

WRESTLING TORCH

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WEEKLY

SPECIAL ISSUE: IN-DEPTH COVERAGE OF

"TITANGATE"

By Wade Keller
Editor/Publisher

The World Wrestling Federation's media relations machine was given a relentless test over the last six days, failure of which could lead to the end of the WWF as the leading pro wrestling organization in the United States. It began Wednesday, Mar. 11 with a front page story in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* by Jeff Savage. That was followed by articles in other newspapers, all of which were the subject of national TV shows and radio programs in the days that followed.

The allegations made over the week focused on five people: Vince McMahon, head of Titan Sports of which the WWF is a subsidiary; Hulk Hogan, the top drawing wrestler of the 1980s; Pat Patterson, Vice President in charge of booking for the WWF; Terry Garvin, a WWF booking assistant; and Mel Phillips, a WWF ring announcer.

The media publicity became so wide-spread that Johnny Carson cracked a joke about steroids on the "Tonight Show" last Thursday.

The *Los Angeles Times* ran a story Thursday on the front page by John Cherwa and Houston Mitchell which focused on Hulk Hogan. The story by John Cherwa and Houston Mitchell was also carried on the wire services and run in Milwaukee, Stamford, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Portland, the front page of the *London Daily News*, and others. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *People Magazine*, *The Village Voice*, *The Oregonian*, and the *New York Post* also ran stories.

Vince McMahon, who has made a personal rule of not doing interviews for the media for nearly a decade, broke the rule twice since the *San Diego Union-Tribune* story broke. First, he appeared on "Larry King Live" on CNN Friday night with Bruno Sammartino and Barry Orton. On Monday, McMahon appeared on "Donahue" and was joined by John Arezzi of WEVD's "Pro Wrestling Spotlight", former WWF Champion Billy Graham, former wrestler Tom Hankins, former Titan Sports announcer Murray Hodgson, Dave Meltzer of the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*, former WWF wrestler Barry Orton, and former WWF wrestler Bruno Sammartino.

McMahon agreed with "Donahue" that if the public does not buy his refutations to the allegations against Titan Sports, that Titan Sports will not be able to "give these tickets away".

The original story by Savage in San Diego covered virtually all aspects of the scandals currently being associated with the WWF.

"Okay, so it's fake," said Sammartino. "That's not harmful. But what it stands for is horrifying. It's a filthy business, and the tragedy of it all is that parents have no idea."

So what's so sleazy? The following are some of the allegations made in the media this week:

San Diego Union-Tribune, Mar. 11: "Steroids is just the tip of the iceberg," said David 'Dr. D' Shults, a former wrestler who is now a private investigator in Connecticut. "There's cocaine, marijuana, heroin, crack cocaine. It's a walking drugstore."...

Six other former WWF wrestlers interviewed by the *San Diego Union-Tribune* have supported Shults's allegations of drug abuse. These wrestlers say some of the industry's biggest stars and executives have regularly used cocaine.

CHRONOLOGY of "TitanGate"

- 6-20-91: Hulk Hogan's subpoena to Dr. George Zahorian steroid distribution trial squashed by Judge William Caldwell.
- 6-24-91: Zahorian Trial begins. Zahorian accused of wrongful sale and distribution of steroids.
- 6-14-91: *Miami Herald* publishes first mainstream article on steroids in pro wrestling involving Hogan by Alex Marvez on the front page of the sports section.
- 6-26-91: Dan Spivey, Roddy Piper, Rick Martel, and Brian Blair testify to being supplied with steroids from Zahorian.
- 6-27-91: After only three hours of deliberations, Zahorian found guilty on 12 counts, including wrongful distribution of steroids without just medical cause.
- 7-12-91: WWF announces new steroid testing program to soon be implemented.
- 7-16-91: Vince McMahon announces at press conference, "the WWF will be standard bearer for drug-free sports entertainment" in reference to new steroid and drug testing and rehabilitation policy.
- 7-16-91: Hulk Hogan says on Arsenio Hall, "...There's two things I'm not. I'm not a steroid abuser and I do not use steroids." Hogan claimed his only use of steroids was in 1983 for rehabilitative purposes.
- 8-23-91: McMahon tells press at Titan headquarters that all of the WWF wrestlers were off steroids. When asked if possibly just one wrestler was still on them, McMahon said with peer pressure from other wrestlers, that was not possible.
- 8-26-91: At SummerSlam, no noticeable difference in size is evident in wrestlers.
- 9-5-91: Ric Flair signs with WWF for an apparent revitalization of the organization after months of bad publicity.
- 11-13-91: WWF conducts first steroid tests one day before

"Entertainment Tonight" was schedule to run feature on steroids and the lack of testing in the WWF up to that point. No wrestlers were suspended and the results of the tests were initially kept confidential.

11-14-91: Hogan again says she was not a steroid abuser on "Entertainment Tonight" and Sammartino says the WWF testing "is a sham."

11-15-91: "Inside Edition" airs critical feature on steroids in the WWF.

-1-3-92: Billy Graham goes public on "Inside Edition" and several wrestling radio shows about his knowledge of Hogan's steroid use, including personally injecting Hogan himself with steroids. David Shults backs up Graham's statements on "Inside Edition".

-1-9-92: *New York Post* columnist Phil Mushnick publishes first of many articles reporting on and criticizing the WWF and their drug and steroid policies.

-2-13-92: Frank DeFord reads editorial over ESPN radio network telling Hogan to admit his mistakes or get out of the public eye.

-2-14-92: Drug-sniffing dog and several St. Louis Police Officers search WWF wrestlers for drugs as they enter St. Louis Arena. Sources at arena claim wrestler were tipped off ahead of time. No drugs were found.

-2-15-92: Barry Orton, after being asked by Mike Tenny, host of "Wrestling Insiders" on the Sports & Entertainment Network, if there was a case of a wrestler being pushed beyond a deserved level due to giving in to homosexual advances from WWF officials, says, "Absolutely. Without a doubt" and then recounted an incident in 1978 where Terry Garvin propositioned him for homosexual sex repeatedly for six hours on a car ride in Texas before either were in the WWF.

-3-11-92: *San Diego Union-Tribune* publishes 80-inch front page story by Jeff Savage on WWF including reports of: dozens of WWF wrestlers claiming rampant use of steroids in WWF, former employees contending homosexual sex with top WWF officials was key to being promoted, six wrestlers saying cocaine use is common among wrestlers and executives, the St. Louis drug search, Graham saying WWF testing is a sham, Murray Hodgson lawsuit against WWF for sexual harassment, two males who claim to have been sexually harassed and abused while under-aged ring attendants in the WWF.

-3-12-92: *L.A. Times* publishes front page story by John Cherwa similar to *Union-Tribune*, N.Y.

Though St. Louis Police are now downplaying the event, they used narcotics-sniffing dogs to search WWF wrestlers as they entered an arena there on Feb. 14...

Graham contends the [WWF's steroid] testing is a sham.

"How can they do anything?" asked Graham. "Nearly every wrestler is on steroids and they can't fire the whole crew."...

Terry Funk, a former pro wrestler who now stars on CBS-TV's "Tequilla and Bonetti," finds it ironic that WWF wrestlers help market children's vitamins, given the extent of steroid use in the business.

"It's utterly tragic to have Hulk Hogan telling kids to eat their vitamins," Funk said in an interview...

"The business itself forces people to take [steroids]," [Jesse] Ventura said in an interview. "I couldn't walk into Vince McMahon's office and say, 'Change the policy.' He would've changed my policy and left me without a job."

The issue of job security has also been linked to sexual harassment at the WWF.

Professional wrestling is a business in which success is predetermined. Promoters decide who wins and who loses every wrestling match.

Because of that situation, former wrestlers and other employees say the promoters and top WWF officials are in a position to extort sexual favors.

Murray Hodgson, a former WWF television announcer who was fired in August 1991, filed a lawsuit last month in Connecticut, alleging that his termination was a result of his rejecting a sexual advance by a WWF vice president.

According to documents on file in Connecticut and with Hodgson's attorney, Edward Nusbaum, WWF Vice President Pat Patterson sought a homosexual encounter with Hodgson last July.

"(Hodgson) was approached by an openly homosexual vice president of the (WWF) who was seeking a homosexual encounter," the documents state. [The Village Voice reported on Mar. 12: "Patterson approached him and asked, 'So you're the new guy?... So what do you taste like?'"

"My client's response was, 'You've got the wrong guy,'" Nusbaum said. "Mr. Patterson said, 'Not if you want to keep your job with us.'"

Hodgson's story is not isolated. At least a dozen former WWF employees have come forward with similar stories of being extorted by top WWF officials for sex.

Wrestlers tell of several WWF executives making advances toward wrestlers, offering pay raises and career advancement in exchange for homosexual favors...

Graham and wrestler Billy Jack Haynes said sexual harassment by WWF administrators had become "openly ridiculous" by the mid-1980s...

"The wrestlers don't like it, but what can they do?" [Graham said]. "They put up with it or get demoted."

Allegations of sexual harassment are not confined to adults. Two males said that as adolescents, they were sexually molested by WWF employees.

Tom Cole, now 20, started working for the WWF in 1985 as a ring boy, a gofer, in Yonkers, N.Y., when he was 13.

Cole said that while on tour with the wrestling show, a WWF employee would film Cole with a video camera while fondling the boy's feet and masturbating.

"He had a foot fetish," Cole said. "He would play with all the young boys' feet for hours at a time."

Chris Loss was 16 when he began working as a \$100-a-night ring boy in Niagara Falls in 1989. He said in an interview that the WWF employee cited by Cole stepped on his foot upon meeting him, and when Loss said his foot hurt, the employee removed the boy's shoe and began rubbing.

"Boys are getting propositioned and played with all the time," Loss said. "You sort of put up with it because you can make a lot of money."

Cole said he was harassed by several WWF employees. He said he was grabbed in the genitals numerous times by another top WWF official, but never said anything because he was scared.

Cole said the sexual harassment continued unabated until he was fired in February 1990 after rebuffing an advance by still another WWF official.

In that incident, Cole said he was driven to the WWF official's house, where he was asked to smoke marijuana, snort cocaine, and have homosexual sex.

When Cole rejected his advances, the official refused to take him home, Cole said. So Cole slept in the WWF official's van in the driveway. The next day, Cole was fired.

"They told me I was no longer needed," Cole said. "I know if I would've slept with those guys, I'd probably be rich right now. It was really sleazy."



BILLY GRAHAM (W.K.)

Former wrestler Ventura places the blame for such stories squarely on McMahon's shoulders.

"Vince McMahon should be more conscious of what is happening there," Ventura said. "The (WWF's) policy when the media comes down on an issue has been to ignore it and it will go away. Well, I don't think this one will go away."

Over the weekend, Tom Cole settled out of court with the WWF which some sources have said was for \$70,000. Cole also reportedly agreed to a multi-year deal with the WWF to be a ring boy again. Cole and his older brother were with Basil DeVito backstage at the Donahue show Monday afternoon. DeVito, a WWF vice president, refused to comment when reached by Torch Weekly at his home Monday night. Loss, the other former ring boy who went public with allegations, has isolated himself from further media exposure.

The Oregonian, Mar. 12, by John Nolen: Haynes... said Vince McMahon... pressured wrestlers into using steroids and "Set us up with a doctor" to obtain the substances.

"Vince knew all of this," Haynes said. "But everybody is afraid of Vince..."

"[Hogan] was driving and going about 80 miles per hour, and they were drinking and smoking joints," Haynes told the *Times*. "I told Hogan that he was crazy, and if he were stopped with all the drugs on him, his career would be over. We finally got to his house about 4 a.m. and he came into the bedroom where I was and he apologized to me. He said 'You're absolutely right, man. I can't believe I was doing that.'"

Haynes said... pressure to use steroids came from McMahon because "he was a very peer-pressure-type promoter."

He said McMahon set the wrestlers up with Zahorian. "Vince wanted us to be drugged up. Every day you'll be traveling and by being drugged up you were wrapped around his (McMahon's) finger. The drugs made you content... It was a big scam. And Vince knew of all this."

Haynes said he had been threatened in two different phone calls to his father, William, since the *Times* first began interviewing the younger Haynes less than two weeks ago. "One caller said, 'You better back off...' and the other said, 'Drop what you're doing or be six feet under,'" Haynes said.

Los Angeles Times, Mar. 12: In 1980, [Hogan] was arrested in New Jersey for possession of a firearm. He entered into a pretrial intervention program, served six months' probation, and the felony charge was dropped...

Graham remembers another incident in 1983 when he was on a charter flight from Minneapolis to Green Bay. "I remember this one flight during which Hulk said, 'Superstar, would you like to try some cocaine?' I said, 'I'd really prefer not to...' He said, 'You're right. Don't start taking cocaine because it is the hardest drug in the world to get off of because it is so good.' After that lecture, he proceeded to put about three or four lines up his nose..."

Allegations of drug abuse "will end his career as a spokesperson for any product," said Nova Lanktree, one of the country's leading experts on sports merchandising. "If it is true that he is on steroids and other drugs and has denied taking steroids publicly, then no company or advertiser will touch him."

Initially, McMahon says, half the WWF wrestlers tested positive for an anabolic steroid, metabolite, but that number is now down to 15 percent.

Donahue, Mar. 16: Vince McMahon: "Hulk Hogan told the truth (on Arsenio Hall)," said McMahon. "The question is as far as the media is concerned whether he told the whole truth."

People Weekly, Mar. 13, by Irv Muchnick: Ken Patera, a former wrestling superstar and 1972 Olympic weightlifter says, "The word came down from the promoters, especially McMahon, that you had to be bigger than life. The only way to do that was to take anabolic steroids."

Randy Culley (formerly Moondog Rex)... confirms: "Me and Hogan ran around together. He was real bold about the steroid use. And he also did Placidyl [a sleeping capsule], Quaaludes, cocaine."

Barry Ross, whose company distributes the [Hulk Hogan] vitamins, rejects any slurs on Hulk's good name, adding, "We stand by him 100 percent."

McMahon is pumping up Hogan's WrestleMania... as Hogan's last match before a "hiatus" that McMahon says "could be six months or six years or forever, I don't know."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Mar. 16, By Mark Madden: McMahon insists the WWF is not in jeopardy.

"We're not in trouble. We're not even in trouble public relations-wise," said McMahon last week.

"We have nothing to hide in this entire organization," he continued. "If anyone in this company has done anything illegal, they'll not only have to answer to the proper authorities, they'll have to answer to [me] first..."

Post also publishes graphic account of Hodgson lawsuit. The story is picked up off the wire-service by several other papers including the front page of the *London Daily News*.

-3-12-92: *Union-Tribune* publishes another front page story on "roid rage" in wrestling.

-3-12-92: "Entertainment Tonight" airs feature with interviews with Barry Orton and Vince McMahon addressing issues in the *Union-Tribune* story.

-3-12-92: *Portland Oregonian* publishes feature story on Portland-native Billy Jack Hayes telling stories of injecting Hogan with steroids and being offered cocaine by Hogan.

-3-12-92: Johnny Carson during "Tonight Show" monologue refers to steroids in pro wrestling and compares WWF wrestlers to Milli Vanilli based on *L.A. Times* Story.

-3-13-92: *San Diego Union-Tribune* publishes third front page story focusing on Hulk Hogan, his signing a two-year deal with New Japan Pro Wrestling for 6 appearances, \$600,000.

Graham, Billy Jack Haynes, Orton, and Sammartino talk of knowledge of Hogan's alleged drug habits.

-3-13-92: On CNN's "Larry King Live", King interviews Vince McMahon, Bruno Sammartino, and Barry Orton concerning all of the above mentioned incidents. King promises to continue coverage in upcoming weeks., although his producers say next week there were no plans for more shows on this subject.

-3-14-92: *San Diego Union-Tribune* publishes fourth front page story in a row on WWF scandals.

-3-14-92: Mike Tennay interviews Barry Orton again on "Wrestling Insiders" nationally syndicated radio show.

-3-15-92: *San Diego Union-Tribune* publishes fourth first page story in a row. That night, the WWF runs a live show at San Diego Arena.

-3-16-92: *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* publishes in-depth story on WWF scandals.

-3-16-92: "Donahue" features Vince McMahon and several others addressing allegations against the WWF.

-3-16-92: Tom Cole, one of those claiming sexual abuse while a ring boy, settles out of court for a reported \$70,000 and appears backstage at "Donahue" show with WWF Vice President Basil DeVito.

-3-16-92: *San Diego Union-Tribune* publishes fifth story in six days. It reports the WWF drew 6000 fans and Hogan was resoundingly cheered despite a week of bad publicity.

McDONAHUE

VINCE MCMAHON FACES OFF AGAINST ACCUSATIONS

Several of those interviewed at a Feb. 28 WWF event at the Civic Arena here showed no lessening of their support for him... "It doesn't bother me if he is a steroid user," [a fan said]. "The kids don't know that, and they won't. They know him as Hulk Hogan, not whoever he is in real life. As long as the two are kept separate, it doesn't bother me at all..."

McMahon... said the organization will weather this storm.

"There are some misunderstandings about the company, some misunderstandings about (Patterson and Garvin) - and God only knows why it's open season on Hulk Hogan - but the public recognizes the World Wrestling Federation as very credible, family-oriented entertainment. I think it will stay that way.

San Diego Union-Tribune, Mar. 16: Despite recent allegations that professional wrestling is tainted by sexual harassment and drug abuse, thousands of fans swarmed the Sports Arena last night... Kids dressed as their favorite wrestlers came. So did parents, some of them bigger fans than their children. Gray-haired ladies came, too, and became misty-eyed talking about the wrestlers they've cheered for...

Donna Orandseky was there an hour before the show with her children, Vinny, 8, and Shannon, 6. The kids were dressed in headbands and yellow tights like their hero, superstar wrestler Hulk Hogan.

"I haven't let my kids know (about the allegations)," Oradesky confided, "because my son especially is into wrestling and everything it stands for. If I tell him, he might want to do some of these things."

However, Oradesky said, billion-dollar professional wrestling, which touts itself as harmless family entertainment, had better clean up its act.

"Parents will only take so much," Oradesky said. "If they don't do something, they will lose their popularity."

"I don't believe he (Hogan) has done anything that people are saying he's done," said Jamie Lutack, 28. "He's done so much good for kids and the community. Now if it was Jake 'The Snake', I'd believe it."

"Ahh, man, they're all on drugs," [Terry Walsh, a teen-age fan] said. "Don't matter to me. Nope, it don't matter to me."

(T)he fans erupted into a chant of "Hogan! Hogan! Hogan!" Hogan remains wrestling's most popular star despite the spate of negative publicity he's received recently...

But while there seemed to be overwhelming support for Hogan, especially after he and Piper vanquished Flair and Justice, there was detectable animosity toward the Hulkster.

Ron Albright, 25, called the wrestler "a phony, with all of the all-American preaching he's been doing."

Said Matt Quinn, 17: "Hulk Hogan is a loser. He uses steroids and lies about it. His abuse will do harm to wrestling."

Print, radio, and TV media across the country are planning more stories and features.

The following are some highlighted quotes from Monday afternoon's episode of "Donahue."

Tom Hankins: "Back in 1985 in Los Angeles, California at the University Hilton Hotel after the WWF had run a card at the Sports Arena, I was sitting at a bar with... Pat Patterson, Andre the Giant, Dr. Jerry Graham, and Mike LaBell... We sat there drinking maybe for an hour or so. I had known Pat for maybe six months. I knew he was gay, but, you know, it didn't matter to me if he was gay or not. He was actually kind of running the shows in L.A. at the time. I don't believe he was in position as the booker yet. And I asked him what was the chance of him using me to do jobs, which means I was a loser. I wasn't real big, I never made a lot of money in the business. I really didn't expect to go to the WWF to make a lot of money. I started out working for ten dollars a night in Tennessee... I asked Pat for a shot or a tryout. He said, 'You've got two chances, slim and none. Well, there is one way.' And he wanted me to come up to the room with him and have oral sex with him. I said, 'No, I'm not interested.' I went down to the next show at the Sport Arena, down to the dressing room where they always let me in because I was friends with some of the wrestlers there and Pat had me physically thrown out, acting like he didn't know me."

Hankins on why he came forward: "When Vince said Barry's charges were ridiculous it was just, I knew it was something that went on in this business. Anybody in this business that really knew about it knew what was going on about Patterson."

Donahue: "So this is like a feature of this culture that has been under way a long time and because it often involves near jobless, vulnerable young males that wanted to be either in the game or on the card, they'd back up because nobody wanted to blow any whistles... This also should be said. You didn't get a lot of press scrutiny. Nobody took you seriously anyway. Mainstream sports press today doesn't."

Barry Orton on why it is tough to believe McMahon didn't know about all of this: "Because Vince, you are the king of an empire and you have eyes and ears everywhere. It is so common - at least the topic of conversation for three to five minutes every night in the locker room - because a lot of the guys have to put up with it and they hate it and if they say anything, they're out of a job."

Vince McMahon: "Why would I risk what we have."

Murray Hodgson: "Because you haven't done anything about it until it went public."

McMahon: "Because I had no knowledge of it."

Hodgson: "I made knowledge of it to you when I was fired and you just blew it off and let me go."

McMahon: "You were fired because you were not very good. That is the only reason you were fired. You were not a good announcer. You could not make the transition from radio to television."

Hodgson: I would like to remind you sir that I

have a two year contract. Two years."

McMahon: "You also have a clause in your contract that states - and as you know, you were hired on a trial basis - you also..."

Hodgson: "I was not hired on a trial basis."

McMahon: "In your contract you will note in a clause that is stated very clearly - and I have it outlined for all to see today - that you can be fired almost at whim if in fact you are not doing a good job. You were doing a horrible job and that is why you were fired."

Hodgson: "Maybe I should point out first and foremost it might be your inability to pick good talent. You had a national talent search. You advertised in Billboard Magazine and across many different media sources searching for that one man who could be the new face and voice of the World Wrestling Federation. You flew me in back and forth four and five different times and you chose over the course of one year of negotiations that I would be the man for that job. I didn't sleep with your vice president, two weeks later I'm fired. I also want to point out one very important fact. From your office came a letter to my landlord to verify my employment. I must bring this point up. It says, 'Murray Hodgson has a very secure job with Titan Sports and is a positive and productive employee.' That came from your office. Just because I don't sleep with your vice president, that qualifies to blow me out of a two year deal? I don't buy it." Crowd responds with resounding applause and whistles as Hodgson stares McMahon in the eye waiting for a response.

McMahon: "Said very well, but I believe untrue. If in fact these allegations against Pat Patterson whom you won't name are true, why not pursue the legal recourse."

Hodgson: "We are right now."

McMahon: "You are? And you are aware that you waited six months after you were let go to bring these homosexual charges against Pat Patterson. Six months, you waited."

Hodgson: "September 14..."

McMahon: "If in fact you were fired on the spot, if you were fired for incompetence, why didn't you say right then, 'Hey, look. Vince, your vice president made a pass at me.' You never told me that. Human resources had no knowledge of that... Why did you wait six months. You asked me for \$160,000 today otherwise you were coming on this program."

Hodgson, shocked, "Excuse me. Mr. McMahon, do not try to deflect the truth here. I have never asked for any amount of money from you. You have tried to buy me off to shut me up so I wouldn't come forward with these allegations that's rotting through the World Wrestling Federation."

McMahon: "You're attorney should be consulted."

Hodgson: "My attorney on September 1991 came forward to you with a letter addressed to you telling of exactly what happened and that I was discharged wrongfully, that I had a two year contract, and that you were well aware. Three weeks later, I was on your rear end (W.K. - Probably not the best choice of phrasing)."

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MARCH 13

LARRY KING LIVE**VINCE MCMAHON, BRUNO SAMMARTINO, AND BARRY ORTON ADDRESS "TITANGATE"**

Narrator: Tonight, sex, steroids, scandal. Is it true what they're saying about pro wrestling? Top promoter Vince McMahon enters the charges... Now, here's Larry King.

Larry King: ...It's one part sport, one part showmanship, and it's so big it often outdraws mainstream athletics. Nonetheless, pro wrestling is reeling. Wave after wave of scandalous charges threaten its family image. Numerous sources talk about steroids and other drugs and they've even named wrestling's biggest draw, Hulk Hogan, although he's denied the charges. Now, a former ringside assistant is charging that ringside executives solicited sex from wrestlers and other employees in exchange for jobs. Some say their careers were cut short for not playing along. Here in Washington is the man who made wrestling an 80s success story, the brilliant promoter, Vince McMahon. He is the owner of the World Wrestling Federation. In Pittsburgh, Bruno Sammartino, the former World Champion wrestler who broke from McMahon in 1988. Shortly we will be joined on the phone by a former wrestler who says he was sexually molested by wrestling executives. We'll start with Vince McMahon. What do you make of all this?

Vince McMahon: I really don't know what to make of it.

Larry King: You have no concept that any of this was going on? No idea?

McMahon: No idea whatsoever. Let me say this Larry, it's very, very peculiar that all of these unsubstantiated charges have not gone to the appropriate authorities, firstly. For instance, there are laws, federal laws as well as state laws that forbid this kind of activity.

King: Where did this break? Who broke this story? How did you hear about it? Why do we know this?

McMahon: All I know is what I've read in the newspaper and haven't been able to respond to. We've started our own investigation, internal investigation, to get to the bottom of all this. We want to get to the bottom of all of this.

King: No one has gone to a police agency and said, "I was forced to have sex?"

McMahon: No one has filed one single charge. Not one single charge with the police, with anyone.

King: Concerning sexual harassment?

McMahon: Concerning sexual harassment.

King: Had you ever heard rumors of it?

McMahon: No. These are things, you don't hear rumors of sexual harassment. If in fact you have someone who may be gay, sure, you're going to hear locker room horseplay. That's going to happen. But just that. Anyone can always come to me. They've always been able to come to me and tell me if anything is out of line.

King: So, in other words, any of your wrestlers could have come to you and said, "There's a guy in the office coming on to me?"

McMahon: Absolutely, notwithstanding the fact that I would not have wanted to be that guy because any of my wrestlers would have wanted to break his neck. You just don't do things like that.

King: Bruno Sammartino, famed wrestler, former champion, he's in Pittsburgh. What do you make of all this, Bruno?

Bruno Sammartino: Well, first of all, Larry, it's ironic that people like Pat Patterson, Terry Garvin, Mel Phillips, have all resigned from this organization - supposedly, because I question that, too. But as far as McMahon being so shocked and surprised with all this, we go way back to when one of his people, this Mel Phillips, when we were doing a taping in Allentown or Hamburg and were in a parking lot, there were people who came forward who caught him with an 11 year old boy having sex in a car. And this fella's had a reputation for many years. Not only has he remained with the organization even though this was brought to the attention of the McMahons, but this guy's flourished because he's been with the organization for a lot of years until now.

King: He was an executive with the WWF.

Sammartino: They promoted him to be in charge of the ring crew plus he became a ring announcer. Pat Patterson, of course everyone in the industry knows he's gay, and that's just fine, that's his prerogative. I mean, as far as being gay, I have no problem with that. As is Terry Garvin. But these people, there's been talk for a long time. It's no secret he's trying to say he was shocked by this all.

King: Bruno, were you ever approached? Did you ever see it happen?

Sammartino: (laughs) Of course not. I'm one of the old...

McMahon: (sarcastically) What do you mean "of course not". It must have been flagrant, then, Bruno. You were one of the top stars in the WWF. Surely you must have performed some of these sexual acts to get to where you were. Is

that right?

Sammartino: (laughs) I was with the organization before any of these characters were even around.

McMahon: Wait a minute, you just said Mel Phillips was there. You just said Pat Patterson and Terry Garvin were there. Wait a minute, come on, Bruno. What's your story?

Sammartino: They came in in the 70s. I came in in '59 with the WWF. Nothing in the late-70s...

King: Bruno, are you saying you always heard these stories?

Sammartino: Absolutely. Not only I, but you will find out more and more, Larry, as these stories unveil. For example, here's McMahon who's saying this is a shocker, nobody's come forward. There's this young man, here, by the name of Cole, Tom Cole, who McMahon's lawyers have been negotiating with for the last three days, maybe longer, to keep him from filing but I guess the money they're offering isn't enough.

King: Hold it. Are you saying that somebody's trying to file charges and you're trying to prevent them?

McMahon: I'll tell you what I'm saying. Bruno Sammartino, this incident that you alleged did you see it? Did you actually see this incident in some sort of parking lot. Did you see it, Bruno?

Sammartino: (laughs) Well, I was told about it right after it happened.

McMahon: (sarcastically) You were told about it.

King: Okay, that's hearsay. You just said there is some wrestler now, someone gonna' bring some charges, that you're negotiating with. Is that true?

McMahon: There's this gentleman by the name of Cole...

King: Is he a wrestler?

McMahon: No. He was an occasional laborer that was used on occasion to set up rings, so we're told.

Sammartino: A 14 year old boy.

McMahon: I beg your pardon.

Sammartino: A 14 year old boy when he first came to work for McMahon.

King: So what are you discussing with his lawyer?

McMahon: We're discussing charges that he is bringing. We went after this man, Cole to find out -- We're reading in the newspaper...

King: What did he say?

McMahon: First of all, we're trying to get to the bottom of this whole thing and find out names of any individual who may have been in any way harmed by anyone in the WWF.

King: Is Cole saying somebody propositioned him?

McMahon: Yes.

King: In return for what?

McMahon: He apparently was seeking employment in the WWF.

King: I see. And told, "If you have relations with me, you'll get hired."

McMahon: Well, actually, yes, I believe so. And actually he is alleging there were charges before that.

King: And now did he threaten to go to the authorities?

McMahon: He never went to the authorities.

King: Is Bruno right? Are you meeting with his lawyers to try to prevent him, to try to settle out of court?

McMahon: In no way are we trying to settle anything out of any court. What we're trying to do Larry is get to the bottom of this. We want to know the truth.

King: Bruno, why would Vince want this to go on in his own organization? Wouldn't he want to weed all this out? This is not healthy for his company.

Sammartino: Well, because Vince McMahon has been very lucky up until now. Because professional wrestling isn't looked upon like baseball, football, and what have you, the media pays no attention. Just like when the steroid situation came, you see there's always been denial, yet even now, Hulk Hogan for example - and McMahon has backed him up - says he's never used steroids. Yet, we know from the trial with Zahorian...

McMahon: Wait a minute, Bruno...

Sammartino: Wait a minute.

McMahon: One thing at a time. You're just like cluster-bombing in here. Let's take it one thing at a time. If you want to talk about Hulk, we'll talk about Hulk. If you want to talk about steroids, we'll talk about steroids.

King: Let's stay with the first thing first, on the sexual thing. Bruno, the question was, why would Vince want someone in his employ propositioning other people in his employ. Why would he want that as a sensible business factor.

Sammartino: You'd have to ask him because the facts are these things are going on. This Mel Phillips, everybody knew he liked little boys.

McMahon: Everybody knew? There has not been one substantiated charge, not one.

King: Are you saying Vince not anyone came into your office and said, "Vince, do you know what's going on?"

McMahon: No one came into my office. No one came to anyone else in the WWF.

King: When you worked for Vince, Bruno, and you were hearing these stories why didn't you bring it up to Vince?



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

Sammartino: When Vince Sr. found out about the Mel Phillips incident, his reaction was that he was not employed by him at that time, and so what that fellow did, more or less, didn't concern him. But ironically, this fellow was hired full-time. Now why would anybody...

McMahon: Wait a minute, you don't have any idea what you're talking about. Mel Phillips has never been an employee of the WWF to this day, never been an employee. He's been used as occasional labor. There you go again. But you know because you saw all of this.

Sammartino: He was a ring announcer for you.

King: When you and Vince were friends, Bruno, and you worked for the WWF and you heard all these stories, why didn't you come to Vince and tell him, "This is what I'm hearing"?

Sammartino: Wait a minute. Of course, as far as Pat Patterson, Terry Garvin, everybody knew about what they were. But, like I said, I wasn't hearing what was going on at that time. Later, when I came back as a color commentator, I started hearing a lot of things about some young wrestlers being approached by these individuals and were told you...

King: I see. And you didn't say anything?

Sammartino: No. Because for one thing, these fellows, you have to understand, wouldn't come forward. Number one, they were afraid to speak because they would be out of the organization.

McMahon: Oh, please.

Sammartino: There were no other organizations to go to. Why don't you speak to this other fellow who is on.

King: We're going to hear in a moment from Barry Orton who was known in wrestling circles as "Barry O". He'll be with us on the phone. We'll be taking your phone calls. Don't go away. (commercial...) We are now joined on the phone by Barry Orton. Barry is a former professional wrestler. He says his career was cut short because he refused sexual advances made by executives of the World Wrestling Federation. He was known as "Barry O". Barry,

can you give the circumstances? What happened? What did they ask you to do?

Barry Orton: Yeah, Larry. Let me begin by saying that through all the immediate attention by the press on the situation, there are some things that have been taken a touch out of context. Perhaps I have even been misquoted a couple of times.

King: You tell me what happened?

Orton: Directly, first of all, while I was with the World Wrestling Federation, I was never approached by anyone who said to me, "If you give me sexual favors, I will give you job security or advance your career." However, there is an overall ambiance that does suggest that and there are situations that have occurred that support that fact.

King: Okay, so when that happened, why didn't you go to Vince and tell him, Barry?

McMahon: Be specific, Barry.

Orton: Well, you know, specifically, the wrestling business...

McMahon: Let's not talk about the wrestling business, let's talk about the WWF.

King: Let him answer, Vince.

Orton: Well, the WWF is definitely part of the wrestling business. Throughout history in the wrestling profession because there are no unions (McMahon now rolls his eyes, appears uptight, and grimaces), no type of security at all for the employees - and that's even intertwined because the employees are not even called employees, they're called self-employed independent contractors - that looks good on the surface, but in fact...

McMahon: Can you get to the issue, please.

King: No, Barry, the question was, explain why you didn't go to Vince and tell him what you had heard or seen and felt?

Orton: Well, it's simple. It's really simple, Larry. Well, if you go and complain, you're gone. And there's not anything you can do about it.

King: Why would the wrestler be gone if the employee approached the wrestler? Wouldn't the employee be gone?

Orton: No. Absolutely not.

King: Why not? The wrestler's the star?

McMahon: Barry, let me have the floor for a second...

King: Barry, why would the wrestler be fired and not the employee?

Orton: Basically the wrestling business is devised into cliques. Cliques of top employees, cliques of office employees. Cliques of mainstream superstar wrestlers. If you rock that boat or make waves, they'll get rid of you one way or the other.

King: You said you were once molested many years ago?

Orton: Yes, that was many years ago.

Unsubstantiated...

King: By two employees, but that wasn't in the WWF.?

Orton: No it was not, but they later became two top officials in the WWF.

King: What would happen if a top wrestler, if someone propositions a Hulk Hogan?

Orton: I think that Hulk Hogan himself would be beyond that kind of approach.

King: So this only happened to wrestlers in the medium range?

Orton: Medium to bottom range. Maybe someone trying to break in or maybe somebody who's been in the business that isn't currently employed.

King: Why would Vince fire even a medium-range wrestler over an employee?

Orton: It comes down to who is considered a more essential part of the mechanism.

King: So in other words the employee, let's say a salesman or a guy in ticketing might be more important than the attraction who is the wrestler.

Orton: Oh, yes, absolutely.

(Larry King appears stupefied and turns to McMahon)

McMahon: Barry, I've got a question for you. If the environment was so heinous, the environment you are referring to, then why did you write to me on two occasions while you were in prison, begging me to book you, and I did, because I believe everyone is entitled to a second chance. I booked you. Why would you want to come back to that environment that you claim was one of harassment.

Orton: Well, first of all, I never did write you from prison.

McMahon: I have the letters. I have the letters

Orton: I wrote you once when I got out. And yes, you put me back to work sporadically for three months. And then I was laid off and nobody bothered to tell me and I sat by the phone for five weeks while the bills stacked up, okay. I'm not answering your question because that's all I know. As far as wrestling goes, the art of the entertainment, that is something that I have enjoyed and it is something that I have put my soul and my heart into.

King: Hold it right there, Barry. Don't go away. We'll be right back with Barry O, Bruno Sammartino, and Vince McMahon, and we'll include your phone calls. (commercial) Let's get some unequivocal statements in and then we'll go to your phone calls. Are you saying, Vince, unequivocally you have no knowledge of this and that if you did have knowledge of it any employee who came on with anybody would be fired.

McMahon: Fired on the spot. We're family entertainment. This is a bunch of bunk. It's absolutely a bunch of bunk.

King: You are entertainment, not sport?

McMahon: Absolutely. Sports entertainment. Coined a new phrase. That's us. We're sports entertainment.

Sammartino: May I cut in here?

King: You may, Bruno.

Sammartino: I may because I'm sick of what he's saying. This guy wouldn't know the truth if it stared him in the face. First of all, he's not aware of anything? He's got a lawsuit right now from a fella he hired for his World Bodybuilding Federation, a guy by the name of Murray "Herchison"... "Hutchinson", who has come on and said that when he was signed they were pleased, they thought he was going to be great for their TV announcing. What happens? Pat Patterson came to him and told him that he wanted to, you know, go to bed with the guy. When the guy said, "Hey, I'm not one of those people, get out of my life," he says, "Well, you're not going to be lasting here." Vince McMahon shortly thereafter fired the guy.

King: Now there's a specific.

Sammartino: He went into his office and Vince fired the guy. This fella said it himself on the news.

King: He's named the name of the guy. Has the lawsuit been filed?

McMahon: You've got your name wrong. You've got a lot of facts wrong.

King: What is essentially the facts?

Sammartino: Come on and tell the truth, McMahon.

McMahon: Murray Hodgkin. In essence what he is saying is that Pat Patterson propositioned him. That's what he is saying... In any event, basically I fired the gentleman. He wasn't with the World Bodybuilding Federation. He was a tryout with the World Wrestling Federation.

King: Why did you fire him?

McMahon: He was horrible. He was absolutely horrible. Pat Patterson had absolutely nothing to do, Bruno, nothing to do. He only saw this man twice.

King: Did the man tell you that Pat had come on to him?

McMahon: No. He waited until after six months later after he filed his suit after allegedly unjustly firing him, now he throws in when it's newsworthy now he and his attorney's now throw in sexual harassment. By the way, that charge has been legally dropped.

King: Are you thinking they're all jumping on top of you now for some reason, this is all coming together?

McMahon: I have no idea. I have no idea.

King: Barry, why didn't we know about this

sooner? Fourteen years ago when you were accosted, why didn't you come forward?

Sammartino: Larry, tell him who the man who it was. No, not Larry, but Barry.

McMahon: You're a little confused, aren't you Bruno?

Orton: Larry, let me just explain to you. It's really hard and I know we don't have a lot of time and some of this stuff needs a lot of time to explain, but when you're breaking into the business, you have a lot of aspirations and a lot of dreams. And a lot of things, you know, it makes you understand the women who are sexually harassed in this country or throughout the world by their superiors that when you're under someone's thumb and you're worried about your position, sometimes taking a little bit of abuse, if it doesn't turn into violent abuse or something, doesn't seem that it's so high of a price to pay.

King: I see. Who abused you?

Orton: Terry Garvin. There was an incident in Amarillo, Texas in 1978 when I was 19 years old. Pat Patterson and Terry Garvin - also at that time. I'd also like to put in at this time that I gave a statement to the attorneys of the kids who were filing the suit in New York - who have made allegations in New York.

King: These are two kids that are making allegations? Has the suit been filed?

McMahon: We haven't talked to any kids in terms of...

King: Has a suit been filed?

McMahon: To my knowledge, we may have been served today. I'm not certain.

King: Two kids saying what?

McMahon: We don't know about two kids. All we know about is this fella Cole. That's all I know about. Again, nobody's going to the authorities - these are adults now - no one going to the authorities alleging a bunch of bunk.

King: Are you saying that when this story came out is when you decided to tell your story?

Orton: Actually, it's kind of an irony. I had no idea this was going on. And I did a...

McMahon: Are you writing a book, Barry?

Orton: Yes I am.

McMahon: Good. Thank you. End of case.

Orton: Yeah. Right.

King: That doesn't mean he's wrong.

McMahon: No, it doesn't mean he's wrong, but...

King: Wait. One at a time. Barry.

Orton: I guess the fact that I took this statement that I gave with all of these allegations and all of the things I saw going on in the dressing rooms to (a polygraph testing company) in Las Vegas and had them look over this statement and give me a polygraph test. It came back, and I'll read the statement to you: "After

complete testing and careful analysis of the polygraph charts, this examiner is of the opinion that Mr. Orton was truthful and there were no deceptive reactions to the relevant questions asked which were..."

McMahon: Which relevant questions?

Orton: "...which were: are there any lies in your statement sworn to on March 2, 1992..."

McMahon: What sworn statement?

Orton: "...did you deliberately lie in your sworn statement..."

King: (talking over Orton): What did you say in your sworn statement. Barry, Barry.

Orton: ...And I would have to advise you Vince McMahon, Pat Patterson, and Terry Garvin to do the same.

King: Let me get a break in.

McMahon: Fourteen years ago, huh?

King: Barry, thanks for being with us on the phone. We didn't have longer and I'm sorry you were so detailed in your answers but we do occasionally on a program like this have to move it along... (commercial) This all came to life, as you probably know, when two teenage boys, called ring boys, employees of the WWF, alleged in published reports, one of them 20 year old Tom Cole threatening a lawsuit, that they were molested by WWF officials which started at age 13, claiming they were propositioned for sex and wrestlers now claim their careers were cut short if they didn't comply.

McMahon: And again, Larry, none of this adds up, Larry. None of this adds up.

King: Are you attacking the press for printing it?

McMahon: There are some members of the media that I would suggest are something less than, ah, legitimate, shall we say.

King: What do you mean?

McMahon: Again, it's like, well, I'll mention one in particular. A man by the name of Mushnick who writes for the *New York Post*.

King: What did he say?

McMahon: During telephone conversations, with never having talked with me initially, never calling the office to substantiate any of his allegations, I had John Fillipelli call him, formerly with NBC, now with us. Mushnick says, "Vince McMahon is the kind of human being who should rot in hell." I never met the guy, I never talked to the guy, and I'd appreciate if he'd let the big man upstairs make that decision.

King: He said that to your representative on the phone?

McMahon: Yes he did. Of course.

King: Let's go to calls and Harrisburgh, Pa. Your with Vince McMahon here in Washington and Bruno Sammartino in Pittsburgh.

Caller: I was at the steroid trial here in

Harrisburgh and heard with my own ears Roddy Piper and other wrestlers testify to using steroids. When are you going to get serious about steroids, Vince McMahon.

McMahon: Well, that's a very good question. First of all, when they all testified that they had used steroids and probably been provided steroids by Dr. Zahorian - which I have as well by the way. In any event, steroids were legal at the time. Steroids are not legal know. If members of the media, as I have begged and pleaded them to do, would call our drug program advisor and would look into our policy and programs, we have the most comprehensive steroid testing policy and education of anyone in professional and amateur sports. We would love to be compared, to have the media come in, read our policy, and compare not just on paper, in practice compare it with the International Olympic Committee and the NFL.

King: Bruno, before you left, you knew things were wrong, right?

Sammartino: This organization has been so infested with steroid use and abuse and other drugs and that it's a joke what he's saying.

McMahon: Why is it a joke, Bruno? You haven't been in a locker room in five years. Why is it a joke? You don't have any idea. You know, you never forgave me for firing your son when he went up into the stands and beat somebody up. You never forgave me for that. You probably never forgave yourself when your own son was using steroids, as well.

Sammartino: (laughs) You are such a lying fool. Let me tell you, Larry, if you can't get this guy to shut his face because he doesn't want me to talk. I was there still in the WWF when Zahorian was there. They used to line up with a long line - we used to laugh at everybody - for their goodies. In the trial it came out, even when it became illegal, (grand jury records show there were still) steroid deliveries to Titan Sports, Hulk Hogan, and many wrestlers had signed these receipts. This guy is suggesting that, well, before it was legal, then it became illegal. That's why Zahorian's in jail, because when it was illegal they were still ordering and supplying these guys. When I said 90 percent of these guys were on steroids, I was being extremely, extremely conservative.

McMahon: How would you know?

Sammartino: Because I was a weightlifter for many years. Right now, presently, are you going to tell me that your Barbarian, (Davey Boy) Smith, Warlord are off of steroids? Who the heck are you kidding?

McMahon: Well, I'll tell you what to do and why don't you get the information yourself.

Sammartino: What's his name. Is that...

King: Are you saying there's no steroid use in the WWF right now?

McMahon: This is what happened. Our very first steroid test...

Sammartino: Is this Mauro Dipasquale?

McMahon: May I speak please.

Sammartino: Is this Mauro Dpasquale?

King: Is this the doctor's name?

McMahon: Yes. No, no. It's not Mauro Dipasquale. Hang on a second. It's Dr. Anthony Daley, the drug program advisor for the World Wrestling Federation.

King: You're saying there's no steroid use in the WWF?

McMahon: That's what I'm saying. (Sammartino laughs uproariously in the background.)

King: To New London, Conn. Yes.

Caller: Yes, I do a radio show up here with D.C. Drake. The kids are very upset and I haven't heard anything tonight about how Mr. McMahon's going to handle the kids. He does a billion dollar business in merchandising, all geared toward the kids. The kids are understanding that Hulk Hogan's a god...

King: Vince, is your empire crumbling, here.

McMahon: No. Live attendance is up. Licensing is...

King: Kids must be upset if they hear about steroids and sex. That's not going to exactly induce people to run out to the arena.

McMahon: No, indeed not. But I think our fans believe, as they have always believed, in the quality kind of entertainment and the quality kinds of human beings that are in the World Wrestling Federation today.

Sammartino: Like Hulk Hogan going on Arsenio Hall saying he never touched steroids. Here's a guy who has signed receipts, whose been abusive for years.

McMahon: He didn't say he never touched steroids. He admitted steroid use, Bruno. Where were you? You don't even watch the program.

Sammartino: Let me tell you what he said! He said when he was injured a doctor gave him an injection that had some steroid in it, that's the only time he ever used it. You know well, who are you b.s.ing? You're talking to Bruno Sammartino who...

McMahon (sarcastically): Oh, yes, I'm talking to someone who's real important. No doubt, yes. Some demagog, that's what I'm talking with.

Sammartino: ...Who was there, who saw your organization, infested with not only steroids, but cocaine abuse, marijuana, crack. You name it and it's there.

McMahon: Oh, you've been there, Bruno. You know it all, right.

King: Charleston, South Carolina.

Caller: My question and statement is for Mr. McMahon. First off, I would like to say sexual harassment is very much alive in America and in an industry as large as his, it's not inconceivable that something like this can happen. What I wanna' know is why he is so defensive and not willing to accept that this possibility exists. And what is he going to do to prevent this from happening in the future?

King: Fair question.

McMahon: Very, very fair question. Thank you very much for asking that question. To me, this is the most reprehensible type of behavior in any organization. Yes, we are certainly large enough whereby this might have occurred and if in fact it did occur, as I stated, the individuals responsible would have been fired on the spot. We're doing everything we can to

investigate this thing. We're going out and asking the questions. The media has kept all of these accusers away from us. They don't want us to get to the bottom of the story. And yes sexual harassment is very much alive, however, also harassment of individuals who happen to have a different sexual persuasion is also very, very alive. Homophobia is a big deal today.

King: We're gonna do more on this. I thank you both for coming. Bruno, thank you very much for being with us and thank you, Vince. Obviously in this period of time we've just scratched the surface and we promise you more programming as this continues to break. (CNN has since released an official statement saying no programs are planned for the future, but they are keeping them out for new developments.)

A FEW McCLARIFICATIONS

McLie #1: "All I know is what I've read in the newspaper and haven't been able to respond to." Phil Mushnick, Jeff Savage, John Cherwa, Mark Madden, Dave Meltzer, Alex Marvez, Irv Muchnick, myself, and others have all made attempts to talk to McMahon personally. McMahon granted an on-record interview to Madden and made statements for publication to Cherwa of the *L.A. Times* and had many on-record discussions with Meltzer and had discussions with Mushnick. Many calls of others were not returned over the past few months. Sounds like ample opportunity to respond.

McDeception #1: "Absolutely, notwithstanding the fact that I would not have wanted to be that guy because any of my wrestlers would have wanted to break his neck. You just don't do things like that." A young man who has spent the last five years of his life trying to get a job in the WWF is not going to deck the Vice President in charge of booking of the top promotion for which he hopes to work. This shows deception on McMahon's part or a total disregard for the realities of sexual harassment.

McJerk #1: "It must have been flagrant, then, Bruno. You were one of the top stars in the WWF. Surely you must have performed some of these sexual acts to get to where you were. Is that right?" For someone acting so concerned about "getting to the bottom of the situation", he seems to be flagrantly ignoring the obvious point that this harassment did not happen necessarily to top talent, but the vulnerable, interchangeable, lower-level talent.

McDeception #2: "He (Cole) apparently was seeking employment in the WWF." Cole was a ring boy, getting paid already by the WWF, an "occasional laborer" as McMahon "McDescribed" him - not someone "seeking employment".

McLie #2: "In no way are we trying to settle anything out of any court." That's why Tom Cole suddenly is hanging out with WWF personnel again.

McDeception #3: "Mel Phillips has never been an employee of the WWF to this day, never been an employee. He's been used as occasional labor. There you go again." Mel Phillips, McMahon conceded on Donahue three days later, was never technically an "employee" of the WWF, but he worked for them virtually every day for the last few years. Under that narrow definition of an "employee", none of the wrestlers who work on WWF cards are employees since technically they are independent contractors, a

nifty way to avoid having to pay workers comp, etc.

McCheapshot #1: "If the environment was so heinous, the environment you are referring to, then why did you write to me on two occasions while you were in prison, begging me to book you, and I did, because I believe everyone is entitled to a second chance." For McMahon to bring up Orton's prison term for vehicular manslaughter is technically more irrelevant than Mel Phillips was "technically not an employee".

McDeception #4: "Fired on the spot," is what Vince said would happen if there was evidence of an employee involved in perpetrating sexual harassment. Phil Mushnick said on KFAN Monday night, "Two weeks ago, ... (McMahon) told me he fully suspected Mel Phillips years ago... He fired him four years ago because he felt he was spending too much time around kids. He hired him back out of the sympathy in his heart. Then Friday, when Mel Phillips's name was brought up, he acted like the guy was a stranger."

McCheapshot #2: "You've got your name wrong. You've got a lot of facts wrong." In reference to Sammartino mispronouncing Murray Hodgson's name.

McLie #3: "(Hodgson) wasn't with the World Bodybuilding Federation. He was a tryout with the World Wrestling Federation." Hodgson is on WWF demotapes which are circulating all over the country. He was not a tryout with the WWF. He signed a two year contract which was terminated two weeks after Hodgson claims he refused Pat Patterson's sexual advances.

McHmmm #1: "(Hodgson) was horrible. He was absolutely horrible," in reference to why Hodgson was let go. Hodgson, before McMahon supposedly determined he was "horrible", was flown to Connecticut from Detroit five times before signing a two-year contract, after which the WWF sent a letter of recommendation to Hodgson's landlord which according to Hodgson said he had solid standing with the WWF as an announcer.

McJerk #2: "You're a little confused, aren't you Bruno?" after Sammartino mistakenly called Barry, "Larry".

McLie #4: "We don't know about two kids. All we know about is this fella, Cole. That's all I know about." For someone who claimed he learned about TitanGate from the newspapers, he has either not been reading the articles to the end or lied about not knowing about Chris Loss, the

other kid.

McLie #5: "During telephone conversations, with never having talked with me initially, never calling the office to substantiate any of his allegations..." in reference to Phil Mushnick, who claims to have made at least a dozen calls to McMahon over the past few months and actually talked with McMahon personally before the recent string of stories broke.

McLie #6: "In any event, steroids were legal at the time." Steroids have been illegal in several states since the early-80s and late-70s, including Florida, home for Hulk Hogan and the destination of several of Dr. Zahorian's Federal Express packages which he said in the trial were steroid shipments. If McMahon wants to get technical, we can get technical.

McCheapshot #3: "You know, you never forgave me for firing your son when he went up into the stands and beat somebody up. You never forgave me for that. You probably never forgave yourself when your own son was using steroids, as well."

McLie #7: "If members of the media, as I have begged and pleaded them to do, would call our drug program advisor and would look into our policy and programs..." Vince McMahon, despite repeated requests from several media members, has continued to refuse to release his steroid policy. It's tough to look into the policy and compare it to the NFL when the promotion will not reveal what that policy is.

McWhat!?: #1: "(W)e have the most comprehensive steroid testing policy and education of anyone in professional and amateur sports." That is surprising considering Vince McMahon the *L.A. Times* that 50 percent of the WWF wrestlers failed the first steroid test in November, yet since then, despite no noticeable decrease in size in many wrestlers, no one has been suspended for specifically failing a steroid test. To use McMahon words, none of this adds up.

McLie #8: "That's what I'm saying," in response to King asking if McMahon was saying no one in the WWF was on steroids. A WWF doctor, Mauro Dipsasquale, wrote in his book that there is no steroid test that is unbeatable - none. How can McMahon say that, then, especially when the naked eye is the only test anyone who has background in bodybuilding needs to believe there is still steroid abuse in the WWF.

(To Be Continued, if History is Any Indication)

BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE
 By Wade Keller
TIME TO FOCUS
ON THE REAL
ISSUE:
VINCE
MCMAHON

A lot of people are praising Vince McMahon for going on two talk shows and publicly addressing the issues alleged against Titan Sports.

McMahon deserves no praise. None.

This weekend confirmed to me that McMahon deserves to fall right along with Pat Patterson, Terry Garvin, Mel Phillips, and Hulk Hogan.

McMahon's favorite line this weekend was, "I want to get to the bottom of this."

What he really meant was, "I say, 'I want to get to the bottom of this' because that seems to be the line that will help Titan Sports survive these scandals."

Vince McMahon wants to save his company. His track record on steroid abuse in his company shows he does not care about getting to the bottom of anything unless it will make him money or save his company. He only addressed the steroid issue because of media pressure. Then when the media pressure was happy with him saying he was going to test, he forgot to actually test. Then when the media was tipped off that over three months went by and no testing took place, he then quickly conducted the first test.

For years, Pat Patterson was an integral part of the World Wrestling Federation. It was with Vice President Patterson's assistance as the head booker that helped McMahon become a millionaire. Patterson was more important to the WWF and its day-to-day operations than all but a few wrestlers.

Yet Larry King repeatedly asked, "Why would Vince McMahon put up with sexual harassment in his company?" It is a logical question, but it has an easy answer.

McMahon put up with it - and let's not even entertain the thought that he didn't know about it - because Patterson was careful enough to allow McMahon to put up with it. We don't know if Patterson ever grabbed a kid in front of McMahon or directly recommended McMahon fire someone because, "Vince, he wouldn't sleep with me."

What we do know as wrestling fans is that

Patterson was more valuable to the WWF than Tom Hankins. We also know that Patterson knew that. Patterson was in a position to exploit a situation and McMahon allowed that situation to exist.

McMahon now wants everyone to believe he is sincere in his desire to "get to the bottom of the situation." Excuse me, Mr. McMahon, but it seems so convenient that you care now, at about the same time the mainstream media care.

What about all those other times it was brought to your attention that you deny knowing about? Mr. McMahon, it's not as if your office is isolated from the rest of the WWF's employees. Titan Towers is four floors, not 40. You are around your wrestlers when you interview them on "Prime Time Wrestling". And you were always just a phone call away.

On "Larry King Live", despite saying he wanted to "get to the bottom of it", McMahon kept snapping at any mention of the possibility that improprieties took place.

McMahon wanted it both ways. McMahon wanted to be the person who knew nothing about these allegations while still being judge and jury about the credibility of these claims.

McMahon is quick to point out that the three individuals who are the subject of allegations are no longer with the WWF. What he forgets is that the fourth person still is. Himself.

People find it hard to believe that McMahon would risk all of this bad publicity by allowing sexual harassment to take place in his company.

This issue is not as simple as Larry King painted it, that being that McMahon could not have possibly been crazy enough to risk his company by allowing this to go on.

Why would McMahon have any reason to believe the mainstream media would ever bring up the issue? The mainstream media certainly had not set a precedent. Larry King knows better than anyone the answer to his own question. McMahon would gamble with his company because he believed the odds were tremendously in his favor that Titan Sports would never be subject of such in-depth media scrutiny as occurred in the last week. So the real question is, why would McMahon fire his number one assistant when the odds against his company ever being held accountable for that assistant's actions were astronomically slim. And it is Dave Meltzer and John Arezzi and Frank DeFord and Phil Mushnick and Irv Muchnick and Jeff Savage and John Cherwa that deserve credit for bringing this story to the forefront of the public's attention.

And Larry King showed that even if the media did attempt to hold the WWF accountable, McMahon would be able to lie his way out of the situation because the mainstream media, such as Larry King, are not prepared (or don't prepare enough) to be sure McMahon does not get away with more lies, deceptions, and empty promises.

Now it is Larry King's duty as a journalist to run a "day two story" as it is called. Follow up on that show, but this time be prepared with facts.

Without "day two stories" in journalism, a scary precedent is set. It tells the Vince McMahons of this world to lie all you want on the first show because you will never be held accountable.

Dave Meltzer, although he was not running his own show like Larry King was, did have more knowledge than King did. In that sense, Meltzer deserves criticism. When given the opportunity to confront on live television McMahon for all of his inconsistencies, empty promises, deceptive statements, and outright lies, he deflected the issue instead to whether or not every allegation being made actually happened and actually gave McMahon credit for saying he was going to address the situation. Meltzer acted as a calm mediator instead of the aggressive expert who could have called McMahon on his lies.

Now that the mainstream media has exhausted their attack on Hulk Hogan, who is leaving the American wrestling scene in three weeks, it is time to shift their attention to McMahon. McMahon did on "Larry King Live" exactly what Hogan did on "Arsenio Hall". He lied, but the only way for McMahon's credibility to also be exposed to the consumers of his product is for more shows like Larry King to continue to cover this issue and for Larry King himself to demand McMahon return to his show and sit down for 30 or 60 minutes opposite Dave Meltzer or anyone who knows what the facts are and who can present them to McMahon and instantaneously refute his deceptions and lies.

Now is the time to focus on the man at the top who, if he is not called on his lies and empty promises, will be making millions of dollars off of another generation.

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"You May Not Like It..." By Mark Madden

WADE'S WORLD WELCOMES... HOGAN, PATTERSON, HYATT, AND MELTZER

With apologies to the Random Marc, here is an excerpt from a TV show never to air...

(The screen shows a familiar logo with an equally familiar song being sung incredibly off-key in the background. The logo and song's words have been slightly altered, however.)

VOICEOVER: Wade's World! Wade's World! Grappling time! Excellent!

(The logo fades from the screen to reveal Wade Keller, only now with unfashionably long heavy-metal style hair and horn-rimmed glasses, and Mark Madden, only now with a black Wade's World baseball cap matching his already unfashionable long heavy-metal style hair. They are sitting in Wade's living room while his two untrainable dogs romp nearby.)

WRITER'S NOTE: *Yeah, I know. Given the fact that the show's called Wade's World, Wade should be playing the Wayne Campbell character and I should be Garth Algar, but too bad. It's my column, and as usual I'll put myself over while making Wade look like a gimp; which he is.*

(Back to the parody.)

MARK: Okay, welcome to Wade's World. This is a very special edition of Wade's World, because we'll be looking at the mega-cool world of pro wrestling. Wrestle on, Wade!

WADE: Wrestle on, Mark!

MARK: Okay, anyway, our lists of guests include Hulk Hogan and Pat Patterson of the World Wrestling Federation... Pat will be sitting next to you when he comes on, Wade... robo-babe Missy Hyatt, and *Wrestling Observer Newsletter* editor/publisher and star of Donahue, Dave Meltzer!

WADE: Wow, Meltzer's gonna be here? Too cool!

MARK: Mega-cool, Wade. But anyway, let's bring out our first guest, Hulk Hogan!

(Hogan walks on, sits on the couch between Wade and Mark.)

MARK: Wow, Hulk Hogan! Party on, Hulk!

WADE: Yeah, party on, Hulk!

HULK: Whaddya mean, party on, brother? I don't see no mirror!

MARK (quickly and slurred): Drugabusersaywhat?

HULK: What?

MARK (quickly and slurred): Drugabusersaywhat?

HULK: What?!

MARK: Exactly! Yeah, well, anyway, since your boss, Vincent K. McMahon, doesn't trust journalists as far as you could throw them, even without mega-juice, he's given us a list of questions we could ask you on these cards. Anyway, here goes:

(Mark reads Vince's list of questions from the cards, each which open up a chance for Hogan to

go into a tried-and-true Hulk rap. But Mark also holds up the cards while he's reading from them; they have messages on the back clearly visible to the camera. The messages read:

THIS MAN LIES TO YOUR CHILDREN... AND ARSENIO HALL.

THIS MAN ABUSES STEROIDS AND COCAINE.

THIS MAN COULD TAKE BRUNO, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT.

THIS MAN DID NOT BEAT TERRY FUNK IN AFRICA.

HE BLOWS GOATS... OH WAIT, NO, THAT'S OUR NEXT GUEST.

(The interview ends with Hogan in full-frenzied Hulkamania while Mark and Wade snicker uncontrollably.)

HOGAN: ...when Hulkamania runs wild on you!

MARK: Well, Hulk (snicker), thanks (chuckle) a lot for, for (guffaw) your time and I hope (laugh) we can do it again sometime...

(Mark holds up final card which says, "IF YOU'RE NOT UNEMPLOYED, THAT IS.")

HULK: What are you laughing at? What's so funny, brother?

WADE: Oh, nothing, Mr. Hogan, it's just that (chortle), that the idea of you being portrayed as anything (har) less than the greatest American hero, as those hackles in the media are doing, is so laughable!

HULK: Oh, okay. Well, I gotta run, guys. I got seven more talk shows I gotta lie on today, then I gotta go to Japan and refuse to do a job to Tenryu!

MARK: Okay, well, party on, Hulk!

(Hulk leaves, Mark and Wade peer out the door to make sure he's gone.)

MARK: Well, I'm glad that's over. Did you hear those answers? Shyeah right! What a gimp!

WADE: He certainly was gimpesque!

MARK: Yes, very much in the style-of-the-gimp. Anyway, let's move on. Our next guest is none other than ex-WWF booker Pat Patterson. Now, originally, Wade and I had agreed not to kid Pat about his, shall we say, rather esoteric sexual habits. But, since he's no longer protected by Vince, anything goes.

(Patterson walks on, dressed in the same Jim Cornette-like suit he often wore on WWF telecasts. Mark and Wade engage in a mad scramble to avoid sitting next to Pat, but he sits right in between them. Both Mark and Wade look fearful, but then Mark breaks the ice:)

MARK: Wait a minute, Wade! We're over 15! We have nothing to worry about!

WADE: (looking relieved): Oh, yeah... I forgot!

MARK: Anyway, that's not why we have Mr. Patterson here. Despite his recent troubles, he's long been a very respected member of the pro wrestling community. His innovation and originality as a booker pushed the WWF to higher levels of interest than it might have reached without him, and when he wrestled, he was a worker without parallel.

WADE: Yes, yes, good work my friend.

PATTERSON: Well, t'ank you, boys. I'm glad we're not going to...

(Wade and Mark jump out of their seats and into Patterson's face, using their hands to simulate fish gills on the sides of their faces.)

MARK: Fished in, fished in! Baited `im, hooked `im, and dragged the slimebucket right on board!

WADE: Yeah, fished in! Mark the Pat-master!

(A flushed Patterson stumbled off view of the camera.)

MARK: Can you believe that? He thought we thought he was a decent guy! Shyeah, right! And monkeys might fly outta my butt!

WADE: Excuse me, Mark. I think they'd be more likely to fly out of his.

MARK: Yeah, good call, Wade. Did you read the stuff they wrote about that guy in the *Village Voice*? I think I'm gonna hurl! I mean, as if!

WADE: Yeah, as if!

MARK: I mean, he's pale! He's bucket! What a sphincter boy... so to speak. Well, anyway, let's move on to our next guest and finally, we have a most excellent guest, none other than robo-babe Missy Hyatt from World Championship Wrestling! I mean, she's a fox! She should be on the FOX Network instead of TBS!

WADE: She's a babe, Mark! She's magically delicious! I should know, I'm a licensed babe-tician! If she were a president, she'd be a Babe-raham Lincoln!

MARK: Good call, Wade, but if she were president, she'd have slept with Mikhail Gorbachev. Anyway, let's bring Missy on! (in an aside to camera, Mark says, "She will be mine. Oh, yes, she will be mine.")

(Missy, wearing almost nothing, comes on the set. Mark and Wade start doing pelvic thrusts and yelling "Schwing!" and "Tent pole!", but when they rise to shake Missy's hand, she flexes her sturdy biceps and knocks both of them flat with two punches.)

MISSY: That's for all the crap you two have written about me. I'd sleep with almost anybody, but you two are out of the question!

(Missy storms out.)

MARK (rising): Wow, that was fun... NOT! Where'd she learn to lay `em in there like that? I mean, I know she was married to Eddie, but...

WADE (also rising): That sucked... and not in the sense I'd imagined, either. We just got our asses kicked on TV by some chick! Next time, let's have Madusa on instead. Manly, yes... but I

like her, too.

MARK: Take a pill, Wade! We're trying to avoid the steroid scandal!

(Someone comes on and whispers into Mark's ear. His eyes open wide.)

MARK: Listen to this, Wade. Missy just left... with Pat Patterson!

WADE: Whoa, way to go, Pat! Nice work, my friend! He shoots, he scores! What do you think they'll listen to in the car, "Bohemian Rhapsody?"

MARK: Yeah, definitely something by Queen. Or maybe AC/DC.

(Mark and Wade laugh uproariously at Mark's joke, then slowly regain their composure.)

MARK: At least they didn't leave with Mel, the god of sensible footwear! Anyway, let's move on to the main event of our Wade's World wrestling show, our final guest... *Wrestling Observer Newsletter* editor, Dave Meltzer!

WADE: Wow, Meltzer... you know, we've more or less copied everything he's done.

MARK: Yeah, but don't bring that up now, Wade!

(Meltzer, brandishing a head with blood, walks on.)

MARK: I think I'm gonna spew! Dave... when I told you to bring us the head of Vince McMahon, I didn't mean to, like, do it literally!

DAVE: Oh, sorry... (drops the head behind the couch)

WADE: Wow, Dave Meltzer! Mr. Newsletter! Meltz-wood! Meltz-o-rama! The Dave-man, bringing down McMahon-o-mania!

DAVE: Wade... isn't that the wrong skit for this parody?

(Wade blushes in recognition of his mistake, then retreats to a corner of the couch and is not heard from for several minutes.)

MARK: Okay, Dave, as the publisher of the

coolest wrestling newsletter of all time, maybe you can tell us how this whole kay-fabe business started.

DAVE: Well, Mark, perhaps first I can enlighten you on the origin of the term, "kay-fabe" itself. The term comes from a rephrasing of the word "fake" as was originally used by carnival barkers, who would use the term "kay-fabe" when not wanting to distress customers by using the word "fake" in front of them.

MARK (wide-eyed and grinning): I was not aware of that.

DAVE: In fact, at one time wrestling used carny talk, the sub-dialect from which the term "kay-fabe" came, as a second language for use within the business itself. To talk carny, you take the syllable "ezz" and put it between the first and second syllables of the word you're speaking in order to disguise words and phrases from those who don't talk carny. For example, my name in carny talk would be "Dezzave Mezzelter", although many in the business have referred to me as "that scumbag dirt sheet writer". But now, with the veracity of wrestling no longer an issue, no one uses carny talk anymore.

(Mark and Wade stare wide-eyed in wonderment at Dave, clearly in awe of his expertise.)

DAVE: Guys... guys? Do you have any more questions?

MARK: Er... no, Dave. As a matter of fact, we're out of time. But I want to thank you, Dave Meltzer, the all-seeing all-knowing quite excellent master of wrestling journalism, for being on Wade's World! I guess you're gonna go out and party with some wrestling bigwigs after the show, Dave?

DAVE: Well, no, as a matter of fact, I'd thought I'd hang out with you guys.

WADE (recovering): Sure, we'll hang out

with you... hang out with... with Dave Meltzer...

(Both Mark and Wade hit their knees and begin genuflecting in front of Meltzer, screaming "We're not worthy! We're not worthy! We're not worthy! We suck! We're scum!" Meltzer holds out his ring for them to kiss. The logo comes back on the screen and the Wade's World theme begins playing.)

[Mark Madden of Pittsburgh, Pa. has been writing "You May Not Like It..." since the April 4, 1991 issue of Pro Wrestling Torch. Mark, a 14-year veteran sportswriter for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, graduated with a Journalism Major from Duquesne University, a school which has graduated pro wrestling promoters... Hmmm.]

NEWS BRIEF:

Scott Anthony from the GWF was hired by WCW to wrestle as "Scott Flamingo"... Kevin Kelly and Brian Adams, who wrestles as Demolition Crush, have entered the WWF... The Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey has decided to run shows by the WWF and not WCW after WCW's final date of Mar. 31 barring further developments that could change that decision... Jesse Ventura was officially dropped from KFAN's Viking's radio broadcast team because, according to Ventura, of his renewed relationship with pro wrestling... Rip Morgan & Jack Victory, "The Maulers", have entered the WWF as a heel tag team and the Samoan Swat Team, Fatu & Samoan Savage, have entered as a babyface team to help fill the current tag team void... Next week, we will be back to the regular format including extensive regional updates, "Ringside Beat", letters, a "Torch Talk", and more. The Yearbook should hit the printers this Monday and be mailed a couple days later. Expect the yearbook within ten days. The Yearbook will be previewed next week...

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