takes—“head down in the corner, and she’d just come when she never alone, never unmonitored.” Kim Vo, Spears’s colorist, went out to dinner with her in 2012 in Las Vegas. The bill was thirteen hundred dollars, and Spears told her half of it. Yet her “X Factor” role alone paid her fifteen million dollars. In sealed court records recently obtained by the *Times*, Spears said that she was limited to a monthly allowance, no matter how much she earned.

Many of Spears’s former friends and employees came to accept that she had entered a new, more secluded phase. She had always changed her phone number frequently to avoid people at all. She’d got engaged to her agent at William Morris Endeavor, Jason Trawick, but they split up in early 2013. “I’ve gone through a few boyfriends with her, but I never around 2012, said. “Every time they get close, they disappear. Every time she gets close to someone who could change her life, decisions are made—you’re getting performing in Las Vegas; the contract paid three hundred thousand dollars per night, and it required that she remain under the conservatorship. She usually flew in and out of Las Vegas to insure that her new gig wouldn’t disrupt her sons’ lives. “It makes me sad,” a former stylist of Spears’s said. “All of us are still friends, but the only one missing is her.” The following year, according to the court documents obtained by the *Times*, Sam Ingham told Reva Goetz, the judge on the conservatorship case, that Spears was a conservator and wanted to terminate the arrangement. Ingham also said that Spears was interested in retiring from performing but “believed the conservatorship prevented that “those gathered, including the judge and lawyers on both sides, raised the possibility that Ms. Spears’s boyfriend was provoking her discontent.” Her boyfriend at the time was a Hollywood type from Atlanta who, after he and Spears broke up, defended her as a “great mother” and spoke out against the conservatorship. His relationship with Spears’ Jamie bought a video of Lucado kissing another woman and showed it to his daughter.

Sam Lutfi claims that Spears sporadically reached out to him. “I’ll go years without contact, and then I’ll get a call every once in a while from her in a closet,” he said. But that’s mirrored by her lawyers, and that she calls or texts only when she can get hold of another phone. “Last time she called me, she was at Ralphs, in Calabasas,” he said. The call from the same number—it’s an Asian doctor, who says, ‘Wow, this is surreal, Britney just borrowed my phone.’ Five years ago, she borrowed a phone at the gym and said that the last time he saw Spears was in 2015, and that the encounter left him concerned. “My opinion is that this conservatorship has drastically affected her mind,” he said, “They made her a zombie. That is not the same girl.” That year, Spears extended her Las Vegas residency, in a two-year deal worth thirty-five million dollars. Jamie got half per cent of the gross revenues from the performances and merchandising.

Around 2015, Spears’s Instagram account, which had until then mostly served up bland promotional images captioned with marketing copy, turned into a subject of memes that became weirder and more joyful—low-res selfies and inspirational quotes, memes about needing chocolate and being single and not wanting to get out of bed. Some of the posts were yearning: a photo of sunlight filtering onto a path in a darkened forest, captioned “Infinity,” or a photo of Mars, captioned “Nothing’s what it seems.” In 2016, she posted a quote: “Are we all so wedded to the ‘spectatorial’ gaze - the confirming, approving gaze of others- that we don’t feel endorsed in the privacy of our own consciousness?” That same year, the *Times* reported recently, Spears told a probate-court investigator that she felt the conservatorship had become an “oppressive and controlling tool” that had “too much control. Too, too much!” She said that she was “sick of being taken advantage of.” The investigator’s report called for a “pathway to independence and a conservatorship.”

On Instagram, though, life seemed sunny. Spears started posting photos of her new boyfriend, a twenty-three-year-old actor and model named Sam Asghari, whom she made music videos. (Asghari did not respond to repeated requests for comment). In 2017, she posted a video of herself painting a canvas on her terrace, captioned “Sometimes I follow by what became her Instagram signature: a string of jubilant emojis. The post became the subject of the first episode of a podcast hosted by the comedians called “Britney’s Gram.” “We either can never think what she’s thinking, or we know *exactly* what she’s thinking—that’s the enigma of Britney,” Barker said, delighted. A new Vegas residency, called “Domination,” was announced in 2018. But then Jamie underwent emergency surgery for a ruptured colon, and, in early 2019, Spears announced a work hiatus, ostensibly on account of her father’s health. She stopped posting on social media. Andrew Wallet, the co-conservator, resigned, receiving a payment. The following month, TMZ reported that Spears had checked into a mental-health facility, and “Britney’s Gram” received an anonymous voice mail. “Hi there, I am . . . I used to be a paralegal for an attorney that worked with Britney’s conservatorship. I am no longer with them.” The caller alleged that Spears had been in the health facility months earlier, against her will.

Spears’s camp suggested that the voice mail came from an impostor, but, after Spears resumed posting, her fans began combing through her social-media posts for clues that developed among her followers after a fan left a comment on Spears’s TikTok account reading “if you need help wear yellow in your next video,” and then Spears posted what she called “my favorite yellow shirt.” The Instagram account grew bizarre: Spears regularly posted multiple near-identical photos of herself, and also videos of her in her house.

Fans began reading these either as indications that Spears was unwell or that her team was making her look unwell in order to justify the conservatorship. A member of her team from “about one per cent” of her posts—those which might incur liability—Spears has “pretty much total control” of her social media. “Would anyone be telling her to post anything detrimental to the brand. Trust me, if I had my way, that’s not what she would be posting. But the point is that she’s not the prisoner with no rights that some people in trying to make her out to be.”

At the hearing this June, Spears described what was happening to her in 2018. She was forced by her managers to go on tour, she said, and was threatened that she would lose the tour, she was told to start rehearsing for “Domination,” even though she wanted to take a break. (The member of her team denied the allegation, saying that Spears had to go on the tour and that her conservators forced her hand only when she attempted to renege after arriving.) One day, she said, she refused to do a certain dance move in rehearsal, and a huge bomb somewhere.” Her therapist told her that he’d been informed by her managers that she wasn’t cooperating or taking her medication—“which is so dumb,” she said, “the same lady every morning for the past eight years give me my same medication, and I’m nowhere near these stupid people.” Soon afterward, she said, her therapist told her that her medication made her feel drunk and scared, she said. Over the holidays, a woman came to perform a “psych test,” and then her father told her that she had failed it all on the phone for an hour, and he loved every minute of it,” she said. “The control he had over someone as powerful as me—he loved the control to hurt his own daughter, he loved it.” At the facility, she said, she had to attend ten hours of meetings a day, seven days a week, for four months, and if she didn’t cooperate she wasn’t allowed to see her boyfriend.

As Spears privately resisted her father’s involvement in the conservatorship, he used her money to fight back. Recent court documents show that Jamie’s lawyers billed her \$100,000 for four months of work, from October, 2020, to February, 2021. The bill accounts for hundreds of hours of work by crisis-P.R. specialists who charged between \$100 and \$200 an hour to respond, they claimed, to media requests.

Ingham seemed to begin hedging his bets. He requested, in a court filing, that future hearings be unsealed, and indicated support for the #FreeBritney movement, as being a conspiracy theory or a ‘joke’ . . . this scrutiny is a reasonable and even predictable result of James’ aggressive use of the sealing procedure over the years to keep meaningful information made available to the public.” In November, Ingham told the court that Spears had informed him that she was “afraid of her father” and that her father is in charge of her career.” A financial firm called Bessemer Trust was appointed as a co-conservator. (Following Spears’s June testimony in court, Bessemer Trust citing the pop star’s desire to terminate the arrangement.) Lynne began to oppose Jamie’s involvement, giving a statement saying that his relationship to Spears was abusive. Despite all this, in December, 2020, the conservatorship was extended until September, 2021. “Britney knows that her daddy loves her,” one of Jamie’s lawyers said, in a *Morning America* interview. The #FreeBritney movement staged a thirty-day campaign to call attention to Spears’s story. (“This is a radicalized group,” the member of Spears’s

about facts.”) It urged followers to support legislation in California that would strengthen the right to legal representation for conservatees. In June, on the day of the twenty devoted supporters rallied at the courthouse in Los Angeles. They gathered on the plaza outside to listen to Spears’s statement, which they streamed and broadcast. When Spears said that she didn’t feel like she owed her team anything, and that they “need to be reminded they actually work for me,” the crowd cheered.

At one point during the hearing, Spears said that the conservatorship had denied her reproductive rights. “I was told right now, in the conservatorship, I’m not able to get pregnant,” Spears said. “I have an IUD inside of myself right now, so I don’t get pregnant. I wanted to take the IUD out, so I could start trying to have another baby, but the so-called doctor to take it out, because they don’t want me to have any more children.” It was a startling allegation, but it was not entirely new. In October, 2020, a makeup artist Asghari, Spears’s boyfriend, said, on a podcast, that Spears’s conservators had the final say about who Spears’s friends were, whether or not she could get married, or have a baby. “We’re talking about some ‘Handmaid’s Tale’-type things,” Maxi said. (When contacted for comment, one of Jamie’s representatives declined to answer special questions about behavior as that of a loving father saving his daughter from possible ruin. The representative, who repeatedly referred to Jamie as “daddy,” objected to the idea that Jamie have anything to do with an IUD.)

A lack of control over one’s medical decisions is a fundamental feature of many conservatorships—and it had been clear for a long time that Spears’s management plan for her life. In 2008, shortly after the conservatorship was established, Larry Rudolph told *Rolling Stone* that the next step in Spears’s recovery was a new boyfriend, because Trawick, her fiancé in the early twenty-tens, was not only her agent; he was formally made co-conservator for a time. Butcher said, “You have to understand—even when you pay a bill? Never. When was she able to pick her friends? Never. When was she ever taught to trust anybody? Never. Anytime she’s trusted anyone, the family has said she was stupid to trust them.”

Some of the silence around the conservatorship may have been well-meaning: after so much invasiveness, people wanted to grant Spears her privacy. One person who was down to just a few million dollars when the conservatorship was established, and points to Spears’s net worth now—her assets are estimated at more than sixty million—has looked out for her interests. And, when someone struggles with mental illness, family members may have to take strict actions that might not make sense to outsiders. Members of the #FreeBritney movement, in interviews, have often issued disclaimers that no one but Spears can really know the truth of the situation. Spears’s team has sealed court hearings and shrouding the conservatorship in secrecy. Butcher, who saw Spears at her most erratic, noted that an argument for her incapacity would be based on Spears’s circumstances. “If you’re controlling someone’s medications, and the shrinks who assess them, you can absolutely build a case,” she said. “She was angry, and she wouldn’t know the context—that it was because they held the kids over her.”

Conservatorships can protect people who are elderly, or who live with profound disabilities or catastrophic mental illness. But there is also a wide range of alternatives that are stricter than what Spears has experienced, such as conditional powers of attorney or formal shared control of finances. As conservatorship law is written, the court is required to appoint a conservatorship is—and remains—necessary. “In practice,” Zoë Brennan-Krohn, a disability-rights attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, said, “this is absolutely necessary. What is happening is that a judge at a reevaluation hearing would ask, ‘What else have you tried? Why isn’t anything else working?’ And, if the conservator hasn’t shown that there are other options, the conservatorship should be suspended. But I’ve never heard of a judge asking that in any situation.”

Lisa MacCarley, an estate-and-probate lawyer in Los Angeles who has become something of a “mascot,” as she put it, for the #FreeBritney movement, describes the conservatorship as plagued by cronyism, with judges appointing advocates from a small list of favored lawyers. Ingham, she said, “has made a lot of money bullshitting people.” The *Times* described a ninety-minute meeting with Spears as “at least three times longer” than any session he’d previously had with her. In one hearing, according to the *Times*, she didn’t recall an order specifically preventing Spears from getting married, but that he “may not want to tell her that.” Ingham replied, “Somehow, that did not come out. Less than a week after Spears’s statement in court, Jamie’s lawyers submitted a filing that pinned Spears’s unhappiness on Jodi Montgomery, who has served as the conservator since September, 2019, and whom Ingham has petitioned to be permanently appointed. They suggested that, perhaps, Spears did not have enough say in the matter. In another filing, Jamie’s lawyers requested an investigation into the truthfulness of Spears’s statement in court.

People on Spears’s team suggest that further hearings will undermine her claims. “God bless her, I felt sorry for her. But at the same time, don’t be telling tall tales,” they say. “The problems, what was wrong with you, your shortcomings—don’t keep trying to blame everyone else for it.” The defenders of the conservatorship offer a set of familiar reasons: Spears is being manipulated by a man—at this moment, according to some, Asghari—with an interest in commandeering her fortune, and that there is a grave medical arrangement that the public has no right to know. “It is so fucking irresponsible to say, ‘Let her do whatever she wants to do,’” the member of her team said.

The idea that Spears needs this conservatorship to function is, to some degree, self-reinforcing. In that respect, experts said, her case is common. Martinis, the disability-rights attorney, said, “guardianships can prove inescapable, which is why they are vulnerable to abuse. In the extreme cases, he said, “the strategy is isolate, medicate, liquidate. You isolate them, you isolate them quiet, liquidate the assets.” If a conservatee functions well under conservatorship, it can be framed as proof of the arrangement’s necessity; if a conservatee struggles, the same conclusion can be drawn. And if a conservatee gets out, and stumbles into crisis or manipulation—a likelihood increased by time spent formally disempowered—argument for their prior legal restraints. “Our mistakes make us who we are, and teach us who we can be,” Martinis said. “Without bad choices, we can’t be wholly human. If we have bad intentions, we say to people with disabilities: we’ll keep you from ever making a mistake.” He added, “Should Britney get out, just watch. The first mistake she makes, say this would never have happened if she were under guardianship.”

“There’s this concept of the dignity of risk,” Brennan-Krohn, the A.C.L.U. lawyer, said. “Most of us have a very wide range of bad choices we can make that society is not prepared for. Conservatorship, you’re subject to the decision-making rubric of best interest. And it’s possible we’d all be better off if someone was making decisions for us like that, in the society we live in.” In her remarks this June, Spears gestured, briefly, to the wider world of broken guardianships: “We can sit here all day and say, ‘Oh, conservatorship Ma’am, there’s a thousand conservatorships that are abusive, as well.’” As she said this, the #FreeBritney supporters at the courthouse, their glittery signs laid down on the ground, impassioned “Yes!”

The question of control has surrounded Britney Spears from the start of her career. How much was she being manipulated by the powerful men who stood to profit from her existence manufactured by the demands of the system around her? A strong sense of self-ownership always emerged from Spears in performance, specifically in her sharp, knowing, seemingly absorbing everything thrown at her and surmounting it through sheer will and charisma. And, all along, as her fans have noticed, she has written lyrics that seem to speak directly to her situation: *my loneliness is killing me; I’m a slave for you; I’m not a girl, not yet a woman; you want a piece of me*. Spears has been since she was a teen-ager, she has never been in full control of her life. Many of the most harrowing revelations in her testimony had been visible to her. She told the court that she’d wanted to express them for a long time but had been afraid to do so in public. “I thought people would make fun of me,” she said. “Or laugh at me. She’s got everything. She’s Britney Spears.”

Britney Spears: Exploitation and Human Trafficking

November 8, 2023 · [Google](#) · False Positive (Score 0.88) [laurieruettimann.com](#)

Reviewed by on June 11, 2024

trafficking human victim victims abuse alarming concerns convictions courts criminals defendants defraud evidence fear guilt inappropriately investigations lawsuits manipulated manipulation offenses trafficked

Britney Spears: Exploitation and Human Trafficking

Over the weekend, I went on a road trip and listened to "Britney Spears: The Woman in Me," narrated by Michelle Williams.

This nearly six-hour audio journey took me through the incredible life of Britney Spears, the pop sensation from Louisiana. What I discovered was a story not only a narrative deeply entrenched in sexism, misogyny, and a shocking abuse of power.

At its heart, this book revolves around Britney's father, Jamie Spears, and his controversial role as her conservator.

The book left me profoundly shaken as a human being, a woman, a daughter, and someone who is passionate about the world of work.

Britney's father truly thought his daughter was only worth her work, and he only saw her value in how much it enriched him.

Understanding Conservatorship

Before we delve into the troubling aspects of Britney's story, let's clarify what a conservatorship is.

A conservatorship is a legal arrangement where a guardian, known as a conservator, is appointed by a court to manage the personal affairs and finances of someone typically due to incapacity or mental health concerns.

Jamie Spears went to court for thirteen years—conveniently using millions of dollars Britney earned while allegedly mentally ill and unable to care for herself—and made care for his daughter because she could not control her body, mind, thoughts, and personal finances.

Exploitation of Britney Spears

After listening to the audiobook, I firmly believe that Britney Spears was a victim of human trafficking, specifically forced labor exploitation, orchestrated by her father. What is human trafficking? It can be broken into two parts.

1. Sex trafficking is a crime against a person in which a commercial sex act is induced by forcing, tricking, or pressuring/scaring them into doing it. Something (drugs, safety, etc) is exchanged for that sex act. A commercial sex act for someone under the age of 18 is automatically considered trafficking, even without coercion.
2. Labor trafficking is a crime against a person in which they are forced, tricked, or pressured/scared into performing labor. In some cases, but not all, someone and sex trafficking.

In Britney's case, I believe her family subjected her to forced labor exploitation. The ringleader was her father, Jamie Spears.

Jamie's actions, which included defrauding the court system to become Britney's conservator, created a system that made her appear incapable of controlling her own Britney into working relentlessly, using her desire to see loved ones and even eat the food she wanted as leverage.

And the fact that he paid others to be complicit in this exploitation and got away with it for over 13 years is alarming. It casts doubt on the California court system's ability to protect citizens who are currently part of the conservatorship system.

The Reality of Human Trafficking in the U.S.

You might be skeptical. Was Britney Spears truly a victim of being trafficked by her father? Is that too strong of a term?

Contrary to common misconceptions, human trafficking is not limited to sex trafficking or perpetrated solely by foreign individuals. In the United States, trafficking cases involve perpetrators, including family members, friends, business owners, and more. Statistics reveal that forced labor exploitation is more prevalent, but public awareness is low. Kidnapping of underage white girls for sex trafficking in Mexico, thanks to bad movies and even worse people.

In fiscal year 2020, of the 1,169 defendants charged with human trafficking offenses in U.S. district courts, 92% were male, 66% had no prior convictions, and the majority were exploited. And the trafficking of boys for both exploitative labor and sex work is higher than you think. A study by the U.S. Dept. of Justice found that 36% of youth male victims are trafficked.

Victims are Intentionally Hidden and Mislabeled

Victims of human trafficking often find themselves misidentified and treated as criminals themselves. Britney Spears repeatedly questioned whether she had done something wrong. She was locked away in mental institutions, medicated inappropriately, and denied access to the outside world and even basic necessities. Some might wonder why Britney Spears, with all her fame and fortune, didn't ask for help sooner. Trafficking victims are often trapped by fear, isolation, guilt, shame, and manipulation. Identifying oneself as a victim can be an incredibly complex and challenging process, especially if self-worth and even a sense of identity are eroded.

What's Next?

Britney Spears is currently engaged in multiple lawsuits to bring her father and others to justice. But after listening to Britney's story, it is clear that the court system has placed unquestioning trust in a white male figure like Jamie Spears, a stark reminder of systemic issues. Regardless of her reliability as a narrator, Britney, like any woman, has choices about her life and finances. Her father's exploitation of her labor and the complicity of others in her confinement are reprehensible and immoral.

In light of Britney Spears' ordeal, ethics investigations and legal action should be taken against those involved in her conservatorship, including the state of California, the medical and psychological professionals who evaluated her. Additionally, there is a pressing need for conservatorship reforms in all 50 states of America.

Britney's story is a stark reminder of the importance of safeguarding individual rights and autonomy, regardless of fame or fortune. It is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the need to address systemic injustices that persist within our society. And I hope that Britney gets more than justice for what she endured at the hands of her father and extended family.

'The Only Thing Comparable Is Sex Trafficking': Top Most Shocking Court Statements From Britney Spears

[Google](#) · False Positive (Score 0.61) [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com)

Reviewed by on June 11, 2024

trafficking

alleging

bullied

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'The Only Thing Comparable Is Sex Trafficking': Top Most Shocking Court Statements From Britney Spears

June 23, 2021 / 5:06 PM PDT / KCAL News

LOS ANGELES (CBSLA) - Britney Spears asked a judge Wednesday to end the court conservatorship that has controlled her life and money since 2008.

The dramatic request at a Los Angeles hearing came with her first words in open court in the conservatorship during its 13-year existence.

"The only thing comparable is sex trafficking," Spears told the judge Wednesday, alleging that her doctors watch her undress, draw an average of eight vials of blood six types of medication.

Spears also said her father and anyone involved in the conservatorship should be "in jail."

"I feel ganged up on. I feel bullied. I feel left alone," Spears said.

Spears said she wants to marry her boyfriend Sam Asghari and have a baby, but the conservatorship won't allow her to. She told the court she's being forced to take

"All I want is to own my money and for this to end and for my boyfriend to be able to drive me in his (expletive) car," Spears said.

In the written speech that lasted more than 20 minutes, Spears revealed many details that have been carefully guarded for years by the court.

When an attorney representing her co-conservator said the hearing and transcript should be kept sealed if private medical information was to be revealed, Spears sh should be public.

More than 100 fans from the so called #FreeBritney movement gathered outside the courthouse before the hearing, holding signs that read "Free Britney now!" and "One fan inside the courtroom cried and occasionally clapped during the remarks.

Spears said she has not felt heard in any of her previous appearances before the court, all of which were kept sealed from the public.

The judge thanked her for her remarks, which she called "courageous," but made no further comment.

In:

Conservatorship

Britney Spears

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Britney Spears says all her jewelry has been stolen

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stolen fake theft alleged authorities toxic

Britney Spears says all her jewelry has been stolen

(Gray News) - (TMX) - Britney Spears says all her jewelry has been stolen.

The "Toxic" singer, 42, shared a video on Instagram on Sunday that showed her opening the nearly empty drawers of a jewelry box.

"You guys, for real, all my jewelry was stolen," Spears alleged in the video. "See? There's nothing. Well, there's a Mother Mary. ... I'm scared. It's all gone. All my jewel

"So you can see for real all my jewelry was stolen," she wrote alongside the video. "And my baby cross that I wore since I was 4 is gone ... it's so thin."

Spears said that much of the jewelry was fake, precisely because she was afraid it would be stolen, but that some of it was custom-made for her.

"It's hard to buy new now because I'm scared it will go missing. So, I buy it cheap and fake, but it's hard because some of my pieces were originally made for me," sh

It's unclear whether Spears reported the theft to authorities.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office told Page Six on Monday that their agency had not "received any calls for service regarding any reports of theft from Spears' resi

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How Conservatorship Threatens Britney Spears' Civil Rights | ACLU

August 20, 2020 · [Google](#) · [False Positive](#) (Score 0.45) [aclu.org](#)

False positive. Non-adverse media.

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How Conservatorship Threatens Britney Spears' Civil Rights | ACLU

UPDATE: After 13 years, Britney's conservatorship finally ended in November 2021, restoring her right to make decisions about her own life. But there are still over 1 living under some form of conservatorship or guardianship in the U.S. — people who deserve access to their civil liberties, too.

Britney Spears did it again — the pop singer has recently been in the news for her ongoing conservatorship and civil liberties battle with her father, Jamie Spears. The California court to keep her father from being her conservator and having broad control over her life decisions and career. But what exactly is a conservatorship, and \ sat down with Zoe Brennan-Krohn, staff attorney with the ACLU's Disability Rights Project, to discuss Britney, conservatorship, and why this is a disability rights issue

Q: Can you briefly explain Britney Spears' situation, and the implications of her conservatorship case?

Britney Spears is subject to a court-imposed conservatorship (in most other states this structure is referred to as a guardianship). This means that a court has determined properly for her food, clothing, or shelter. The court has then granted other people — her conservators — the legal right to make decisions for her. News reports indicate Britney since 2008. While we do not know the details of Spears' conservatorship, in general, conservators like those in her case have the ability to make decisions about her lives, where and how she spends her money, what medications she takes, who she spends time with, and other decisions.

Q: Can you please break down, what is conservatorship? What does it mean?

Conservatorship means the court is taking away the civil liberties from one person and giving them to someone else. Sometimes it's ALL of that person's civil rights are partial. But it is the court weighing in on the person's life and saying you, as a person with a disability, are no longer able to make decisions about yourself and livelihood how you support and feed yourself — and we are putting someone else in charge of making those decisions. Because it's such an extreme step to take, it's really surprising once a court has put a person under a conservatorship, only a court can lift that conservatorship.

Q: Why is the ACLU just weighing in on this now?

The ACLU has a long history of advocating for the rights of people with disabilities to live independent, self-directed lives as active members of their communities. Our and guardianship are part of that commitment: ensuring that people with disabilities retain their civil rights and liberties and a belief that disabled people are protected rather than the removal — of these rights.

This issue is getting attention right now because of Britney Spears' fame. But she is only one of untold thousands nationwide under or at risk of guardianship or conservatorship advocated for expanding supported decision-making, an alternative to conservatorship or guardianship where people with disabilities can choose trusted support people without court intervention or loss of civil rights.

Q: Why is conservatorship a disability rights issue?

People only end up under conservatorships or guardianships if a court identifies them as having disabilities. This includes people with psychiatric disabilities, developmental age-related disabilities like dementia, and other types of disabilities.

Fighting against the unnecessary and dangerous removal of disabled people's civil rights and civil liberties is a core belief of the ACLU's disability rights work. This is because they are bad or wrong or unnecessary — conservatorships are complex and individual processes. But the ease with which disabled people can be stripped of their rights, and they face getting those rights back, is a systemic disability rights issue about which we have serious concerns.

Q: How do people get into conservatorships? How does conservatorship limit a person's civil liberties/rights?

Typically a conservatorship happens when somebody comes into court saying they think this person needs guardianship or conservatorship. Often, it can be the person's disability, or sometimes it can happen after a school or doctor tells the parents that they should get a conservatorship. What's especially dangerous about conservatorships is harmless, including by courts and judges who impose them routinely. This is part of society's paternalism and infantilization of people with disabilities. But in fact, conservatorships are often permanent arrangements.

Conservatorships limit a person's civil liberties, which we at the ACLU of course view as a core concern. But beyond that, conservatorships don't necessarily actually result in financial, physical, or emotional abuse.

Q: What laws or policies exist that protect someone from a conservatorship of this kind? What would the legal process to lift the conservatorship look like?

Most state laws have some safeguards in place. In California for example, the court is supposed to consider which less restrictive alternatives to conservatorship have been tried. The judge should ask a person seeking conservatorship, "What else have you tried? Have you tried supported decision-making? Have you tried joint management classes? Have you tried a system of text reminders to make sure the person gets to their medical appointments?" And if the person seeking conservatorship judge should deny the conservatorship. There should only be a conservatorship if these other options have been tried in good faith and really aren't working. But in reality, conservatorships are often imposed even when other supports and alternatives might work.

To lift a conservatorship, the laws are different state by state, but a conservatee can go to the court to say they want this changed or lifted, and the court should consider. Judges are very reluctant to lift conservatorships, and only the judge has the power to do so. You aren't necessarily entitled to a lawyer to help you get out of a conservatorship case, it is virtually impossible for a person to access the courts, especially if their conservator doesn't agree that the conservatorship should be lifted. How would they where they live or where they go or who they associate with — figure out how to get before a judge to challenge that they cannot make these decisions? It can be a lot easier to get into conservatorships than to get out of them.

Q: We don't know Britney's diagnosis or details about her particular situation. How do we know this case is a civil rights/liberties issue?

We don't know if Britney Spears identifies herself as a person with disabilities, or what, if any, diagnoses she has received. But by virtue of being under a conservatorship, we know she is disabled, and has stripped away her civil rights because of that disability. So it's inherently a civil rights/civil liberties issue.

What we don't know is what the info the court had, what Britney has said about what she wants specifically, what other options have been tried, or what her lawyers have said that this is an example of a thoughtful conservatorship that was implemented as the last resort and is being reviewed carefully, thoroughly, and regularly, that is not then appears inconsistent with what we see of Britney publicly. Our view is that in general, conservatorships should be viewed with skepticism and used as a last resort. In and without substantive engagement.

Q: Are there alternatives to conservatorship that can help keep a person with a disability and others safe, without limiting their rights?

Yes, there are plenty of alternatives to conservatorship, and they are important. Everyone — with and without disabilities — uses supports to make decisions. We ask people to make lists of pros and cons. These same options should be available to people with disabilities. Powers of attorney, advanced medical directives, shared supported decision-making are all options for disabled people to keep their rights and get support in making decisions, just like nondisabled people do.

Q: What would you say to people that think the conservatorship in Britney's case is for the best? And that the risks of harm (emotional/material/physical) are high?

We don't know all of the risks and benefits at play, so we can't speak to the specifics of her case. But we do know that the conservatorship itself also has risks. The risks are financial, physical, and emotional abuse. And even when there is no abuse, conservatorships limit a person's ability to advocate for themselves, learn from their decisions, and develop. There is a risk in being told that your opinions, your likes and dislikes, don't matter — it makes it harder to stand up to abuse or neglect. So in any conservatorship case, we want to know that the real risks (and benefits) of both conservatorship and its alternatives have been seriously weighed.

Q: Do ALL people with disabilities have a right to lead self-directed lives and retain their civil rights? Shouldn't it be on a case by case determination?

All people with disabilities have a right to lead self-directed lives and retain their civil rights as much as possible. What that looks like will be different for different people and their support needs for some or all of their lives. But as a society we need to find ways to support people with disabilities and recognize that they are individuals with a full range of preferences who have the right to exercise their civil liberties.



Appendix - search request details

Google API

Entity ID	Type	Name	Year of birth	Citizenship	Resid
—	Individual	Britney Spears	1981	United States	—, U

High-risk countries

Russian Federation NK

Keywords

ACCUSE ARREST BRIBE CONVICT CORRUPT COUNTERFEIT CRIME EMBEZZLEMENT FRAUD GUILT
INVESTIGATION KICKBACK MONEY LAUNDERING NARCOTIC PENALTY SANCTION SENTENCED EVASION TEI
TRAFFICKING VIOLATION

Article Language(s)

Any

Search time period

10 Years



Report Explanation

Case Status: the recommendation based on the analyst's findings. Possible values are Further investigation needed, True positive or False Positive. The name.

High-Risk Countries: shows flagged countries which were found within the article(s). Note that additional countries that were not found within the article screening.

Keywords: shows keywords found within the article(s) that are commonly associated with a True Positive alert. Note that additional keywords that were not may have been used in the screening.

Article Title: the name of the article returned by the search parameters. Clicking the name of the article title in the Summary section will navigate you to the article details section.

Article Status: a risk-based category assigned to an article. Possible values are "Needs Investigation", "False Positive", "True Positive". Articles that were "Positive" by the model are automatically assigned "Needs Investigation" unless a human team member changes the status during the review process.

Score: a model-based assessment that determines the relevance of the entity and a risky activity and/or crime. It is given on a 0.00 to 1.00 scale, with 1.00 being the highest.

Reviewer: the name and ID of the final analyst who reviewed the article and updated its status and/or comment. Possible values are the name and ID of the analyst or "Auto" if it was processed automatically by the digital worker Evelyn. It is possible for different articles to be reviewed by different analysts within the same case.

Comment: articles are first analyzed by the machine learning model. If the model dispositioned the article as False Positive, you'll see the reasoning list and any comments made by analysts during their manual review in this section.