

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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ANUCHA BROWNE SANDERS,

Plaintiff,

-against-

06 CV 0589 (GEL)

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, L.P.,
ISIAH LORD THOMAS III and JAMES L. DOLAN,

Defendants.
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VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF JEFFREY NIX

New York, New York

Friday, January 26, 2007

REPORTED BY:

BARBARA R. ZELTMAN

JOB NO.: 11467

1 JEFFREY NIX

2 A Under Scott Layden was the
3 president and general manager.

4 Q So you never became an assistant
5 general manager until Mr. Layden came --
6 came on?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q Okay.

9 MR. ADES: You may want to
10 clarify that, just when you moved there,
11 so Lucy understands.

12 A Jeff Van Gundy was still the
13 coach when I moved to the front office
14 with Scott Layden.

15 Q So again then getting back to the
16 steps an employee would take if they were
17 having work-related problems under the
18 policies of the Garden, what would they
19 do?

20 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

21 MR. ADES: This is any work-
22 related problem.

23 A You would go to your immediate
24 supervisor or you would go to human
25 resources.

1 JEFFREY NIX

2 Q Okay.

3 Did you have a choice? Did you
4 have to go to one or the other first?

5 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

6 A I don't think there was a
7 sequence of ...

8 Q Okay.

9 During the time that you worked
10 as assistant general manager under Scott
11 Layden, were there ever times when
12 employees came to you with work-related
13 issues?

14 A No.

15 Q When was it, if you recall, that
16 Scott Layden actually came to work at the
17 Garden?

18 A I can't recall a specific date.
19 Late '90s. I am not sure.

20 Q So let's talk about the time
21 period, just for a moment, when Scott
22 Layden is the -- is he the general manager
23 of the Knicks? Is that his title?

24 A I recall that being his title to
25 start. I think he was president, also.

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JEFFREY NIX

A When Isiah arrived, he made a coaching change.

Q So what happens actually when Isiah Thomas arrives in December of '03, is that he comes on and takes the place of Scott Layden, correct?

A That's correct.

Q And he also makes a coaching change and Don Cheney is no longer the coach?

A That's correct.

Q And who comes on as coach?

A Lenny Wilkins.

Q I want to stay and talk for a moment in time when Scott Layden was the president and general manager of the Knicks.

During that time period -- strike that.

There came a time when Layden was the general manager that Anucha Browne Sanders came to work for the Knicks as well; is that correct? For Madison Square Garden?

1 JEFFREY NIX

2 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

3 A Yes.

4 Q Would you and, for example, Scott
5 Layden and she have dinner on occasion?

6 A Sure.

7 Q With spouses?

8 A Yes.

9 Q During that time period, would
10 Anucha Browne Sanders come out to the
11 practice facility to watch practices?

12 A She would come out on occasion,
13 sure, yes.

14 Q Would she actually participate,
15 for example; in scouting activities?

16 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

17 A I am not sure exactly what you
18 mean by "scouting activities."

19 Q Well, would she ever -- would she
20 ever go out when scouting was being done
21 to watch the process or see the process?

22 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

23 A No, she would not travel with our
24 scouts to see games.

25 Q When trades were being made, did

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JEFFREY NIX

Thanks for explaining that.

MR. ADES: So you can explain -- she's trying to understand what's going on.

Q And so would she -- did she ever participate in draft night?

A Yes.

Q And why would she be there?

A First of all, she's a senior-level executive at Madison Square Garden. They were all invited to that event, to that room to see that process.

We also had players that evening that might have been at Madison Square Garden on draft night. You select them, you bring them up, you introduce them to the people involved, our scouts, our executive management team.

And it was important -- I think it was a valuable part of our -- you know, it's a team effort.

Q Sure.

A And that's how -- that's how I always treated things: We are a team.

1 JEFFREY NIX

2 Q Did she read scouting reports?

3 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

4 A No.

5 Q When the -- when the game was
6 actually going on, where would you go to
7 watch the game from?

8 A I would watch the game in a TV
9 booth, upper level Madison Square Garden.

10 MR. ADES: All the time? Did you
11 ever watch it from anywhere else?

12 THE WITNESS: Maybe from the
13 lounge, in the players' lounge.

14 MR. ADES: Just trying to be
15 accurate.

16 Q Thanks.

17 Anywhere else?

18 A No.

19 Q And would Anucha Browne Sanders
20 ever join you to watching the game from
21 either of those vantage points?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And where would Mr. Layden watch
24 the game from?

25 A He would be --

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JEFFREY NIX

MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

Any time? I mean, this is during that same period but any time?

MS. FRANCO: Yeah, okay.

Q What was his usual practice?

A He would watch the game up in the TV booth.

Q So during the course of an average week, let's say during the season when Layden is general manager and you are assistant general manager and Anucha Browne Sanders is working at Madison Square Garden as well, you would see her on three or four occasions during the week?

MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

A It depends on the season.

Q Okay.

A You know, we are not a January-to-December schedule in basketball. We have a preseason, we have a season, regular season. We have a post season, we have a draft season in June, and then we have basically an off season

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2 of course. Yes.

3 Q What were some of those changes?

4 A Regarding the practice facility,
5 the players' appearance, the team playing,
6 coats and ties, all those types of things,
7 yes.

8 Q So, for example, in terms of the
9 players' appearance, you are saying
10 actually that when Isiah Thomas came in,
11 he put some kind of rules into place about
12 how the players would dress?

13 A He had some specific rules, yes.

14 Q And what were those?

15 A Coat and tie on the road, on the
16 plane.

17 Q Anything else?

18 A Player related, I am not sure. I
19 don't recall.

20 Q You said he put some rules into
21 effect with regard to the practice
22 facility.

23 Would those have been rules with
24 regard to who would be allowed out at the
25 practice facility?

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2 A Not necessarily, no.

3 Q Having to do with who would be
4 allowed, say, in the locker rooms after
5 games?

6 A Specifically in the locker room
7 or the lounge area.

8 Q Let's talk about the lounge area.

9 A Just team personnel.

10 Q Was -- was that a change in terms
11 of what had occurred under Scott Layden?

12 A I don't recall there being a
13 significant change. It was more -- you
14 know, it had no effect on me.

15 Q Were you able to observe whether
16 it had an effect on others?

17 MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

18 A I don't recall the effect on
19 others. I don't recall specifically the
20 rules.

21 Q But you do recall that there were
22 rules that were actually codified, whether
23 they were codified in terms of e-mails or
24 postings or whatever, that Isiah Thomas
25 made it clear how he wanted players to be

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JEFFREY NIX

treated out at the practice facility,
correct?

MR. MINTZER: Objection to form.

A I don't recall anything in
writing.

Q Well, how was it that you heard
about these changes?

A Verbally.

Q From whom?

A From people at the practice
facility. Yeah, Isiah has some specific
rules who could come to the locker room,
who parked where, things like that at
Madison Square Garden. Who can come back
in the locker room area after the games.
Closed the doors. You know, they would
hold the press.

And really there was nothing
really significant, I didn't think.

Q Did Anucha Browne Sanders ever
make any statements to you that indicated
that she thought that she was less welcome
in any of those areas than she had been
before under Scott Layden?

1 JEFFREY NIX

2 personnel that were back there never
3 really changed as far as I know. I mean,
4 you have three specific locations for the
5 most part. You have the New York Knicks'
6 locker room, you have the lounge area and
7 you have the New York Rangers' locker
8 room.

9 Q What kind of changes took place
10 in terms of after Isiah Thomas came in
11 terms of people who would have access to
12 the lounge or the ability to come in the
13 lounge?

14 A I think he just wanted to keep it
15 off limits -- I don't think Isiah wanted
16 people just lounging and hanging out there
17 during the game, being around there. He
18 wanted to create a sterile environment
19 around the team on game days at Madison
20 Square Garden.

21 Q Did he ever tell you why?

22 A No.

23 Q Did there ever come a time in
24 this January-to-March time frame -- strike
25 that.

1 JEFFREY NIX

2 Q Okay.

3 So from 1992 on, you would have a
4 contract and then periodically renew or
5 amend that contract?

6 A Exactly.

7 Q Did you have a contract that was
8 up in October of '04?

9 A No.

10 Q And so did the change that Isiah
11 Thomas was telling you he was going to
12 make, did that require some negotiation to
13 amend an existing contract?

14 A It was it was an amendment to the
15 end of the current contract that I was on.
16 My title as assistant general manager
17 ceased on August 31 of 2005. On
18 September 1 of 2005 is when my title of
19 director of scouting kicked in.

20 Q Are you saying 2005 or 2004?

21 A 2005.

22 MR. ADES: So even though Isiah
23 Thomas told you you were changing, you
24 still got paid under the old system; is
25 that correct?