Planning and roadblocks hindered Spears paparazzi

[*Spears, from Page B1*]
that could have caused harm to the public or Spears.

LAPD Deputy Chief Michel Moore said it was "a shame" that scarce police resources had to be diverted from "public safety needs such as violent crime, drunken driving or responding to the ongoing stream of 911 calls." But he said the department "had no choice but to ensure that we appropriately dealt with this incident."

Spears' hospitalization came under Section 5150 of California's Welfare and Institutions Code, which greatly restricts the ability of government officials to hospitalize people against their wills, but allows a person to be held for 72 hours. If Spears won't consent to additional treatment, authorities can petition to have her held an additional 14 days.

Among advocates for the mentally ill, some expressed hope that Spears' hospitalization could help remove the stigma from involuntary hospitalization for mental illness — easing what is often a wrenching decision for families.

Despite Spears' celebrity, the decision to have her committed involved elements that are typical for many mental health cases in California, said Randall Hagar, head of governmental affairs for the California Psychiatric Assn.

Cases typically involve a family desperate for treatment for a loved one, a patient who appears functional one moment and severely ill the next, and an imperfect legal system struggling to mediate it all, he said.

"Every family will tell you how much they fail before they can finally get a hospitalization," Hagar said.

State Sen. Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), a leading authority on mental health law, said he hoped the attention generated by Spears' case could help increase public understanding of the issues involved in commitments.

"With all that goes on in pop culture, in an ironic way this could be a teaching moment," said Steinberg, an author of a 2004 ballot initiative that sought to reform California's troubled mental healthcare system.

"I sure hope the conversation shifts from the paparazzi and all of that to how many people in this state and this country need mental health services and don't receive them," he said.

Advocates who are otherwise in agreement about many aspects of the mental healthcare system are deeply and often bitterly divided over the issue of involuntary commitments.

APTN Video

MOTHER: *Lynne Spears, center, was photographed leaving UCLA Medical Center, where her daughter Britney was admitted for involuntary mental healthcare early Thursday.*

Gabriel Bouys AFP / Getty Images

AT COURT: *Spears is seen arriving at Los Angeles County Superior Court for a custody hearing last month.*

Experts on mental illness estimate that as many as half of people who are mentally ill deny that they are sick.

Some believe that virtually any attempt to commit someone involuntarily is a step backward, a reminder of dark days of asylums, forced lobotomies and, more recently, the use of forced restraints and long periods of seclusion.

> 'With all that goes on in pop culture, in an ironic way this could be a teaching moment.'
>
> — State Sen. Darrell Steinberg, *on Spears' hospitalization*

Others call that wrongheaded and say that with enough protections in place, some people who suffer from mental illness but do not agree that they are sick can be helped by compelled treatment. Failing to compel treatment is akin to denying chemotherapy to a cancer patient, people on that side of the debate say.

In Spears' case, tabloids had been reporting for months about her erratic behavior — including speaking in a British accent and shaving her head. But it wasn't until a month ago that authorities got involved. Police were called to her house after she refused to turn over her youngest child to bodyguards for her former husband, Kevin Federline, and locked herself in a bathroom. At that time, Spears was taken by ambulance to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center on the same type of involuntary hold. She was released a day later.

Over the last few weeks, her strange behavior continued, authorities said. She drove past the Los Angeles County courthouse several times while custody hearings were underway regarding her children, but didn't go inside.

By this week, the situation appeared to reach a breaking point.

According to LAPD officials who spoke on condition that they not be named, Spears' psychiatrist and family members gathered at her hilltop home Wednesday evening to execute plans to take her in for an evaluation. The news media found out about the effort, and by 11 p.m., her neighborhood was swarming with photographers and TV news cameras. TV choppers hovered overhead.

The police waited until the crowd had shrunk before taking Spears to the hospital about 1 a.m., the officials said.

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U.S. Navy Announces Alternative Arrangements for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Requests Public Input

On January 15, 2008, the Department of the Navy accepted alternative arrangements, approved by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These alternative arrangements specifically address the use of mid-frequency active (MFA) sonar and its effects on marine mammals during Navy exercises in Southern California (SOCAL) Operating areas. These exercises include Composite Training Unit Exercises (COMPTUEXs) and Join Task Force Exercises (JTFEXs) scheduled to occur between January 15, 2008 ad January 23, 2009. A Decision Memorandum documenting the Navy's acceptance of these alternative arrangements was published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2008.

Information on the Navy's proposals for the SOCAL Operating Area including the full text of the Decision Memorandum is available at www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com.

The Navy will prepare a post-exercise assessment after each exercise. By this Notice, the Navy requests input from the public on the process for reviewing the post-exercise assessments. The Navy is also offering the public the opportunity to discuss the implementation of these alternative arrangements. Input on reviewing the post-exercise assessments and any requests to meet with Navy and CEQ representatives about the alternative arrangements may be submitted by contacting Mr. Alex Stone at (619) 545-8128 or in writing to:

Naval Air Station North Island
Attn: Alex Stone, CPF Environmental
McCain Boulevard, Building 678, Room 218
San Diego, CA 92135

For more information about the Navy's Decision Memorandum, visit www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com.

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