

## WILL THIS BE ALAMO COUNTRY?

Written by Charles Jay  
Thursday, 20 February 2003 18:00

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### The 34th Round

Apparently not content merely with being the vice-chairman of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, Tony Alamo Jr. may now have designs on "higher office", so to speak.

Alamo Jr., who we've covered extensively in previous chapters of "Operation Cleanup2" may launch a run to become president of the ABC, according to reliable sources both within the organization and in Nevada.

If this is true (and Alamo hasn't confirmed this himself), it could lead to an interesting state of affairs indeed. Inasmuch as we will have a piece of legislation on the table which could establish a "United States Boxing Administration", it would be natural for the president of an organization such as the Association of Boxing Commissioners to become a candidate for that position.

If Alamo wished to establish a power base for the purposes of becoming the boxing "czar", or being a "power broker" who would have a great deal of influence over the eventual selection, you could take a lot worse track than go move into the second-highest position in the most prominent boxing state (Nevada), then to a post heading up a trade organization (ABC) that will invariably be involved in shaping policy, establishing criteria for ratings, disclosures and the like, and designating different entities to do different things, such as the national "boxing registry", which is currently Fight Fax.

When that person is someone who is, besides the networks, quite possibly the biggest financial "backer" of fights in the United States, not to mention a licensed promoter in its own particular jurisdiction, there are a lot of questions that have to be asked. We've been trying to ask them all along.

I'm not saying Alamo Jr. is doing anything overtly wrong, or will be in the future. If he is, that is something we'll find out, because it becomes pretty tough to hide from people like us. What I'm worried about are the COVERT things, which involve the "quid pro quo", vote brokering, deals that could be made among people who are clearly political animals, not just in the ABC, which is comprised mostly of political hacks, but also Senator John McCain's committee, which as we pointed out includes Senator John Ensign, who is the son of Michael Ensign, chairman of Mandalay Resort Group and thus not only the ultimate superior of Tony Alamo Sr., but also the ultimate "financier" of all this boxing activity.

If all these connections are so close, it represents a good reason why we ask questions about the motivations of the individuals involved. It's called the APPEARANCE of conflict of interest, and it's completely legitimate to bring up.

In fact, I'd venture to say that in a sport which is constantly striving to achieve some form of credibility in the public's consciousness, circumstances where the son is the regulator of the

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father, and regulator of other competing entities at the same time, are more detrimental to the game than any antics Mike Tyson could possibly perform. That's because Tyson will disappear from the radar screen soon enough, and he'll take his reputation with him, whereas when you have persons in positions that would seem to produce possible conflict, and it goes unchecked, it will beget MORE possible conflict. When you take that kind of thing to the national level, it just gets magnified.

If Alamo were to run for the ABC presidency, which would have to happen at the organization's annual convention in July (being held in Missouri, the jurisdiction of current president Tim Lueckenhoff), it would be interesting to see what kind of support he'd receive. That's because it would offer a statement as to how the ABC members feel about the APPEARANCE of conflict of interest in terms of the regulation of boxing. Some of them may indeed be beneficiaries of some kind of conflict of interest in their own homestate, which would make things perhaps a bit more intriguing.

We'll be conducting a little "straw poll" to this effect, but as a preliminary inquiry, we asked a couple of commission operatives, who have votes in the process, what they thought of the possibility that Alamo Jr. might seek the ABC presidency. They commented on conditions of anonymity, of course.

"I'd be willing to give him every opportunity to speak his peace, if he wanted to at the convention," said one of the commission people, "but I would really want to hear his rationalization as to why he thinks people shouldn't bring all this (the conflicts) into question. If he could do that to my satisfaction, I'm sure I would consider supporting him."

One commissioner, however, was not so liberal about it.

"I've been in boxing for over twenty years, and all this politicizing and nepotism is a bit too much," he said. "You just can't continue to send this message out to the public - that this 'father-son' thing is okay because there's a lot of money behind it. I think if Alamo were to get elected, I would recommend that my state drop out of the ABC. Somewhere along the line this whole thing has to stop."

It's our understanding that Lueckenhoff might be brought onto ESPN2's "Friday Night Fights" to speak with "ace reporter" Teddy Atlas about the Nevada commission. Let's hope someone reads this story and has the initiative to ask Tim how he feels about his possible successor being a product of that very situation.

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