

Don King Wants Some Sympathy

Written by Rick Folstad
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Hey Don, why didn't you tell us things were so bad? Why didn't you let us know? Maybe we could have done something to help - held a bake sale, said a prayer in church, contacted our Congressman.

Done something to ease the strain.

Of course, Don King is that kind of guy. He never told us the mean little secret he's been hiding, that the celebrated life of one of America's premier boxing promoters was actually a living hell.

How come we didn't see it?

To put it in Don's own words after recently announcing plans to start up a television boxing network: "I'm not going to be an indentured servant anymore."

Yep, life must have been hell.

I've never seen a list of King's assets, but I'm pretty sure he flies first class when his Lear Jet is being serviced. I don't think he shops at K-Mart, and I doubt if he prowls Norm's Used Car Lot in Lauderdale looking for a deal on a Buick. And I sure can't see him going to Wendy's late at night when his stomach starts to growl.

He's a little beyond indentured servant status, but we get the point. That's one thing King always makes sure of.

King blames HBO for failing to properly promote his fights. He's also a little miffed over his lack of air time. He blames fight commentator Larry Merchant for everything from flu season to the rise in gas prices.

"I have remained silent about my lack of air time and the way they (HBO) ignore the WBA, WBC, IBF and other organizations, hiding behind the veil of journalistic integrity," said King, no longer remaining silent. "What they are doing is diminishing the sport of boxing to serve their own selfish interests to control the fight game."

That last line should be included in the introduction to King's autobiography.

He goes on.

"It is all HBO's way or no way. They got guys now that they're all trained to keep Don King off the camera. Don't let Don King be seen, yet I'm the laborer. It's almost like slavery. You do the work and they get the pay and they be the master. I can't live like that."

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First off, the guys "trained" to keep King off camera, probably aren't paid enough. That's got to be a full-time, stress-filled job, trying to keep King from sneaking into the background in front of the lens, a big smile and that funny hair thing catching everyone's attention.

Second, I always thought the guys fighting in the ring were the laborers, not the promoter, not the commentators, not the ring girls. Besides, I never felt too sorry for a promoter. He's a busy guy, but his only risk is his bank account. He doesn't piss blood or feel his bones snap or wake up two days after a fight struggling just to get out of bed. So I sure don't care if I see him on camera.

And finally, how can a guy like King possibly compare his position to slavery? Didn't anyone break out laughing when they heard that? Was anyone insulted?

No, I guess not. We suddenly remember where it all came from.

Unfortunately, that's something we can never forget.