

Arraignment of pop star Michael Jackson

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CAROL COSTELLO, CNN ANCHOR: Camera lenses from across the world are trained on Santa Barbara County, California today for the arraignment of pop star Michael Jackson on child molestation charges. It's time for some Coffey talk right now.

Kendall Coffey live from Miami -- good morning, Kendall.

KENDALL COFFEY, CNN LEGAL ANALYST: Good morning, Carol.

COSTELLO: This is a relatively simple hearing, isn't it?

COFFEY: Well, you'd think it would be a non-event, but arraignments usually are just a formal presentation of charges, a defendant enters a plea of not guilty. But I don't think anything is going to be normal in this case. There may be as many as a thousand Michael Jackson fans on hand and among other things, there will be some real sparring over what kind of access the media is going to get to matters that right now are under seal, such as the search warrant and the affidavits in support of the search warrant done on Neverland.

COSTELLO: Now, what do you think the judge will rule in the case of cameras in the courtroom? And I know that prosecutors are going to ask for a gag order.

COFFEY: Well, both sides have been a little unconventional up to now. But what judges have been doing in other high profile cases, looking at Scott Peterson, looking at Kobe Bryant, is they have been pretty restrictive with respect to media issues, keeping under seal the same kind of materials that the media is asking for today, imposing gag orders.

So my sense is that the judge's inclination is going to be to put some kind of restrictions in place to keep this case from becoming even more of a media frenzy than it already is.

COSTELLO: Michael Jackson has hired a new attorney, the attorney who got P. Diddy off. Does that mean he believes that Geragos isn't doing his job well enough?

COFFEY: I don't think so, although I was struck by the fact that Benjamin Brafman is being referred to as co-lead attorney, in effect, a two quarterback offense. It may be, Carol, that the daily intense demands of two high profile cases at the same time -- we know that Geragos is also representing Scott Peterson -- both cases are now sort of turning to the boiling points. It may really make it more fair for both clients involved that Michael Jackson has a second high profile lawyer who's also very, very media savvy.

COSTELLO: OK, we heard a little bit ago that Michael Jackson's camp has paid for this caravan of love, you know, busloads of fans to come, to be at the courthouse.

Could that possibly help him in the case against him?

COFFEY: It's not going to be a big factor either way. As long as the fans aren't disruptive, as long as they're sort of ordinary folks, maybe it's a slight positive. The one thing that wouldn't help Michael Jackson in Santa Barbara, in that particular community, is to have busloads and busloads from the Nation of Islam. I think anything that reminds everybody that he has sort of had a generally, kind of a good guy image, at least in the past, might be a positive, and it never hurts a defendant to see that there are some people out there that still believe in his cause.

COSTELLO: I think the Nation of Islam is going to provide security for him. So there will be a presence there.

COFFEY: Well, Carol, I mean everyone's mystified by why somebody trying a case in that venue, who's already got some very significant weirdness issues, would be involving the Nation of Islam. There are lots of other companies that can provide security. But no one finds this case an easy one to predict and there has been anything but normal development so far. We all know that Michael Jackson went on the air amidst child molestation charges to tell the whole world that he still thinks it's a good idea to have under aged roommates doing sleepovers.

COSTELLO: And in court today he's expected to enter a plea of not guilty.

Kendall Coffey...

COFFEY: He'll say not guilty and we may hear some things about scheduling.

COSTELLO: All right, of course we're going to be covering that in its entirety.

Kendall Coffey, live from Miami, thanks to you.