

Britney Spears'

After crying in front of **Diane Sawyer**, *Us* wonders: Is the pop princess under too much pressure?

BY JOEY BARTOLOMEO

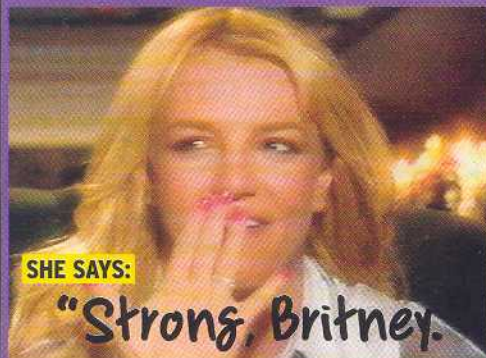
SHE HAS BARED NEARLY EVERY body part onstage and in magazines, but on November 13, Britney Spears bared her soul. During a *Primetime Live* interview with Diane Sawyer to promote her new CD, *In the Zone*, the 22-year-old burst into tears after being asked about her "rough year" (reeling from a breakup, controversies and an aunt's serious illness). "She's typical of former childhood performers," Beverly Hills psychotherapist Dr. Jenn Berman tells *Us*. "On the one hand, she's mature. In other ways, she's childlike." (Spears peppered responses with "Eew!" and "Weird!") But those close to the singer understand her anxiety. "It's very hard for her with all she has to deal with," Spears choreographer Jamie King tells *Us*. "Luckily, she has a strong support system. But it's still tough. It would be for anyone."



She Cracked Her Knuckles!

Knuckle-cracking "suggests aggression," says body language expert Patti Wood. "It may be toward [her]self or somebody who's not there."

Her *Primetime* Meltdown, Moment by Moment



SHE SAYS:

"Strong, Britney."

An overwhelmed Spears tries to keep it together. It was like "a public therapy session," says Dr. Rebecca Curtis, editor of the book *Self-Defeating Behaviors*. "True emotion was coming out."



SHE SAYS:

"I'm embarrassed."

Unable to compose herself, she feels ashamed. Her recent publicity blitz may be to blame. "When we're tired, we cry more easily," says Curtis. "But it's good to work through the pain."



SHE SAYS:

"Can we stop?"

Finally, she crumbles. "With her hands over her nose and mouth, she holds in her true emotional state," says Wood. "Typically, you would put your hands over your eyes."

TV Tears



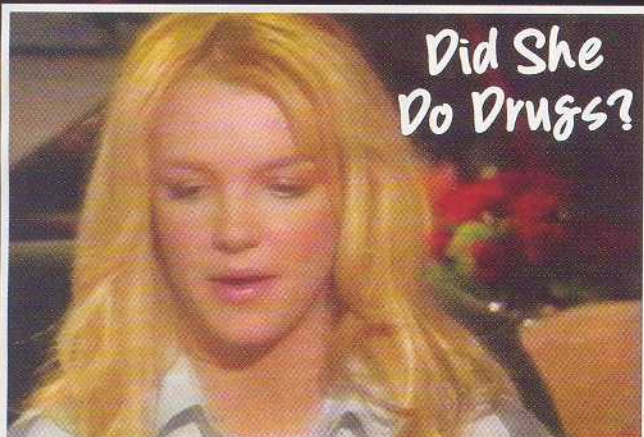
She Likes Amaretto Sours!

Spears also drinks red wine. "It makes me, like, really mellow," she says.

DIANE SAWYER:
"Would you like to have a guy, a family?"

BRITNEY:
"That would be the ultimate dream. That would be great."

Did She Do Drugs?



Spears tackles the rumors. "I've been around people, and I've gotten the high off of it," she says of pot. (But Dr. Drew Pinsky tells *Us*, "Being near pot smokers is probably not sufficient to make you high.") And cocaine? "Never that," Spears says.

Her Late-Night Spoof



Preshow, Spears "was a little nervous," says a witness.

Another Spears TV sighting of note: During a November 13 appearance on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, the singer was carried out onstage on a stretcher. "It was her camp's idea," a producer tells *Us*. The entrance was Spears's way of poking fun at an Internet rumor making the rounds that said she had overdosed.



Britney & Brad

"The crush continues," she says of Brad Pitt (with her in frame).

Britney On ...

The singer opened up about friends, lovers – and herself

■ **JUSTIN** "I will always love him."

But as for his hints that she wasn't faithful: "I'm not technically saying he's wrong. But I'm not technically saying he's right either."

■ **COLIN FARRELL** "It's refreshing

that he doesn't care what people think about him. And he says whatever's on his mind. . . . We talk every once in a while, but he's very busy right now."

■ **ROLE MODELS** "People like Faith Hill and Madonna . . . give me hope. The fact that they have their families with them and they can balance the whole thing. I think that's inspiring."

■ **HER TALENT** "I think my voice is OK. I like the feeling that I get when I sing. . . . But I would love to have a voice like Christina [Aguilera]. I would love to have a voice like Whitney Houston."

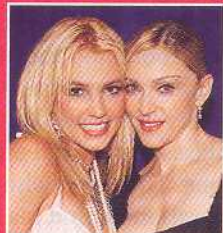
With reporting by Jed Dreben, Ian Drew & Shirley Halperin



With first love Timberlake in 2002.



Having a fling with Farrell in 2003.



With Madonna, MTV Video Music Awards.

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