

February 25, 2009

VIA FACSIMILE 702.486.2577
AND CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Keith Kizer, Executive Director
Nevada State Athletic Commission
555 E. Washington Avenue
Suite 3200
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Re: UFC 94; Response to Letter from Raffi Nahabedian on Behalf of BJ Penn ("Letter")

Dear Mr. Kizer:

Per the request contained in your February 5, 2009, letter, please find enclosed our responses to the Letter with supporting statements from Steven L. Friend and John Danaher and other exhibits. Each of us, as well as Georges, Georges' manager, Shari Spencer, and the rest of Georges' training staff vehemently deny any allegation as to the intentional and illegal use of "grease" for Georges' benefit during UFC 94. We would, however, like to summarize the events of that evening, as well as the statements and exhibits attached to this letter.

FACTS

After the first round, which appears to be the principal round in question, while Georges was seated, Phil twice took Vaseline off the back of his left hand and applied it to Georges' face in the customary manner. He then massaged Georges' temples, neck and shoulders, prior to placing his right flat palm against Georges' chest and massaged Georges' back with his left hand. After Georges stood up for the beginning of the second round, Phil again administered the breathing technique placing his left palm against Georges' chest and massaged Georges' back with his right hand.

After the second round, two deputy commissioners who were working Georges' corner questioned Phil about the presence of Vaseline. Phil showed the deputy that there was no Vaseline present, and as a precaution, the deputy commissioner wiped off Georges' back. Thereafter, Phil thoroughly wiped off his hands with a towel after applying Vaseline to Georges' face prior to touching any other part of Georges' body.

NO INTENTION TO ILLEGALLY APPLY VASELINE

Notwithstanding the admonitions of the Letter, the video evidence does not show Phil applying Vaseline to Georges' back, but the administration of a procedure to assist Georges with his breathing, which requires pressure on Georges' chest and circular pressure on Georges' back. The breathing treatment being administered to Georges between rounds was developed by Steve Friend, a well respected and pre-eminent holistic therapist in UFC circles. The nickname the "Witchdoctor" was given to Mr. Friend by UFC President Dana White, in recognition of the success of Mr. Friend's methodologies. Dana White is also the person who referred the "Witchdoctor" to many UFC fighters, including Georges. The breathing technique had been developed by Mr. Friend to assist another UFC fighter with his breathing prior to ever being used on Georges. The purpose of this technique is to open Georges' airways and to promote healthy breathing between rounds and during the fight. Phil also administered this breathing technique

without incident, during Georges' last two most recent fights with Matt Serra and Jon Fitch. It was also used in Sean Sherk's fight with Mr. Penn in May 2008. Finally, UFC locker room footage is being provided with this submission showing the breathing treatment being administered to Georges while he was wearing a shirt in the locker room prior to the fight. Therefore, the demonstrated history of the application of this breathing technique is well documented and fails to show any intention to apply Vaseline to Georges' back.

Although the administration of the breathing technique could, to the uninformed, resemble the application of Vaseline to Georges' back, we can assure you and the Commission that no illicit, illegal or dishonest activity was intended nor occurred. Prior to any Vaseline being applied to Georges' face, the amount of Vaseline on Phil's hand is barely visible, thereby indicating that at no time was more than a small amount of Vaseline being used between the first and second rounds. To have the alleged impact, as recognized by the rule, a much larger quantity would be required. Initially, the Vaseline was applied to Georges' face from Phil's right hand, but he used his left hand to massage Georges' back, which are the opposite hands for the proper application of the breathing technique. This mistake was corrected while standing prior to the beginning of round two and between each of the following rounds. As indicated by the visual evidence, even if Vaseline was transferred between Phil's hands, at no time was Phil using a sufficient quantity which, after massaging Georges' face and temples, could have been applied in a beneficial or illegal quantity to Georges' back. Moreover, if the illegal application of Vaseline were intended, it would be an extraordinary feat of ingenuity and dexterity to do so ambidextrously and completely under the supervision of at least one deputy athletic commissioner and within the view of thousands of spectators and numerous television cameras. Any finding to the contrary would necessarily conclude that the prior history of the development of the technique, the use of the technique by another fighter, the history of use of the technique on Georges, particularly while dressed in the locker room, was an elaborate ruse to cheat and disguise the application of a miniscule amount of Vaseline to Georges' back. What the video evidence shows is rubbing Georges' back to administer the breathing technique, not the application of Vaseline.

The documentary evidence provided herein, as well as post-event statements to the media, indicate no intention whatsoever to apply Vaseline, in any quantity, to Georges' back. In fact, the admonitions of the fans, Dana White, and others, clearly caught Georges' corner by surprise. After the second round Phil can be seen, clearly perplexed, showing his hands to the deputy working the corner indicating that no Vaseline was present on his hands. Likewise, as indicated strongly in Mr. Danaher's statement, Georges' strategy was substantially dependent upon controlling Mr. Penn on the ground. Therefore, excessively lubricating Mr. Penn's body by allowing Vaseline migration from Georges would have been counter-productive since it would have allowed Mr. Penn to escape to a standing position making Georges vulnerable to Mr. Penn's vaunted striking ability.

The Letter alleges prior information implying that Georges may be more slippery than other fighters. However, the fighter who Mr. Penn identified as having provided that information has vehemently and publically denied having had any such communication with Mr. Penn.

There also seem to be some concern about similar allegations made by other fighters whom Georges has defeated. We have been actively involved in cornerwork for MMA combatants for many years. We have found the deputies of the Nevada State Athletic Commission to be exemplary in the performance of their duties. Therefore, it would seem anomalous to us, that deputy athletic commissioners do a laudable job in keeping illegal amounts of grease off other mixed martial arts combatants, but amazingly, can't seem to do so with Georges. Notwithstanding the presence of numerous cameras, over a million television viewers and more than 15,000 live attendees, there is no evidence of any undetectable technique for the illegal application of Vaseline to Georges. But somehow, certain other fighters imply that Georges has some secret technique to violate that regulation.

EFFECT ON THE OUTCOME

What the video evidence does not show, is Georges' extensive preparation for the fight against Mr. Penn. Georges' ability to negate Mr. Penn's fabled "rubber guard," and the objective basis for substantial majority of the allegations contained in the Letter, was merely the result of concentrated, directed training techniques in that regard, as evidenced by Greg's and John Danaher's thorough statement submitted herewith. Mr. Penn's frustration in executing his game plan, was merely the result of superior training, technique and execution, and not any illegal or unfair tactics on behalf of Georges or his camp. In Georges' first fight with Mr. Penn, Georges in a dramatically similar fashion to UFC 94, dominated both the second and third rounds by controlling Mr. Penn on the ground. The day after UFC 94, JD Penn admitted in his blog that "we are not trying to make excuses, GSP was the better fighter that night..." and "Georges did a great job last night, nobody is trying to take that from him."

The video evidence shows that only scant amounts of Vaseline were ever used. The Vaseline is barely visible on Phil's hand; however, prior to ever touching Georges' back, Phil lubricates Georges' eyebrows, cheeks, chin and other portions of his face as well as massaging his temples. If any Vaseline was left on Phil's hands after that process, it could have only been a miniscule amount and clearly within the limitations of NAC 467.598(2); nor more than could be expected to be transferred between unarmed combatants in the ordinary proceedings of a bout of mixed martial arts. Georges' back was wiped clean after the second and third rounds, thereby eliminating any material effect from any of the prior rounds. Therefore, the aggregate lubrication present between Georges and Mr. Penn was not materially different than would have been present and accumulated on the fighters during a normal mixed martial arts contest. In fact, during the first fight with Georges, Mr. Penn actually used his fabled "rubber guard" to rub his leg against Georges' face. If, as the Letter states, the absence of lubricant is necessary for the proper practice of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, grappling and other MMA techniques, Mr. Penn would certainly not purposely execute a tactic which would invariably cause the transfer of lubricant to vitally important parts of his body to execute his defense.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe that the existing rules are sufficient to create a safe and fair environment for mixed martial arts combatants in the state of Nevada. However, to avoid the ordeal that has been created by the Letter and the subsequent fall-out, we would suggest that to avoid any possible appearance of impropriety, and to avoid any such misinterpretation of a cornerman's actions in the future, we respectfully suggest the Commission consider enhancing the existing regulations to provide something like the following:

- 1) Continued use of the pre-fight touch test, to detect the presence of both water and petroleum based lubricants that could have been applied to the fighter's body hours before the fight.
- 2) Rubdown the fighter (excluding face or body parts covered by gloves or shorts) with a towel containing alcohol or other Commission approved solvent prior to entering the Octagon. This act should be sufficient to immediately remove any lubricant undetected by the touch test.
- 3) Rubdown the fighter (excluding face or body parts covered by gloves or shorts) with a dry towel between rounds to remove any lubricant that has either been applied between rounds or which has migrated to the fighter's body during the contest. This can be accomplished very quickly and will not distract or otherwise delay the contest. These rubdowns are also publicly observable, so as to avoid any abuse or subterfuge.

- 4) To avoid the application of excessive amounts of lubricant, limit the application of lubricants to the fighter's face to deputy commissioners or licensed cutmen.

CONCLUSION

We take our involvement in the sport of mixed martial arts very seriously. We hold the sport in high esteem and are honored to be two of the chosen few who are able to participate in this noble profession. We would not, nor would Georges or any of his handlers, advisors or his manager, do anything to jeopardize either Georges' reputation or the integrity of the sport. Therefore, we believe strongly, that we have done nothing to violate Nevada State Athletic Commission rules or to otherwise impugn the outcome of UFC 94, the integrity of the UFC or the sport and that the Letter constitutes nothing more than Mr. Penn's desperate attempt to protect his reputation and commercial value after being totally dominated by a superior athlete.

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GREG JACKSON


PHIL NURSE

February 25, 2009

Keith Kizer, Executive Director
Nevada State Athletic Commission
555 E. Washington Avenue
Suite 3200
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Re: UFC 94; Response to Letter from Raffi Nahabedian on Behalf of BJ Penn ("Letter")

Dear Mr. Kizer:

My name is Philip Nurse and I am the Muay Thai Kru that trains and corners UFC welterweight champion Georges St. Pierre. In response to the complaint issued to you by the contender of the January 31, 2009 UFC title fight, BJ Penn, please find the following details of the event in question that are described to the best of my recollection as they pertain to the categorically false accusations being made against our team.

On the night in question, Georges St. Pierre was accompanied by head trainer Greg Jackson, Firaz Zahabi, Jonathan Chaimberg and me into the arena. In that short span of time, the team quickly broke up the water and Vaseline responsibilities. Greg asked me whether I wanted to be responsible for handling the water or the Vaseline in between rounds. I indicated to Greg that I was impartial and would leave the decision up to him. As Georges ran ahead of us, Greg advised that he wanted me to manage the Vaseline for Georges's face and that he would take care of the water. I had already been tasked with ensuring that Georges was made to relax and to keep his breathing regulated.

Greg, Firaz, Jonathan and I were present at the cage in order to corner Georges during his rounds with BJ Penn. From my location, it was necessary to relay my views to Greg and also advise Georges on what Greg could see from his vantage point. As we noticed things, Greg shouted to Firaz and me, Firaz would shout in French and I would shout in English to Georges. I most often advised on the stand up portions of Georges's rounds.

My original task for all of Georges's fights when I act as corner man is to jump in and keep Georges calm, relaxed and focused. I only have a small amount of time to get this done (less than sixty seconds). To help with circulation, the first thing I do is to stand in front of Georges and elevate his legs.

For this fight, I was dually tasked with re-applying Vaseline to Georges's face, a decision made quickly as described above, mere moments before entering the Octagon that evening. From my position in front of Georges and with his legs propped up on my thighs, I applied a very small amount of Vaseline onto the back of my hand which I use

as a palate. I then used my fingertips to apply trace amounts of Vaseline to Georges's eyebrows, nose, cheeks, chin and jaw area.

In order to aide with regulating his breathing, I administered a technique taught to me by one of our team doctors, Steve Friend. Mr. Friend originally developed this technique for another fighter. Mr. Friend advised that it was very important that we practiced this technique, especially for this fight, because part of our game plan was to maintain extremely high-intensity rounds and Georges's breathing recovery in between rounds was vitally important.

I pushed down on Georges's shoulders slightly as I noticed that he wasn't relaxed and then began the breathing technique taught to me. While still elevating Georges's legs on my own, I rubbed a small area in the center of his back while holding my other hand flat on his chest.

At one point during the relaxation technique, I realized that I had been performing the breathing/ energy movement with the wrong hands at the front and back of Georges. Thus, I switched my hands that were each set at two different points- one on Georges's chest, one near the top of his back, in order to administer it correctly. I was very keen on trying to get this technique performed accurately because our team had a meeting earlier that day about the importance of this administration and which hands belonged where, which way to rub Georges's pressure points, etc.. It was clear that Georges had been exercising a consistently high amount of pressure and energy and needed to breathe and relax.

When Georges returned to the corner after the second round, I immediately got in front of him and raised his legs (in similar fashion to the first round) and began repeating the Vaseline application in a like process to the first round- using only my fingertips and taking the lubricant from the back of my hand.

When I started to work the breathing technique on Georges, someone in the commission started shouting but I couldn't properly hear what was being said. I recall hearing one of the men say something about "hands." After we had all completed our corner men duties on Georges and as we were walking out of the Octagon, I noticed commission officials in the ring and saw them take a towel from Greg.

Georges continued to dominate his opponent in Round 3 as he had in the other rounds. After the third round was over, I again entered the octagon and stood in front of Georges and elevated his legs on my thighs. I had dried my hands with a towel and showed the member of the commission my dry hands. I dried Georges's back from my standing position at Georges's right side and then I started trying to finish my job of relaxing Georges and pushed down on his shoulders as was the case with the first round in order to release them.

During these tasks that we executed in between rounds, had any lubrication remained on my fingers after I applied it to Georges's face in accordance with the NAC regulations, I

was unaware of it and never intended to lubricate any other part of Georges for any reason. I never considered applying Vaseline to any part of Georges, save for his face. I did not apply any Vaseline directly from a jar to any part of Georges's torso or limbs. I only applied as much Vaseline to my hand as would be necessary to legally lubricate Georges' face.. I did not apply any Vaseline from the back of my hand to any other part of Georges. I was not aware of nor did I intentionally leave any of the lubricant on my hands when I began to conduct the breathing and relaxation technique on Georges. Under the watchful eye of the commission officials, in front of the cameras and the crowds, it would have been ludicrous for me to have "greased" our fighter's back.

The commission was present in the octagon in between rounds at our corner and at the contender's corner to oversee the tasks being performed by each team. We respectfully deny all allegations being made that our team and the commission were lacking in responsibilities that enabled excessive lubrication of our fighter.

The charges by the other team that any lubrication left on our fighter rendered it impossible for BJ to execute his popular "rubber guard" technique is completely without merit. Our camp tactically prepared for defending against the contender by examining some of his previous fights and picking up his usual tendencies. We were very keen on ensuring that if the two fighters made it to the ground, Georges had to keep away from Penn's renowned "rubber guard." Part of our plan for Georges to keep out of Penn's well-known guard was to make the round a wrestling match in order to exhaust BJ's arms. We knew that this would slow Penn's hands so that Georges could then move on to standup striking and keep BJ guessing on what was coming next.

Additionally, Georges continuously practiced and then flawlessly executed another preventative move on the ground by immediately "posturing" or pushing up every time that he noticed Penn making the rubber guard attempt. The longer the round went, the weaker Penn got attempting to execute his signature move against Georges's frequent posturing which Greg, Firaz and I shouted for him to do from our views at the cage.

Never during any of the exercises or techniques that I was tasked with performing on Georges did I ever intend to commit any sort of illegal act. My focus was taking care of our fighter in an efficient and effective manner. Our team has no need for and has never considered committing the improprieties being charged against us. We never needed an advantage of an illegal or immoral sort because our team trains efficiently and with thoughtful, skilled and tactical plans that do not require that we ever attempt to facilitate a sordid or manipulative violation of any kind in order to win a fight.

I have never had my integrity or that of any of my fighters (either in Muay Thai or in Mixed Martial Arts) challenged, nor has any type of complaint or inquiry ever been filed or lodged against me. The accusations contained in Mr. Penn's letter represent the first time that my integrity has been called into question, and have come as a shock and surprise to both myself, the fighters I train, and my peers in the Muay Thai and MMA communities. Further, I respectfully deny the allegations that our corner and the

Commission were lacking in our responsibilities. I appreciate the time given to our team to respond to the letter sent to you and am hopeful that, upon review of the true facts and circumstances of this matter, you will concur that the losing opponent's letter is without merit and should not taint the strength, skill and integrity of Mr. St. Pierre, Greg Jackson or me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip Nurse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Philip Nurse

Greg Jackson
Jackson's MMA
5505 Acoma
Albuquerque, NM 87108

Keith Kizer, Executive Director
Nevada State Athletic Commission
55 E. Washington Ave., Suite 3200
Las Vegas, NM 87101

February 9, 2009

Dear Sir,

My name is Greg Jackson and I was the lead corner for the Georges St. Pierre/BJ Penn fight on January 31st, 2009. This statement is a response to the allegations of impropriety that night by Mr. Penn's corner.

Phil Nurse, second cornerman to Mr. St. Pierre, was trained in an energy stimulating technique by Steven Friend. Because of Phil Nurse's experience as a Thai boxing trainer, I relegated to him the duty of applying Vaseline to Mr. St. Pierre's face in between rounds. After applying the Vaseline to Georges St. Pierre's face, Mr. Nurse did the energy technique, which I believe involves rubbing the chest and the back of the fighter. I am not exactly sure of the specifics, because I am not trained in this technique.

It is possible, although I did not witness it, that there was a miniscule amount of Vaseline left over on Mr. Nurse's hands after he was done applying it to Mr. St. Pierre's face and that a small amount may have been applied to the center of his back. If this happened, it was completely unintentional. We regret any inadvertent impropriety that may have resulted, but as it was both a small amount and was wiped off by the commission, we feel that it had no bearing on the outcome of the fight.

We trained Mr. St. Pierre specifically to counter the aspects of Mr. Penn's guard and contend that it was the specific techniques that he trained which allowed us to execute our gameplan to the fullest.

With much respect,



Greg Jackson

February 25, 2009

Keith Kizer, Executive Director
Nevada State Athletic Commission
555 E. Washington Avenue
Suite 3200
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Re: UFC 94; Response to Letter from Raffi Nahabedian on Behalf of BJ Penn ("Letter")

Dear Mr. Kizer:

My name is Steven L. Friend. I am a holistic therapist, currently in retirement, with a background of research in both the western medical model as well as the Chinese medical model of internal energy and have created techniques over the last 27 years for the relief of pain and the promotion of well being.

I was introduced into the MMA arena by Dana White the current president of the UFC, when he asked me to help the fighters recover from injuries and also to work on him and members of his staff. As I became known to the fighters, I was approached by many fighters over a three year period to help them prepare for their upcoming fights for relief of pain and enhance their performance. Although I am in retirement, I still help a few fighters prepare for their upcoming fights - one of these fighters is Georges St-Pierre.

In observing Georges' fight with John Fitch, I noticed that he was struggling with breathing in that fight - his breaths are short and fast. The reasons for this short shallow breathing are complex but the solution is simple. When Randy Couture was having similar problems when preparing for his third fight with Chuck Liddell I developed two techniques to help him breathe deeply and function at full capacity - one of the techniques is no longer necessary for Randy but is definitely necessary for Georges before and during his fights. This technique consists of placing the left hand on the front of the chest while the right hand moves in a circular motion on the back at the same time. After what I witnessed at the Fitch fight, I was adamant with Georges and his corner that this technique be implemented before and during the BJ Penn fight. Consequently on the afternoon before the fight, I prepared Georges's corner and in particular Phil Nurse on how to administer this technique of rubbing the back correctly.

The point I wish to make here is that the rubbing of the back by Phil Nurse was 100% intended to help Georges take full, deep breaths and nothing else. There was absolutely no premeditation or intention to apply Vaseline to Georges's body to give him an unfair advantage over his opponent. Such an intentional action would not only be unethical and contrary to George's and his corner's character, it should be quite obvious to any seasoned fan or regulating body that it would never be necessary to apply Vaseline to Georges's body for Georges to face any opponent.

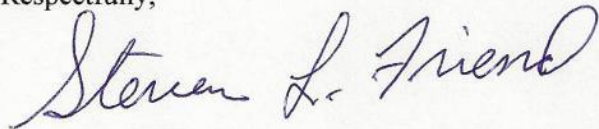
After the fight I walked up to Marc Ratner to say hello and he told me that there was a problem with Phil Nurse applying Vaseline to Georges' back. At that time I explained to him that this is a completely

wrong perception of what was being done in regards to the rubbing of Georges's back during the fight. Marc both knows me and also of the many people I have helped over the years working within the UFC.

I have worked with many fighters over the years and can state without reservation that Georges St-Pierre is not only the most skilled fighter I've had the privilege to know, but beyond a doubt he is one of the most humble and honest people I've ever met.

If you need further understanding of why this energy technique was used for Georges, please feel free to contact me for a more clinical understanding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven L. Friend". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "S" at the beginning and a distinct "F" at the end.

Steven L. Friend

February 25, 2009

Keith Kizer, Executive Director
Nevada State Athletic Commission
555 E. Washington Avenue
Suite 3200
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Re: UFC 94; Response to Letter from Raffi Nahabedian on Behalf of BJ Penn ("Letter")

Dear Mr. Kizer:

My name is John Danaher. I am the grappling coach of Mr. Georges St. Pierre. Mr. St. Pierre is currently at the center of a dispute with Mr. BJ Penn which is being investigated by the Nevada State Athletic Commission and which arose out of a chain of events starting in their highly publicized fight on Jan 31st in Las Vegas at UFC 94. The allegation against Mr. St. Pierre is that one of his cornermen applied Vaseline to his upper body at the end of the first round and that this act had an influence on the outcome of the match. The allegations are not entirely clear and in the public eye have tended to diverge into different claims

- (1) That this act of applying Vaseline was *intentional* on the part of Mr. St. Pierre's cornermen and that an overt act of cheating took place.
- (2) That the act of applying the Vaseline was an unintentional mistake on the part of the individual cornerman (Mr. Phil Nurse), but that unintentional or not, it still affected the outcome of the match.

In response Mr. St. Pierre and his entire camp have countered that both claims are easily shown false and that the first claim is more than merely false, it is reprehensible and unfairly damages the excellent reputation of Mr. St. Pierre in MMA competition. Our claim is that whatever small amount of Vaseline may have remained on Mr. Nurse's hand after he began rubbing Mr. St. Pierre's neck and upper back could not possibly have a role in outcome of the match and furthermore, such an action was actually very much against the interests of Mr. St. Pierre. Ironically the person who would have benefited most from application of Vaseline to the body was Mr. Penn.

Let us look objectively at the issue and list the facts of the case that can best illuminate the issue and rid it of the emotional bias that has plagued the public dispute.

First, let us look at the substances that are at the center of the dispute and analyze the reason why they are deemed illegal. Lubrication of any kind, whether it be Vaseline or baby oil, or some similar substance makes control over the human body more difficult as friction and traction between the two grapplers is reduced. Given that grappling is a very large part of MMA competition, this could be used to favor athletes who wished to avoid grappling techniques. That is why body lubricants are strictly banned in nearly all

forms of grappling competition. MMA, however, also permits striking techniques. In the sport of boxing, Vaseline is commonly applied to the face to lessen the likelihood of facial cuts that could interfere with the match. Modern sanctioned MMA competition took on the same practice as it was deemed to be in the best interests of the athletes. This immediately creates a problem. *How can we protect the facial skin of the athletes from striking technique without compromising their ability to apply grappling technique when skin lubricants are used?* The current answer is simple. A small amount of lubricant can be applied to the face of the athletes as they enter the cage or ring and at the end of each round. This is a compromise solution that has become the industry standard. Enough of the background, let us move forward to the arguments.

I wish to advance a number of arguments that I am confident will show any objective audience that the entire matter can be speedily resolved as at worst an unintentional occurrence that played no significant role in the outcome of the fight and that no deliberate attempt was made to break the rules of the event.

The argument from human error: It is commonly agreed by all that under stress, most people are more prone than usual to making errors, even in tasks that they perform routinely. This fight was a high pressure event. It captured a massive audience both in the arena and on PPV. There was substantial media interest due to the long build up to the fight, shown on national TV as *UFC Primetime*. To say that the atmosphere was electric in the locker room prior to the fight, in the walk-out and as the match went into the early phases would be something of an understatement. In such an environment it is hardly surprising that small lapses in judgment should occur. To suggest, as some have that this action was intentional is ludicrous. If a cornerman wanted to flout the rules banning body lubricants, he would hardly choose to do it out in the open in front of numerous cameras, the Nevada State Athletic Commission representatives and millions of viewers and in a way that clearly showed no effort at concealment. A moment's reflection on the matter quickly shows the incident for what it was, a minor mental lapse on the part of a cornerman in a very high-pressure environment that was quickly rectified and not repeated.

The argument from self-interest: Let me be very clear about this; it was simply not in Mr. St. Pierre's interest to apply any form of lubricant to his body given the strategy that Mr. Firaz Zahabi (Mr. St. Pierre's head trainer) and myself had worked out months in advance to the fight. Our fight strategy involved favoring the clinch, pushing Mr. Penn against the fence and working for a controlling takedown to the mat followed by striking from top position along with controlling positional advance through grappling technique culminating in TKO or submission late in the match when Mr. Penn began to fatigue. Observation of the fight will clearly show that Mr. St. Pierre followed this game plan to the letter in a fashion that has been widely praised throughout the MMA world. Note that the centerpiece of our game plan was the notion of *control*. Mr. St. Pierre was to use grappling technique in the clinch, takedown and ground-grappling phases of the fight to attain victory. Applying body lubricant would have been *directly against his own interests* as control is made more difficult by the presence of oil or Vaseline. In his previous fight against Mr. BJ Penn, Mr. St. Pierre began with a kickboxing-based strategy (suggested by a former kickboxing coach no longer employed by Mr. St. Pierre) and lost the first round when Mr. Penn proved to have very good striking skills. Mr. St. Pierre went on to win the fight by switching to a fall-back strategy I had engineered based on clinching, takedowns and top-control on the ground in rounds 2 and 3 and took a close decision. Not wanting a repeat of the disastrous first round of the initial fight, we agreed upon the same clinch/takedown/top control strategy that worked so well in rounds 2 and 3 of that initial fight and proposed using it from the beginning of the second fight, but added the idea of sophisticated *positional advance* in recognition of Mr. St. Pierre's greatly improved ground-grappling skills since the first fight. It should be noted by all that such a fight strategy would be *undermined*, not aided, by the presence of body lubricant. It

was simply not in Mr. St. Pierre's self interest to use lubricant. Ironically, it was in Mr. Penn's interest for lubricant to be applied (though we are in no way suggesting that he did), since his best success in the previous fight, and in the more recent fight, came when he engaged in boxing technique in the open rather than grappling technique.

The argument from inconsistency: A strange feature of the debate is this: Mr. Penn's camp claims that lubricant prevented Mr. Penn from successfully applying his grappling techniques (ignoring for now the obvious point that in their previous match where there was no such allegation, he also failed to successfully apply any grappling technique). Yet Mr. St. Pierre was extraordinarily successful in applying *his* grappling technique. In the course of the match Mr. St. Pierre scored with numerous sophisticated grappling techniques, takedowns, pins, guard passes etc. *Lubricant does not discriminate.* If lubricant made Mr. Penn's grappling ineffective, it *should have also made St. Pierre's grappling technique ineffective.* Anyone observing the fight however, can clearly see the high level of grappling technique used by Mr. St. Pierre. Indeed, this was the subject of considerable admiration and comment after the fight by MMA pundits. As it stands, the charge made by Mr. Penn is straightforwardly inconsistent.

The argument from lubricant transfer/migration: A very simple fact needs to be stressed. *Once Vaseline is applied to the face, it is only a matter of time before it "migrates" to every other part of the body.* Moreover, it is impossible for one person to be lubricated without the other rapidly becoming lubricated. This is a direct consequence of the close-contact nature of the sport. As the fighters grab each other, clinch and grapple, their faces come into contact with the rest of their body and the Vaseline soon becomes applied as a thin film over both athletes. Add to this the copious amounts of sweat exuded by the athletes and in a very short time, the Vaseline is all over both fighters. Moreover, this process is compounded at the conclusion of each round as the Vaseline is reapplied to the face and the process continues in ever-increasing amounts of sweat. *The effect of a rubbing a small amount of Vaseline residue into an athlete's shoulders is thus negligible.* Whatever, tiny amount of Vaseline Mr. Nurse may have inadvertently rubbed into Mr. St. Pierre's shoulders and neck (before it was toweled off) would have inevitably got there in a very short time frame (and was probably already there after the first round anyway). Let us be clear on this: *This transfer and migration of Vaseline is totally unavoidable given the nature of the sport.* It is present in every sanctioned fight. Mr. Nurse's actions did not have any impact on the fact that Vaseline will be present all over the bodies of both athletes soon after the bout begins. If anything, Mr. Nurse's action probably *reduced* the amount of Vaseline on Mr. St. Pierre's body as he was toweled down after the breathing technique was administered.

The argument from character: It would be one thing if a fighter who regularly broke the rules of the events in which he competed had allegations made against him for cheating; but Mr. St. Pierre is widely recognized as one of the finest representatives of our sport in the world. Over time, at the highest levels, he has forged a reputation as a man of high moral character and unsurpassed sportsmanship. In my capacity as Georges grappling coach I can personally attest that he is a man of unusually fine character. This is not only my belief, but the belief of millions of MMA fans who have followed his stellar career and the large number of fellow MMA athletes who train with him and those who compete against him. It is simply not in his character to cheat. Throughout his career he has consistently demonstrated a civility and noblesse which has made him an icon in the sport. It would be absurd for him to totally discredit himself and the work he has done over the years by brazenly cheating on national television in a way that does not even make strategic sense.

These are the main considerations that we believe will demonstrate the veracity of Mr. St. Pierre's position. Let us now consider the main reasons why it might be alleged (we believe erroneously) that Mr. Penn's inadvertent action influenced the outcome of the match.

Explaining the failure of Mr. Penn's grappling technique during the course of the fight: Over the years, Mr. Penn has forged an excellent reputation as one of the very best MMA grapplers in the world. He competed with brilliant success in both grappling events and MMA and deeply impressed people with his grappling skills. People were thus understandably shocked that his grappling skills not only proved ineffective against Mr. St. Pierre, but that Mr. St. Pierre appeared to dominate the grappling phase of the fight with relative ease. *The only explanation, it is alleged, is that he must have possessed some unfair advantage.* We have already pointed out the inconsistency of this argument. Now we shall go further. As an experienced grappling coach I would like to make a few points.

Mr. Penn's claim is that his grappling technique from the guard position (bottom position underneath his opponent using his legs to control the man on top) was rendered ineffective by Vaseline and that it was his intention to win the fight from this position. Mr. Penn has deservedly gained an impressive reputation for skill from the guard position due to his uncanny flexibility and technical knowledge. It should be noted, however, that Mr. Penn has never controlled an opponent from guard position in a way that led to the finish of the match or even a decisive attack that turned the course of a match *in his entire MMA career*. It is extremely unlikely that he would begin by suddenly doing this against the current world champion in a higher weight category. In fact, Mr. Penn's greatest grappling skills in MMA have always been his *top position guard passing and back/mount control*, positions with which he has had brilliant success in previous matches, but which he simply could not attain in two fights against Mr. St. Pierre. Throughout his career (including his first fight with Mr. St. Pierre) Mr. Penn's main use of the guard position has not been to control and submit opponents (something he has not done at any point in his MMA career), but rather, to stand back up to his feet where he can employ his very dangerous boxing skills (a tactic he has had much success with over the years). As Mr. St. Pierre's grappling coach, my main concern with Mr. Penn's guard grappling skills was not control and submission, but the danger of him standing back up to his feet where he could use his dangerous jab and uppercut as he did in round 1 of the first fight. Ironically, lubricant makes the act of standing up from guard position easier as the top man finds it difficult to get a controlling grip to hold the other man down.

In the public debate over the incident, some people have claimed that Mr. Penn could have used his extraordinary flexibility and skills from guard position to control Mr. St. Pierre by locking his feet and legs in "high guard" position around Mr. St. Pierre's shoulders and neck in a way that could have led to submission victory, but that the presence of the Vaseline made this impossible. (As a side note: Many pundits confuse Mr. Penn with practitioners of "rubber guard" technique (a system of grappling from guard position developed and popularized by the noted American jiu jitsu stylist, Mr. Eddie Bravo). "Rubber guard" technique often requires a high degree of flexibility and is quite distinctive in its operating methods. In MMA competition, advocates of "rubber guard" technique have had some success in controlling opponents and even winning from their specialized guard positions. Mr. Penn uses his very flexible legs in ways that often superficially resemble "rubber guard" technique. It should be noted immediately that Mr. Penn is not a user of the rubber guard system. His flexibility often creates a resemblance, but there are significant differences. Rubber guard is an instance of what I often call an *algorithmic* approach to ground grappling; where the grappler follows a step by step algorithm to attain the control and position he desires to submit or sweep his opponent over into a controlling pin. Mr. Penn employs what I call an *opportunistic* approach to grappling from guard position, where he uses his experience and sense of opportunity/timing to see an avenue to attack or stand back up to his feet where he can employ his dangerous boxing skills). In my

coaching of Mr. St. Pierre I emphasized precise placement of hands, head and arms in such a way as to *prevent opportunities to attack from ever arising*. This is a simple, yet effective means of overcoming this approach to guard grappling. It was this specialized training that made it difficult to maintain control over St. Pierre even for an athlete as flexible and talented as Mr. Penn.

Second, many people have noted that Mr. Penn may not have a strong record of *winning fights* from guard position, but that he nonetheless has proven on many occasions that his guard is *extraordinarily difficult to get past and into a dominant pin*. This is very true. Mr. Penn is blessed with an unusual mix of physical dexterity/flexibility and technical knowledge that makes his guard exceptionally difficult to get past. Many observers of the fight were shocked then, that Mr. St. Pierre was able to pass Mr. Penn's guard repeatedly and apparently with little difficulty. The only possible way this could happen, they reason, is if Mr. St. Pierre had an unfair advantage. In fact this can be explained very easily.

(i) Throughout his career, Mr. St. Pierre has proven himself capable of taking on elite MMA athletes and beating them *within their area of specialty*. He has outwrestled NCAA wrestling champions and All-Americans, he has out-grappled Brazilian jiu jitsu world champions and black belts and he has out-boxed elite strikers. Yet now, for no particular reason, people express disbelief when he once again out-grappled a grappling icon, just as he previously out-wrestled wrestling icons in nationally televised MMA events. The inconsistency here is remarkable. No-one accused him of cheating when he took down NCAA champion wrestler, Mr. Josh Koschek several times with ease, nor when he took down Mr. Matt Hughes (an All American in wrestling), rather, they acknowledged what should have been obvious; Mr. St. Pierre had trained himself to a degree that he could challenge experts at their own game. That he should do the same thing against ground-grappling specialists is no different.

(ii) Jiu jitsu-based grappling is a *detail-based* sport. *Precision of technique* is everything. Even minor failures in hand placement, head position, arm position, foot position, placement of the lever and fulcrum etc. etc. can have the deepest consequences. To all but the experts, these small details are unappreciated and unseen. Boxing may be the sweet science, but jiu jitsu is what I call *the subtle science*. I teach Georges at the level of inches and centimeters. The subtle details of technique that most people will never see, but which his opponent will immediately feel. This is what I call "invisible jiu jitsu." In my profession, *many will look, but only a few will see*. What may look like a basic grappling method of passing the guard in competition is incredibly complex in the many subtle details that make it work against a high-level opponent. Georges employed guard passing technique at a very high level of precision against Mr. Penn. The results speak for themselves.

(iii) Mr. St. Pierre trains very, very hard. The simplest explanation for the success of Mr. St. Pierre is his work ethic. As a full time coach who works with many elite athletes, I have never seen anyone work as consistently, intelligently and as long as this athlete. In training camp in preparation for this fight I came in for the two weeks at the critical time one month before fight night for specialized jiu jitsu training. At this stage, Georges had already been training for months and was going into the critical final stages. We trained three times a day, every day, including Christmas and New Years. At times he was so tired from brutal grappling sessions that he could not even raise his arms at the end of training. Then, two hours later he would be in another gym, sparring world class boxers. Then, that night, sparring with world class wrestlers. Unlike most professional fighters, he does not take time off after a fight, but immediately resumes training. He constantly looks to acquire new skills from many disciplines and grow in knowledge. It does not surprise me in the least that he improves with every fight. When I first met him, his jiu jitsu skills were surprisingly weak for such a successful athlete. Now he is a dire threat to even the best ground grapplers. Without appearing immodest or self congratulatory, over the years I have developed a reasonable skill level in the sport of jiu jitsu. Often when I

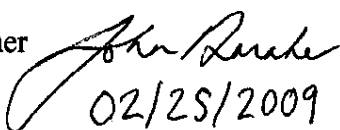
train with Mr. St. Pierre I think to myself how well he is doing against me *utilizing only ground-grappling technique*. What if he were using *all the techniques allowed in MMA competition*, punches, elbows, knees, kicks, driving takedowns, hitting me every time I attempted a grappling move. In all honesty, *I would not be at all surprised if he completely and quickly overwhelmed me and passed by my guard and defense with ease and pinned me helplessly, even though I (currently) am thought of as the more knowledgeable and skillful ground grappler*. In the same way, it should not be seen as totally surprising that under the physical and psychological pressure of a high-level MMA fight, that Mr. Penn's undoubted guard grappling skills should be strongly undermined and overwhelmed.

Another point made by Mr. Penn is that from his perspective, Mr. St. Pierre felt slippery and difficult to control. Mr. Penn is a very experienced MMA fighter with an outstanding competition record and accordingly, his words must be taken seriously. It should be noted that almost all the grappling training done by professional MMA athletes is done whilst wearing a T-shirt or rashguard. This clothing provides considerable friction between the two athletes as they train. In a sanctioned fight, both athletes are bare-chested and thus a large percentage of that traction is immediately lost. Moreover, in a professional fight, Vaseline is applied to the face of the fighters (something that very few athletes do in the practice room) and as we have seen already, quickly finds its way around the rest of the body. It is quite shocking how different it feels to grapple bare-chested as Vaseline migration occurs and sweat adds to the problem. This can surprise *even experienced athletes*. After the fight with Mr. Penn, Mr. St. Pierre confided in me that when he went to apply a certain type of clinch technique upon Mr. Penn (a technique we had worked on a lot for this fight and which we erroneously thought would play some role in the outcome), Mr. Penn slipped out very easily and felt very difficult to hold. Even to an experienced MMA athlete like Mr. St. Pierre, the degree of difficulty of holding and controlling a strongly resisting and skilful opponent under normal match conditions was surprising and frustrating. Doubtless Mr. Penn has similar feelings.

For these reasons we find the arguments in favor of the thesis that the only way to explain the successes of Mr. St. Pierre's grappling and the lack of success of Mr. Penn's is due to the presence of lubricant on the body, unconvincing. In conjunction with our earlier arguments we advance our conclusion *that this small incident, elevated unfairly into a scandal, was merely an unfortunate misinterpretation of a cornerman's actions that played no role in outcome of the fight*.

Respectfully,

John Danaher



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