

# PRO WRESTLING TORCH

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## Not Guilty

### HEADLINE NEWS STORY

By WADE KELLER, Editor and Publisher

When the "not guilty" verdict was read, Vince McMahon looked toward the sky, smiled, and forcefully shook both fists in front of his chest signalling victory. He then got up and hugged his wife, Linda, and his attorney Laura Brevetti. His son, Shane, then joined in the celebration. A weight had been lifted off of McMahon's shoulders, a weight that had been placed there by a combination of forces, most notably by the government but also by his own actions. He told the press afterward he can't wait to get back to work on what he loves most—promoting pro wrestling.

"I would just like to say (on behalf) of my whole family we are delighted with the outcome," he said. He thanked the jurors and complimented his attorneys.

It wasn't easy sailing for McMahon as the jury deliberated for 16 hours—all day Thursday and until 4 p.m. Friday. Thursday afternoon, after the jury asked for read-back of some testimony, Brevetti walked out of the courtroom and, thinking she was alone, said aloud, "F—!" She

—Please see NOT GUILTY, pg. 11

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### THE MCMAHON TRIAL

## Prosecutor Sean O'Shea lashes out against Vince McMahon in the trial's final, dramatic moments

WADE KELLER  
UNIONDALE, N.Y.

Wednesday around 5 p.m., government prosecutor Sean O'Shea running on high adrenaline made his closing rebuttal. "They say we did it (conducted the investigation against Titan Sports) because we don't have respect for wrestling," shouted O'Shea, who then dramatically turned 180 degrees and pointed at defendant Vince McMahon. "You know who doesn't have respect for wrestling? Vince McMahon, who used wrestlers like slabs of meat and pumped them up with steroids for profit."

The forty courtroom observers sat with their jaws dropped, the defense attorneys tried to keep their cool, and Vince McMahon sat in stunned silence, probably trying with all his might not to stand up and shout, "Who do you think you are?!"

The timing was straight out of a courtroom movie, the climax coming out of nowhere as the usually calm and methodical prosecutor broke out of his shell to lash out against the defendant. Some court room observers felt O'Shea's closing rebuttal to the defense's closing summary was so powerful, so poignant, that he was playing possum all along, hustling the defense into thinking he was going to let them get away with what he called their illogical arguments and smoke-screen distortions only to lash out at them when they would have no chance to respond.

At one point during the defense's closing summary, as Titan attorney Jerry McDevitt swaggered across the courtroom making his closing arguments, government investigator Tony Vilente turned to O'Shea with a big smile on his face, perhaps saying, "They're playing

right into our hands."

O'Shea, who few believed had a strong case against McMahon coming into the day, hit a ball to the warning track. It was up to the WWF to catch the ball or let it sail just over their glove into the stands for the homerun the prosecution needed. At the time, it appeared they may have let the ball slip past their glove. That "hit" was what O'Shea called "the smoking gun"—a two-by-three foot blow-up of a memo Linda McMahon wrote to Pat Patterson.

The letter alone, O'Shea argued, was enough evidence for the jury to find the defendant guilty. The letter read: "I spoke to Vince about the fact that the State of Pennsylvania is probably going to launch an investigation into the use of all illegal drugs including steroids... Although you and I discussed before about continuing to have Zahorian at our events as the doctor on call, I think it is now not a good idea. Vince agreed and would like for you to call Zahorian and tell him not to come to any more of our events and to also clue him in on any action that the Justice Department is thinking of taking."

There were other heated exchanges. Brevetti asked in her closing summary, "Do you feel you're being asked to do something good here or are you being pushed to get McMahon?"

O'Shea angrily responded: "We didn't say, 'Be like Hulk Hogan, take his vitamins,' all the while they were pumping him up with steroids. They're big, rich, powerful—they're corporate drug dealers. Just because they're rich doesn't give them a free pass."

O'Shea's vitriolic closing statement seemed to pump life into what Brevetti called a "dead on arrival" case. O'Shea would find out two days later it wasn't enough.

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# TRIAL DIARY

By WADE KELLER, Editor and Publisher

**T**he steroid trial of the United States vs. Vince McMahon and Titan Sports began with jury selection on July 5 and continued through July 22 when the jury read its verdict. In last week's double issue, the trial was covered in detail from July 5 to July 15. The following is a day-by-day diary of the final three days...

## MONDAY, JULY 18

From 1:30 p.m. until 5 p.m., without the jury present, prosecution and defense argued various points of the trial with the judge. In the end, the defense had a good day in that the judge dismissed counts two and three of the indictment based on lack of jurisdiction in the Eastern District. He was upset with prosecutor Sean O'Shea, saying he was given the impression O'Shea would be presenting a much stronger case on the two distribution counts. The judge said he would consider dropping count one and would have his decision the next day.

## TUESDAY, JULY 19

From 1:30 until 5 p.m., without the jury present, the discussion from the day before continued. A lot of the focus was on the wording of the judge's instructions to the jury. O'Shea cited cases where a defendant did not need to know all of the details of a conspiracy as long as he knew of its existence and he knowingly joined and participated in it. The judge said that mere knowledge of a conspiracy is insufficient for a



Vince McMahon

Photo by W.K.

conviction. "A person may know a criminal without being a criminal."

The judge told the defendants that he would say the words "prove beyond a reasonable doubt" so often during his instructions to the jury that even they would be sick of hearing it. The judge responded to the defendant's request for a change in wording by saying, "That would be at best irrelevant, at worst misleading."

Jerry McDevitt argued that a doctor can distribute prescription drugs however he wishes to his patients. The judge drew an analogy that if he were at a baseball game with a friend of his who happened to be his doctor, too, and without expressing any concern over his health, the doctor offered him some drugs for money, would McDevitt consider that a legitimate doctor-patient relationship? McDevitt argued yes and the judge vehemently disagreed.

The battles over wording continued with some enthusiastic exchanges among the defense, prosecution, and judge.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 20

**Sean O'Shea Summation** At 9:30 a.m., with the jury present, O'Shea began his nearly two-hour summation. The following are paraphrased excerpts from his summary:

(")My summary today will merely confirm my opening statement. It will show you the dark, corrupt underbelly of Titan Sports. The boss of the company used steroids. They were corporate outlaws, headed by the sole owner, the defendant. He was a cunning and sophisticated drug dealer. He was using dangerous and illegal drugs to help a superstar employee, who was trying to hide behind the secretary of the owner.

You've heard every excuse. They blame Anita Scales, Emily Feinberg, Bob Gorse. The corporate outlaws blame all the little guys. They blame the fear of stigma or bad publicity. People who are scared of bad publicity don't warn doctors of police investigations. They don't launder checks at the local bank. They played the game of see no evil, hear no evil when it came to Dr. Z. They blame everyone else, but you know. The owner saw these drugs as profit—not the paltry profit Zahorian made off of his drug deals. Don't let them insult your intelligence by saying they didn't get rewarded by Zahorian's steroid sales. They were tempted by the millions of dollars of profit made by the company.

Judge Mishler will instruct you steroids must be distributed by a doctor with a legitimate doctor-patient relationship and after November 1988 had to be for treatment of disease. It has to be a real doctor acting as a real doctor. Vince McMahon and Emily Feinberg are not doctors. There was no disease in Hulk Hogan. That alone is enough to convict. But there's much more evidence.

This is about a corporate drug pusher. Some wrestlers wanted steroids and would do anything to keep their jobs. Every drug user has the excuse

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and they may believe they need it to go on. That's why drug pushers have customers. We know they are dangerous. That's why they are illegal. If the pushers have willing customers, that's no defense. The wrestlers were willing to pump up because they wanted the money, they wanted their jobs.

Everyone knew about Dr. Zahorian. Patterson said when he was a road agent, Zahorian offered him valium. He knew about Zahorian in '85. Zahorian offered a cornucopia of drugs not because of any complaint of illness. Important employees—George Skaaland, Jay Strongbow—purchased steroids and gave them to their own sons. Agents offered wrestlers cash. Jack Lanza said, "Do you need cash? The doctor's here." Tom Zenk was a new wrestler, he didn't know what that meant.

Anita Scales wasn't on the road, but she knew he was bad news. Mel Phillips told her. Tony Garea told her the doctor was "sleazy" and "opened up shop." Robert Morella said there was no place in the business for his type. Strongbow told her, "The boys need their candies." When was the last time you referred a doctor giving you candy? When was the last time you called your doctor sleazy? When was the last time your doctor sent you pounds of drugs in FedEd packages? Pat Patterson was squirming on the stand. He said he never heard of those terms, but Emily Feinberg said she was one of Patterson's closest friends and heard Patterson refer to steroids 20 times. The defendant Mr. McMahon knew what the juice was. He knew it was wrong, but okayed it.

Dr. Zahorian told Vince he was giving wrestlers steroids. His option was to say to Zahorian, "Get those drugs out of my company." Instead, he decided to make them available. When Zahorian was on the witness stand, the defense tried to say the government put him up to this. You heard it go on and on. He was contrite. He was credible. He said he would have stopped, but Vince McMahon said, "No, go on." If the wrestlers needed the steroids for medical purposes he wouldn't have said, "I will stop."

Think of the coincidence. Every wrestler was sick, always, at the same time, and no one ever got better. Addicts don't stop. Addicts keep using to keep going. The government exhibit shows Zahorian was present at 50 events from '85 to '91.

People without guilty knowledge don't tell Zahorian to call them back on a pay phone and warn him and tell him to destroy records. When was the last time you asked your doctor to call you back on a pay phone? That's what you do to avoid the police. If he's a drug dealer in a white coat and you've been conspiring with him to distribute steroids, you avoid the police.

This memo (see cover sidebar) is the smoking gun. Patterson denied receiving it because it's the smoking gun. It shows that Vince McMahon, Linda McMahon, and Pat Patterson were all up to



their necks in the conspiracy. It says Vince McMahon ordered the cover up. This memo says they knew it was illegal what Zahorian was doing. It doesn't tell you they were shocked to find out steroids were illegal. They knew because six weeks earlier they laundered checks to supply their number one star with steroids.

All the bobbing and weaving was just that. Any time they shift blame, think of this memo. It shows the top three executives knew. They were talking out both sides of their mouths. Sure, he's a drug dealer, but he was their drug dealer.

They knew steroids meant their wrestlers would be bigger and they could go longer and thus make more profits. God help those who tried to do the right thing in the offices of Titan. Does it sound right that they would mix a chemical cocktail so the wrestlers could go on? He was trying to make more profit from chemical cocktails.

The CEO of this company admits he gave steroids to his top star and there was no doctor-patient relationship. That alone proves it. The stigma excuse is baloney.

(O'Shea then recounted the Rude and Wacholz testimony concerning McMahon's implied and direct orders to take steroids. He then called the letter regarding how to legally possess steroids "a wink and a nod.") This memo was still urging wrestlers to take steroids.

(O'Shea then linked the charge to the Eastern District by talking about events at Nassau Coliseum and Rugby-Darby drug company.)

"The judges instructions will tell you about conspiracy laws. He will tell you a conspiracy can be inferred due to actions. You can tell from the actions of these people that McMahon approved.

This is multi-million dollar corporate America, not a mom and pop shop. They are trying to blame the little people, others, everyone else for their actions. Maybe they have a fancy logo and maybe they present a fancy face to you, which makes it worse. This corporation mixed a chemical cocktail and conspired to keep wrestlers pumped up and their cash registers going. It's shameful and it's illegal. Consider this evidence and call them into account. I ask you to find the defendants guilty."

**Laura Brevetti Summation** (") Mr. O'Shea says it's unreasonable to say bad publicity was a concern? The hypocrisy of that statement is they bring in a 5 by 7 photo (of Hulk Hogan, Vince McMahon, and Zahorian) and blow it up to 20 by 22, to bring in Hulk Hogan to breathe life into a dead case. To have Hulk Hogan bear his soul that he took steroids when it was legal to take steroids. It is government leaks of this investigation that creates stigmas. The hypocrisy of that statement—it was the government that created the leaks. The media singled out Vince McMahon.

The government is asking you to infer, to deduce. That is not the type of evidence necessary to change this man's life. But on what standard are you going to judge a man? You must be confident beyond a reasonable doubt. Don't use

as evidence rumor, scuttlebutt, "I thought he meant." Look at evidence through the eyes of people in the '80s, not the '90s. Don't judge on 20/20 hindsight, on evidence brought forth under suspect circumstances. He's being painted as a scapegoat. They are trying to stir the prejudice in you because he made a lot of money.

Nobody respects wrestling, nobody respects wrestlers. It's not America's passtime. People won't admit they watch it.

When you heard evidence, did you get the feeling people had a grudge, a lawsuit, wanted money, had hatred. Did you think someone put out an 800 number asking for info, any scrap of information from the bottom of a tar barrel. It's all sizzle, no steak.

Of all the wrestlers who wrestled for the WWF after 1985, you would expect the government to bring you witnesses with specific dates and times and precise testimony. Credible testimony. They would say they never used steroids before, McMahon told them to take them, and Zahorian was told to sell wrestlers steroids. You didn't hear that. You heard 180 degrees the opposite. They brought you nine wrestlers, so they must be the best nine they've got. They brought you wrestlers with grudges, with lawsuits, who work for the competition. Did Zahorian change his testimony to fit the government's case? Is that evidence that makes you confident.

All of the wrestlers told you they were using steroids before and after they worked for the WWF. One out of seven of them bought steroids from Dr. Zahorian (not counting John Minton and Hogan, who she said she would talk about later). It's mind boggling. They wanted to get evidence from the bottom of a tar barrel for this dead, one-count case.

After February 1991, a WWF memo advised wrestlers that the law was changing and it was no longer legal to possess and use steroids. We heard from two witnesses who told you they were convicted of steroid use after 1991, Zenk and Szopinski. Zenk and Rude said they were on steroids. Zenk said he was on steroids three weeks ago and Rude when he was in WCW. The government doesn't care. They don't want to clean up the current problem. Rude gets to stand up and leave the court room and we have to sit here for two weeks and decide if this happened years ago. You heard Rude say he took steroids while in WCW the last three years. What are we doing here? Tom Zenk didn't buy steroids from Zahorian, but he is the type of individual who would take steroids out of the bottom of a trash can. (She continued to draw a picture of the government singling out McMahon when others were more guilty, more recently). It boggles the mind. Zenk is able to testify that he took steroids three weeks ago and then go to Japan and make 10,000 dollars and we have to sit here two weeks to see what may or may not have occurred.

Do you feel you're being asked to do something good here or are you being pushed to get McMahon. (She then went down the list of

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***"The government is asking you to infer, to deduce. That is not the type of evidence necessary to change this man's life."***

**—Laura Brevetti, McMahon's attorney**

wrestlers who testified one at a time, picking apart their testimony as being part of 1-800-LAWSUIT craze. She read back at length testimony from several witnesses.)

It's not whether wrestlers were on steroids, but if McMahon knowingly and willingly entered into and participated in a conspiracy with Dr. Zahorian.

Mr. Terry Bollea (Hulk Hogan) was presented to you as a star witness for the prosecution. He was called to prove their case, but was it the opposite? No wrestler, not matter his star quality, could save this dead case."

(She then tried to portray Emily Feinberg as a professional actor (she filmed one promo video with no script) Emily Feinberg is well practiced in the art of deception. Her purpose was to give them information on a man she couldn't get another paycheck from. It's all a figment of an actress's imagination.

How did Dr. Zahorian present himself to laymen? As a competent and able doctor. After two and a half years of incarceration he says he now believes what he did was wrong and the wrestlers were not his patients. I suggest to you after two and a half years of incarceration, you'd believe chickens fly. He said he never spoke to Mr. McMahon after '88 and there's not a shred of evidence Mr. McMahon had any knowledge of the '88 act or that he was violating it. The only possible thin reed of evidence left is this four minute conversation in its final evolutionary state in 1988 where McMahon told Zahorian to be sure to keep the wrestlers healthy.

It is each and every one of you who puts life into the constitution; it's not just a piece of paper. I know you want to get back to your families, but this is important. This man deserves your time."

**Jerry McDevitt Summation** (") They say the victim of this crime is the FDA, that they were defrauded. No one took the stand from the FDA. The FDA ran from this courtroom like Dracula runs from a cross.

If you don't have evidence, you use harsh rhetoric. You talk about underbellies. There is only one reference to the FDA in the prosecution's case. Everything you learned about the FDA's regulatory efforts you learned from us.

If your only physical evidence is a little bottle that I can't even look on this (the prosecutor's) table and see, then you blow up a document so big you need anabolic steroids to lift it.

When Zahorian wasn't scheduled to be at Hershey, if he was five years into a conspiracy



with McMahon, wouldn't he feel comfortable calling his co-conspirator and saying, "Hey Vince, what gives?" Zahorian was never hired after the law changed.

It was not illegal to buy and possess steroids for your personal use. The method of your payment doesn't make the action illegal. Is there anything wrong with being discreet, keeping your personal use private?

The government alleges there was a cover-up. As far as cover-ups go, this was a lousy cover up. Emily Feinberg destroyed nothing. Remember, every single piece of evidence is right there (on the prosecution's table) and they haven't proven anything to you.

For 30 years the system failed to do what it's supposed to—it failed to regulate steroids at their entry point into the system. More steroids entered into circulation than possibly could have been used for medical purposes, but no one stopped them. No laymen can defraud that system. Mr. McMahon is not responsible for this egregious mess.

Does anybody really know what a conspiracy is? The government charges that it's an unspoken agreement to violate the law. You heard only one snippet of a conversation brought out under the most egregious circumstances possible. (He then talked about Zahorian's treatment before giving his grand jury testimony.) Was it necessary (to treat him that way)? Does that make you feel good about this country. The bottom line is, his presence was required by the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission. He tells you no one ever encouraged him to sell steroids to wrestlers to increase ticket sales. What is the basis for these charges?

You have heard no evidence of a violation of the 1988 law. A conspiracy is an attempt to create a crime, not solve one. The government's case summed up is, 'Maybe you won't notice.'

This is the greatest system in the world, but it is also one that allows the government the last word. This is the last you'll hear from me. The vote you cast over the next few days is important. It's a huge responsibility. The government has a huge burden. They didn't come close. They didn't produce any evidence. Mr. McMahon entertained millions of people—some used steroids when it was legal and they got them from a doctor. I ask you to find McMahon not guilty.

**O'Shea's Rebuttal** It's not a special rule that I get to talk to you again. It occurs in every case because we have the burden of proof. (Angrily) Some of the points they made demand an answer. Let me answer Ms. Brevetti's question of whether you have been brought here to do something good. She talked about hypocrisy. The defendant is a corporate drug dealer. We're asking you to find him guilty because the evidence merits you finding him guilty. Someone helped obstruct justice. Their memo is all meat, yet they're still blaming everyone else. They blame us (the government), the blame us for the full court room, they blame us for them being public figures even though they've promoted themselves on TV for

the last ten years.

We didn't say 'Be like Hulk Hogan, take his vitamins,' all the while they were pumping him up with steroids! They're big, rich, powerful. They're drug dealers. Just because they're rich doesn't give them a free pass. The defendant told Emily Feinberg to distribute steroids to Hulk Hogan. He was involved in the memo. He ordered Sages to launder money, he ordered Feinberg to destroy evidence.

Let the judge tell you the law, not Mr. McDevitt. The judge will tell you the definition of a prescription drug. He will tell you it doesn't allow for it to be dispensed at will. It must be authorized by a licensed practitioner and must have been pursuant to a legitimate doctor-patient relationship. The court will tell you the law. Mr. McDevitt was trying very hard to throw smoke in the air and deceive and confuse you.

They played a game with Dr. Wadler for two days. He said they took things out of context. That's what Mr. McDevitt does. They told you all of the witnesses said what they said because they have a grudge or are suing them. The defendant is the common element in those lawsuits. If Randy Colley had such a grudge against Vince McMahon, why didn't he say McMahon told him directly to take steroids. If you're gonna lie, why not the big lie. Why didn't Tom Zenk lie and say McMahon told him to take steroids? Because they were telling the truth. If I wanted to get McMahon, why didn't I pull Zahorian aside and tell him we want McMahon so tell us on record he told you to distribute steroids to wrestlers. If we set up Zahorian, did we write this memo? If we wanted a frame, we sure did a horrible job.

They say this case is old. It takes a while to uncover illegality, especially when they use pay phones and clever check maneuvering. Where is the grudge of Anita Scales, Emily Feinberg, Margaret Sharkey? They are just regular folks who tried to do the right thing. He tells you the defendant didn't know the law. Ignorance is no excuse, we all know that. They offered you excuses. Everyone in this courtroom knows you can't distribute drugs.

They say we don't care what happens to other suppliers. They ask why don't we go after this guy and that guy. Some have been convicted. Dealers have been convicted. Because someone else is violating the law doesn't mean you can. Blaming others, blaming users is their defense. Customers will always want drugs from these pushers, these facilitators. Rick Rude is a user, the defendant is a pusher.

They ask, why don't you prosecute WCW? Have you heard about WCW? If we hear about it, we'll go after them. We'll be after them like white on rice because it's a serious crime. They say prosecute WCW, doctors in England, the guy behind the tree, but leave us alone. They say we should do our job, while all along they were doing this (points to the Linda McMahon memo.)

They're pretty good at rhetoric. They spoke to you for hours. We don't have the corner on rhetoric. Ladies and gentleman, they can call

## THE MCMAHON TRIAL

***"The government didn't say, 'Be like Hulk Hogan, take his vitamins,' all the while they were pumping him up with steroids!"***

**—Sean O'Shea, government prosecutor**

witnesses. They could have brought in all these guys, but they would have danced around on the stand just like Patterson did.

They say I cooked this up, that I have nothing better to do with my time. They say that Mr. Viente, Mr. Flag, and I just out of the blue went after them. They say we went after them because we don't have respect for wrestling. You know who doesn't have respect for wrestling? Vince McMahon (points to defendant). He used wrestlers like slabs of meat, pumped them up for profit. That's an insult. We're asking you to hold the big guys accountable. They can't get away with saying it's merely a personal choice.

When McMahon scolded Jim Hellwig for leaving steroids in his hotel room, he was only too happy his champion was using steroids. What he was in a tirade about was that he was caught. They say Hulk Hogan was our star witness. They said that, yet we had to immunize him to get the truth out of him. He testified he got steroids ten times for Vince.

They say it's all hysteria? Yeah, illegal drugs are hysteria. We didn't cook this case up, ladies and gentlemen. They say it's sizzle. They don't like the evidence. They didn't like Patterson's evidence. We're not coming in and applying a new law to them. They knew when they drafted the memo and the bank check. All the evidence shows they knew.

They say they didn't know the law. Ignorance is no excuse. This is a rich company with all kinds of resources to get the law, to find out about the law. They want you to believe I decided to put Zahorian in shackles and chains. Jail is not a nice place. People who go there get put in solitary confinement for their own protection from other inmates.

They want you to believe they had no choice. If you're dealing with a sleazy doctor. Tell him to get out. 'I am the owner of the this company, get out, don't come back.' They say Zahorian wasn't hired after the law changed. But he was back there selling drugs. Patterson and the defendant put him back there. So they were playing word games. This is not a contest about who can be the trickiest. This is a search for the truth.

Thanks for your patience. Your verdict of guilty will say that you can't hide behind a doctor's white coat. You can't obstruct and impede justice as they did in December of '88 right before Dr. Zahorian was indicted. You can't blame others. If you violate the law, you're guilty. Without sympathy of prejudice, find them guilty.



# WEEKLY TV REVIEWS

## ■ WWF MONDAY NIGHT RAW—7/9

**Summary** The program opened with a preview of the TV main event: Bret Hart defending the WWF Title against 1-2-3 Kid, including an excerpt of Hart's speech at the WWF Hall of Fame ceremony where he praised Kid... Randy Savage welcomed Jim Ross back to the WWF and then Kid and Hart were introduced. Before the match began, Owen Hart and Jim Neidhart came to the ring to cause trouble. The referee forced them to leave, but not before Owen made the heelish comment to Bret: "You're just a scaredy cat"... The 22 minute match built tremendously. Kid opened by armdragging Bret, who reacted as if he was impressed. Kid hit Bret with some solid looking jump reverse sidekicks which sent Bret over the top rope. At one point, Kid attempted a crucifix, but Bret fell back into a powerslam and got a three count on Kid. Bret watched, though, as Kid's foot was draped over the ropes before the third count, so he asked for the match to be restarted. As Bret convinced the referee to restart the match, Kid hooked Bret with a pin attempt from behind. For the finish, Kid came off the top rope with a dropkick but Bret caught Kid's legs in mid-air and turned it into a sharpshooter. Kid quickly submitted. After the match, many fans stood and clapped (Ross and Savage also stood and clapped) as Bret helped Kid to his feet. Ross called it the greatest championship match he's ever seen (\*\*\*\*)... Todd Pettengill hosted a SummerSlam report... Next week's TV main event, Lex Luger vs. Diesel, was promo'd... Jerry Lawler interviewed Ted DiBiase who said Undertaker belongs to him... I.R.S won a squash... In a closing interview, Bret Hart said he felt fortunate to still be champion...

**Strong Point** Bret vs. Kid. Ross's superb call of

## ■ NWA EASTERN CHAMPIONSHIP—7/5

**Summary** The program opened with The Public Enemy facing Phi Delta Slam. Slam was billed as being a hot tag team from Florida. In the highlight of the match, Flyboy Rocco Rock flipped over the top rope and when Slam moved, he landed on and broke the table. In the end, Enemy won when Rocco landed a backflip splash off the top rope... Highlights aired of Sandman and Woman beating on Tommy Cairo and Peaches and 911 choke-slammings and pinning Cairo... Mikey Whipreck beat Pitbull #2 by DQ. Whipreck was getting demolished, as usual, when he rebounded off the ropes and hit Jason, who was standing on the ring apron. Pitbull #1 responded to his manager getting hit by joining Pitbull #2 in attacking Whipreck which caused the DQ... Paul E. Dangerously did an interview blaming the coverage of O.J. Simpson for ECW TV being preempted from its normal timeslot... Sabu beat Chad Austin easily after a swinging legdrop over the top rope. The highlight was Sabu sunset flipping Austin from the ring apron to the floor... On their way to the dressing room, Dangerously, Sabu, and 911 ran into Shane Douglas and Mr. Hughes, who were approaching the ring for their match. 911 and Hughes had a face off which led to the very popular 911 (who is actually a heel) getting cheered on by fans. No brawl erupted... Douglas was scheduled to face Tommy Dreamer, but Hughes attacked Dreamer first causing the DQ. Hughes sidwawk slammed Dreamer and Douglas bent down to make the three count, but Dreamer kicked out, which the announcer hyped was the first time anyone has kicked out of that move. Douglas shouted for Sabu to come to the ring, but Sabu didn't.

**Strong Points** Something happening every minute. Solid-to-spectacular wrestling moves... [By WK]

## ■ WCW SATURDAY NIGHT—7/9

**Summary** This was WCW's experiment to do a live show and try to cover the costs of the live feed by building the show around a 900 number fan poll where fans chose who would wrestle in the main event. The show pushed fans to vote for two matches, Vader vs. Guardian Angel and more so Ric Flair vs. Sting. It was billed by Tony Schiavone as the first-ever live interactive broadcast in wrestling history (which it wasn't). This was also Hulk Hogan's first appearance in Atlanta for WCW, which led to a soldout crowd of 785 and 2,000 fans turned away... After squash matches, interviews, and an endless series of 900 plugs, only seven minutes remained for the main event, Flair vs. Sting, and the post-match angle and interviews. It took away any suspense for fans who own clocks, knowing that the main event would either end within a few minutes of starting or continue after WCW went off the air. After a few minutes of Sting on offense, Sting applied the scorpion at 4:20. Sherri Martel, dressed like a man, ran in, attacked the referee and eye-raked Sting. Hogan ran in and made the save, atomic dropped Sherri, and pulled off her wig. As Hogan threatened to hit her, Flair clipped him from behind and beat on him for a few seconds before Mr. T ran in for the save... Also on the show, Dustin Rhodes & Am Anderson beat Steve Keim & Bobby Eaton, Rick Steamboat beat Tex Slazenger, Marcus Bagwell & The Patriot beat Pretty Wonderful ending when The Sullivans distracted Roma who was pinned by Bagwell...

**Strong Point** The energy level of the show...

**Weak Point** Sting looked like a wimp, the main event was too short, the 900 plugging made WCW appear sleazy, the other matches were too short. [WK]

## ■ AAA LUCHA LIBRE ON GALAVISION—7/2

**Summary** The show consisted of matches from the Triplemania series. In the opener, Espectro Jr. & Jerry Estrada & Fuerza Guerrera beat Winner & Heavy Metal & Rey Mysterio Jr. in two straight falls... Mascarito Sagrada beat Espectro Jr. two falls to one in a midget match. The finish was screwed up, but the match was great... Santo Jr. & Octagon & Lizmark beat Love Machine & La Parka & Psicosis two falls to one. Santo pinned Park and Octagon pinned Love to win the first fall. Psicosis pinned captain Santo to win the second fall. Lizmark pinned Love with a pull of the tights and every babyface piled onto Psicosis for victory... In the main event, Konnan escaped the cage to beat Jake Roberts. Konnan was accompanied by Perro Aguayo and Roberts was accompanied by Sherri Martel and Blue Panther. Lots of heat, no wrestling. Mascarita Sagrada came to ringside and dove off the top of the cage onto Roberts with a bodysplash. Konnan pinned Roberts and the referee awarded Konnan the match, but someone informed the referee that the match couldn't be won by pinfall, so the match was restarted and Konnan immediately exited the cage to win the match. Panther and Aguayo had more action than Konnan and Roberts. Sherri was carried out on a stretcher and this was her last appearance in Mexico.

**Strong Point** The opening match was great with Mysterio Jr. really getting a chance to shine in the match. The entire show was solid with three great matches and a main event with a ton of heat and angles.

**Weak Point** Finish of the midget match and the quality of the wrestling between Konnan and Roberts in the main event. [By Carlos Rey]

## ■ SMOKY MOUNTAIN WRESTLING—7/9

**Summary** In the opener, The Thrill Seekers beat Larry Santo & James Atkins... Jake Roberts asked for Kendo to come out. Kendo came out carrying Bambi. Roberts began shoving Bambi around, smacking her like he was going to hit her. He then set her up for a DDT, but White Boy charged in and made the save. Then he got double-teamed by Roberts and Kendo until the babyface Kendo made the save... Highlights aired of Rock & Roll Express & Bambi vs. Brian Lee & Chris Candido & Tammy Fytch match which the Express and Bambi won. Afterward, Lee & Candido blind-sided Morton and Fytch cut off a little snippet of his hair. In the post-match interview, The Rock & Roll Express demanded to wrestle Lee & Candido in a hair match at the Fire at the Mountain card. Morton brought out a contract saying if his team lost, he would be shaved, but if Lee & Candido lost, one of them would be shaved. Fytch came out, jumping up and down happily, saying she was confident her boys would win and would love nothing more than to see Morton shaved bald, so she grabbed the contract and prepared to sign it. Lee & Candido tried to talk her out of it, but she began chastising them, implying they were cowards and not man enough to stand up to the Express. She signed the contract anyway despite their pleas. After the signing, Lee & Candido wrestled a squash. As the match was going on, Rock & Roll came back out and told Fytch she needed to read the contract more carefully because the contract specified she would be shaved if Lee & Candido lost. Fytch got upset, ordered Lee & Candido to attack the Express. They chased the Express and thus lost by countout... More highlights from Knoxville aired. The Funks beat The Armstrongs when Terry Funk pinned Steve Armstrong after a shot from Comette's tennis racket. Highlights aired of Smothers vs. Bruiser Bedlam in a doc fight. Bruiser Bodyslammed Smothers on a chair and then climbed up to the top rope to give him a headbutt, but Smothers rolled out of the way and Bruiser head-butted the chair and Smothers pinned him to win the match. The Funk Brothers ran in and joined Bruiser in beating on Smothers until Bob again made the save with the baseball bat. In a post-match interview, Bob challenged Bedlam and the Funk Brothers to a six-man tag against himself, Tracy Smothers, and a partner. The Armstrongs indicated that either of them could be the partner. Bob said he didn't want to pick either one of them because that would be showing favoritism and would pick someone else. He also announced he came up with someone to replace him as commissioner and would announce who soon... Comette was then interviewed. After Chip Kessler kept knocking on Comette's dressing room door, Comette finally came out and complained that Kessler kept bothering him, saying, "You ought to work for the Torch." Comette then predicted victory in the six-man. He said he was a little concerned over who Bob would pick as his mystery partner, but whoever it was, his team would be able to handle them. He predicted that he would be able to bribe whoever Bob picked as the new commissioner and thus take control... In the "Night of the Legends Update," Don and Al Green were announced as the next inductees into the Knoxville Hall of Fame... Tracy Smothers beat Steven Dunn to retain the TV Title... The Thrill Seekers smashed a cake in Comette's face...

**Strong Point** Knoxville footage and interviews were strong.

**Weak Point** Roberts's attack on Bambi was a waste of time... [By Tim Whitehead]



# T.T.P. TORCH TRIPLE PLAY

## Media reaction to the verdict

### EDITOR'S NOTES

This is the first of a twin set of *Pro*

*Wrestling Torch* editions. The second should have arrived in your mailbox the same day as this issue (both were scheduled to be mailed Monday afternoon, although this issue went to the printers Saturday afternoon). This issue is obviously focused primarily on the final week of the McMahon trial and a reaction to the verdict.

The theme is carried through with the Jim Ross "Torch Talk" which sheds some light on what McMahon's day-to-day role in the WWF is and how the WWF could have been affected by him serving prison time. (It's a concern that may not be entirely moot yet if the government pursues the one still relevant distribution count in Connecticut.)

The second issue of this twin set (#291) will focus primarily on the match that would have dominated headlines any other month—Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan. While last issue (#289/290) the finish was reported, this issue delves into details on the match with analysis and viewer reactions.

I apologize for the haphazard schedule that has occurred as a result of the trial, but given the magnitude of the trial, I felt I should be there in person to cover it. In the end, while we fell behind on some of the usual features and weekly news updates, I believe the *Torch* reached its potential in its in-depth coverage of the trial.

We will soon be back on the normal scheduled with a Tuesday mailing date beginning Aug. 2. Before then, not only will you receive issue #291 (perhaps you already have), but the issue originally scheduled to be mailed July 26 will be mailed later this week (probably July 28).

I welcome your letters responding to a variety of issues regarding the McMahon trial. Based on the "Trial Diary" in last week's double issue, do you believe McMahon should have been found guilty or not guilty? What arguments should have been made by either the prosecution or the defense that weren't? What lessons should be learned from what was learned during the trial and from the outcome of the trial? In retrospect, has the *Torch's* coverage of the steroid issue been fair? Was its coverage on target and balanced? What about the mainstream media?

The WWF-steroid story is a story that hopefully we can all leave behind us very soon. But before we do, a little retrospect to add perspective is probably worthwhile. Your letters to the editor are welcome (or, if you want to respond to the above questions, but not for publications, phone in a brief response).

Thanks again for your support. The *Torch's* readership continues to reach new heights.

### FEATURE

The night after the verdict was read, the media

coverage of the trial played right into Vince McMahon's hands. McMahon, during his press conference, was asked pleasing questions, such as, "Why were you chosen for this witchhunt?" Not exactly probing or relevant or informed, but exactly what McMahon is—and should—be aiming for.

Sean O'Shea ended up making a brief statement to the media that did little to damage McMahon. "We thought it was an important case to bring. This case highlighted a serious problem in this country among athletes and athletic organizations, so in that sense we're happy. Obviously you always want the jury to go your way. We accept the jury's verdict."

O'Shea could have complained that the law was too vague because it was obvious from the evidence that McMahon was a corporate drug pusher. He could have vowed that McMahon hadn't heard the last from the government. Instead it was McMahon who was on offense. The only reference to a possible second indictment in a different district came on Ch. 12. A reporter said that O'Shea wouldn't comment on the possibility of bringing up additional indictments in Connecticut and added that a source close to the judge said it was a possibility.

McMahon was interviewed (billed as an "exclusive"—perhaps a reward for the softball "witchhunt" question which came from that station earlier) by Fox. "It's been an unbelievable ordeal which I wouldn't wish on anyone," said McMahon. "It's been two-and-a-half years that no American should endure. It was endured by us and a jury of my peers found us not guilty. I have a great faith in humanity. I was singled out unfairly. I had everything riding on this. I'd be less than candid to say I wasn't nervous. I was definitely very nervous."

McMahon talked about wrestlers testifying in the case with an emphasis on Hogan. "I don't feel badly when anyone tells the truth," he said. "It feels bad however when someone you've worked with takes the stand and does not tell the whole truth and all of the truth. That hurt me very badly."

The reporter asked McMahon if there was any chance of him filing a civil lawsuit against the government. McMahon said, "As they say in the World Wrestling Federation, keep tuned. It could very well be the hunters are soon the hunted."

Other than Fox, the other TV stations ran short reports with soundbites from McMahon and WWF fans at the courthouse. Overall, early damage control seems to have been successful. McMahon came off as the babyface.

BBL continued from pg. 12

as his top heel to carry his promotion into the next century. He has a solid core with Shawn Michaels, Brian Lee, Mark Callaway, Kid Diesel, and others, but he needs to build on that core. Will he choose the Davey Boy Smiths and Sid Justices and Pitbull-types? Or will he go after Sabu and Chris Candido-types, wrestlers who lack the traditional WWF size but have the in-ring tools to sell tickets?

If McMahon is able to recreate the success he had in the mid- and late-'80s without roided up monsters, then he will get full credit for the brilliant promoter he is. It's not as if McMahon has no skills as a promoter and thus needs to rely on steroid bodies to achieve success. Whether or not one agrees with his promoting philosophy (i.e. stressing personalities and storylines over the in-ring athletics), it's tough to argue that he is not the best at what he does.

McMahon may choose the preferable route and not go after wrestlers with the bigger-is-better mentality not because he thinks it will help his legacy, but instead because he believes the bigger-is-better mentality won't work anymore. After all, it's going to be a long time before viewers of WWF wrestling don't look at a muscled wrestler and suspect foul play. Even with the WWF proclaiming their great steroid testing policy, fans will be skeptical. That alone could cause a bigger-is-better philosophy to backfire in the '90s.

If viewers would be willing to accept big muscled wrestlers as natural, that doesn't necessarily mean they would pay to see them. The wrestlers with the better builds relative to other wrestlers are not getting the automatic pops from audiences like they used to. Sid Vicious is not an automatic TV ratings draw. Fans are not as awed with steroid-like bodies anymore. They've seen them ad nauseum in the '80s and the novelty has worn out. Fans want wrestlers to appear physically fit if that's part of the given wrestler's image, but they don't require the Road Warrior look anymore to allow themselves to be entertained by their wrestling.

McMahon, though, may decide to go with what worked before, but simply be more careful with how he approaches it. If he does promote wrestlers to the top who have the best physiques, but not necessarily the best in-ring skill or interview ability or charisma, if he does return to reserving a high percentage of slots in his company for wrestlers with the bodybuilder look, it may not take the government to shut down Titan Sports. McMahon may run himself out of business, just as promoters who live in the past tend to do.

A relieved and rejuvenated McMahon will probably return to the television screens with energy like never before. He may put together some of the most compelling storylines and characters we have seen yet. But is he a changed man? Has he learned from past mistakes as he claimed to the media? Over the next year or two, McMahon will write his long term legacy.



# ARENA EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Each week Pro Wrestling Torch Weekly spotlights recent live arena events from around the world. The reports are compiled from correspondents who attend the shows live. If you attend a show live, please fax a match-by-match report with a focus on the most important occurrence(s) of the show. If you plan to attend a show, feel free to let us know ahead of time via phone and leave your phone number so we may call you about filing a report for this space. The Torch voice mail/fax line is (612) 854-4274 or mail reports to the Torch, P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis, MN 55420.

## Lawler KO'd by Vicious slam

United States Wrestling Association  
July 4, 1994  
Memphis, Tenn.—Mid-South Coliseum  
Estimated Attendance: 1,350

The regular Monday night wrestling card contained quite a surprise—the return of Sid Vicious. The main event was a six-man handcuff elimination match pitting **Tommy Rich & Doug Gilbert & The Dream Machine** vs. **Jerry Lawler & Brian Christopher & Moondog Spot**. The match began as all six wrestlers paired off against their foes from the preliminary matches. There were some tremendous blows with a trash can lid, a broom handle, and an elastic strap.

The first to be locked to the cage was Dream Machine by Spot at 8:00. At 10:00 Rich cuffed Spot. Almost simultaneously, Rich and Lawler handcuffed Christopher and Gilbert at 11:00. This left Lawler vs. Rich. Rich started signalling for a time out, but Lawler began pummeling Rich in the corner until Rich's big surprise materialized from the heel dressing room.

The crowd rose in unison, gasping as they realized it was Vicious. Lawler, though, had his back turned and continued to beat on Rich until Vicious tapped him on the shoulder. When Lawler turned around, Vicious one-arm throat slammed him, KO'ing him. Vicious then grabbed the house mic and demanded, "Lawler, get up! You and the rest of these idiots will realize one thing—Sid Vicious is here to rule the world." (\*\*1/2)

**Title Match** Jerry Lawler beat Tommy Rich via DQ to retain the Unified Title when the referee saw Rich use a chain at 10:51. The first seven minutes mainly saw rest holds and the rest was a Memphis-style brawl. (\*1/2)

**Double Elimination Tag Challenge** The Eliminators beat PG13 at 6:44 (\*). PG13 beat Masters of the Orient at 4:50 (\*1/2). Masters beat Eliminators at 6:45 in the best match of the night (\*\*). PG13 beat Eliminators by DQ at 6:46 (\*). PG13 beat Masters after using the hubcap to win the WINGS Tag Titles (\*).

**In Other Bouts** Dream Machine beat Moondog Spot by DQ at 2:00 (\*3/4). Brian Christopher beat Doug Gilbert by DQ after a low-blow at 4:55 (1/4\*). Debbie Combs beat Susan Sapphire at 2:57 with a roll-up (DUD). Reggie B. Fine beat Koko B. Ware at 0:57 (\*\*1/2). Doug Basham beat Spellbinder (mgd. by Bert Prentise) at 4:56 (\*\*). Colorado Kid beat Tony Falk at 3:41 (\*1/2). Jeff Gaylord beat Bull

## Hart brothers go 60 minutes

World Wrestling Federation  
July 8, 1994  
East Rutherford, N.Y.—Meadowlands Arena  
Estimated Attendance: 4,000

Bret Hart defeated Owen Hart in a 60 minute marathon match to retain the WWF Title. Owen came to the ring to very little reaction. Bret got solid, but not spectacular cheers. At 20:00, the fans grew restless of the methodical action and began a loud "boring" chant. Bret and Owen responded with a criss-cross, but soon returned to a resthold. At 25:00, the "boring" chants returned and some families began to leave the arena (it was past 10:30 p.m.). Bret responded with a flurry of offense. Owen reversed a whip and rammed Bret into the corner turnbuckle. Bret took a good bump and Owen scored a near fall.

Owen applied a crossbar on Bret and soon followed with some undramatic near falls. Owen missed a charge into the corner and rammed into the ringpost. Bret hit Owen with a few uppercuts and went for the sharpshooter at 31:00, but Owen kicked out. Owen hit Bret with a top rope dropkick, but Bret kicked out. Bret went for a roll-up, but Owen ducked out of the way and Bret fell through the ropes. Owen hit Bret's legs with a crossbody block over the top rope. Owen acknowledged the crowd for the first time in the match and got a rise.

At 35:00, Owen attempted to suplex Bret into the ring, but Bret slipped over Owen and rolled him up for a three count. After the one minute rest period, Owen began to work over Bret's knee and at 42:00 applied the figure-four. Bret reversed it, then Owen rolled back, and Bret grabbed the ropes. Owen reapplied it and Bret submitted, evening the score. During the rest period, Owen kneedropped Bret's crotch, then bashed his knee as the referee reattached the turnbuckle. Owen reapplied the figure-four and Bret submitted again.

The final 13 minutes saw the best action of the entire night. Owen began to work over Bret's knees again, but Bret rolled up Owen for a near fall. Owen charged Bret and ran into his foot. Bret then mounted the second rope and came off with a short, hard, fast clothesline. Owen took a great bump as Bret sold his knee being injured. The action spilled out of the ring where Owen rammed Bret into the ringpost. Owen flicked off the crowd. Bret rolled into the ring to avoid an Owen chair swing. Owen climbed to the top rope, but Bret knocked him off and Owen crotched himself for a big pop. Bret then suplexed Owen

off the top rope and then applied the sharpshooter, which Owen submitted to. The score was evened at two a piece.

After the one minute rest period, Bret piledrived Owen for a near fall. Owen spun out of a salto suplex attempt and turned it into a tombstone for a very near fall at 59:30. Owen then applied the sharpshooter, which Bret reversed with 20 seconds to go. Owen submitted just seconds before the time limit expired, thus avoiding sudden death overtime.

A really strong final 15 minutes, but the first 30 killed off a lot of potential crowd heat. The first 30 minutes told a story, just not an interesting one. Perhaps a 30 minute marathon match would have been better if they planned to merely dog it in the first 30 minutes. (\*\*\*\*)

**Grudge Match** Randy Savage pinned Jerry Lawler in 14:00. Lawler came to the ring to tremendous heel heat. He added to it by circling the ring with the mic working the crowd. "Let me make something perfectly clear, I hate each and every one of you!" he said. "And the next one of you to say Burger King, I will personally slap the taste out of your mouth." A "Burger King" chant then began. Savage came to the ring to a standing ovation. After five minutes of working the crowd, the action spilled outside of the ring briefly. Then Lawler pulled a foreign object from his tights and used it on Savage. The end came when Lawler went for a bodyslam and out of nowhere Savage rolled him up for a three count.

Savage did nothing in this match and the two barely made contact with each other. Lawler blamed the "idiots" for his loss. When the crowd cheered, he said, "Just for that, you've seen me for the last time." They cheered even louder, so he responded, "Just for that, I shall return." No wrestling, great psychology and heat. (\*\*)

**In Other Bouts** Nikolai Volkoff (w/Ted DiBiase) beat Virgil in the popcorn match (following intermission) in 9:00. There was no pop for Virgil (\*1/2). I.R.S. beat Tatanka by DQ in 8:00 when Tatanka shoved the referee twice (\*1/2). Yokozuna pinned Typhoon in 13:00. Yokozuna got a babyface pop when he entered the ring and raised his arms in the air. The first five minutes saw two brief seconds of contact. Then it got worse. A belly-to-belly suplex put Typhoon down for the three count (DUD).

**The Head Shrinkers** beat Double Trouble in 8:00 to retain the tag titles. Double Trouble replaced Well Dunn who replaced The Heavenly Bodies. Okay match, void of heat (\*3/4). Duke the Dumpster pinned Rick Martel in 10:00. Duke rolled through on a Martel attempted roll-up for the three count (\*3/4). 1-2-3 Kid pinned Kwang in a strong opener. Kid had some hot moves (\*\*3/4). [Wade Keller]



# TORCH TALK

The following "TorchTalk" with Jim Ross was conducted May 29, 1994. In this installment, Ross talks about Vince McMahon and how he has structured the WWF's day to day operations.

**Keller: Let's talk about Vince McMahon specifically. How does the level of respect Vince McMahon showed his employees differ from WCW's management treatment and respect shown employees?**

Ross: I think that WCW seems to have less pressure and the people on the upper-management level seem to deal with less intimidation and fear. Vince strikes a very imposing figure. He's a big guy. There's no doubt in anybody's mind who the boss is. There's no doubt in anybody's mind who the booker is or who's gonna determine this or that. He's got a great deal of respect in his company. I think a lot of it is because some people know him really well and like him, other people's respect is based on fear and intimidation.

I think at WCW the guys that are in upper-management seem to be a little bit lower key. They're obviously not as flamboyant. Vince is an entertainer, he's a personality. He is a very outgoing, very gregarious fella and I think some people are comfortable by it, but there are others who are very intimidated. He hires you and he fires you.

**Keller: What were your early dealings with**



Vince McMahon

Illustration by Joseph Borzotta

## Jim Ross on McMahon as a leader

**Vince McMahon like last year and how were they different than you expected?**

Ross: I had never met Vince before until I went up there for an interview. I never met him in my career. I only talked to him on the phone once and that was when I was working at Mid-South. It was about talent, not about working there. When I met him I really didn't know what to expect. I found him to be a very good conversationalist, I found him to be very intelligent, I found him to be highly motivated, highly confident in his abilities. He told me when he hired me he didn't want me to change, he loved my style the way it was. He was excited about my concept for starting a radio network. It was a very positive situation at that point. He could be down to earth if it was just him and me one on one. He had the ability to be a down to earth guy. He's in a high profile, high pressure situation. When I got there the grand jury was subpoenaing witnesses and all that stuff was going on. In the face of all those challenges, I tell ya' it was amazing how positive he did stay. All in all, it's hard to figure the guy out. He does have a lot of very good qualities. Like a lot of people who have been in wrestling, I don't think he trusts many people.

**Keller: You don't think he trusts many people?**

Ross: I know he doesn't. He has a very small inner-circle.

**Keller: Who makes up that inner-circle?**

Ross: Pat Patterson and Bruce Prichard. That's his inner-circle.

**Keller: Where does, say, J.J. Dillon fit in?**

Ross: He's so busy on administrative things, dealing with talent, dealing with contracts, dealing with problems on the tour. J.J. is a very important part of the WWF, but he is not in the booking, TV writing inner-circle that Patterson and Prichard are. J.J. has so many other duties. J.J.'s in his office every day and he works a lot of long hours and does a great job for them. J.J. treated me great. J.J. was really nice to me when I came in and when I came out. He was nothing but a professional. He's so busy with his duties in the office. The other guys, they don't go to the office that often. They work out of their houses or Vince's house pretty much exclusively.

**Keller: Patterson and Prichard?**

Ross: Yes. They're the ones who if Vince decides to go a certain direction then they work to enhance that and make sure everything is going that way. They come up with ideas themselves. Patterson especially is a very, very powerful man in the WWF. He's very, very powerful. I think that he's probably Vince McMahon's closest confidant other than perhaps Linda in the entire company.

**Keller: Based on his reputation going in was there anything that really surprised you about Vince?**

Ross: I probably haven't been around anybody who works as hard as him. I don't know how he does it. He works every day and that's no exaggeration. I swear that is the truth. He's as dedicated to his business as anybody could possibly be.

**Keller: Why do you think he is that dedicated? Because he doesn't have a lot of other interests, he fears if he relaxes the WWF will lose its position in the industry, or because he just loves it so much?**

Ross: The only hobby he has that I'm aware of is working out. So the only two things he does are work out and work on wrestling. He has structured his company to where he has an immense responsibility. I think one of the basic reasons is, he gets his workout done, he trains hard, he's in great shape. I'd say he takes 90 percent of the important calls from wrestlers who are key guys, Vince takes care of them. He fields those calls. He's always on the phone, business never stops, it's a seven day a week business. He's very, very busy as an on-air talent. I just think he has a workload. The way he has the company structured, he's the focal point of the company. He probably gets as much exposure as anybody in a high profile position, including the wrestlers. He not only has a tremendous responsibility as an on-air talent, but he's also got the responsibility of managing the entire company.

His wife does a great job. She's one of the nicest people I've ever met. She's a really genuine person in my dealings with her. Somebody else may have a different opinion, but in my dealings with her she was simply a wonderful and really loyal wife, a very astute businessperson, and Vince is really fortunate he has a wonderful family. He has two good kids, really nice kids. Shane's working in the company. He's gonna be an asset there. He's got a lovely daughter who is still in high school. He's blessed with a really nice family. They understand he's gonna work everyday. It seems they get along okay in that respect.

**Keller: What are Linda's day-to-day responsibilities?**

Ross: She's the president of the WWF. She's involved in the day-to-day management of the entire operation as far as Titan Towers is concerned. I don't think she gets too involved in what goes on over at TV because Vince is there so much. He's there to do voiceovers two or three days a week, probably. So Vince handles what airs on TV, but Linda works closely with everybody else, whether it be marketing or television syndication or international or the



business affairs or what have you, she's right there involved in it. She is not a figure-head. She is a very intelligent, competent person who probably has not been given enough credit for the success of the company because he's so up front. He's so prominent that often times other folks who are really, really valuable there don't get their just due.

**Keller: Does Vince McMahon fall short in any area in being a truly admirable leader of Titan Sports in either your view or in the view of others who have worked for him?**

Ross: I don't know how he could do more. I guess philosophically there are some things he could do. Maybe he could take a little bit more time in dealing with issues, but he's so busy that he doesn't have any extra time. I'm telling ya', any of the guys who are reading this who have worked there or people who work there right now who are reading this, they know that Vince doesn't have any extra time. Vince works every day, he'll work until 7 or 8 at night at the office, he works on the weekends. I've been at his house many, many weekends working. I met with him late at night. I don't know if he's a workaholic, but I would say he certainly has those symptoms. I don't know how much more he could do. I guess he could disseminate the information within the company in a little bit more timely fashion to his production people and other people on the staff and delegate a little bit more so he could spend more time on the creative aspect of it.

**Keller: In terms of the power he wields, does he wield that power because he's confident in his abilities and it's his money on the line or because he just likes having that much power?**

Ross: Well, any of us who work on TV, yours truly not excluded, we've all got an ego to feed. Some people can keep their egos in check. He's got a strong ego. He's got a great deal of confidence. You've got to go back to what really makes common sense. He is financially responsible for the company. He's the guy, the buck stops with him. I don't think I or anybody else in his position or management would probably do things much differently in terms of being as dedicated and as hard-working as he is to his company, but I think it's because he's responsible for the ultimate success or failure of it. I think he's doing what he thinks he has to do to keep the product rolling and to make it better.

If I were him I would delegate more, take more time to be with my family, I would stop and enjoy life a little bit more, and I think all that would come back to him twofold. It would give him a chance to step away and look at it. It would give him a chance to look at his product a little closer and actually listen to what was being said and see if he enjoys watching the show like a fan sitting in their living room. I don't think he's able to do that with his current schedule as it is. I don't think it's all ego. I think it's a matter of self defense, self preservation..

**Keller: Do you consider Vince a very secure**

**person or from your time around him did he seem to be constantly trying to prove himself?**

Ross: I think like a lot of people who are entrepreneurial by nature, they never really reach their comfort zone. They're always looking over their shoulder and trying to get better and trying to improve what they're doing. I think that's a trait of a lot of guys. There are guys who can look at starting companies and taking it from small to big-time. I think most of the guys—I don't want to say they managed on fear, but they managed with an edge. There's this cutting edge they're always on, this delicate balance there. I don't think he's unlike any other entrepreneur by nature.

**Keller: Of all the people with power in the WWF, whose level of power surprised you the most?**

Ross: (pause) I would say probably Patterson.

**Keller: A lot of people perceive him as the number two guy or tied with Linda with differing responsibilities?**

Ross: He's number two in a specific area, the booking and the creative end. He's not number two overall. Linda is, absolutely. There's no doubt about that, but he has great influence with Vince. She does everything very well documented, very well structured, she's very organized. She is not only Vince's partner in life, she is his partner in business.

But as far as Patterson is concerned, Pat is extremely, extremely powerful in a key element we watch as TV viewers and that is formatting TV and doing the booking and dealing with the talent and writing TV. Patterson is very strong in that respect. I didn't respect how strong he was because everybody always said Vince is the boss. There's no doubt about that, but Patterson has a great deal of influence there and perhaps rightfully so. I wasn't there during their heydays, but it surprised me a little bit. I'm not saying I was disappointed. That's the area I worked in most, so I saw that more than I saw the workings of the marketing department or the syndication department.

**Keller: So if the top four in the company are Vince, Linda, Pat, and Bruce Prichard, who would be the next two or three people or does it become a blur at that point?**

Ross: Basil Devito's been there a lot of years, he wields a lot of power. Prichard is just powerful in his particular area. Doug Sages, who is the financial guy. He, of course, has been in the focus a great deal in the last year or so because of their well-publicized financial situation. He's very influential there. It depends on what area you look at. In the area I worked in, it was Vince, Pat, and Bruce with their support personnel then kicking in led by Kevin Dunn, who is the executive producer.

Pat and Bruce probably spend more time with Vince than any other two people do in a company. That gives them a little edge in a lot of

***“When I got to the WWF, the grand jury was subpoenaing witnesses and all that stuff was going on. In the face of all those challenges, I tell ya' it was amazing how positive Vince McMahon stayed.”***

regards since they spend more time with the boss.

**Keller: Who did you enjoy working with the most while in the WWF, both personally and professionally?**

Ross: From a talent perspective I really loved working with Bobby Heenan when we were both there. We had a great deal of fun. I grew to love and respect Gorilla Monsoon, one of the nicest human beings I've ever met in any walk of life. Really a nice, nice man. There are some great production people there. Kevin Dunn was great to work with. He helped me a lot. I was an outsider when I arrived there. I came from the enemy with a southern accent. I was not well received by the masses initially.

**Keller: In what ways did you sense that? Or in what ways was that obvious?**

Ross: It was pretty obvious. Everybody would talk in short conversations. Nobody went out of their way to want to do stuff with you after work, but that didn't last long. When I left there I had a great relationship with everybody at the TV facility. I was always on call. I was there six days a week. The only day I wasn't at the studio was on Sunday and there were some Sundays I worked. I was in the studio every day but Sunday.

The production people really understand wrestling as it's supposed to be. That helped them do a good job either in their editing or in their audio work

I enjoyed being around Pat. He's a funny guy and he's got a great sense of humor. I've known Bruce since he was working for Paul Boesch and I was working for Bill Watts when they were doing Houston.

**Keller: Was that an adjustment for you to deal with Bruce being in the position he was in?**

Ross: A little bit of an adjustment. Bruce is a very loyal guy to Vince. He's basically Pat's assistant, Pat's right-hand man. Vince will give them the direction for TV and then he and Pat will write the television. Bruce and I were neighbors, but I didn't see him as much as I thought we would because my duties required me to be at the studio virtually every day and his duties had him either at his house, Pat's house, or Vince's house virtually every day.



# • PRESS • CONFERENCE

A few minutes past 4 p.m. Friday afternoon, Vince McMahon met with the press and reacted to the verdict just minutes after it was read. The following is a transcript of media questions and his answers...

**McMahon's opening statement** I would just like to say (on behalf) of my whole family we are delighted with the outcome. I must say coming into this, having been investigated for over two-and-a-half years, it has been quite an ordeal. Certainly there is no one in America who is above being investigated for any reason. I felt that from time to time the investigation was a bit unfair. I thought the charges that were hurled against me and my company were wrong.

And I must say that coming into this I didn't have a great deal of faith in the judicial system as such nor necessarily in the way and manner in which someone is prosecuted. The one thing I've always had is faith in humanity and today that was reaffirmed.

**Q: Do you want to respond to the label "corporate drug pusher"?**

I think the jury responded very nicely to all of the insults, notwithstanding the charges, hurled by Mr. O'Shea. I must say that I not only felt in great hands in terms of humanity deciding my fate, a jury of my peers, but also no one has ever been any better represented than I was and my company was in this case with Jerry McDevitt and Laura Brevetti. Many of you would assume the greatest legal talent as we speak is out on the other coast. That is not the case, folks, it's right here. And I'm very appreciative for everyone who helped us through this entire ordeal.

Most importantly, other than the jury and the legal staff, I'm very appreciative for all of the many fans not just here in the United States but all over the world, who had faith in the WWF and everything we believe in—bringing quality entertainment to everyone we possibly can. That's what we're all about. We're about fun. We're not about this (points to courthouse). We're not about courtrooms and things of that nature. We're about fun. That's what we sell is fun and that's exactly what we're gonna do right after we leave this press conference is go back to work and start delivering more fun to everybody.

**Q: Many kids have gotten a bad impression of the wrestling league, wrestlers, muscles, because of the steroids and everything that came out in this trial. What's your message to them after the trial?**

I'll disagree with that statement. I think that more than anything else the WWF was again found innocent of these scurrilous charges that were hurled against us. Just as I said at a previous

## McMahon press conference

press conference—and I don't see any of the same faces from the last one I had back in 1991—at that press conference I stated from that day forward we were going to institute the greatest drug testing in any sport or any entertainment as it relates to steroids and drug abuse. And we did it.

**Q: And you continue to do it?**

We continue to do it. I would invite you to compare and contrast any drug abuse program compared to the WWF. Please, I'll charge you, just as I charged people at that press conference back in 1991, compare us to the NFL even though we're not a sport as such. Compare us to anything Hollywood has in terms of drug abuse or steroids. Compare us and contrast us. Continue to follow this story! That's the only way that young people can be certain the WWF is everything we say it is and will be in the future. The only way they're gonna know that, guys, is through you, the media.

**Q: Why were you singled out?**

I don't have (that answer). That's a question I have asked myself many, many times as to why the WWF or Vince McMahon was singled out. I really don't have that answer. I guess maybe that answer only lies with the prosecution and I'm sure they'd be happy to deliver a statement.

**Q: With the close attention you normally pay to your work, every aspect of it, has it been difficult to sit here not only these weeks, but all of the preceding months?**

I don't know of any corporation in America that can withstand the kind of scrutiny we have undergone for the last two-and-a-half years and the kind of disruptions in normal business day-to-day activities, the kind of disruption in my family. This has turned everything inside out. But in spite of it all, we're here very happily to stand here before you innocent of all charges.

**Q: How are you going to celebrate tonight?**

I'm not sure about that but I may celebrate by going back to work.

**Q: The acquittal notwithstanding can you tell us what the investigation and the trial has done to your company as a business?**

As far as the effects of the company, I think if there were any doubts as to what the WWF was and is all about, I think this just cleared up all of them. As far as I'm concerned I see nothing but blue skies ahead for the WWF.

**Q: Some of the people who write the wrestling newsletters say the sport isn't nearly as popular as it was before the investigation. Is that right?**

I think in every form of sport, in every form of entertainment — some years Hollywood has great years, other years not so good. It's a talent-driven commodity and everything has to be going in a synergy fashion to really work for you. And it will

be there—we always will be there in the future—and will be just as popular as it was before.

**Q: Do you think the World Wrestling Federation can go on just as it always has?**

I would suggest the World Wrestling Federation is going (to go) a lot better than ever. Again, I don't know of any corporation—I don't know of any major motion picture studio out in Hollywood, I don't know of any sport here in America or anywhere else that can go through what we went through, as intense of an investigation as we went through, and to come before a jury of your peers — to me it reaffirms again my belief in my fellow man.

**Q: As you look back now, any mistakes that you (realize you made)?**

I think there's no question we made some mistakes along the way. I don't know of any corporation, I don't know of any individuals—you guys with cameras and those without—that haven't made mistakes from time to time. The important thing about making mistakes is to get it together and make sure you don't make those same mistakes again and be better off as a result of it. That's what I'd say about mistakes.

**Q: What would you tell children about steroids?**

I would say personally as Laura was saying, if you truly believe that you are right about something and you understand the consequences, stand up, stand up for your rights. That's exactly what we did. We stood up for our rights. We knew the government was incorrect. We stood up for our rights and as a result of that we were found innocent of all charges. The other aspect of steroids or any other illegal drugs, as far as kids are concerned, JUST DON'T DO IT, period.

**Q: There's been a lot of talk about Hulk Hogan's testimony blowing up in the prosecution's face. Do you want to give us your assessment on his testimony?**

No, I don't think I'd care to comment about Hulk Hogan's testimony. I think it spoke for itself. We all live with our own demons, I suppose, and his are (pause) whatever they are.

**Q: (How did you and your family get through this)?**

The same way we've gotten through everything. We just stayed together. I'm the most fortunate, luckiest man in the world to have a family like I have. I don't want to talk about that too much or I'll break up. Nonetheless, guys thank you very, very much for being out during what is obviously another hot summer day. I want to thank all the fans that stayed with the WWF, certainly my legal staff, especially the jury, and you guys in the media as well. You've been very respectful and we greatly appreciate it. Thank you very much.



## THE MCMAHON TRIAL

**NOT GUILTY** continued from pg. 1

noticed she was being observed by a reporter and told him she wasn't confident at the moment. She quickly added, "But I'm also a lousy prognosticator."

Indeed she's not, they both laughed Friday afternoon. The tension was high all day Thursday. Court room observers' emotions swayed several times as they patiently—and sometimes not so patiently—waited for a decision to be read. Prosecutor Sean O'Shea wore his poker face most of the time, but he appeared confidently relaxed. Titan Sports attorney Jerry McDevitt and Laura Brevetti were uptight, sometimes showing that with nervous laughter and other times by outright hanging their heads. Vince did all he could to remain calm, joking with his wife and son, talking with his attorneys about what could have been said or what should have been said to the jury.

Members of the press and wrestling fans who stuck around until the end ran the gamut of opinions. While some WWF fans blindly never wavered in their opinion that Vince would be found not-guilty, those whose minds were not made up believed as of late Thursday that the jury was moving toward a guilty verdict, a gut feeling based on the testimony the jury requested be read back, the emotions of the attorneys, and the speed with which the jury appeared to be reaching a decision. Thursday around dinner time the judge told the jury they could go home, but if they believed they were near a verdict, he could have dinner brought to them. They opted to have dinner brought to them, but at 9:30, with no consensus, the jury adjourned for the day.

Friday everyone believed they would come to a decision before lunch and the collective gut feeling was the decision would be not-guilty; it seemed as if there was enough time to find reasonable doubt and the jury was just trying to convince one or two to go along with the verdict. But by Friday afternoon the feeling was it could go either way since so much time was being taken by the jury.

At 3:55 p.m., the jury returned to the courtroom with a verdict. When the verdict was read, O'Shea's jaw dropped and the WWF fans in the courtroom cheered out loud as if their favorite wrestler just scored a pinfall. The judge stood and angrily instructed anyone who cheered to immediately leave the court room. None left, but all fell silent as McMahon and company celebrated.

While McMahon realizes one of the distribution counts that was dropped from this case due to lack of jurisdiction may be retried in another district later this year, he was in an understandably celebratory mood.

More than anything, McMahon tried to set the tone for how the case should be interpreted when speaking with the press. "I think that more than

## FAST FACT

**Zahorian Trial** June 27, 1991, after three hours of deliberations, a jury found Dr. George T. Zahorian guilty of 12 counts, including wrongful distribution of steroids without just medical cause. The trial lasted only three days and included testimony from Dan Spivey, Roddy Piper, Rick Martel, and Brian Blair. Hulk Hogan was originally subpoenaed, but on June 20, Judge William Caldwell ruled that Hogan need not testify, his reason was not given.

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anything else the WWF was again found innocent of these scurrilous charges that were hurled against us," he said, with his old self-assured confidence oozing out of him once again.

He said the WWF's drug testing policies compared favorably to any of those found in the NFL or Hollywood. He told the media he was still willing to be held accountable in the future, this decision notwithstanding.

"Continue to follow this story," he exclaimed. "That's the only way that young people can be certain the WWF is everything we say it is and will be in the future."

He admitted to making some mistakes in the past and said he, as would anyone, has learned from those mistakes.

A relieved Laura Brevetti told the press she doesn't hold any ill feelings toward prosecutor Sean O'Shea despite the tension present during closing summations. "Well, that's the adversarial system, that's the constitution," she said. "I think the day of summation both sides had the fullest and fairest opportunity to put their argument to them and I think we see the result. I think the jury was persuaded by our argument because it was based purely on the evidence and not on the rhetoric."

Brevetti commented on the government going after Titan Sports when some of their witnesses admitted to committing felonies as recently as this summer. "We saw that there was stuff going on in the '90s and just last month that appeared to be a violation of the law that were ignored all for the purpose of getting some favorable—to their

point of view—testimony. I questioned that to the jury and I wonder whether that had an impact on their mind. I can't help but think that it had to."

Jerry McDevitt, who appeared more worried than anyone at times during jury deliberations, talked about the length of time the jury took to reach a verdict. "It was a case that would require some deliberations, especially with the vagueness of the conspiracy charge," he said. "It took them a while to sort through the evidence and when they did they came to the obvious conclusion. It's the one we said all along."

One juror spoke briefly with the press. "Over the last two days we weighted lots of evidence and based upon the evidence presented to us, we could not convict the man." Not exactly the type of vindication McMahon is looking for, but he'll take it.

Prosecutor Sean O'Shea accepted the decision and did not comment on further action.

Lead investigator Tony Vidente smiled earlier in the week when the judge mentioned one of the distribution counts could be retried in another district. When asked how much the government spent on the case, Brevetti said, "Too much." The government has to be embarrassed by the amount of time and money spent investigating McMahon to not come away with something. If they are willing to spend more time and money, Vince McMahon's legal woes may not be over yet.

But until further notice, it's back to business for McMahon. Now it's his turn to show, as he said, he has learned lessons from past mistakes.



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**FIRST CLASS**

## BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE

By WADE KELLER, Editor and Publisher

**I**t might be over, it might not be over. It depends on whether or not the government chooses to pursue a distribution count under proper jurisdiction, i.e. in Connecticut. If the government does, they may have a case after all. The law appears to indicate that if Vince McMahon ever bought steroids for Hulk Hogan, even as a payback for Hogan loaning him steroids in the past, it constitutes illegal distribution.

That notwithstanding, for the sake of argument, let's say Vince McMahon has heard the last from the government on this issue and the government has heard the last of McMahon. Where does McMahon go from here?

McMahon has two general options. He can take this decision as a vindication, an affirmation that he was right all along. If he does, maybe he will begin to take some chances again, letting a superstar here and a superstar there slip by his steroid tests somehow. If that's not possible or McMahon believes it's too risky or he simply thinks that's beneath his ethics, perhaps he will do the next best thing—hire wrestlers who are at the peak of their steroid-enhanced physique and then make sure they stop using steroids while they work for him. He would still get all the benefits of the wrestlers' steroid use when they entered the federation without having to risk

## Where does Vince McMahon go from here?

being part of a conspiracy to keep them on steroids. As this trial shows there is no law on the books on which one holds someone legally culpable for heading up a system that rewards prior steroid use. McMahon may decide to take advantage of that.

Then again, McMahon may have been humbled by this trial. He may have been humbled by the nightmares of spending two, three, five years in prison as others ran his company into the ground. He may have been humbled by the powerlessness he felt as Sean O'Shea pointed at him and said he doesn't respect wrestling. He may have learned lessons from past arrogance or past policies. He may want to prove he respects wrestling, not just his mainstream image and the size of his pocketbook.

If he is a changed man, perhaps he wants to rebuild his legacy. All the success in the world doesn't make a bit of difference if you are not respected by people whose opinions matter. Frankly, the opinions of the mindless zombies who cheered when McMahon was found not guilty and who blinded themselves to any of his wrongdoings in the past don't matter.

McMahon cares about his legacy, and the legacy he leaves for his son Shane. The legacy of his first ten years is that one of the main ingredients to his success was steroids. Even with the not guilty verdict, this trial cements that

image of the WWF in the '80s. There will always be an asterisk next to the nearly 80,000 fans who packed the Pontiac Silverdome or the millions who watched WWF wrestling on NBC on Saturday nights. That asterisk says those athletes were using drugs that, had the public known they were using them, would have prevented them from having the kind of mainstream success they had.

McMahon can virtually wipe out that image over the next ten years as he grooms his son to pick up where he leaves off. McMahon can continue to promote the type of matches he has recently, such as 1-2-3 Kid vs. Bret Hart, which drew a respectable 3.0 rating—something WCW would pop champagne corks over. McMahon has shown that wrestlers need not be exploding with muscles for the public to buy them. In fact, the other extreme can be marketable. If, however, McMahon promoted so heavily the Kid vs. Hart match merely to show the jurors who might have watched his shows during the trial that his product is not currently muscle-reliant, then his mission can be considered accomplished and he can go back to stressing the old muscles-first, talent-second style of wrestling.

McMahon is at a fork in the road in his promoting career. He cannot rely on Owen Hart

—Please see BBL, pg. 7