

TENNIS ANYONE?

Written by Charles Jay
Monday, 22 July 2002 18:00

Aw shucks.

Just when I thought I might be in line for a free trip to Indonesia or some other exotic place, to supervise one of those all-important "world youth" title fights, the WBC pulls the rug right out from under me.

Gourmet meals, hookers, the whole works. Right out the window.

Yes, Jose Sulaiman & Friends appear to be passing a resolution against your humble reporter.

In its latest newsletter, dated July 18, the organization wrote,

"The policies of the World Boxing Council have once again been the subject of criticism - this time by an author of an internet site, one "Charles Jay" - as regards the appointment and selection of the ring officials for Saturday night's WBC welterweight title bout between Vernon

Forrest and Shane Mosley in Indiana.

"The article is full of gross misstatements of fact, errors and misrepresentations, most particularly regarding the relationship between the World Boxing Council and the Indiana State Athletic Commission.

"We feel compelled to respond to the lies and set the record straight...."

It's sure nice to know you've got people that concerned.

And even nicer to know the WBC is always around to "get the record straight".

If they were angry on Thursday, when their newsletter was written, they had to even more irate on Friday, when, as a direct result of our July 16 story, an inflammatory letter was penned by Senator John McCain, which basically threatened to cut off the WBC's balls by way of future boxing legislation, perhaps that which is currently up for consideration before the Congress.

And just imagine their reaction on Saturday, when McCain's letter was shown as part of HBO's telecast of the Forrest-Mosley fight.

If you'd like, you can read the entire WBC newsletter

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, but essentially it talks about how respected and revered the WBC is, how respected and revered Tony Castellano is as a judge, and how dare I infer that his credentials were not known by the members of the Indiana Boxing Commission.

As for my "lies, errors, and misrepresentations", where are they?

Did Jake Hall not come to a verbal agreement with Sulaiman on the judges, a group that included Fred Jones of Indiana?

Was Jones not switched in favor of Castellano in the Monday meeting?

The commissioner, Hall, tells me he had never heard of Castellano before that meeting, and neither of his fellow commissioners knew either. In fact, Hall even brought the question up to Kelsey and Treacy during the meeting, at which time neither man could come up with an answer. "He's one of the names on the list (the WBC's list of recommended judges)", was the only retort Kelsey offered.

The truth is, the two Indiana commissioners voted for Castellano based not on actual qualifications, but on the recommendations of others in the meeting, namely Al Haymon, the representative of Forrest, who was coming in OVER A SPEAKERPHONE, and who had not been identified to Jake Hall. There was no one present at the meeting to make an argument for Shane Mosley.

And there's reason to believe that the switch in judges was a fait accompli well BEFORE that commission meeting, something that was unbeknownst to Hall. Fred Jones, the judge who was ousted in favor of Castellano, told me that at 8:15 AM last Monday morning, as he arrived a half-hour early for the meeting, Bill Kelsey, who was the only other party present in the conference room, came to him and said, in Jones' words, "What happens today - I hope you don't take it personally."

Discussing that kind of official commission business between Kelsey and Treacy, outside an official commission meeting, and apart from Jake Hall, might be legal, but it's certainly suspicious.

Given the opportunity to articulate the special qualifications of Tony Castellano before my story was written, neither commissioner - Bill Kelsey or Ed Treacy - came forward with a response.

Kelsey returned my call AFTER the story was posted. My understanding, through Hall, is that Treacy is angry because my story mentioned that he didn't return the call. Well, I've got news for you - Chapter 35 appeared on Tuesday of last week, and it's Monday of THIS week - six days later, and Treacy STILL hasn't returned my call.

What does all that tell you?

It tells me plenty.

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More from the WBC

"Third, the dubious author of the internet piece (me) refers to the fact that one judge, Tony Castellano, was 'unknown in the state of Indiana.' In response to this, we can only state that the author is lacking in his comprehension of boxing history, and that HE MIGHT BE BETTER OFF WRITING ABOUT

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, OR SOME OTHER SPORT OF WHICH HE HAS A GREATER UNDERSTANDING."

As confirmation of his absolute qualifications, they bring up that Castellano served as a judge for over fifty years, and about a million fights, including the Marciano-Charles fight in 1954. Are you f**king kidding me?

My sense of boxing history? Yes, this guy is history - ANCIENT history. Max Schmeling is still alive today, as far as I know, and though he never beat Lennox Lewis, he did beat JOE Louis. That doesn't necessarily mean I could still buy his way into the WBC heavyweight ratings.

Or maybe I shouldn't speak too soon.

Standard procedure, if they were looking to displace one of their own judges, who they had approved by way of a vote on June 7, would have been for the commissioners, Kelsey and Treacy, to consult with Nevada on what Castellano's real qualifications are, IN THE HERE AND NOW, not 40 years ago.

They did not.

But Jake Hall, who's got more on the ball, requested that Marc Ratner, the executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, send a letter of recommendation for Tony Castellano - at most a routine matter.

Ratner wouldn't go that far.

Let me repeat that - RATNER WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.

What does THAT tell you?

The fact is, Castellano is merely an HONORARY judge in the state of Nevada, and that's out of courtesy to his wife Carol, who is a working judge. TONY Castellano is NOT a working judge in the state of Nevada.

You go ahead and draw your own conclusions regarding that.

Castellano, in fact, was not on the WBC's original list of five "recommended judges" that

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was submitted in a letter from Sulaiman of the to the Indiana commission on May 17,

As for the contention that "the WBC holds the Indiana State Athletic Commission, its director and officials in only the highest respect and regard", that's bullshit.

In point of fact, they had NO RESPECT at all for the Indiana Commission. After they had agreed with Jake Hall on the judges (Jones, Merritt, and Duane Ford), and the commission voted to approve those officials on June 7, the WBC attorney, someone named Gabriel Penagaricano, wrote a letter demanded that all the officials be of the WBC's choosing or they would pull the sanction for the fight. "You can have yourselves and Indiana title fight if you want", was the way Penagaricano threatened Kelsey.

Of course, the WBC had all the leverage in the world. According to a "Memorandum of Commitment", in which financial terms, including a \$1,327,500 site fee, were outlined between three parties - the promoters (Indiana Black Expo Inc. and Pacers Sports & Entertainment Inc.) and an "agent" (Al Haymon Development Inc.), "the bout MUST be unconditionally sanctioned by the WBC for the welterweight championship of the world".

Whether compelling a FOURTH party to do something is legitimate or not as part of an agreement is a question in and of itself. But there seemed to be no question the WBC was secure in its position that it could squeeze someone's balls in the end.

Soon, enough, it may be the other way around.

Now, about those Williams sisters.....

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