They say the punch that does the most damage is the one you never see coming. The one we never saw coming this past Friday in Nashville was the third man in the ring.

We at Team Gunn want to share our thoughts on the worst officiated fight in recent title fight history. Before that, we do want to speak on the positive. We want to thank the good people of Nashville for their warm welcome and continued support of Bobby Gunn, the uncrowned cruiserweight champion. We proved this weekend in our home away from home that we are the true people's champion.

Shelby Gross was the benefactor of a long count that puts Tunney-Dempsey II to shame. His disqualification-worthy tactics in round two were appalling, having no place in the confines of a professional boxing ring.

Because of the deplorable actions – and inactions - of referee Freddie Boges, we have officially filed a protest with the International Boxing Association, the Tennessee Boxing and Racing Commission, the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance, and the state's Attorney General's office.

Our first area of concern was with referee Freddie Boges given permission to officiate the IBA world cruiserweight title fight on Friday, March 31, 2006. It has come to our attention that Mr. Boges lied about his being certified with the Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC). All major sanctioning bodies and state commissions require all of their officials to be ABC certified. To be eligible to officiate a world title fight, you must supply proof of your certification. Mr. Boges failed to do so, before or after the match.

His lack of qualifications was apparent as early as the pre-fight instructions. He repeatedly deferred all questions to IBA Ratings Chairman Norm Longtin, rather than answer them on his own – simply put, perform his job.

Onto the fight.

Less than forty seconds into the round, Bobby Gunn dropped Shelby Gross for the first of two times in the round. Gross beat the count, but acted in accordance with his corner to spit out his mouthpiece and buy some time. Such audio can be overheard in the video, which was been supplied to IBA President Dean Chance, and ABC President Tim Lueckenhoff, among others. As a result, Gross was able to buy close to thirty seconds of recovery time.

He briefly recovered, but could not avoid the Gunn show. Bobby was all over him, sensing that his long awaited goal of becoming a world cruiserweight champion was well within reach in less than a round. Gross managed to absorb an enormous amount of punishment before a barrage punctuated by a vicious body shot laid him out flat on his back. According to the video – which is presently available for public viewing on promoter Fight Beat Entertainment's website (www.f

ightbeat.com
) – Gross was FLAT ON HIS BACK for twelve seconds, and off of his feet for a grand total of EIGHTEEN SECONDS.

Despite the referee's obvious shortcomings, is it still too much that we ask a grown man to be able to count to ten? In this case, yes it was. There is no feasible explanation for Boges counting in super-slow motion. Nor does it excuse the fact that he stopped the count at nine (which was closer to eighteen seconds in real time). Instead of counting out Gross, he stopped and watched him rise to his feet. You don't allow a fighter more time than the mandatory ten seconds a fighter is given to recover from a knockdown. Mr. Boges allowed such to occur, his actions obvious to everyone at ringside, including IBA Ratings Chairman Norm Longtin.

"(The fight) was the most incompetent performance I have ever seen by a referee," said Longtin. "I went over with the commission what I saw transpire in the ring including the longest count I have ever seen - it was so slow that it reminded me of a refs count over two fallen wrestlers."

The count lasted so long that everyone EXCEPT for Mr. Boges thought the fight was over. Even when he finally rose to his feet, Gross took out his mouthpiece and threw his arms in the air, unable answer the referee's question. At that point, a member of the commission entered the ring with a stool – believing the fight was over, KO1 for Bobby Gunn. In any state, the commission will enter the ring with a stool the moment the fight is over. The reason is that they want to have the fighter seated and off of his feet as quickly as possible to maximize and expedite his recovery time.

Apparently, Mr. Boges was unaware of the rules in his own state, or even in what was literally his own ring. Instead, he waited for the ring to clear, and proceeded with the action. He never called time, which denied Bobby the chance to knock him out for the second time in one round.

Between the end of the first round and the start of the second round, the turnbuckle mysteriously and conveniently becoming undone. Who did it and why, we'll leave up to you the fans and media. All we do know is that Gross was given even more time to recover from the enormous beating he absorbed in the opening round.

Even with the additional recovery time, Gross was still visibly shaken when the second round finally went underway. Bobby was still doing his thing in the ring, before getting clipped by a wild, hail Mary-like haymaker. Shelby capitalized, and soon put Bobby on the canvas for the first time in his career.

What took place soon thereafter easily ranks among the most despicable acts ever witnessed in a boxing ring. Perhaps not on the level of Mike Tyson chewing off a piece of Evander Holyfield's ear, but certainly not too far behind.

Bobby was left defenseless on the canvas. Boges' horrendous reaction time allowed Gross to race over, kneel down, stick his knees in Bobby's chest and wail away on a defenseless target, hitting Bobby with fists and elbows. Boges FINALLY reacted to Gross' life-threatening actions

by bear-hugging him and body-slamming him to the canvas.

The following are taken directly from the ABC's home page (www.abcboxing.com) in regards to actions to be taken in the event of an intentional foul:

A. Intentional fouls
1. If an intentional foul causes an injury, and the injury is severe enough to terminate the bout immediately, the boxer causing the injury shall lose by disqualification.
2. If an intentional foul causes an injury and the bout is allowed to continue, the referee will notify the authorities and deduct (2) points from the boxer who caused the foul. Point deductions for intentional fouls will be mandatory.
3. If an intentional foul causes an injury and the injury results in the bout being stopped in a latter round, the injured boxer will win by TECHNICAL DECISION if he is ahead on the score cards or the bout will result in a TECHNICAL DRAW if the injured boxer is behind or even on the score cards.
4. If boxer injures himself while attempting to intentionally foul his opponent, the referee will not take any action in his favor, and this injury will be the same as one produced by a fair blow.
5. If the referee feels that a boxer has conducted himself in an unsportsmanlike-like manner he may stop the bout and disqualify the boxer.

None of the above was ever enforced by the referee. Instead, Boges warned Gross that the next time would result in a disqualification. Whoop-de-damn-doo. The only recovery time Bobby was afforded was the mandatory eight-count and the time it took to recover, clean and re-insert his mouthpiece, which was exited as a result of the deplorable tactics exuded by Gross.

There's not much to be said about the rest of the round. Bobby tried his hardest to recover, but was out of it. Admittedly, the fight should have been stopped after the second knockdown. But Bobby is a warrior to the very end, and was able to sell to the referee that he was able to continue. That's not saying much, though – with this referee, all it would have taken to be able to fight on was to utter senseless babble. He did somehow remain on his feet for the remainder of the round, trying his damnest to fight his way back into the fight. But Gross was the fresher of the two at that point, and his final blows put Bobby out for the night.

That said, Bobby was not granted the same opportunities at the end of the round, as was Gross during the second knockdown of the first round. Bobby's head slammed to the canvas just as the timekeeper FINALLY rang the bell to end a round that lasted nearly five minutes. All he had to do was beat the count and then be escorted back to his corner. From there, he could be evaluated after a full minutes' rest to see if he was fit to continue for round three. Instead, Boges counted to eight and then evaluated him. Bobby couldn't keep his footing and the fight was stopped.

What we have a hard time digesting, though, is the inconsistent actions of the referee. Gross was granted the benefit of the doubt in the opening round. We were not given the same opportunities in round two. Hey, give us eighteen seconds to rise from a knockdown and the chance to mount our fallen opponent and freely swing on him, and we're right back in the fight.

What we at Team Gunn are protesting is what Gross was ALLOWED to do – in order to win the fight. Gross did all of that, because an unqualified, incompetent referee afforded him the opportunity to do so.

Our protest is predicated on the following facts:

- Mr. Boges was granted permission to officiate a world title fight with supplying sufficient proof of being ABC certified (simply, because he is NOT ABC certified), therefore violating the rules set forth by the IBA, ABC and the Tennessee Boxing and Racing Commission.
- As evident on the video replay, Mr. Gross was flat on his back for approximately twelve seconds in the end of the first round, and took eighteen total seconds to recover from a knockdown, only to benefit from a count so slow, a ten-count in instant replay would have taken less time.
- As also evident on the replay, the turnbuckle became undone in between the first and second rounds. All that can be seen for the moment is a hand reaching in from the Gross camp. The next screen shows the turnbuckle on the canvas, off of the ring post.
- Also evident on the replay is Gross' intentional foul and life-threatening beating given to Gunn on the canvas, which was not handled by the referee in accordance of the Association of Boxing Commissions.

We have said our peace, and turn the matter over to the proper authorities: the International Boxing Association, the Association of Boxing Commissions, and the Tennessee Division of Commerce and Insurance. We can only hope for a swift and just resolution to this matter. Mr. Gross should be disqualified - in fact, declared the losing fighter via first-round knockout. Bobby Gunn should be crowned the IBA world cruiserweight champion, or at the very least have the fight declared a no-contest, and a mandatory rematch be issued.

Before we close, we would like to thank the IBA for allowing us the opportunity to fight for the title. We would also like to thank the people of Nashville for once again opening their arms to Team Gunn. Finally, we would like to thank first-time promoter Jake Donovan o/b/o Fight Beat Entertainment for taking a huge risk in putting the show together. It was because of his efforts that we were able to make it to a ring and fight for the world title. It was because of an incompetent official's efforts that were denied to the chance to be crowned world champion.

Finally, we part with this: for years, we struggled with the perfect nickname for Bobby Gunn. "Irish" Bobby Gunn was not unique, nor did it reflect his global following or his Canadian upbringing. Other nicknames have been offered, but none were fitting. After Friday night, Bobby has finally earned a nickname befitting his courage in the ring: "Braveheart" Bobby Gunn, The uncrowned people's champion.

We thank those who offered their overwhelming support regarding what took place this weekend, and patiently await the outcome.

Sincerely,

Team Bobby Gunn

The People’s Champion