
B O X I N G

King to Pay \$7.5 Million To Norris

By The Associated Press

The boxing promoter Don King agreed to pay the former champion Terry Norris \$7.5 million yesterday as a jury was debating the boxer's contention that King stole money from him, Norris's lawyer said.

King agreed to pay \$3 million by next week and the remainder within 15 months, said the lawyer, Judd Burstein, who said the settlement in the seven-year-old case might encourage other fighters to sue King.

"I think this is the beginning of the end for Don King," Burstein said. "A lot of people now realize he can be held accountable for what he's done."

The case went to a New York State Supreme Court jury this week, and Burstein said that King agreed to settle when jurors came back and asked the judge for a calculator and a magnifying glass.

The former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson is also suing King in New York, saying that King stole more than \$100 million while promoting his fights after his release from prison in 1995. That case has yet to go to trial.

King, who is promoting an eight-fight card Saturday night in Atlantic City, could not be reached for comment immediately.

Burstein said that Norris, who has brain damage from punches, had no money left from a career in which he made millions of dollars. Norris was a 154-pound champion in the 1990's, beating Sugar Ray Leonard in 1991 in his biggest fight. He lost his last three fights and finished with a 47-9 record and 31 knockouts.

Norris retired in 1998, and he was denied a license to fight again in 2000 by Nevada boxing officials who heard testimony that his speech was slurred and that he had brain damage from fighting.

Norris sued King and his former manager Joe Sayatovich, charging that they had conspired to pay him less than what he should have made for fights after Sayatovich borrowed \$200,000 from King in 1994.

The Real Fighting Is Outside the Ring

If you focused only on the tale of the tape, you wouldn't give Judd Burstein much of a chance.

At 5-foot-9, 180 not-quite-rock-solid pounds, with a perfectly normal-sized neck, the 45-year-old Manhattan lawyer should not be much of a threat to the heavyweights of the professional boxing world.

But look at what Burstein's done lately in the House that Don King Built.

Burstein got his client Julio Cesar Chavez a welterweight title shot at Oscar de la Hoya over King's harshest objections.

He got South African heavyweight Francois Botha into the ring with Mike Tyson — again, over the objections of King.

And now Burstein has caused a huge embarrassment for the Florida Athletic Commission, including the firing of the commission's executive director and the indefinite suspension of the chairman.

Ouch!

Their alleged offense: Accepting a \$100,000 "contribution" from promoter Don King — and turning a supposed public agency into a rubber stamp for the High-Haired (and High-Handed) One.

So here's a little story to celebrate the return of big-time boxing to New York, as Evander Holyfield meets Lennox Lewis at Madison Square Garden tomorrow night. It's a Don King production, of course.

Judd Burstein first went up against Don King almost two years ago. The lawyer was representing Terry Norris, one of King's unhappy fighters. Norris desperately wanted to break free of the promoter's grip.

Burstein went looking for an angle, of course, and he found one. He noticed that King had allowed his New York

State promoter's license to lapse.

Bingo! Norris was a free man.

Soon enough, Burstein was representing other unhappy boxers trying to free themselves from King. When Botha was angling for a shot at Tyson, Burstein came on to help pave the way.

This time, the legal match was shifted to Florida and that state's athletic commission.

Sure enough, Burstein's client got his match with Tyson — and King's special machinations cost two top state officials their jobs. (HE, of course, has been charged with nothing, so far.)

Down in Florida, Burstein discovered that Don King had made a \$100,000 contribution to the Florida Boxing Association, a nonprofit group largely controlled by the athletic commission.

He made the donation at the same time he was asking the commission to change an old Florida law that prohibited exclusive deals between fighters and promoters, a rule that was a special irritant for King.

When the dust finally cleared this week, the commission's executive director, Mike Scionti, was out of his job. The chairman, Alvin Goodman, was on indefinite suspension.

And Florida Gov. Jeb Bush was hopping mad.

"Unfortunately," Bush said, praising the shake-up that Burstein launched, "our laws today do not provide criminal sanctions for violations of our ethics code."

And the New York lawyer who had dug all this up had a look of satisfaction on his face.

"My experience with King is that he has an extraordinary ability to get in at the top," Burstein said yesterday.

"What he does is through force of power, personality and money. He has the capacity to exert undue influence.

and he can succeed. Until we have some national body controlling these state athletic commissioners, we're gonna have these problems."

"Part of Don King's approach is that if he can get away with corrupting somebody, he will. But sometimes, it's not even necessary. In New York, they were so desperate to bring big-time boxing back to Madison Square Garden, they'd deal with anyone."

As for King — well, he's no fan of Burstein either.

To get the full flavor of this, we must go back to a meeting of Florida's State Athletic Commission, a meeting that was held at the Hyatt Regency hotel at Orlando Airport Nov. 3.

No one paid much attention to that meeting at the time. But the transcript speaks volumes about one high-haired promoter and one lawyer from New York.

Judd Burstein had finally gotten under the skin of Don King. King was sputtering now:

"My learned . . . friend over here, Mr. Burstein, who speaks of me like he's a dear friend of mine — 'Hey, Don, how are you?' — and at the same time, he's like an insidious insect or a snake to try and destroy me."

An insidious insect? A snake?

"I don't understand it," King went on. "I'm a family-type guy. I believe in my family, and I work for the betterment of my community."

King said he was the real victim here, and Burstein wouldn't let go. "He has now become the guy . . . in the movie 'That Shot Liberty Valance' — or whatever that movie was. He's going to be the one that's going to bring King down."

"That will never happen because," King vowed, "number one, I'm not doing anything."

If that's the truth — the whole truth — then certainly, Don King has nothing to worry about.

If that's the truth . . .



Ellis Henican

New York Law Journal



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NEWS

In Brief

Burstein to Represent Comptroller in City Snapple Suit

City Comptroller William C. Thompson Jr. has hired Judd Burstein to challenge the Bloomberg administration's decision to license Snapple as New York City's official drink with exclusive rights to sales in city buildings, including courthouses. Mr. Burstein, who has recently won two jury verdicts amounting to \$8.6 million for retired heavyweight boxing champion Lennox Lewis, has agreed to cap his fees on the Snapple case at \$95,000. Mr. Burstein, who bills \$650 an hour, estimates he will end up donating \$55,000 in legal services to the Comptroller's Office. Justice Richard F. Braun of Manhattan Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral argument today on merits of the case. — *Daniel Wise*

The Donald can duck alimony - his lawyer

By HAL DAVIS

The sticky Trump divorce just added a layer of glue.

Yesterday, the Donald's lawyer insisted Trump doesn't have to pay a dime come alimony time.

The Donald claims Ivana Trump's steamy novel, "For Love Alone," violates a gag order that is part of the couple's \$25 million divorce settlement.

The order bars Ivana from talking about her life with Trump without his permission.

"He does not now have to make the payment," attorney Judd Burstein told Manhattan Supreme Court Judge Phyllis Gangel-Jacob.

The Appellate Division last week said Gangel-Jacob went too far by removing the gag order from the final judgment "without notice to the parties or explanation."

But Gangel-Jacob said yesterday the five-judge panel did not know the full story.

"I am shocked that this deception . . . was never properly corrected before the court," she said.

The judge said she met with Donald's lawyer, Stanford Lotwin, and Ivana's then-attorney, Michael Kennedy, last May 22 to warn them of possible problems with the gag order.

"I saw a quagmire of legal problems," the judge said.

She complained Lotwin at that time "did not say one word of objection," and agreed to the deletion.

Gangel-Jacob said Burstein, who worked on the appeal, should have told the appeals court about the conference: "I was not hiding behind a curtain."

Ivana's lawyer, Robert Stephan Cohen, said he planned to reargue the issue before the Appellate Division now that Gangel-Jacob had explained her position.

After the hearing, Trump said he wasn't impressed.

"The contract has been violated," he told The Post. "I don't have to pay. But I haven't given it much thought. I don't have to until August."

The Trump attorney who argued the appeal case was puzzled.

"I'm not interested in the views of the judge who has been condemned by the Appellate Court 5-0," lawyer Jay Goldberg said. "That's the only court that counts."

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Richard Johnson

With Paula Froelich
and Chris Wilson

Stings like bee

DON'T expect **Don King** to invite lawyer **Judd Burstein** to any of his bouts. Last week's federal court decision barring heavyweight champ **Hasim Rahman** from fighting anyone but Burstein's client **Lennox Lewis** is the fourth consecutive courtroom KO Burstein has handed King. Two years ago, after Burstein got the executive director of the Florida Athletic Commission fired for some questionable contributions to King, the electric-haired impresario blasted the barrister as an "insidious insect." Now that Burstein has forced Rahman to cancel his little-regarded fight with **David Izon** Aug. 5 on a King card in Beijing, expect more insults.

Mag's clean breast settles pic lawsuit

By **ROBERT GEARTY** and **BILL HUTCHINSON**
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Penthouse magazine threw a sheet over its topless blunder yesterday, settling the lawsuit of an ex-model mistaken for tennis darling Anna Kournikova in sultry snapshots.

The settlement came just as a Manhattan federal judge was on the verge of ruling whether to order Penthouse to recall copies of its June issue — touting topless pictures of Kournikova — from newsstands, where it landed late last month.

Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione issued another apology to Judith Soltesz-Benetton — and vowed to destroy all unsold copies of the issue.

Penthouse's parent company, General Media, refused to disclose how much it cost to settle with Soltesz-Benetton, 28, who sued the magazine for \$10 million May 6. But a Penthouse source told the Daily News the settlement was "no where near the \$10 million she wanted."

Soltesz-Benetton's lawyer, Judd Burstein, also declined to disclose the sum but released the mea culpa letter from Guccione.

"We acknowledge that those pictures were taken without your knowledge or consent and that you would never have authorized their publication in Penthouse

or elsewhere," Guccione wrote. "We made a terrible, but wholly unintentional error in publishing the pictures of you as Anna Kournikova and we are taking steps to ensure that no such errors are made in the future."

Burstein said Soltesz-Benetton, daughter-in-law of fashion designer Luciano Benetton, accepted Guccione's apology "because it is backed up with action on the part of Penthouse."

Kournikova also has filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles against Penthouse and General Media. The suit is pending.

Penthouse printed 1.2 million copies of the magazine featuring a dozen pictures of Soltesz-Benetton sunbathing on Miami's South Beach.

During testimony last week, Guccione said the magazine photo spread came from videotape shot by a paparazzo who peddled it as exclusive footage of Kournikova, 20.

The photographer said he thought the video was of Kournikova because the size of the woman's nipples in the footage measured up with pictures of the tennis star in a sweat-soaked T-shirt.

Guccione said he also tried to verify the footage by comparing it to photos of Kournikova and concluded the woman in the video held her pinky finger the same as the tennis star.



Anna Kournikova

Jury KOs Lewis promoter

By **TIM SMITH**
DAILY NEWS SPORTS WRITER

Heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis landed another victory in court yesterday when a Manhattan federal court jury awarded him \$8 million in his lawsuit against his former promoter Panos Eliades. The jury also awarded Lewis' U.S. based promoters, Main Events, \$680,000 in damages against Eliades and his companies.

The jury found that Eliades had defrauded Lewis of money from several of his bouts when Eliades was the promoter.

Lewis severed his ties with Eliades after he made the discovery before fighting

David Tua on Nov. 11, 2000. But Eliades maintained that he still had promotional ties with Lewis.

With the jury ruling that Eliades had breached his fiduciary responsibilities toward Lewis, Eliades now has no future promotional ties to the fighter.

In a statement after the decision, Lewis said that his former manager, Frank Maloney, was aware that Eliades was stealing money from him but Maloney didn't do anything to stop Eliades.

"It has been a very long trial and I am satisfied that justice has been done," Lewis said. "I can now concentrate on my boxing career without the interference and cheating of Mr. Panos Eliades."