

Honest Bill Daly

Julius Helfand is a 'smearer,' Dan Parker Is a 'phony' and Frankie Carbo is 'a fine fellow...a gentleman.' So says the elusive treasurer of the International Boxing Guild

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Treasurer William (Honest Bill) Daly of the International Boxing Guild has had a trying year. Last May, Chairman Julius Helfand of the New York boxing commission began investigating the Guild when Welterweight Vince Martinez charged that he was unable to get fights after his contract with Daly expired. Helfand eventually outlawed the Guild's New York local, but he had little success with Daly who flatly refused to testify and later ducked a subpoena. Martinez, unable to buck the boycott, returned to Daly's management. Last January, however, a federal grand jury, after hearing testimony that the Guild had enforced a boycott against a Cleveland promoter, indicted Daly and two other Guild officials. Two weeks ago, with Helfand's subpoena lifted at least temporarily, Honest Bill gave his side of the story to SI while he held court in the back booth of a Broadway restaurant.

William (Honest Bill) Daly ordered a Scotch and then he spoke: "I think Julie Helfand is a smearer. He has done nothin' for boxin'. He's a politician who took the job as a medium of gettin' a judgeship. He said he was gonna clean the racketeers outta boxin'. I haven't seen one racketeer he's cleaned out. He hasn't found one fake fight in boxin' yet. He isn't a good investigator.

"He's used Carbo's name as a headline huntin' scheme," Daly continued indignantly. "Durin' them days, I'd read the papers and see Frankie on Broadway, in Dempsey's eatin', or another place. He didn't seem to be a fugitive or a man corruptin' the fight game. The old sayin' is, 'Get up or shut up.' "

Daly leaned back and puffed on a cigar. "Helfand accused Tex Sullivan and Willie Gilzenberg of St. Nick's of foolin' around with gangsters. But when the hearin' opened, Helfand struck that out. The 'great investigator' couldn't produce, again. Outside of tellin' the boys that if they belonged to the Boxin' Guild of New York they're gonna lose their license, he didn't file no criminal charges or misappropriation of funds. Who stole anything? Steal a loaf of bread," Honest Bill said righteously, "you get put in the can."

"Helfand or no other commissioner," Daly continued, "ever tried to get more money for the fighters like the Guild did. Never in my 35 years of boxin'. They always protect the promoters and the different political hacks appointed to the commission. They saddle the small clubs with these hacks, and when the show is over and \$2,000 is in, they take 5% of the gate for the commission! Then their next grab is what they call officials—those guys who stand around to count the shoelaces on the fighters' feet. They take anywheres from \$300 to \$400 off the top for the officials. At St. Nick's, I think they go three-seven-five for those bums! They see a free fight for nothin' and get paid for it! The government takes 10% for taxes, then fighters get their percentage after that."

Bill Daly shook his head over the outrages committed in the name of the state. He took a sip of his Scotch, rattling the ice around in the glass before putting it down. He puffed on his cigar while he waited for the next question. It concerned Promoter Ray Arcel.

In September of 1953 Ray Arcel, who was at odds with the Guild, was slugged on the head with a lead pipe by an unknown assailant. That autumn Arcel paid about \$13,000 for advertising—at \$1,500 a page—in the International Boxing Magazine, which Daly edited. In view of the circumstances surrounding the Arcel case, did not the price of \$13,000 for these advertisements amount to extortion?

"Ray, when he got his TV deal, said he'd like to help out his pals with a welfare fund for the Guild," he said patiently. "From time to time, he offered to give money to the Guild, but the Guild attorney said that wouldn't be right. Well, I opened up a magazine to be a voice for fight managers. Then we went out and hustled ads like any other magazine, and if a guy like Ray was doin' good, we sold him a bill of goods that if he was doin' good he should take ads. We gave him full-page ads, we did, and he was only new. He was competin' with the IBC. We told him every manager and boxin' writer would get a free copy. At that time, he was havin' difficulty gettin' talent, and you have to let people know you're in business. This was the only magazine that reached the boxin' game. Arcel could afford to pay more for the ads, and it meant more to him than, say, the manufacturer of Pabst beer because it got to the fight managers. It was a trade magazine. It was in the business."

Did Daly have any idea who slugged Arcel on the head with a lead pipe?

"Couldn't even offer an idea of what caused it," said Daly, relighting the cigar. "The magazine is gonna be in business again," he confided. "And naturally I'm gonna sell everyone who wants to take an ad that they can take it off their income taxes. We don't know who's, gonna be on the editorial board, but the magazine may be so hot this time they may not wanna go in."

"I'm gonna expose people—phonies!" Daly shouted, waving the cigar around. "The holier-than-thou guys! You can put Dan Parker's name down there. But we'll have to put him off until we get ready for him. Can he take it like I did under his barrage of malicious lies? I will only have to stick to the truth to expose this character!" Daly yelled. "He will holler like a thief—because he can't take it!"

Was he also planning to expose Jimmy Powers?

"A newspaperman like that just reports," said Daly.

What about SPORTS ILLUSTRATED?

"You people are just involved with the Martinez case," Daly said, shrugging his shoulders. "Your material came directly, I believe, from the Martinez clan—I said clan—when I split with Vince and his family. It was no different than a man and his wife threatenin' each other and both chargin' each other with various crimes with the ultimate goal of securin' a divorce. But happily the divorce never came. A reconciliation was effected after assortin' the various lies and eliminatin' the hungry wolves who wanted to get a hold of this important piece of championship fightin' material. No, I don't know what you done wrong."

Was he planning to expose anyone else?

"Pious Harry Markson," cried Daly as though he had forgotten someone. "Pious Harry Markson has been shoot-in' his mouth off to a great extent and holdin' halos over the top of his head in his desire to prove to the world he is holier than thou!"

Why was Markson, the IBC general manager, on the list? Daly wouldn't say why. Was there anyone else? There was, but Daly refused to say. What about Bob Christenberry, the former commission chairman, who once fined Daly \$500?

"Christenberry?" asked Daly with a smile. "He's a jolly politician who goes with the wind. From time to time, though, we'll pinpoint anyone who tries to make remarks about the Guild. In my honest belief, the Guild is the only organization that has done anything constructive about gettin' better conditions for the fighter and the manager in boxin'. It will only be a question of time, if the International Guild should fold, that the TV people, the sponsors and the promoters will cut down on the amount in purses that they are now payin' that was set up by the Guild. The International Guild is the organization that made the sponsor pay decent money to the promoter, and we stopped the promoters from puttin' it all in their pockets and payin' out nothin' to the fighters. Mike Jacobs, durin' the days of radio, handled close to a million dollars from the Gillette people and sunk it all into his pocket and gave nary a penny to the fighter who made it possible for public interest and radio producin' of fights. The event of television was the cause of us organizin' the International Guild to keep the money from goin' into the promoters' pockets."

Daly ordered another Scotch. What did he have to say about his indictment in Cleveland?

"That's that anti-Sherman act violation," Daly replied casually. "It has somethin' to do with boycottin' studio fights. I personally oppose studio box-in' due to the fact that it would eliminate the gate thereby defraudin' the fighter and his manager of the just gates that would accrue. TV people don't care what fighters get—their only interest is to sell the sponsors' products. The wolves are startin' to work already. WATV in Newark is gonna telecast the fights which they have purchased for the large sum of \$100, or thereabouts, for the rights to the weekly telecasts out of Philadelphia for the Metropolitan area. The damage that will be done in this particular instance—the fighters are gettin' paid coolie wages—it will certainly knock out Sunnyside Gardens for good and that's the only small club left in the Metropolitan area. What will Julie Helfand do about this? Nothin', brother, nothin'! He will continue in his smear tactics in order for him to secure his goal, a judgeship!"

Where did Frankie Carbo fit in?

"Carbo?" asked Daly. "I only know what I read in the papers. What I read is various things from Helfand and people like that, supposed to be crusaders. I know Carbo personally, socially, and in my company he is nothin' but a gentleman. I think if there is anything against Carbo, there are certain authorities that are vested with the power to curb his so-called activities. He's a rather quiet guy. A fine fellow. Yeah, I go to a nightclub with him, public restaurants. I would introduce you to Carbo if we met in a public place. I believe Mr. Carbo knows or has a speakin' acquaintance with writers of all sports, whether it's horse racin', baseball, boxin' or any other. He is no stranger. He is a well-known person. I'm too old to duck anyone in public places, even if I wanted to, to hide from anyone in public places. I'm no different than a politician or anyone else tryin' to sell his wares. Politicians hold babies in their arms! They stop at nothin' durin' a campaign! They meet devious characters and the rank and file to sell their wares and get the votes; and after they get elected, they try to preach to the suckers." This amused Daly greatly, and he slumped down in the booth laughing.

How long had he known Carbo?

"I imagine I've known Carbo 26 years," Daly said, when he finished laughing. "I thought at one time he was in, uh, what the hell was that—in the orange business or something. I don't know whether he owned the citrus groves. I don't know if it was this frozen juice or what it was. His home now, I believe, is in Florida. You'll see him at the World Series. Choice seats. The big races. You know—Swaps-Nashua. Ringside seats at the fights. Does he go to the fights? Oh, sure! I believe horse racin' is his favorite sport. He is thoroughly versed in horse racin'. He talks very intelligent about horse racin'. Is he an owner? Not that I know of. But I'm not sure. Write: 'Not that I know of.' "

"ENOUGH ON CARBO"

Daly smiled. "You have enough on Carbo," he said with finality. "Just make sure that my opinion of the necessity of the Guild should be told. The public should be told that Mike Jacobs defrauded the fighters and managers of thousands and thousands of dollars that rightfully belonged to them. Just make sure that you don't twist it. You'd regret it."

Had he left anything out?

"No, you covered the waterfront. If that's not bein' outspoken, I wouldn't know what would be. What time is it?" asked Daly. "Five-thirty? I've got to go." He got up, started putting on his hat and coat, then said he had something to add. It was his opinion of the Harry Thomas-Jim Norris story.*

"I dare you to print it," Daly said with a smile. "Take this down. I absolutely don't think that Jim Norris was guilty of the charges made by a fighter, a washed-up fighter who never was great, and I believe that he was a publicity seeker no different than some of the morons who, when a murder was committed, go in and give themselves up. Morons and cranks, that's what. Morons and cranks. I may be wrong, but that's my opinion. That won't go," said Daly with a laugh. "I'll bet you don't print that." With that, Honest Bill shook hands, walked from the restaurant, hailed a cab, got in and rode off.

*Daly's reference here is to the article Jim Norris Is Part of Boxing's Dirty Business (SI, Dec. 13, 1954). After this story appeared, Norris announced to the press that he had instructed his lawyers to prepare a \$5 million libel suit against SI. At this date, 15 months later, the suit has not yet been filed.