

10.25.10 – Mike Benoit Press Conference – Transcript

Mike Benoit: Before you turn your cameras on, I just have to tell you a little story. I really don't want you to report it. You can record my voice but I really don't want to be on camera with this.

Mark Davis: Mr. Benoit, what do you want? Do you want this to be on the record or off?

MB: This I want to be off the record.

Davis: Well then we won't roll this.

MB: Okay. 1983, I was on a construction site talking to an engineer. As we were talking, I saw a piece of metal that they had been lifting off the roof, it broke off and it started to fall. Natural reaction I went to catch it. As I went to catch it I sliced the tendons in this finger. I went to the hospital, of course, and with tendons they tend to keep you up your arm. Well I can't actually move that finger anymore. It's become a problem for me because when my son would come to town and we went to the gym or something, if I was up there doing arm curls, this is what it would like... Please forgive me if I'm talking today and giving gestures that would indicate that you'd suspect that I'm giving you the finger. That really is not the case. Okay, now we can go live.

The first thing I want to address today is, people are going to ask me, Why are you here today? How did you get here? Did someone bring you here? Did someone pay for your trip? What is that all about? Approximately 2 weeks ago, a fellow that I have talked to for quite a long time, a fellow named Irv Muchnick that does a lot of blogging, and I'm sure some of you have heard his name, got in touch with me and said there is someone with the Blumenthal campaign that would like to talk to you. I said give him my e-mail address, which he did. I got an e-mail from a fellow named Brian, who is here and today, and asking me if I'd consider coming down and do a press conference here. I said absolutely, if you can put some journalists together, I will walk there. Those were my words. And that actually didn't come to fruition until Friday afternoon. I didn't know I was coming here until this Friday until they called me and said they had set up tickets. And I said, "I have some conditions in coming down here." And he said "Okay, what are they?" I said, "Number one, don't ask me to say anything. Don't give me instructions on what to say, what not to say." I am here today to talk about something that is very passionate for me. One of the things you are going to see today at times, I am going to get quite emotional. It has been three and half years since my son passed and I still have trouble talking about it. So, we will move forward.

A week before, June 22nd, which would be a Sunday before, I think it was the 17th of June—it was Father's Day—I got a phone call, my son called me and wished me a happy Father's Day. I said, "Oh Chris, where are you today?" He said, "I'm on the road, dad. I wish I was home." I haven't even started yet and I'm feeling that emotion. So needless to say, a week later when we got the news, I say a week later, we got the news on Monday, June 25th. I need to go through that process. I was on my way home, about quarter to five on Monday afternoon, and I pulled into my driveway and my cell phone rang. It

was my cousin in Ottawa. He said, "Mike, is it true?" And I said, "Is what true?" And before he could even get the words out of his mouth, a fellow by the name of Scott Zerr who was a journalist up in the Edmonton area, said, "Mike he's gone." Well, I get out of the car, hug my wife, and as I'm walking to the house, Scott says, "Can I talk to you?" I said, "Of course you can." We're standing on the deck, I haven't even gotten into the house, my wife had gone into the house. He said, "Mike, they believe Chris had murdered Nancy and Daniel, and then committed suicide." So Scott Zerr, as I say, was a friend of Chris's, local journalist. I said to Scott, "What is the background? What happened? Tell me." He said that he had gotten a call from a fellow named Carl DeMarco. Carl DeMarco was the president of WWE Canada. You need to put some time frames together here because it is extremely important to have an understanding of what happened that weekend. So Carl had called Scott at approximately 3:30 that afternoon. Now WWE was holding a show in Texas, which—I am not sure if at that time of year we are on the same time zones. Like if it is the same time zone as Edmonton. Worst case scenario they are an hour ahead of us. So DeMarco called Scott and asked him to come to our house, knowing that he knew where we lived, he knew the family. He thought, you know, maybe it's best if you go and tell us what happened. He said, "Of course." So I get into the house, I am talking to my wife, of course she is all upset. I am saying, "What happened, when did you find out? What went on?" She said, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Monday afternoon on June 25th, Carl DeMarco phoned her and said to her, "Hi, Mrs. Benoit, I want you to know that I consider Chris to have been one of my best friends." She said, "What are you talking about? Why are you calling me and telling me this? Has something happened to him?" He said, "Oh, no one has called you yet. Let me get right back to you." About 15 minutes later, she gets a call from the country sheriff's department, saying that they have found three bodies and we are currently investigating. No more information. Again, time frame, you have to keep this all in mind.

So when the RCMP, which is the local Canadian police force—so it's the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force, because we live out in the country, they are the folks that actually patrol our area. They were called by the Fayette County Sheriff's Department to come out to our place and they started telling us. And I said, "I already know the circumstances. Scott Furve has already told me." If we look at all those time frames and remember the time that we are talking about, WWE put on a show that night, a tribute show to Chris Benoit. As far as I am concerned, WWE had full knowledge. They had the knowledge now that I had, since they're the ones who gave it to me. They knew that this was being investigated as a double murder suicide. Why would they put on a tribute show only to go on the next night and say, "We are no longer going to talk about Chris Benoit anymore, that monster"? Why they would that is because typically tribute shows get the highest rating out of any shows during the year. So again, what are we talking about here? Not people, we're talking about dollars. The dollar sign moves everything with this company. We'll move on from there.

This is the 25th. On the 26th, DeMarco is in my house by noon time. So he had taken a red eye from Toronto to come out. Very nice man, very nice, character, integrity, I cannot say enough about Carl. He was there to support us, very nice man. When he came there he said, "Chris was one of my best friends, I am so sorry for what happened. The McMahons will be in touch, expect a call from the McMahons." Wednesday, Carl is back in Toronto and phones me, "Has Vince called you? Have you heard from him?" I said, "No, nothing." Ten days go by, so we have got ten days has gone by. I get home one day and there

is a message on my phone. “Hi, this is Vince McMahon of the WWE. I suppose I could have called you earlier but we are both trying to deal with this. Call me.” And left his number. I never returned the call. We didn’t get a call, a letter, a phone call, flowers, nothing, from the CEO of the WWE. Who was the CEO? Linda McMahon. This is the person that the state of Connecticut is thinking about sending to the Senate of the United States. Again, we talk about character and integrity. In a company, in the company that I work for, the most important thing is the people that work for it. Any CEO, any company that loses sight of that will not be successful long-term. And this is what we’re looking at today. This is what we’re going to be talking about.

Mark Davis: Who do you work for and what is your profession?

MB: I am the manufacturing manager for a company that makes air filtration for commercial buildings and industrial buildings. When I say air filtration—we produce units that makes clean air.

Davis: Right, so the thing that is making that noise in this room?

MB: No, that’s the fan that’s making that noise. The filter is what cleans the air as it comes into the building. So as I told you, I get uncomfortable up here. So, where are we going here? We are up to about 10 days out. In between we had some calls from individuals. I had all together, I kept count, 10 calls from the wrestling community, seven of which were people that were retired. Three of them were current wrestlers. One of those wrestlers was a fellow by the name of Dean Malenko, and Dean currently works for the office of WWE. Dean shared with me that on Sunday, which was the 24th, a fellow named by Chavo Guerrero, a good friend of Chris’s, told him about some text messages that he had received that had come in early in the morning. These are some text messages that my son had sent saying here is address, the dogs are in the compound, the gates are open. Chavo had gone to Dean, naturally—Dean was one of Chris’s friends. Dean had proceeded to call Chris on two occasions that Sunday afternoon. Now they were doing a pay-per-view Sunday night. If you go to a pay-per-view, one thing you will see is that Vince McMahon is in charge of that pay-per-view. He controls it completely. So to suggest for thirty seconds that Dean didn’t share those text messages with Vince, I believe it is impossible. The WWE did not have a wellness call until noon that next day. It was noon that next day before they actually called the sheriff’s department to do a wellness call at the place. What I am suggesting is the only reason they didn’t is because they were setting up the tribute show. They didn’t want to do it the night before because it would interfere with the Pay-Per-View. So when someone says they got out ahead of the story, I think, my own personal opinion is that was the case.

On Thursday, four days after the tragedy, I finally got a call from the funeral parlor because I had called them Wednesday to try to make arrangements to have my son’s remains cremated and brought back to Canada. I got a call from the funeral parlor and they said that the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, which is the criminal investigation of the state of Georgia, was going to release the body to them. I said, “Okay, can you make the arrangements to go there and pick it up and set it up so that Chris can be cremated?” He said, “Yes, and that will take place on Friday.” On Thursday afternoon, I got a call from a fellow by the name of Chris Nowinski. If any of you have been following some of the NFL concussion crisis in the NFL,

you'll notice that one of the driving forces there is Chris. Chris Nowinski, former WWE wrestler. Went to Harvard, played collegiate football, I believe he played football in high school too. So Chris calls me—and I wasn't a big wrestling fan, I would try to catch my son on camera but I didn't really watch the programs at all. So he introduced himself. I vaguely remember hearing the name before. And he said, "You know Mike, I think that there is more to the story. I think there is something has happened here. Would you be prepared to let us examine Chris's brain?" I'm thinking right away, I'm looking at the phone, thinking, Who is this? Is this one of the inquirers, one of the magazines that want a picture of my son? I have no idea who this guy is. I said, "Chris, you are telling me something, I have never heard of this study before. Can you send me more information?" He says, "Let me do that." He actually e-mails me the story of Mike Webster. I hope everyone knows the story of Mike Webster. He was the all-pro center for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Played 14, 15 years. Had 4 super bowl rings. Ended up being homeless, living in his truck on his street. Used to use a taser to zap himself so he could go to sleep and he was in so much pain. When Mike Webster died, he ended up on a table in Pittsburgh in the coroner's office. There happened to be on duty that day a doctor by the name of Bennet Omalu. Now Doctor Omalu didn't know anything about pro football, had no idea who this guy Webster was. But he was listening to the news reports on the radio about this guy that was a superstar, such a nice guy in the community, everyone had loved this guy but how his life had deteriorated. He was on drugs, he lived in his truck, he was homeless, lost all his money. And Omalu thought, "What happened to this guy? How can that happen to someone?" And because these questions were going around in his mind, not only am I going to do an autopsy on this guy, I am going to take a look at his brain. He asked his boss at the time, "Do you mind if I take some of his brain samples home?" And some of the coworkers and people in the office looked at him and said, "This guy is right out to lunch. He wants to take brain samples home with him. What is he doing?" And Omalu had a microscope at home and he started putting through the brain tissue under special testing. And he found these stains that typically you only see in people with advanced Alzheimer's disease. And that staining—now the difference, I just want to tell you here—the difference between Alzheimer's disease and CTE is that you have two things present with Alzheimer's disease, and it's an amyloid plaque and a [inaudible] protein. In CTE that is caused by brain damage, by trauma to the brain, you only see the plaque. There is no amyloid protein in there. So, there is a difference when they get it under the microscope. Anyway, so, because Bennett was so inquisitive and he started looking at this, he found it absolutely destroyed. Mike Webster's brain was destroyed. And this was the first case outside of boxing. Now remember [inaudible] dementia, they found out about that in the 20's, like 1926 or something like that. So it's been around a long time. It's [inaudible] dementia, it's "punch-drunk" syndrome. So, it's something that has been around for forever. So the first case that they found outside of boxing was Mike Webster. Then they found two more Steelers, then there was another football players; I'm not sure who he was. And the fifth case was Chris Benoit. So, my son was No. 5 and it was by far the worst case that they had seen to date. It is my understanding now that they are up to 40 or 50 cases, and I'm talking between BU and the UVW Medical Center. There was an article in the paper not long ago that there [are] three or four hundred pro athletes that have signed up to donate their brain tissue after their death.

So, we are way beyond where we were two or three years ago. And of course, when we came out with the findings in September of 2007, the first thing that we got back right away was pushback from WWE.

“This is impossible, to even suggest that Chris Benoit had the brain of an 85 year old. How could he possibly function? Take the plane, anything like this.” So, they didn’t understand the science. But the fact of the matter is, is that, my personal belief, a myriad of deaths that have taken place in this industry over the past 20 years and they’ve taken place in this industry over 20 years—why? Because of deregulation, and the person that is running for the Senate, the Senate, in Connecticut, actually brags about being responsible for part of that deregulation. They pulled the safety net away from these guys. You know, when I talk about a safety net, these boxing and wrestling commissions, some of which were drug testing, why in Earth, why in God’s name would you lobby against drug testing? Does anyone have that answer? As far as I am concerned the only reason you do it is because you know that people who work for you, some of them are taking drugs. You know, could we have saved a few lives by having some testing going on? Anytime, anytime in this world, when you take any industry and deregulate it and have absolutely no oversight, you know what happens? Any answers? People start dying. People start having problems. I mean, there’s only so far you can go with deregulation. And then this wrestling industry, today, we’ve got an industry with absolutely no oversight. And, until this kid here has breath in him, I’m going to work to make sure that that changes and speak out whenever I can. And that’s why today I welcome the opportunity, and thank all you folks for being here today. And I think that if no one’s aware of the people that are involved in this, Chris called me that day. My final answer to him was because of a very helpful gentleman by the name of Kris Sperry. Dr. Kris Sperry is a chief medical examiner for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. And he said to me, he said, “Mike, it may not give you the answer of what happened on that weekend. But, it may just help people down the road.” And that’s why I went forward. And I’m thankful today to Dr. Sperry, to Chris Nowinski, to Dr. Julian Balles from the UVW, to Dr. Bennett Omalu, and to Dr. Robert Cantu, that’s the—he’s a neurosurgeon at BU. Going forward, and I’m still back in the time frame a week after the tragedy happened. I went down to Atlanta, needless to say, was at my son’s house twice. I wouldn’t go inside; totally too emotional for me, I didn’t want to go inside. But, I got to meet Dr. Sperry from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and he told me of a call he had received from a coroner out of Pittsburgh. And this coroner was suggesting a couple of things to him, like, he better test Daniel for Fragile X. You know, there’s a very high possibility that Daniel died first, and then the question becomes, “Who killed Daniel?” So, he is suggesting these things to Sperry and Sperry said to me, “Mike, I just dismissed them. I just completely dismissed them.” I think it was probably a year later that I’m reading in the paper that there’s a criminal trial going on in Pittsburgh and who is on trial? Dr. Cyril Wecht, and who is his defense attorney at the time? Jerry McDevitt. So, did the McMahons get Dr. Wecht to call the Fayette County criminal investigation department and try and influence the direction of the autopsy on the son? If they did, that’s an attempt to obstruct justice. That’s what it is. I mean, that’s the way I look at it. Maybe Dr. Wecht was just being a concerned citizen, offering his opinion. It’s certainly a coincidence in the fact that his lawyer is Jerry McDevitt. Why would he call Atlanta from Pittsburgh? Another incident that took place during that period of time is there was a gentleman that went into the Fayette PD and told them that he represented me. I’m just looking for his name here. I believe I have it somewhere. Here it is here. So, he confused the Fayette County Sheriff’s office, that he was working for me, when in fact, when the Fayette County looked into it, he was working for WWE. So, he was a fellow by the name of Clifford Cormany Jr. And he works for IPG. So, they were spending some dollars, and why were they spending dollars? Because they were trying to distance themselves from what was going on. And how do I know this? Is that Jerry McDevitt also

approached our lawyers and said, "You know, it's in our best interest to work together. We've got a pretty good idea of what happened here." So, they were trying to push the theory of Nancy killing Daniel, Chris coming back to the house, finding it and killing Nancy. That was in their best interest. It took them out of the loop completely. They were trying to influence the investigation in that way. Not only that, but a day or two after this happened, Linda McMahon was on Good Morning America talking about my grandson having Fragile-X. Within a few days, they had to retract that statement because there was no medical information available. The doctors, the school, everyone is saying, where did this come from? So, they had to retract that. But they were trying to push the theory. They were trying to push WWE out of this picture as far as they possibly could. And reality was, as far as I'm concerned, and I'll tell you here today—if my son did not have CTE, caused from trauma to the head while he was working for WWE, he would be alive today and I would not be in this room. They love to point out, they love to talk about, "Oh, well we have a Wellness Program now. We care about our guys. We take care of them. We do drug testing. We have a drug testing program." You know, well-run companies are proactive. Well-run companies are proactive. They are out in front. The number one thing, and I said it at the beginning of the program, the number one thing a company can do is be concerned for the health and safety of the people that work for them. And that's going to impact the bottom line. If you don't do that, eventually it's going to catch up to you. I am almost thankful that this lady is running for the Senate of the United States. Why? Because it has put her company right in the spotlight. And it has given me an opportunity today to come in here and talk to you people about what I believe is the underlying reason for all the deaths in this industry. In 2004, in 2004, USA Today said—they did a survey. You're 20 times more likely to die before the age of 50 if you're a pro wrestler rather than working in the NFL. I mean, this is a fake thing. This is a scripted thing. They talk about this being scripted, they talk about their workers being the same as soap opera workers, they talk about them being the same as singers. You know, this is scripted. How can we have the death rates like that? Linda McMahon just commented after Lance McNaught died—"Well, I may have met him once. We can't be help responsible for these acts." This is a caring CEO? This is what the state of Connecticut wants to send to Washington? To look out for your interests? What is the job of the President of the United States? Tell me that? To look out for the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the United States. What is the job of the U.S. Senator? To look after the health and safety and welfare of the people of a state. And it goes down to town mayor, to village "whoever." That's the job of a politician. Everything flows from there. The people of this state want someone that cares not for the people that work for her to go and represent them in Washington? My belief, my belief, Mike Benoit's belief, the only reason that woman wants to go to Washington is to protect the dollars that WWE makes to head off any attempt to regulate their industry. That's the only reason she wants to go to Washington. And be damned with the rest. Anyway, let's get back to this so called Wellness Program. They talk about it, "best in the industry, better than the NFL. We're doing all these things." Vince McMahon gets into the congressional hearings in 2007, and when questioned about the drug rehab program that they had, he said, "It's good PR." Not "It's going to help anyone"—"It's good PR." They've got this terrific, terrific drug program, drug testing program. Let me quote someone. This is in an article back in 2004. And it says, "Testing just doesn't work, because wrestlers can fake urine test, or use designer steroids that are undetectable. Anyone who wants to beat it can beat it. The ones who are caught are stupid." Who do you think said that? Any guesses? USA Today, 2004. Jerry McDevitt, in 2004, well, that's the quote that they have in USA Today in 2004. Maybe Jerry said it in 1967, maybe

he said it in 1971. I have no idea when he said it. That might be a question that you want to ask the McMahons. So they've got their chief legal counsel and a few months after they put in their drug testing program suggesting that it doesn't work. It's a joke. And now they're out there telling you that it's the best in the world. What happened? Did they come up with something new? A new testing program that can now find all these designer steroids that Jerry talked about in 2004? I have no idea.

Davis: What was Jerry's last name, again?

MB: McDevitt. So, we go on to how we can spread lies and rumors within an organization and tell people basically what they want to hear, not what the true story is. You want to know the true story? You came to the right room today. Again, I go back to someone by the name of Irv Muchnick who has written, he has blogged about the WWE for a great length of time. I'm not sure of the background, why he did it, or what, but, old Jerry, or I guess Linda McMahon and Vince McMahon got quite upset with Irv and put Jerry on them and Jerry sent Irv Muchnick an e-mail on October 21, 2010. And he listed a whole group of things in here. But one of which is, he says—so, there's all kinds of media exposure, talking about concussions. So now they do baseline neurological testing. Didn't really advertise it. They don't believe in the science, but now they're doing it. You know, I said in CNN in a program they did on my son back in 2007 that the wrestling industry will change dramatically because of what happened to my son, because they won't be able to afford the litigation going forward. I didn't say I was going to bring forward the litigation. I have no reason to sue WWE. My two surviving grandchildren, Chris' two children that live up in Canada, they could consider bringing a wrongful death suit against WWE. And they have until they are 20 years old. In the case of my youngest granddaughter, that's 7 years from now. So there's for them to do that. And this is much like the tobacco industry. When they first tried to go after the tobacco industry, because cigarettes cause cancer, no one was winning anything. But I think the fellow that's running against Linda, Blumenthal was actually responsible for one of the cases that went against the tobacco industry and I don't know the date. I just read that recently and I'm not even sure that that's factual. Anyway, in 2010, McDevitt writes to Irv Muchnick, "As Michael Benoit surely knows, since he is the executor of the estate, the house where the murders were committed had no mortgage. Instead the builder was paid in a series of payments totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. All payments were consistently made by Nancy Benoit from various accounts." And what Jerry is suggesting here is that my son and Nancy were selling drugs out of the house. So now, we're—I don't know what we're doing now. Now they're suggesting that my son was a drug dealer. I mean, you know, Jerry, I hope you're watching this program today because you talk about ethics—actually, Jerry sent me an email and he said, "It's because of canon of ethics that I can't talk to you." You talk about ethics, man you got none. When my son died, they owed him about three weeks pay, plus royalties from the sale of memorabilia. Our lawyers sent to Jerry a letter asking WWE to forward the payments because the tax slips that they sent, we had an income tax actually due on the estate. And the tax forms that they sent us didn't agree with the deposits that had been made in my son's accounts. So we questioned them. And at first he said, "No, no, no we paid everything. You guys, you've probably just, you've missed the receipts. They've gone somewhere." So, we went back again and said, "That's not the case. You need to send us an account." And then we got a letter back, which I have here. And what he said was, "It was a mistake. We haven't made all the payments." How much are those payments? I don't know, 40, 60

thousand dollars. I'm looking at it and saying—you know, I don't want to spend a lot of more money going after this. It will probably cost us 40 or 50 thousand if they're going to pay us. But I would think, I would think that the least that WWE could've done was to pay out what they owed my son. He's got two surviving children here. But no, they didn't do it. They still owe that money today. That 40 or 50 thousand dollars is probably part of the cash that that lady is spending on her campaign right now. That's—we talk about character, integrity again. Here it is, if anyone wants a picture of this. "Under the canon of ethics that governs lawyers, I cannot speak directly to you about matters because you are represented by counsel." I laughed when I got this from McDevitt. If anything about this whole group of people, they've been unethical from Day One.

Anyone here ever hear the name of Andrew Martin? Andrew Martin was a 33-year-old, former WWE wrestler. Andrew was the second wrestler to be tested after his death. At 33-years-old, he died of a drug overdose. Andrew—my son was 5'10"-and-a-half, 5'11", 225 lbs, what they call a "high flier." Andrew was 6'5", 280 lbs, anything but a "high flier." When Andrew passed I called his dad. And the bad part about this concussion research is that you really need to be ahead of the game. When someone dies, you're making phone calls within a day, within 24 hours. You're looking to ask them if they would consider contributing their son's remains so they can be studied So emotional, so emotional, I can hardly get the words out of my mouth to say I want to offer my condolences, because I know exactly how they feel. And Andrew's dad said to me at the time, "It's over, I don't want to talk about it, I don't want to hear anything about it. Thank you for calling." That's it. But we had checked with the coroner at the time and asked him to make sure that saved tissue, brain tissue, in case we could get them to change their mind. And typically, coroners in cases where there is some doubt as to the exact cause, they do save brain tissue. And they preserve it, they do it one of two ways. They put it in a formula or they freeze it. So we had asked the coroner to make sure that they save sufficient tissue to be able to test, in case he changed his mind. What I did was I wrote a letter to Robert Martin, who is Andrew's dad and told him about what had gone on, the testing up to date. When he got the letter, he apologized. He said, "I'm so sorry. Yes I'm going to give you the go ahead to do it." And Andrew was found to have extensive brain damage at the age of 33. How did Andrew get brain damage? He sure didn't walk down the street and trip on his shoelaces, which is what WWE would love you to believe. He got it because he was the Hardcore Champion in WWE. And what is a Hardcore Champion? Tables, ladders, chairs, power bombs through tables, hit over the head with garbage cans. The props that are used in wrestling are real. The props that are used in wrestling are real. As I said to my son one time, "Chris, you get hit with a chair—does it hurt?" He said "You're damn right it hurts, dad." These guys are in pain. Why do they take prescription painkillers? Because they're in damn pain. They work 52 weeks of the year. They never have a chance to recover. The worst thing that can happen to you when you have a brain injury, a concussion, is to get sub concussive blows soon after the fact. WWE is saying, "If that was true, Eric Lindros, who is in the NHL, who has a history of concussions, should have killed numerous people." Every time Eric Lindros had a concussion he took 4, 6 months off. He never had a complete season if you look at his history. So Eric Lindros had time off. Guys get concussions in the wrestling industry—guess what, they're wrestling the next night. Andy Martin said—not Andy Martin, Chris Nowinski, said he went through four weeks going through a table every night of the week. WWE said that's crazy, but he had concussions.

So now we've got 3 documented cases. We've got Andrew Martin, we've got Chris Benoit, we've got Chris Nowinski all with severe concussions. The people that had their brain tissue actually examined was Chris and Andrew. And I had said to Andrew's dad, "I will never talk about my son and not talk about your son at the same time. I will not let the public forget your son." And that's important to me. So again—when we made the information of the tests that were done on Andrew Martin public, WWE's response was, "Although this is a new emerging science, the WWE are unaware of the veracity of any of these tests, be it for Chris Benoit or Andrew Martin. Dr. [] claims that Mr. Benoit's brain had resembled an 85-year-old with Alzheimer's, which would lead one to ponder how Mr. Benoit would have found his way to the airport, let alone be able to remember all the moves and information required to perform in the ring. WWE has been asking to see the research and test results in the case of Mr. Benoit for years and that's not been supplied with that." Dated December 2009. In October 2008 the doctor that WWE hired to run their baseline neurological testing is a doctor out of Pittsburgh called Dr. Maroon. Again, in October 2008 he went to the University of West Virginia representing the NFL, asking to see the brain tissue, the brain tissue samples. He went with another doctor—I believe his name was Peters, he was from the Albert Einstein Institute in New York. This man had dealt with Alzheimer's disease for 20 years, looking at brains of Alzheimer's patients. When he saw the tissue samples, he said "What is this? I've never seen anything like this in my life. This is way beyond anything that I've ever seen." So this is someone that's independent, been in the business for 20 years looking at brain tissues, had never seen that amount of issues going on in someone's brain tissue. But Maroon was there. Again, he introduced himself as being there for the Pittsburgh Steelers. He's the neurosurgeon for the Pittsburgh Steelers. So did back in October 2008, do you think that 30 seconds that Maroon went back and never informed WWE of what he had seen when he visited the University of West Virginia? Do you think he would do that? You'd have to ask him that question. I don't know the answer. So they were aware but they still claim unaware, over a year later. These people, this is what they do. Do you want your representatives—the one thing that you've got to ask for is honesty. These guys, every time they open their mouth it's a lie. You continually question what they're saying. It is my belief, again, that the problems in any industry when there's no oversight, the first ones to suffer are the people. And I think any and every industry—can you imagine what would happen in boxing or, well, mixed martial arts for that matter if there was no commissions looking at them? Someone gets knocked out in a mixed martial arts fight they don't fight for six months. They're off. And again I talk about in the wrestling industry—you get a concussion one night, you're in the ring the next night getting hammered again. That's the worst thing that can happen with people that have suffered a brain injury, just sub concussive blows to the head after the initial concussion can cause deadly results, and doctors believe now that this is a disease. Once you have it it gets progressively worse. You have it, you ended up getting it in your 20s and 30s. By your 40s and 50s you're ending up with full-blown dementia, an Alzheimer-like condition. Something needs to be done. We've got some momentum because of this campaign. Something needs to be done. These people need to be regulated going forward. They can't continue to do what they do and get away with it.

They brought in a drug testing program in the early '90s. Why? Because Vince had been indicted on a drug charge. And after he was acquitted they said, "I don't think we really need this testing anymore," so they went from 2006 to—again, reactive after Eddie Guerrero died they put the drug testing thing

back in. So they're not a proactive company. They're a very reactive company. Believe me when I say this—everything that they do is all based on public relations. They want the public to believe. They don't want to have people coming along and trying to tell them what to do. They don't want any officials coming in saying you can do this, you can do that, and by them doing that—and they're done it for quite a number of years now—that's why the big toll of deaths that you see, the early deaths that you see in this industry. And hopefully we've got momentum going forward and we change, we change the way things go and we save some lives going forward. And it's important what you folks do here today, what you talk about and what you write about, and I'm open for questions.

Susan Raff: I read part of Irv Muchnick's book when he was here and forgive me because I don't remember what ratio it was that he talked about, the amount of steroids, the average person compared to what was in your son. And I guess my question is, at the time did you know that he had a drug problem? Did he ever come forward and try to talk to anybody about that?

MB: Interesting question. Good question, something I wanted to address and again I get up here and I lose my train of thought at times. In 2005, Eddie Guerrero died. Chris phoned me, extremely upset over the loss of what he considered his best friend in the business. And I said to him at the time, "God, Chris, I hope you're not doing something that's going to put you in exactly the same position as Eddie." He said, "Dad, I do take steroids and I take them under prescription because of the neck injury that I suffered in 2001." My son broke his neck in 2001. That's a good question—that is a very good question to ask WWE. How many broken necks have you had in your industry? Can you imagine if these guys were employees instead of independent contractors? Now we've got WCB involved. How many broken necks do you think WCB would look at before they say, "You guys are doing something wrong here"? This is what I talk about oversight. If they were employees, they'd have that protection. They're independent contractors. Hey, I'll show you the contract, man. You can't work for anyone. You'll go where we tell you to go. You'll follow our guidelines. You'll dress the way we dress. On some of your days off we might ask you to go out and do publicity shows and that. They are anything but independent contractors. They are employees and by calling them independent contractors they have taken that safety net away from them that would protect them. I am absolutely shocked that Occupation Health and Safety has not gotten involved in this industry. I am absolutely shocked. How we can have the number of deaths that we have had in this industry and everyone looks the other way? I mean congressional committees in 2007, there were two of them. There was the Rush Committee and the Waxman Committee. Steroids come out in baseball—rush. Threw the file out on wrestling. Who the hell wants to hear about that? Everyone wants to hear about baseball. And what did the Waxman committee do? After their findings, which weren't public—they didn't invite us in, we didn't come in and have an opportunity to speak before them—and after the findings they buried them for a year and then sent them off to Washington when the changeover between Obama and Bush was taking place. That whole thing got buried. Why? They were the ones that said someone should look into the drugs in WWE.

Pazniokas: Who should be regulating this? Is there a specific action you're looking for? Does it go back to the athletic commissions, which is kind of an odd fit because it's not truly a competition, but there's the danger, the risk factors are certainly there?

MB: They should be employees, in every sense of the world. They should be employees, and if they were employees they'd be afforded protection by WCB.

Raff: So there was no drug testing at the time your son passed?

MB: No—I shouldn't say that.

Mark Davis: What do you mean by WCB?

MB: Workers' compensation. If you get injured, workers' compensation, while you're working, they're going to investigate it. So you go in, you've got a broken neck—"How did you get that?" Occupational Health and Safety is another avenue that should be in looking at this industry and saying, "What's going on?" No, again, go back to the drug testing that was taking place. They put in drug testing after Eddie Guerrero died. He died in 2005. So my son died in 2007. They were given exemptions if you had a prescription. If you had a doctor's prescription for steroids you would be exempt. But that was bogus in the sense that if you had a prescription, could you put any amount of steroids? Anabolic c steroids, there's really no place for them. Maybe there are some medical issues that you'd take an anabolic steroid. There's a huge difference between taking that and a bioidentical testosterone replacement therapy for someone that's losing their testosterone levels. Again, levels. You need to look at the level. Even if you have a prescription, again, there are certain levels that are acceptable.

Raff: And it can be abused.

MB: It can be abused. Anything can be abused.

Davis: I wasn't certain at the beginning here, but did you pay your own way or did the campaign pay your ticket here?

MB: Did I not say that? I'm sorry. I meant to be out in front of that whole thing.

Davis: You said you would walk here, but they paid for the ticket?

MB: They paid for the ticket, they paid for my hotel room, they bought me a meal last night.

Brian Lockhart: I'd just like to be clear on something, and I'm familiar with your son's story and I'm familiar with some of the things you've said and listening to you here today. Are you essentially saying that your son did what he did in 2007 because of the brain injuries that he suffered as a wrestler with WWE? Do you think that's the sole reason? Are there other—and the reason I ask that question, and I'm not trying to be insensitive, but we spoke this past summer with Vince McMahon, and again I'm not trying to be insensitive but he described, we reported this, he described your son as going "postal." He basically said that you can't pin this on WWE. He seemed to be a great guy. Everybody loved him. He

just snapped.

MB: He suggested that on Larry King. And after he had said it, there was a group on there. It was Donald Trump was on the program, Chris Jericho, who claimed to be one of my son's friends. They all had a little chuckle about it. Again, character, or lack of. There's a program called the Fifth Estate in Canada. It was put on in 2008. If you Google the Fifth Estate and you go to, I believe it is "A Fight to the Death." That may be the program. I'm forgetting just exactly when it aired. If you give me a business card I could send you a hookup to it. Dr. Omalu on there said without question, without question, CTE, extensive brain damage is the main contributing factor in the tragedy in June 2007. Vince McMahon? Dr. Omalu. Who do you want to believe?

Lockhart: This morning, Linda McMahon said that you're here—she told a few of us who spoke with her—because you're bitter and you're looking for somebody to blame because of your son's drug addiction and things that he did.

MB: Okay, who told you that again?

Lockhart: Linda McMahon this morning.

MB: Linda McMahon. Hmm. I wonder why she would say that. I wonder why she went out and said that my grandson had Fragile X. I wonder why she dismissed Lance McNaught as "I may have met him once." "And we can't be held responsible for drug addicts and what they did." Who is it again that said that? Have I answered your question? Any other questions?

Ted Mann: Do you think that wrestling can be done safely?

MB: I do.

Mann: How?

MB: Oh, I've got to thank you guys. You keep asking questions you keep reminding me of things—2007, Congressional committee, Stephanie McMahon's on there and makes the comment, "There's a safe way to give chair shots to the head." My question is, I'd be very interested to see that research. Not only would I be interested to see the research that was done to back up that comment, but was my son part of that research? Was Andrew Martin part of that research? Was Chris Nowinski part of that research? I'm asking questions here. I don't know. Maybe I come off as the bitter father. That's really not the exact description that I feel that I have. Determined? Yes. And determined to do what—to make changes in this industry so that we don't have another 10- or 20-year history of people dropping dead at the age of 30, 35, 40. Look at the kids that they've left behind. Look at the children. I think Lance McNaught had two children that are very young, I think under the age of five. Here's a guy that they showed him. There's a YouTube video of him taking 20 chair shots from Shawn Michaels. A week later, he's on an airplane and causes a big ruckus or something and they said he'd taken too many painkillers. If someone

hit you with 20 chair shots, would you be taking pain pills? You'd probably be in the damn hospital.

Mann: That's a great example. The WWE would point to McNaught and some of the statements he made when he was still alive about this essentially being his dream job, the one thing he wanted to do, and wanting to fight through. So I guess what I'm asking you is, if you want to better regulate this industry, how do you make those changes when WWE can say, "These people are choosing to do this"?

MB: Why do we have laws in place? If you go into the bar today and hit some guy over the head 20 times with a chair, what do you think's going to happen to you? I'm quite serious. What's going to happen to you? You're going to get arrested. You're going to go to jail. And yet they can do it with impunity and the wrestling ring and call it entertainment. I think Mike Vick used to do the same thing with dogs.

Lockhart: Since you came down here at the request of the Blumenthal campaign, is there anything that you believe Dick Blumenthal, if he is elected to Congress, could do at that level to further regulate WWE to make the environment safer, to make wrestling safer? Is there anything you would like to see him do if he is elected?

MB: I would certainly hope that that is the case. I would certainly hope that that is the case. I believe that Linda McMahon has gone into this campaign to run for Senator of Connecticut and she's brought attention to herself and the industry that she was CEO of for, I don't know, 15 years or something. They've exposed the underbelly of this industry, the death and destruction, the occupational health and safety issues that have been in it, and I think now that that's on the table people like Blumenthal and some of the other people that are in the Senate need to look at making changes so they stop what's going on. Hey, if Linda McMahon—I understand she's going to end up spending \$50 million on this campaign. If they were so concerned about the health and safety of their employees, why wouldn't she take half of that and put it into a program to make sure that the people were better protected? Why wouldn't she do that? That would have been money well spent. And I hope that I didn't come off today as just the bitter father down here talking about it. I have a passion about this subject. Yes, I loved my son. I know he wasn't perfect. I'm not perfect. I don't think that anyone in this room considers themselves being perfect. But we're all fragile. We all have our problems in life, but I'm here to try and enact changes in an industry that is out of control, that has cost so many lives, so much destruction—and needlessly, for what? One reason, one reason alone, and I'll tell you what that reason is—money. That's the first concern of the McMahons—to be able to buy a boat, the Sexy Bitch, be able to buy the home in Florida. Maybe they wouldn't quite make as much money if they paid more attention to the health and safety of their wrestlers, but at least the people that work for them would come in the morning and go home at night and be safe, not trying to crawl out the door after a wrestling match and having to pop 10 pain pills to get through the night.

Christine Stuart: Why do you think she's running for Senate?

MB: To head off any attempt to regulate her industry. That's what put the \$50 million in her pocket. Do

you think that she wants to lose that?

Pazniokas: At the beginning of your remarks you talked about the disturbing text messages that Chris sent to []. What action should those text messages have initiated on the part of Vince McMahon or anybody else who was aware of them?

MB: I don't know that it was ever brought to the attention—I'm assuming that one of them brought to the attention of Vince. Chris was supposed to win the ECW championship that night. He was slated to win a belt that night. If you ever saw Vince operate behind the scenes at one of these pay-per-view programs, he runs the show. He directs everything. To suggest that he didn't ask anyone, "Where's Chris? What's happened here?" makes absolutely no sense. But do I know that Dean Malenko told him? No I don't. Dean has told me on the two occasions I talked to him, "No, no, Chris was my best friend. He was my best friend, he was my best friend." If he was his best friend, why the hell didn't he call and do a safety check on Chris on the Sunday afternoon?" Maybe Daniel was still alive. We didn't know that. They didn't know that at the time. Now you look back and say he was dead, but why didn't they do that? Perhaps someone said, "Hey, we've got a pay-per-view going, let's not upset the []."

Raff: Did this happen on a Sunday or a Monday? I'm a little bit confused with the timing.

MB: Pay-per-view was Sunday night.

Raff: No, that your son—that he incident happened.

MB: There's been no conclusive evidence to exact timelines. We're thinking late Friday night, early Saturday morning that this happened. They could never tell us exactly what—but the police identified it as Nancy, Daniel, then Chris. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation identified it as Nancy-Daniel, Daniel-Nancy. They didn't know.

Male Reporter: When did the tribute run?

MB: Monday night the 25th.

Male Reporter: And he was supposed to be in the Saturday night pay-per view also?

MB: Sunday night pay-per-view.

Raff: And you were called on Monday?

MB: Yes.

Pazniokas: The person who said he was representing you, Clifford Cormany—was he a private investigator?

MB: Yes.

Pazniokas: How do you spell his name?

[Benoit gives Pazniokas a sheet of paper]

Daniela Altimari: You said earlier that your goal is that Mr. Blumenthal, if he's successful, gets to the Senate and takes what you're saying to heart in terms of what needs to be done to regulate the industry. Did he make you any promises? Did he in conversations to you—

MB: No. I've never spoken to him.

Altimari: How about the campaign, did they indicate that this would be an issue he would pursue?

MB: Never, no. I'm hoping he would do that. Once you know the issues and you're in a position of authority, and he's spoken about these issues in this campaign, I would hope that if he does go to the Senate that he would follow through and do something about it. I'd probably be talking about Blumenthal if he did wind up going in and did absolutely nothing, just dropped the ball. If you want to come back next year I'll give you a report card on him. They probably won't pay my way though. So I actually told them going in, when I was coming down, I said, "There can't be any conditions attached to this whatsoever." I said I really have no interest in doing that. If you're going to suggest to me that I say anything forget about it because I won't.

Altimari: But I'm wondering did it go the other way as well? Did you make a condition to him that says "I'll come down here and talk about this during the campaign if" —

[inaudible]

Altimari: I understand that, but if, "I'll come down and talk about these issues in the context of the campaign if you, if you're elected to the U.S. Senate, make this an issue on your agenda"?

MB: No. I have told the people who work for him that actually contact me, I said I would hope that would be the result, but as I said before, I welcome the opportunity. I thank you folks for coming out and listening to me today. As much as I can spread that message I will.

Raff: Mr. Benoit, do you remember, and I know I brought it up earlier, what the ratio was with steroids? I remember it was a huge thing that Irv brought up in his book that the acceptable levels to what your son had in him was just overwhelming.

MB: Ten times the level, I think that they said. The thing that they don't know, the thing that Irv doesn't know—Irv and I get into it. On many occasions we don't agree in this sequence. If you look at his book I

can be very critical of his book and as a matter of fact there's stuff in there that is really a little left of center, but I haven't up until now, I haven't really shared that information with him. But we don't know when Chris took the steroids. As far as I'm concerned, he could have done it an hour before he ended up hanging himself. Maybe he said, "Hey, I need a lot of—I don't know what happens when you take a huge massive dose of steroids. Does it boost your levels way up where you feel, oh, I'm going to do this?" He had to pick up 260 pounds, wrap a cord around his neck, and drop it. So he physically had the weights in his hand. Do you need to be over the top to do that? I can't even imagine what was going on in this guy's mind when he did it. I say "this guy's"—my son. I haven't personally seen it—Chris's first wife has a Bible there that wasn't part of the crime scene. It was actually in the drawer. There's a notation in there by Chris, "Preparing to leave this earth." One of the things that happens to you with brain damage, this suicidal ideation, I think that was there. In Chris'—it was widely talked about in Chris' diary that was written over a period of 10 days after Eddie Guerrero died. I have it up here. This is it right here. Took place over a period of 10 days. Chris says here in one sentence, "I will see you soon my brother. We will both laugh with the same perspective. I love you, Eddie. I miss you. November 30th, 2005." What does that mean? I'd never seen this before, and as I say Nancy had given this to Chris because he was so upset over the death of Eddie Guerrero, and she said, "Write down your feelings. Write down anything that you think." When I saw this, I said, "This is a guy that needed help. " This is 2005. Chris died in 2007. And when Chris—see again, you talk about the symptoms of CTE, suicidal ideation is one, fatigue is another one. Chris could never go to sleep. He says, "I'm so damn tired all the time." And I'm thinking to myself, why are you tired if you wrestle 20 minutes, half an hour a night? Why are you so tired all the time? But this is one of the things that manifests itself when you have the brain tissue issues. And suicide, depression, can be violence associated with it. The first thing really to go—that's another thing that you like to preach about and talk about this thing is that the first thing that you see go with people who have it is deterioration in personal relationships. So you see divorce and usually these guys end up failing businesses, they go down. They did a study in 1985 and I can send you the study if you want to see it. Somebody went on death row and what these guys had in common was that they were on death row, sentenced to death, and in each and every case they had a history of traumatic brain injury in their life. Does this play a role? Is there something that we're missing here? Is there something that we can do to change things? Is there something that we can do when you see behavior in people that you're able to change something, give them medication that would change the direction in their life to help heal them? This is what I look for every day. It's what I read about every day. There's currently a program going on now with progesterone, I think, if you get to someone that has traumatic brain injury, soon after it happens with injections that you can reverse it. So there's a lot of research that's gone on.

Pazniokas: Did you ever ask for WWE or anyplace else if the private investigator had been retained by WWE?

MB: Did I ask it? No. It was the police department that told us that they found out that it was—

Pazniokas: Have you ever directly or through attorneys asked WWE as to why they did that and what their own investigation, if they conducted one, may have found?

MB: [No audible answer to that question] I thank you for coming here today and hopefully the information has been helpful.