



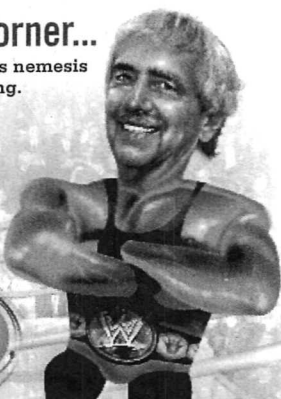
And in This Corner...

A lawyer and his nemesis
jump back in the ring.



IRVIN "The Muckraker"
MUCHNICK

VS.



JERRY "The Litigator"
McDEVITT

K&L GATES PARTNER JERRY McDEVITT, WORLD WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT INC.'S top outside lawyer, and writer Irvin Muchnick, whose books include *Wrestling Babylon*, are locked in an ongoing grudge match over WWE practices. It may not be *WrestleMania*, but this feud's got bad blood to spare. The latest round came in December, when *Pittsburgh City Paper* ran a piece on the WWE's efforts to combat steroids and head injuries. Muchnick slammed the story as a "puff piece," McDevitt fired back in a letter to Muchnick, and the duo were at it again. —VICTOR LI

...ON STEROIDS

Calls the WWE's steroid policy a "joke" that gives special treatment to some wrestlers. Says Muchnick in an interview: "Given the long and bad history of deaths in this industry, we can seriously question whether this company can regulate itself."

Notes in his letter to Muchnick that the lab WWE uses is independently owned and operated. Slams Muchnick's on specific WWE stars, and says the organization acted on a list it obtained of wrestlers who were customers of a steroid-linked pharmacy.

...ON WRESTLER HEALTH

Labeled the organization's concussion-prevention program just a "good first step." Says Muchnick: "In the past, the positive things they've done, they just take it away when no one is looking."

Argued that the WWE relies on the same concussion-monitoring program as the National Football League. "We put in place a protective program to eliminate as many concussions as possible," says McDevitt.

...ON EMPLOYMENT LAW

Rips the WWE policy of defining wrestlers as independent contractors, denying them health care, pensions, paid leave, and the right to organize.

Counters that WWE covers medical bills for those hurt in the ring and fulfills "most of" the tests used to define independent contractors.

...ON CHRIS BENOIT

Repeats in an interview his claim that a "cocktail of death" resulting from, among other things, steroid abuse and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (a brain disease common in athletes who suffer repeated head trauma) caused ex-WWE wrestler Benoit to kill his wife, son, and himself.

Dismisses the findings of the pathologist Muchnick cites as the source for his claims. McDevitt says in an interview that the doctor can't prove he examined Benoit's brain, adding: "CTE is a real, significant issue that people have to get their arms around. We're not anti-CTE, but the science has to be right."

...ON EACH OTHER

"He's a great lawyer," Muchnick tells Bar Talk. "If he wants to sue me, I look forward to it. After all, the truth is always a defense."

"He's a vicious man," McDevitt tells Bar Talk. He declined to say whether he has any plans to sue Muchnick.

