

Band subpoenaed to testify before grand jury investigating nightclub fire

BY DENISE LAVOIE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Members of the rock group Great White have been subpoenaed by prosecutors and said Tuesday they will appear before a grand jury investigating whether criminal charges should be filed in the nightclub inferno that killed 97 people.

The grand jury is expected to convene Wednesday, law enforcement officials said on condition of anonymity.

Band publicist Byron Hontas said the musicians are cooperating with authorities and expect to testify early next week.

Investigators are trying to determine who is to blame for the fire that was apparently sparked by the band's pyrotechnics last Thursday. Flames swept through the West Warwick club, the Station, in a matter of minutes.

The band has said it received approval to use the special effects, but the club's owners have denied giving permission.

It could not be immediately determined whether the club's owners, brothers Jeffrey and Michael Derderian, have received subpoenas. Their attorney, Kathleen Hagerty, did not return calls Tuesday, and the attorney general's office declined comment.

Police searched the Narragansett home of Michael Derderian on Sunday, according

to a law enforcement source. Attorney General Patrick Lynch has said he does not believe the Derderians have cooperated with investigators, but spokesman Mike Healey said Tuesday: "We're not pitting the band against the Derderians."

Meanwhile, Gov. Don Carcieri

tough process and the families and the impacts of this thing are rippling throughout the state," Carcieri said.

The fire also injured nearly 190 people; about 60 remain hospitalized, including 40 in critical condition.

Legal experts and fire investi-

with," Donald Bliss, president of the National Association of State Fire Marshals and the New Hampshire fire marshal, said.

Edward Ryan Jr., an attorney who represented a homeless man charged with manslaughter in a 1999 fire that killed six Massachusetts firefighters, compared the Rhode Island case to Boston's Coconut Grove nightclub fire that killed 492 people in 1942.

In that fire, the nightclub owner was charged with negligent manslaughter for having an overcrowded club with locked exit doors, an act that showed he disregarded known risks to life, Ryan said. He said the bar boy suspected of starting the fire when he lit a match was not charged because the deaths were caused by an unsafe building.

Ryan said the grand jury could find the club owners and the band committed "affirmative acts" that caused the deaths — the band by using pyrotechnics without a permit, and the Derderians by failing to make sure no fire hazards were present. He cited reports that pyrotechnics had been used in the club by other bands.

"If they had 70 shows in the last three years and 35 of those involved pyrotechnics of some sort, that leads to a fair inference that they knew or should have known what was going on in their club," Ryan said.



Kristen LaPlante, left, and Michael LaPlante leave the scene of the Station nightclub fire in West Warwick, R.I.

said 93 of the 97 bodies have been identified. The governor also said there was a discrepancy between the number of people reported missing and those confirmed dead, and search crews using dogs were expected to go over the charred ruins again to look for bodies.

"This is a tough, very, very

gators said the Derderians or members of the band Great White — or both — could be indicted on such charges as criminally negligent homicide, manslaughter, even murder.

"It is pretty obvious that there was some joint responsibility. Maybe the issue is not which one to charge, but what to charge both

Adventure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

choose the adventure structure so that students will not only have a chance to experience the academic aspect of college, but also the social and physical aspects."

Students have the option of staying on campus or commuting to the program. The residents will stay in Maxey College on the Horseshoe.

"We want students to learn that USC is a well-balanced college and a great environment," Steele said.

Students interested in the program must fill out an application, and selection is based on GPA, teacher recommendations, a student essay and PSAT or SAT scores, if applicable.

The program has been advertised nationally, but the Southeast is where most stu-

dents are expected to come from. The adventures will begin with a trip to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida and will end with a trip to Washington, D.C., where students will study the presidency and its effects on government.

The weeklong academic programs will be held during the four weeks in between the trips. There will be an estimated 40 students on the USC campus each of these weeks.

"This is a new direction for us. We are trying to develop our summer academic programs," said Jim Twitty, USC's director of continuing education. "We hope that it will be a recruiting tool because studies have shown that if perspective students have a positive visit to the college campus beforehand, then they will be more likely to attend that college."

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Grant

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

find those factors so that in future studies we can modify them and learn if that does in fact result in increase in physical activity," Pate said.

He said if that works out, they hope to make policy recommendations for schools and the agencies that operate them.

Bill Brown, associate professor of educational psychology and a part of the team working with Pate, said the monitoring of the children will take place on two different levels: direct observation by trained individuals and motion sensors the children will wear throughout the day.

Brown said the study would give researchers a much better description of what children's activity levels are in the schools, where children find themselves for a long part of the day.

"Most kids at the preschool age are in some form of group care by age 4," he said. "And the circumstances they find themselves in, as far as their cognitive, physical and social development, can be very, very important."

Brown said it doesn't make sense to wait until children are 14 and having weight problems if there are things that can be done at the policy level and at a teacher implementation level.

"I think most people would agree that we really do need to take a preventive and early intervention approach to more active and healthy lifestyles for kids," he said. "It's a national problem, obesity — state and national problem."

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