Yes, the holiday season is upon us, and with Thanksgiving only a few days away, I think it's appropriate to be thankful for all our blessings.

And then of course, Thanksgiving provides us with an opportunity to expose those who our just flat out turkeys. And this being boxing, there is no shortage of those.

First, we'll start out with WBC dictator Jose Sulaiman. Ok, now where do we start? There's so much to choose from and this guy and his organization are such big turkeys that they could feed several third world countries. Well, in the interest of fairness (and space) we'll just focus in on his most recent transgressions against boxing and common sense.

There was his $60 million lawsuit against the likes of Mike Tyson, Lennox Lewis, Showtime, HBO and anyone else involved in the Lewis-Tyson promotion because of the melee that broke out during their January press conference to announce what was supposed to be their April date. Instead, Tyson would approach Lewis unannounced and a riot would occur on stage. During this mayhem, Sulaiman, who was behind the curtain where all this took place, would be trampled on and knocked unconscious. (Now, I could be insensitive and say that both Tyson and Lewis should be given medals of honors for what they did, but I absolutely refuse to say such a heartless thing). In the following months, Sulaiman would slap everyone and his mother with this frivolous lawsuit for what he said were psychological damages and mental anguish.

What's ironic about all this is that it was his organization that helped put this fight in motion by ranking Tyson as it's top ranked heavyweight despite having faced a collection of "has beens and never weres" the past few years. You could say that Sulaiman caused himself to be knocked out.

Then there was the case of Graciano Rocchigiani who was mysteriously robbed of his title after winning the vacant title against Michael Nunn in early 1998. The title was vacant because Roy Jones had decided to vacate the crown to supposedly take on heavyweight Buster Douglas. Well, we all know Jones never took that fight and the WBC just conveniently gave back Jones his green belt. And for Rocchigiani? Well, despite stating in several of their newsletters that Rocchigiani was their new champion, it turned out (according to them) it was a typographical error- one that was made for three months straight until Jones decided he was a light heavyweight after all.

Rocchigiani sued for about $30 million in damages and won his case several months ago. It's doubtful if 'Rocky' will ever see any of his money, but the perception of the WBC is irreparably damaged forever.

Next we go to Bernard Hopkins. Wasn't it just over a year ago that this guy was putting on a transcendent performance in knocking out the highly regarded Felix Trinidad to capture the undisputed middleweight title of the world- the first to do so since the great Marvin Hagler? Yup.

It was the climax to what was a Cinderella story. A former ex-con turned family man who had made it to the pinnacle of boxing. A pugilistic Horatio Alger. Well, for this Cinderella, midnight came early. Because since that time he has turned on and severed ties with his long-time trainer Bouie Fisher and his advisor Lou DiBella.

DiBella was just recently awarded over $600,000 in damages in his defamation lawsuit against Hopkins, who had claimed that DiBella had extorted money from him while at HBO. Fisher, will be next to be in litigation with Hopkins as he is suing over, what else, money and breach of a lifetime contract.

And in that time, he's had one meaningless fight against Carl Daniels and has squandered chances to have rematches with Trinidad and Roy Jones. He is currently a man without any big fights on the horizon and no network contract.

All this for a guy who's one of the best fighters in the world pound-for-pound and one of the few undisputed champions this sport has.

All the things that got him to the top: feistiness, stubbornness, out-spokenness, hubris, and paranoia…all helped lead to his eventual downfall.

Now, we move to the Tyson-ites. No, not Mike Tyson himself, but his fanatical following who still don't understand that it's no longer 1988. You remember 1988, right? The days of the Gumby high-top fade haircuts, New Kids on the Block and Cavaricci pants. Well, those things are now passe and done with. And you know what? So is 'Iron' Mike Tyson for that matter. Around that time Tyson was still rolling through opposition like hot butter through a knife, now his edge is so dull it wouldn't cut into cheesecake. His last good days occurred in 1991 when he had two hellacious fights with Razor Ruddock. But quick, can you name the last decent guy he's defeated since then?

Didn't think so.

Only the Tyson-ites don't see it that way. They have a litany of excuses as to why their guy got whipped by Evander Holyfield twice or hasn't regained any portion of the heavyweight title since 1997. Oh, they'll tell you it was his jail time, he needed a new trainer, he wasn't focused, or that he was bored with boxing. And that when all the pieces were in place, the REAL Tyson would be back, better than ever.

And of course, this was supposed to occur this past June when he finally met Lewis. He was motivated, he was happy, and he was facing a champion who didn't exactly possess the whiskers of George Chuvalo. He was exactly the kind of opposition that Tyson had once defeated by just stepping out of the dressing room and intimidating. And all his band of followers - those in his camp, his sycophants and his fans who put the 'fan' in fanatical, would tell you all about it.

Which of course is understandable; hey, they want their guy to win. It wasn't nearly as sickening to hear from these same folks about what a great guy he was and how misunderstood he was- hey, you can believe that if you want, just don't try and shove that down my throat. I ain't hearing it.

But it was a grand day when Lewis would toy with Tyson over eight rounds before finishing the job of totally debunking the myth of Tyson. Tyson is, and always will be, the consummate front-runner who has never defeated another highly regarded heavyweight in his prime. It was pathetic to see him almost grovel to Lewis about a rematch after all the months of bluster and boasting he had done. Once again, the big bully got exposed.

And after all this, you still hear Tyson-ites try and explain to you that it wasn't the REAL Tyson that night in Memphis, that he was drugged or that he had problems with Lewis' size. Sorry, but you guys need to stuff it- like a Thanksgiving turkey.

HMMMM?

In the wake of Fernando Vargas' positive test results for steroids following his loss to Oscar De La Hoya in September, there was a lot of finger pointing as to who was responsible for Vargas' infraction. I n reality it was Vargas, since he is the one accountable for what goes into his system. But in his camp were two men responsible for his physical conditioning. John Philbin, a former strength and conditioning coach of the Washington Redskins and the former bobsled coach for the USOC; and a nutritionist by the name of Mazen Ali, who was brought in the last month by Vargas. Ali came in with a background in bodybuilding, which is suspicious, and those suspicions grew this past week. And he was arrested this Monday in New Jersey on the kidnapping and aggravated assault on a Hector Perez. Police raided his Body Worx Hardcore gym and

found a small quantity of steroids and $4,000 in cash. I'll let you do the math.

THUNDER SILENCED

We all knew Micky Ward had a great chin, we now know that his head is pretty tough too. As it's been found out that Arturo Gatti suffered a fractured right hand during their action-packed third round this past weekend. Gatti would send Ward down to the canvas in round three with a counter over-hand right and hit Ward repeatedly throughout the round and the fight with that same right hand. Pat Lynch, Gatti's long-time manager, tells me that his man will undergo surgery next Thursday in New York and will not return to the gym for about two months. In the meantime, he and Main Events will look to get an HBO date sometime around March or April.