

Jackson's supporters to appear at arraignment

BY TIM NOLLOY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Michael Jackson's family, friends and fans are planning a massive show of support when the pop superstar is arraigned on child molestation charges later this week.

Fans and family of Jackson, including his brother Jermaine, scheduled a news conference Monday at the family's complex in Encino to announce their plans for the singer's arraignment, which is scheduled for Friday in Santa Maria.

Jackson's fan clubs plan to have cars and buses travel to the courthouse in northern Santa

Barbara County from throughout Southern California and even Las Vegas, said Angel Howansky, a freelance publicist who is helping coordinate the event.

"We've had fans calling from out of state who are flying in just for the arraignment," said Howansky, who added that she was helping without pay.

Also Monday, more than two dozen Jackson lawyers, accountants, bankers and managers will meet at the Beverly Hills Hotel to discuss the singer's business affairs, said Jackson family friend Brian Oxman.

"There is to be a meeting of the brain trusts for Michael's management," Oxman said. "Rumors will be set to rest, and

it's to explain how Michael is to handle further actions in connection with his business. They have not specified what it is or who is to be doing the speaking."

Jackson spokesman Kevin McLin provided details Sunday of the Encino event, but said he couldn't provide any information on the Beverly Hills meeting besides confirming it had been scheduled.

Jackson, 45, is charged with seven counts of performing lewd or lascivious acts upon a child under 14 and two counts of administering an intoxicating agent. He's free on \$3 million bail pending the arraignment in Santa Maria.

Blood sample casts doubt on Princess Diana accident

BY JILLAWLESS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — British police have doubts about the authenticity of the blood sample that led French investigators to conclude drunk driving caused the car crash that killed Princess Diana, a newspaper reported Saturday.

The Times of London reported that senior officers were concerned that no DNA test was conducted to prove the blood sample belonged to Henri Paul, chauffeur of the car that crashed in a Paris underpass on Aug. 31, 1997.

Princess Diana's boyfriend Dodi Fayed and Paul were all killed in the crash, which a French court ruled in 2002 was an accident caused by Paul's speeding and being under the influence of alcohol.

A police spokesman said Saturday the force had no comment on the Times report.

French police inspector Jean-Claude Mules, who played a central role in the investigation, told The Times there was no mistake about the blood sample. "We are very serious people and no errors are allowed," he was quoted as saying.

Many people continue to believe that Diana was the victim of a conspiracy, however, variously pointing to the royal family and intelligence agencies.

British coroner Michael Burgess, who opened an inquest into the deaths of the princess and Fayed this week, has asked London's Metropolitan Police to investigate whether there is any evidence the deaths were not the result of a "straightforward road

traffic accident."

The Times said there were "high-level concerns" that Paul's blood could have been mixed up with another sample in a laboratory or the mortuary where his body was taken.

It said the sample tested contained extremely high levels of carbon monoxide that could have rendered Paul incapable of driving.

Fayed's father, Mohammed Al Fayed, and Paul's parents have repeatedly said they are not convinced the blood sample tested was Paul's and have drawn attention to the high carbon monoxide level.

A French court-designated expert said in 1999 that the carbon monoxide level was due to Paul inhaling gas from the car's air bags.

Pentagon auditors spent hours doctoring files, investigators say

BY LARRY MARGASAK
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Pentagon auditors spent 1,139 hours altering their own files in order to pass an internal review, say investigators who found that the accounting sleuths engaged in just the kind of wasteful activity they are supposed to expose.

When the auditors in the New York City office learned well in advance which files a review team would check, they spent the equivalent of more than 47 days doctoring the papers and updating records from several audits, the Defense Department's inspector general concluded. Administrative staff, audit supervisors and other employees also participated in the scheme.

The fabrication at the Defense Contract Audit Agency "certainly violates the spirit and intent" of government auditing standards and rules on ethical conduct, according to the inspector general's report obtained by The Associated Press.

The fabrication was discovered in 2001, but the report on it was not disclosed until Tuesday.

The defense agency, which audits government contracts, is the same one that recently reported that Vice President Dick Cheney's former company, Halliburton,

may have overcharged the Army as much as \$61 million for gasoline in Iraq.

The audit agency ran up some charges of its own when its auditors worked on altering the records.

The task of rewriting the files was so daunting that auditors came in from other offices to help make the changes, costing taxpayers more than \$1,600 in travel expenses.

The agency "is supposed to be the watchdog for defense contracts," said Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, a constant critic of government waste. "Altering audit work papers could undermine the accuracy of the Pentagon's cost reports. Falsifying official reports is a crime, and those involved must be held accountable."

To stop any fabrications in the future, the review teams only give 48 hours advance notice of the files they want to inspect. The advance time under the old policy was much longer.

Discipline was proposed for the manager who directed the alterations, but was never imposed because the official resigned, the report said.

Daniel Tucciarone, executive officer of the audit agency, said a second senior management official who "had not been forthcom-

ing and acted inappropriately to conceal information" was punished.

Tucciarone told the AP that the agency took "appropriate disciplinary action in all cases" but added that federal privacy law prevented him from releasing such information about individual employees.

The revisions were so pervasive that the work continued even after the review team arrived to inspect the auditors' files. The New York branch manager directed a senior auditor to delete electronic backup files of original documents, the inspector general said.

The report said agency employees believed that "upgrading" the working papers was a normal and acceptable practice and that they did not try to hide what they were doing.

The inspector general uncovered the file deletions following a tip to a fraud, waste and abuse hotline.

This is not the first time that Pentagon anti-waste investigators were found to have altered documents.

The AP reported in 2001 that the inspector general's office itself destroyed documents and replaced them with fakes to avoid embarrassment in a review of its work.

USA Today journalist 'panicked' as newspaper investigated his stories

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Pulitzer Prize finalist Jack Kelley says he "panicked and used poor judgment" during an investigation into his stories for USA Today that led to his departure from the newspaper.

While defending his work with the paper and saying he still stands behind every story written during a 21-year career there, Kelley told The Washington Post

he resigned because he made an indefensible mistake in attempting to defend himself.

Specifically, he said in an effort to prove he had spoken with a human rights activist in Yugoslavia, he encouraged a translator who was not present during a 1999 meeting with the activist to impersonate another translator who was there.

He told the Post the woman who agreed to help him called

the USA Today journalist assigned to investigate the matter last fall and verified Kelley's account.

"I resigned because I felt I should no longer work at USA Today because of what I'd done," Kelley told the Post, saying he had "panicked and used poor judgment." He said his action stemmed from his belief that the investigation was "a witch hunt to drive me out of USA Today."

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