

CBS News

'Wannabe Jurors' Needn't Apply

SANTA MARIA, Calif., Jan. 31, 2005

(CBS) Jury selection is set to begin Monday in Michael Jackson's molestation trial, and a jury consultant says both sides will be on the lookout for "wannabe" jurors.

Kathy Kellerman tells ***The Early Show*** co-anchor **Harry Smith** both sides will have their antennae up during the selection process for prospective panelists who have personal agendas.

"Absolutely," she says, "there are potential jurors who want to sit on this trial. There might be individuals who are fans of Michael Jackson and want to protect him. There might be people who have experienced molestation in the past, either themselves or people they know, and they will want to take revenge. There might be people who want to be famous and write a book or be on the media afterwards. There are all sorts of wannabe jurors."

Separately, a Jackson publicist denied to **co-anchor Hannah Storm** reports that the pop star is suicidal or broke.

Kellerman told Smith there will also be those potential jurors who won't want any part of serving. "Some," she says, "will be excused for what's called hardship, meaning the jurors who don't want to serve, can't serve because of time schedules, medical appointments, financial reasons, will be excused."

Kellerman agreed with numerous predictions that the selection process could take a month or more. She explained that, in a typical criminal trial for your "run-of-the-mill, everyday defendant," choosing a jury takes "maybe one day, two days, three days at a maximum, usually."

But in the Jackson trial, Kellerman believes possible jurors will be interviewed one by one. Usually, that interviewing is done in a group.

What would the perfect juror for the prosecution be like? "A person," Kellerman replied, "who believes in personal responsibility, that what you reap in this life is what you sow. There's someone who is religious and fairly traditional, and does not tolerate much in the way of deviation from traditional roles for males in society."

And if you're the defense?

Then "you're looking for someone who believes in the concept of lifestyle and there may be variations in it. You're looking for somebody who is a fan of Michael Jackson and who will give Michael Jackson a benefit of the doubt."

Kelleman gives the edge in "the PR war" that's been waged by both sides to the

Jackson camp at the moment, saying she believes publicity "has made sure that at least some jurors might give Michael Jackson the benefit of the doubt."

And Jackson being in the courtroom for jury selection is typical: "Defendants are always in court during jury selection. It gives Michael Jackson a chance to bond with the potential jurors and, if a potential does not like Michael Jackson, that would be somebody that the defense should consider excusing."

Jackson spokesperson Raymone Bain says it will be a "very businesslike and very serious" Jackson in the courtroom.

Jackson thinks he can get a fair trial, Bain says, and "has confidence in his defense team. His spirits are great. He has the support of his family, his children, his friends."

She tells **co-anchor Storm** that Jackson is "coping well. ...It has been a bit frustrating in that we have not been able to address a number of issues because we've been under a very strict gag order.

"Mr. Jackson, though, *has* been able to address certain other issues. ...He is not suicidal. Mr. Jackson is very strong. He is very thick-skinned, too. Regrettably, there've been images of him painted that are not true. He's been in the music industry for 41 years. He's seen it all.

"The only thing that concerns him," Bain continues, "is that it's become such a circus. You know, the enormity of all of these false and outrageous claims -- but Michael is fine. He is not suicidal." He is indeed, she contends, "happy."

What's more, "There've been all of the reports about bills unpaid. We've gone through a transition, and sometimes, when organizations go through transitions, there are a number of things that are not quite dealt with in a quick or an efficient manner. But he's brought in his brother, Randy, to oversee his business. He's doing an excellent job."