

The 60th Round

There was something that really worried me about the testimony offered in the deposition of Dr. Manuel Mediodia, some of which was reproduced on these pages in previous parts of "Kentucky: Fried".

As I sit back and analyze it, what I found most disturbing about it were not the revelations about what happened in the ring and outside of it on March 9, 2001, when Greg Page nearly lost his life. It was not that he did not provide proper medical care for Page or didn't check around the Peel's Palace venue to make sure there were proper safety precautions being adhered to. We knew most of that already. We were already aware that he had nothing but ammonia capsules to take into the ring after he, at long last, realized that Page was lapsing into unconsciousness. You knew that too, if you had read "Operation Cleanup".

We also knew that Mediodia wasn't in the ring the entire time attending to Page, and there was a certain degree of negligence attached to it. And we already covered most of the pertinent facts about Mediodia's background when "Horse Manure Isn't the Only Thing That Stinks in Kentucky", our first revealing series about the Kentucky tragedy, was published in 2001.

No, what really concerned me was not that Mediodia was being truthful and forthcoming in answering the questions posed to him by Page's attorney, Doug Morris, during his deposition. It was the WAY he was answering the questions, which was, well, rather matter-of-factly. He was not doing a "mea culpa", in the sense that he was cleansing his soul by owning up to massive neglect. In fact, in most cases he really didn't think what he was doing was the slightest bit out of the ordinary.

And he was not in a defensive posture or a state of denial, as you'll discover was the case with Nancy Black in particular.

No, he was just kind of wide open, like a big lapdog.

But when someone is suing you for everything you've got, trying to ruin your reputation and have your medical license taken away, that's just not the way anyone would be expected to act.

From what I've read in the deposition, not to mention what I've heard from people who viewed Mediodia's testimony, he was kind of "lost in space", like he had no perception about the reality of the circumstances he was in. He answered questions in detail, and in many cases in a manner which might tend to incriminate him, as if he didn't even bother to consult with his attorney. Indeed, no lawyer would ever advise him to respond in the way he did.

To use boxing parlance, he appeared to be "taking a dive".

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Written by Charles Jay
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For any defendant, this would be enough to pique one's curiosity. For a defendant who also happens to be a physician, it's frankly a little frightening. I'd have to really wonder about the PRESENCE OF MIND of someone like that. I mean, this guy didn't seem to be completely aware of whether he was working professional shows or amateur shows in the state of Kentucky most of the time. And I think you'd agree that presence of mind takes on a relative degree of importance when a fighter is lying unconscious or badly hurt in a boxing ring and needs immediate, competent medical attention, perhaps to save his life.

How can someone like that be allowed to serve as a ringside physician?

I guess only when the person appointing him (in this case, Jack Kerns) has even LESS presence of mind.

It appears, when all is said and done, that Mediodia's most important qualification was not any training he might have had in head trauma, or his abilities in emergency medicine, or his previous performance at fights, or his level of vitality, or his rudimentary knowledge of what goes on in a boxing ring.

It was that he was AVAILABLE. And unfortunately, that's often the case in states where perhaps there isn't very much in the way of pro boxing. Availability becomes the consideration that seems to outweigh all others. Believe me - it's much more common than you might think.

Often, it leads to someone like Mediodia getting the call. And with the slightest bit of bad luck, it can, in turn, lead to tragedy.

So let this be a lesson for boxing administrators, wherever they are - it's simply not good enough to shrug your shoulders about the shortage of physicians and settle for something that is sub-standard, but rather, to go to whatever lengths are necessary in pursuit of the highest standards possible. To any boxing commissioner who can think for himself/herself, that needs to be the absolute top priority, regardless of what might be a minimum requirement of state law.

You know what that means, don't you? That means psychiatrists won't do. Neither will chiropractors. Or dentists. Or optometrists. Or medical assistants.

If the stupid and unwarranted tragedy in Kentucky can serve any instructional purpose, it's that no one should be using former ABC board member Jack Kerns as his/her role model.

In his deposition, Mediodia claims that he went up into the ring to attend to Greg Page, then returned to his seat, then went back into the ring again he saw that Page's condition was getting much worse. That course of action is silly enough.

But a Louisville police officer named Jonathan Bryant - a friend of Page - asserts that he had to actually search through the crowd to track down Mediodia, who was on his way out to the parking lot, moving as fast as he could.

The truth probably lies somewhere in between those two stories. All I know is that I'm sitting

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here with a still photograph in front of me. It shows Page, lying down on the canvas, apparently unconscious, with a few people in the ring and a bunch more looking at him from outside the ring. And none of those people is Dr. Manuel Mediodia.

I don't care what "extenuating circumstances" anyone claims may have existed. To abandon Page at any time during this period was CRIMINAL - not only on the part of Mediodia but also that of Kerns, for having deemed this excuse for a doctor to be capable and qualified in the first place.

And there's really no need for any boxing commission to become an accomplice, although some have indicated that they're willing.

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