

# Foreman mum on boxing improprieties during testimony

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Never one for bobbing and weaving in the ring, former heavyweight champion George Foreman had little problem ducking a question: What did he tell a federal grand jury?

Foreman testified before a grand jury reportedly investigating whether the International Boxing Federation sold rankings and arranged fights in return for kickbacks.

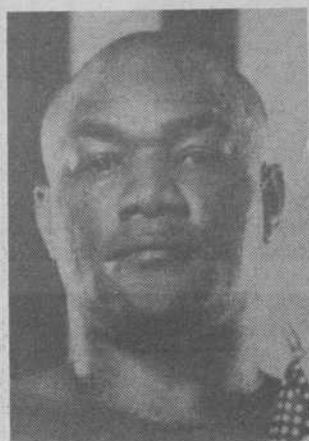
He was in the grand jury room in the old federal courthouse here for less than an hour. On the advice of his lawyer, he would not discuss his testimony. But asked if he had ever paid a kickback, he

said, "No," and said that this was his first appearance before any grand jury.

The lawyer, Lawrence H. Wechsler, would not comment, but has said federal prosecutors are examining whether Foreman was extorted by sanctioning groups, and that he did not know if Foreman ever paid to better his ranking.

In past weeks, the grand jury has heard from officials of the East Orange-based IBF, one of the world's three major sanctioning organizations. It does not appear that its president, Robert W. Lee Sr., has testified.

Foreman, of Houston, was happy to talk about the need



GEORGE FOREMAN

to reform boxing and the sanctioning groups.

"I think that boxing should be given some time to clean up its act. If not, someone should do it for them," Foreman said.

Although inactive in the ring for several years, Foreman — who recently turned 50 — also said he wants to fight the man he considers the heavyweight champion, Lennox Lewis.

"I'd like to keep coming back until I'm a grandfather and boxing is a sport as clean as ping pong," said Foreman, who later playfully sparred with news photographers outside the courthouse.

At 45, Foreman captured the IBF and World Boxing Association championships to become the oldest champion in any weight class, and now boasts a record of 76-5.

The grand jury also heard from the boxing judge criticized for her scoring in last month's Evander Holyfield-Lennox Lewis

heavyweight title fight.

The judge, Eugenia Williams of Atlantic City, told the grand jury that no one attempted to sway her decision, her lawyer has said.

The investigation here preceded a controversial draw in the Holyfield-Lewis fight, which prompted New York law enforcement agencies to start their own probes of the IBF.

Of the three judges, only the IBF-picked judge — Williams — had Holyfield, the IBF and WBA champ, winning the fight many believed Lewis dominated.

Among them is Foreman: "I think Lewis won the fight hands down."

But he said it was not the first robbery the sport has seen, and claimed his defeat in 1974 by Muhammad Ali in

Africa should be a prime example.

The controversy over the Holyfield-Lewis fight created an opportunity for improvements, including having the sanctioning groups adopt guidelines on how they set rankings, Foreman said.

Federal grand jurors have subpoenaed all IBF records since 1982 on rankings and contracts for fights, as well as checks, invoices, expense forms and telephone records, its attorney has said.

The IBF and two other sanctioning groups — the WBA and World Boxing Council — by their rules and rankings, play a large role in determining whom a boxer fights. Boxers who defy the groups risk losing the chance to be declared a champion and earn large purses.

## Court resets date in Pippen drunken driving case

HOUSTON (AP) — Scottie Pippen made a brief courtroom appearance and was granted his request to put off a hearing in his drunken driving case.

Pippen, playing his first season for the Houston Rockets, was arrested in April for suspicion of driving drunk.

No new date was set immediately. Pippen was in the courtroom of County

Court-At-Law Judge Sherman Ross for less than 10 minutes while his attorney, Rusty Hardin, filed papers to postpone the hearing.

When asked if his client would be exonerated, Hardin replied, "Trust me."

Pippen spent most his 11-year pro career with the Bulls. He was traded in January. He signed a five-year, \$67.2 million contract with the Rockets.

## Louima

(Continued from Page 4) when he told investigators and the media that he heard one attacking officer say, "It's Giuliani time," a reference to the aggressive policing policies of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

"Isn't it true, Mr. Louima, that your second man in that bathroom is another 'Giuliani time,' another way that you want to raise the attention of the country on this case?" Worth asked.

"No, sir," Louima responded.

The exchange was part of a relentless cross-examination of Louima by four defense lawyers Monday, his second day on the witness stand. He is to resume testifying Wednesday; today's testimony was canceled because a juror was ill.

Louima last week identified Volpe as the officer who allegedly rammed a broken broomstick into his rectum, causing severe internal injuries. The officer, he said, "told me if I ever talk to anyone about what

happened to me, he kill me and everybody in my family."

The case, which involves a black victim and five white officers, has strained relations between the police department and New York's diverse ethnic populations.

On Monday, Volpe's attorney, Marvyn Kornberg, suggested Louima changed his story to support a lawsuit filed on his behalf by O.J. Simpson's former lawyers Johnnie Cochran Jr., Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld.

"Has your memory gotten better since you retained Mr. Cochran, Mr. Scheck and Mr. Neufeld in a \$155 million lawsuit?" Kornberg asked.

"No, sir," Louima replied. The attorney had confronted Louima with his 1997 statement to a state grand jury that no other officer was holding him down as Volpe sodomized him.

Last week, Louima testified that a second officer, identified by authorities as Schwarz, restrained him by grabbing the chain of his handcuffs.

Louima, 32, also testified

Volpe was the officer who hit him in the head with a police radio, contradicting grand jury testimony in which he couldn't identify the attacker.

Louima insisted his trial testimony was more accurate than past statements, many of which were made while he was still in the hospital and on medication.

"Now I am not really worried too much about my health," he said. "I'm more peaceful. I have a better chance to think."

Volpe, Schwarz, 33, Thomas Bruder, 33, and Thomas Wiese, 35, are charged with violating Louima's civil rights by beating him after his arrest outside the nightclub.

The officers' supervisor, Sgt. Michael Bellomo, 37, is charged with helping cover up the attack. If convicted, Bellomo, Bruder and Wiese face up to 10 years in prison; Volpe and Schwarz could get life in prison without parole.

The latter two face longer sentences because of the sexual nature of the bathroom attack.

## Profilers

(Continued from Page 4) skin.

Limited studies already show that while Blacks make up less than 15 percent of the driving population, they are 72 percent of all routine stops.

Mfume said that virtually every male driver he knows has been stopped at least once for an alleged traffic violation only to

be found guilty of nothing more than being Black.

"All citizens, regardless of their race, should be free to travel America's highways without undue harassment," Conyers said. "If our citizens are to trust our justice system it is imperative that all forms of discrimination be eliminated from law enforcement."

## Jackson

(Continued from Page 10) and to work for peace.

Or, in the words of the mother of Specialist Gonzalez, one of the POW's, about Jackson's trip to Serbia, "He was determined to go there."

He was determined to see them, and he was optimistic about getting them even though there might have been a lot of doubt from a lot of people. I think he left it all in

God's hands."

Go, Jesse go. Ignore the nay-sayers and critics. Ignore the racism and the back-biting. Free the captives and proclaim Jubilee. And may God continue to bless you.

(P.S. A tiny little newspaper article just shared the story that the U.S. Senate did pass a resolution of thanks to Jackson. There is progress).

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