

Britney Jean Spears was born to be an entertainer. Even as a child, she was a star: At age 10, she began appearing on television programs such as *Star Search* and *The New Mickey Mouse Club*. At age 17, she completed her debut album, . . . *Baby One More Time*, and quickly became one of the world's most famous and best-selling singer-entertainers. But she is also a tragic figure whose highly publicized personal problems, which may stem at least in part from a history of mental disorder and substance use, have led to numerous appearances in civil courts.

Spears has appeared twice in court seeking to terminate marriages. Her first marriage, to long-time friend Jason Allen Alexander, took place on January 3, 2004. She was 22 years old at the time. Two days later, she filed a complaint with the Clark County (Nevada) District Court seeking annulment on the grounds that she "lacked understanding of her actions to the extent that she was incapable of agreeing to marriage because before entering into the marriage the Plaintiff [Spears] and Defendant [Alexander] did not know each other's likes and dislikes, each other's desires to have or not have children, and each other's desires as to State of residency." The annulment was granted after only 55 hours of marriage. (For further information, see <http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/britneyannull.html>).

Spears' second marriage, to Kevin Federline, took place later that year on September 18, 2004 (although the necessary legal documents were not filed until October 6, 2004). Spears and Federline had two sons together: Sean, born September 14, 2005, and Jayden, born September 12, 2006. But Spears began to behave erratically during her marriage to Federline, including an infamous incident in which she was photographed driving her car while holding a baby in her lap, without any proper restraints. She also expressed unhappiness with her marriage in media interviews and eventually filed for divorce in November 2006, citing irreconcilable differences. This started a legal battle, with both Spears and Federline seeking custody of the children. The couple reached an agreement in March 2007 and their divorce was finalized a few months later.

Spears' problems worsened after her divorce. She attended a substance use treatment facility in February 2007, then shaved her head completely bald with electric clippers a few hours after checking out. After a few days, she attended and completed an inpatient substance use treatment program. Her ex-husband, Federline, was concerned about her parenting capacity and requested an emergency court hearing regarding custody, but later cancelled the appearance. A detailed custody evaluation was conducted by a California psychologist, Dr. Jane Shatz, the results of which were released in a 700-page report submitted by Dr. Shatz. The court reached a decision in September 2007 that Spears and Federline would continue to have joint custody of their two children, with conditions placed on Spears including random testing for drug and alcohol use and attendance at counseling.

Despite the court-ordered conditions, Spears continued to have problems, including being charged with hit-and-run and driving without a license. In October 2007, Federline was granted full custody of both children. But after Spears ignored the court order, police were called to her residence in January 2008. The children