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Britney Spears's court-appointed lawyer joins manager in resigning after shocking conservatorship hearing



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Britney Spears and Larry Rudolph in the audience at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards. (Photo: Kevin Mazur/WireImage)

Britney Spears's court-appointed [conservatorship](#) attorney, Samuel Ingham, is requesting to resign one day after longtime manager Larry Rudolph quit. Those are the latest ripple effects following the pop star's impassioned testimony. A legal expert says Jamie Spears should follow suit, as a good "housecleaning" is overdue.

Ingham, who has represented Spears since she was put in the conservatorship in 2008, filed documents on Tuesday asking to be dismissed "effective upon the appointment of new court-appointed counsel." The request comes as Ingham faces public scrutiny for his handling of the case, which pays him more than \$500,000 annually — a tab Spears must pay.

Ingham has not yet responded to Yahoo Entertainment's request for comment. While he told the court last year that Spears is a "voluntary" conservatee, she made it clear in her shocking testimony that she's not. She called the conservatorship "abusive" and claimed her lawyer never told her it was a possibility to petition to end it.

Further, Spears, 39, told the court she wanted the opportunity to "handpick my own lawyer by myself," instead of being appointed one, noting she had finally "built a relationship" with Ingham — 13 years later — but that he was never her choice. That led Ingham to say that he served at the pleasure of the court, and would step aside if asked.

Ingham's resignation follows Rudolph, who is not directly involved with the conservatorship, stepping down as her manager on Monday. It's a job he had off and on since the mid-'90s, with credit for helping make her a star.

"It has been over 2 1/2 years since Britney and I last communicated, at which time she informed me she wanted to take an indefinite work hiatus," Rudolph wrote in a letter sent to conservators Jamie Spears, Britney's father, and Jodi Montgomery and obtained by *Deadline*. "Earlier today, I became aware that Britney had been voicing her intention to officially retire."

The letter continued, "As you know, I have never been a part of the conservatorship nor its operations, so I am not privy to many of these details. I was originally hired at Britney's request to help manage and assist her with her career," in the mid-'90s, a role he's had on and off since. "And as her manager, I believe it is in Britney's best interest for me to resign from her team as my professional services are no longer needed."

Rudolph said the letter served as "my formal resignation," and noted before signing off, "I will always be incredibly proud of what we accomplished over our 25 years together. I wish Britney all the health and happiness in the world, and I'll be there for her if she ever needs me again, just as I always have been."

Per Rudolph's timeline, he last spoke to Britney Spears — who has not directly said she plans to retire, only that she has no immediate plans to perform — around the time she called off her Las Vegas residency in January 2019. Around that time, Rudolph gave an interview saying Britney Spears's "meds stopped working and she was distraught over" Jamie Spears's near-fatal colon rupture in late 2018. He said the singer was excited to tour, but then stopped returning his calls. She "clearly doesn't want to perform now... From what I have gathered it's clear to me she should not be going back to do this Vegas residency, not in the near future and possibly never again."

It was later revealed that Britney had been involuntary hospitalized in a psychiatric facility in early 2019 as all this played out.

In Britney Spears's court testimony, she claimed "my manager" called her therapist while she was prepping for her tour and said "I wasn't cooperating or following the guidelines in rehearsals," which she said was untrue. "And he also said I wasn't taking my medication, which is so dumb, because I've had the same lady every morning for the past eight years give me my same medication."

She also claimed her "management" threatened, "If I don't do this tour, I will have to find an attorney" because she would be sued.

Additional fallout from Britney's testimony was that Bessemer Trust — a wealth management group which serves as a co-conservator of the stars's estate alongside Jamie — requested that Judge Brenda Penny remove it from its role. In the paperwork, it was stated the company thought the conservatorship was voluntary and that the star wanted the company to be her co-conservator.

On Tuesday, Montgomery, who serves as conservator of Britney's person, said she isn't resigning — unless Britney requests that she does. And as of the day before, Britney "asked Ms. Montgomery to continue to serve." After Britney's testimony, Montgomery said her goal is to "assist and encourage Britney in her path to no longer needing a conservatorship of the person."

However, Jamie Spears's position hasn't appeared to change. Last week, the judge denied a previous petition to remove him a conservator— and he seems steadfast in his belief that the conservatorship should continue. As for the issues raised by Britney Spears in her testimony, he said they should be investigated, but punted it to Montgomery and Ingham, saying he's "simply not involved in any decisions related to Ms. Spears's personal care of medical or reproductive issues." He didn't address the fact that his daughter said she wanted to sue him over his role as her conservator.

A rep for Jamie Spears hasn't responded to Yahoo Entertainment's latest inquiry as to whether he plans to step down as conservator. A conservatorship insider previously told Yahoo Entertainment that they don't expect him to ever voluntarily step down. He's long viewed the situation as this: Britney is his daughter and he's looking out for her because no one else is.

All of these conservatorship changes are not likely to help #FreeBritney any earlier. As it stands, if Britney filed to end her conservatorship today, it could take into next year for that petition to be filed, for her to undergo an evaluation and a hearing to take place with testimony for and against ending it. Now, there are additional measures for the judge to consider — the approval of Ingham to step down, new counsel to be approved for the star and the judge to consider Bessemer's resignation.

"Everyone wants to see something happen July 14 — the next hearing date — but we have to remember this is a court process," California-based [top family law attorney](#) Christopher C. Melcher of [Walzer Melcher](#) tells Yahoo Entertainment. "Nothing moves quickly in court."

First, Britney needs new, independent counsel, whether or not Ingham's resignation is accepted, and that person "needs to get up to speed, which is not easy to do when we're

talking about 13 years of litigation history to learn about," says [celebrity divorce lawyer Melcher](#), who represents Kanye West in his divorce from Kim Kardashian. Then, the petition to terminate must be filed. "That also will take time to prepare," before the evaluation and hearing. "Technically, the court could make orders without a hearing," after giving notice to everyone involved, but "mostly that doesn't happen. The court system relies on attorneys making arguments to a court, presenting evidence for those arguments and then the court making a decision. It's an orderly process."

Melcher says he hopes the court "acts with urgency" after what he's seen to date. "This is not the regular type of legal dispute," he notes. "This is not a fight over money. This is a fight over liberty. We have now Britney saying her liberty is been taken from her" — which, by definition, a conservatorship does, but in this case it's "against her will and in a way that's harmful to her. And that there's not been proper oversight of this case. That needs to be handled immediately. Every day and moment that goes by potentially is doing damage to her that cannot be undone. The court needs to act with speed and not let this thing go on and on and continue it and investigate endlessly."

Looking ahead to the July 14 hearing, Melcher says the judge could OK Bessemer Trust's resignation on that date — but he hopes that Jamie Spears, who shares the job as co-conservator of Britney's money, is removed at the same time.

"Jamie should do the right thing: Step aside and resign right now," Melcher says. "He's not speaking to his daughter," since last year, "and his daughter has made it clear she does not want him in control. He is doing more damage than good. He needs to leave that post. By holding on, he's just making it worse. If he wanted to really help his daughter, he would let somebody take that role, even temporarily, while a petition to terminate is resolved."

Melcher goes on to call it a "good thing there is housecleaning" of the conservator parties. "This is a house that needed to be clean. With all the allegations out there, inconsistent statements, now the finger-pointing," of Jamie at Montgomery and Ingham. "This group of folks need to be replaced." Even just on a temporary basis "until the court hears the request to terminate."