

LAW & JUSTICE

Jury Finds Jackson's Doctor Guilty

Caregiver was reckless; faces four years in prison

(AP) — Michael Jackson's doctor was convicted Monday of involuntary manslaughter after a trial that painted him as a reckless caregiver who administered a lethal dose of a powerful anesthetic that killed the pop star.

The verdict against Dr. Conrad Murray marked the latest chapter in one of pop culture's most shocking tragedies — the death of the King of Pop on the eve of the singer's heavily promoted comeback concerts.

Murray sat stone-faced and showed little reaction at the verdict.

He was handcuffed and taken into custody without bail until sentencing on Nov. 29. Murray appeared calm as officials led him out of the courtroom.

There was a shriek in the courtroom when the verdict was read, and the crowd erupted outside the courthouse. The judge polled the jury, and each juror answered "yes" when asked whether their verdict was guilty.

The jury deliberated less than nine hours. Murray, 58, faces a sentence of up to four years in prison. He could also lose his medical license.

Jackson died on June 25, 2009. The complete story of his death finally emerged during the six-week trial. It was the tale of a tormented



Dr. Conrad Murray is found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in the death of Michael Jackson during trial in Los Angeles.

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genius on the brink of what might have been his greatest triumph with one impediment standing in his way — extreme insomnia.

Testimony came from medical experts, household employees and Murray's former girlfriends, among others.

The most shocking moments, however, came when prosecutors displayed a large picture of Jackson's gaunt, lifeless body on a hospital gurney and played the sound of his drugged, slurred voice, as recorded by Murray just weeks before the singer's death.

Jackson talked about plans for a children's hospital and his hope of cementing a legacy larger than that of Elvis Presley or The Beatles.

"We have to be phenomenal," he said about his "This Is It" concerts in London. "When people leave this show, when people leave my show, I want them to say, 'I've never seen nothing like this in my life. Go. Go. I've never seen nothing like this. Go. It's amazing. He's the greatest entertainer in the world.'"

Throughout the trial, Jackson family members watched from the spectator gallery, fans gathered outside with signs and T-shirts demanding "Justice for Michael," and an international press corps broadcast reports around the world. The trial was televised and streamed on

the Internet.

Prosecutors portrayed Murray as an incompetent doctor who used the anesthetic propofol without adequate safeguards, and whose neglect left Jackson abandoned as he lay dying.

Murray's lawyers sought to show the doctor was a medical angel of mercy with former patients vouching for his skills. Murray told police from the outset that he gave Jackson propofol and other sedatives as the star struggled for sleep to prepare for his shows. But the doctor said he administered only a small dose on the day Jackson died.

Lawyers for Murray and a defense expert blamed Jackson for his own death, saying the singer gave himself the fatal dose of propofol while Murray wasn't watching. A prosecution expert said that theory was crazy.

Murray said he had formed a close friendship with Jackson, never meant to harm him and couldn't explain why he died.

The circumstances of Jackson's death at the age of 50 were as bizarre as any chapter in the superstar's sensational life story.

Jackson was found not breathing in his own bed in his rented mansion after being dosed intravenously with propofol, a drug normally administered in hospitals during surgery.

The coroner ruled the case a homicide, and the blame would fall to the last person who had seen Jackson alive — Murray, who had been hired to care for the singer as the comeback concerts neared.

America's Poor Grows to 49 Million

Higher costs make it harder for people to stay afloat

(AP) — The ranks of America's poor are greater than previously known, reaching a new level of 49.1 million — or 16 percent — due to rising medical costs and other expenses that make it harder for people to stay afloat, according to new census estimates.

The numbers released Monday are part of a first-ever supplemental poverty measure aimed at providing a fuller picture of poverty. It is considered experimen-

tal and does not replace the Census Bureau's official poverty formula, which continues to determine eligibility and distribution of billions of dollars in federal aid for the poor.

Based on the revised formula, the number of poor people exceeds the record 46.2 million, or 15.1 percent, that was officially reported in September.

Broken down by groups, Americans 65 or older sustained the largest increases in poverty under the revised poverty formula — nearly doubling to 15.9 percent, or 1 in 6 — because of medical expenses that are not accounted for in the official rate.

Those include rising Medicare premiums, deductibles and ex-

penses for prescription drugs.

Working-age adults ages 18-64 also saw increases in poverty — from 13.7 percent to 15.2 percent — due mostly to commuting and child care costs.

For the first time, the share of Hispanics living in poverty surpassed that of African-Americans, 28.2 percent to 25.4 percent. That is due to an increase in the poverty rate for Hispanics under the new measure because of lower participation of immigrants and non-English speakers in government aid programs such as housing and food stamps.

Kathleen Short, a research economist at the Census Bureau, said many of the shifts in poverty reflect the large numbers of older

people who hover near the poverty line after receiving Social Security cash payments. The poverty line is defined under the official measure as \$11,139 for an individual, or \$22,314 for a family of four.

Because of Social Security benefits, only 9 percent of seniors, or roughly 3.5 million, live in poverty according to the official formula. But that number increases by roughly 2.7 million when taking into account the additional health care costs. If it weren't for those health care costs, the poverty rate for seniors would have dropped to 8.6 percent. "The medical expenses are very large," Short said.

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