

Michael Jackson's Doctor Could Face 'Homicide' Charges

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By Arshad Mahmud

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And according to several news reports, police are now moving ahead to issue arrest warrant against Dr. Murray on charges of homicide. The Las Vegas cardiologist told detectives that he had been treating Jackson for insomnia for about six weeks, and had been giving Jackson 50 milligrams of propofol every night using an intravenous drip.

His impending arrest has added a new twist to the Jackson saga, leading some legal and medical experts to wonder whether he should be charged for manslaughter or should he be treated as a professional who was just doing his duty to alleviate the pain of his patient.

It's still too early to predict how the case would unfold in the future but the issue has refocused attention on the relationship between a celebrity and his/her doctor. More specifically, the question is now being asked whether the doctors treating celebrities are sacrificing their professional ethics in order to accommodate undue request from their patients.

"I think it's far too early to say he'll be charged with any crime," said Laurie Levenson, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. "We know that the coroner believes that this is a death at the hands of another. Now the question is whether that involved criminal conduct," she told the Washington Post, citing intent to harm and gross negligence as examples.

According to reports, Murray said he feared that Jackson was forming an addiction to the drug, which the singer allegedly referred to as "milk," and that he was trying to wean him off of it.

On June 25, the day Jackson died, Murray tried to induce sleep at 1:30 a.m. with Valium; at 2 a.m. with lorazepam; and at 3 a.m. with midazolam, according to the affidavit.

After unsuccessfully putting Jackson to sleep with additional doses over the next few hours, Jackson then demanded propofol. At 10:40 a.m., the report notes, Murray administered 25 milligrams of the drug and continued to monitor Jackson for 10 minutes, until Murray left for the restroom. Murray told investigators that he returned after no more than two minutes and noticed Jackson had stopped breathing.

But the story might be more complicated than that. Investigators have indicated through a series of search warrants that they are probing manslaughter, excessive use of prescribing medication and prescribing to an addict.

In the months since Jackson's death, police officers and the Drug Enforcement Administration have raided Murray's Las Vegas home and office, his second office and storage unit in Houston.

Medical records have also been subpoenaed from Jackson's other doctors, including dermatologist Arnold Klein, general practitioner Allan Metzger and anesthesiologists David Adams and Randy Rosen.

If Murray or others were charged, it would mark yet another matter heading to the courtroom after Jackson's death. He left behind three children, a pile of debts and a complicated financial empire that are likely to be the subjects of legal proceedings and courtroom battles for years.

Earlier this month, a Los Angeles judge awarded permanent custody of Jackson's three children -- Prince Michael, 12; Paris, 11; and Prince Michael II, 7 -- to the late singer's mother, Katherine Jackson. The same judge has also approved a

\$60 million deal for a feature film with Columbia Motion Pictures, a traveling memorabilia show and a slew of new Jackson-related merchandise.

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