

Page 1

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
06 Civ. 0589 (CGE)

-----x
ANUCHA BROWNE-SANDERS,

Plaintiff,

- against -

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

Defendants.

-----x
December 8, 2006
12:24 p.m.

VIDEOTAPE DEPOSITION of ISIAH
LORD THOMAS, III, taken by the Plaintiff,
pursuant to Notice, held at the offices of
Vladeck Waldman Elias & Engelhard, P.C.,
1501 Broadway, New York, New York, before
Debbie Zaromatidis, a Shorthand Reporter
and Notary Public of the State of New
York.

33

THOMAS

2 A. Well, for today they are.

3 Q. I don't --

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. Okay.

6 | A. And if I left that out,

7 | that -- that was not my intention.

8 Q. Okay. Is there anything else
9 that is inaccurate about this statement?

10 A. " When asked if charging party
11 reported to him, he stated that she
12 reported to Mills." That -- that would be
13 accurate.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. "According to Thomas, when he
16 started working he started immediately to
17 implement new changes."

18 Q. Is that accurate?

19 A. Assess and implement changes.

20 And -- and I think in -- in the phone
21 interview what I tried to explain in the
22 phone interview was that when I was hired
23 in December I believe of '03 the first
24 thing that I needed to kind of clean up
25 was the on court product in terms of the

34

1 THOMAS

2 you know, the players and the people, who
3 were -- they were coming to see play.

4 The -- and my job was to quickly try to
5 evaluate and assess the talent base that
6 we had, and I spent a lot of time trying
7 to assess and maneuver that talent base,
8 and so -- so that was -- that was the
9 implementing of changes on the on court
10 product and also, you know, tried to clean
11 up the space and implement policy around
12 the players and procedures in terms of the
13 way we -- we would operate and carry
14 ourselves and conduct ourselves.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MS. EISENBERG: Is there a
17 question?

18 MR. SMITH: Patience is a
19 virtue.

MS. EISENBERG. I know.

21 Q. Okay. Is there anything else
22 that is inaccurate in this document?

23 A. Well, we are going to go through
24 this line by line.

25 Q. We can go through this line by

THOMAS

35

2 line.

3 A. Okay. So the first thing I did
4 was to close access to practices only to
5 coaches and players. Locker rooms were
6 also restricted only to players and
7 coaches and medical team. Well, the first
8 thing I did was implemented a dress code
9 at the practice facility and also, you
10 know, for our players, and -- and I did
11 implement, you know, access -- I closed
12 down access to practices, coaches and
13 players, locker rooms, so forth. So that
14 is -- that's accurate.

15 Q. Okay. And just to -- I want to
16 go back for a second. The line before, it
17 says, "According to Thomas when he started
18 working he started to immediately
19 implement new changes."

22 MR. SMITH: Withdrawn.

23 Q. Are you saying is what she said
24 that you -- the first thing you did is you
25 started to implement new changes? Did you

1. THOMAS

2 tell the EEOC investigator that you were
3 implementing new changes?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And did you tell the EOC
6 investigator that you did close practices
7 to coaches and players and locker rooms
8 were restricted only to medical staff?

9 MS. EISENBERG: Objection as to
10 form.

11 A. No, I didn't tell her that I
12 closed practice to the coaches.

13 Q. I am sorry. You are right. Let
14 me -- let me -- excuse me.

15 You said the first thing you did
16 was to close access to practices to only
17 coaches and players, and locker rooms were
18 also restricted only to players, coaches
19 and medical staff.

20 Did you tell the EEOC
21 investigator that?

22 MS. EISENBERG: I am going to
23 object as to form.

24 A. Now, does that mean I can answer
25 that or not?

1. THOMAS

2. MS. EISENBERG: Yes.

3. Q. Yes, you can answer.

4. MS. EISENBERG: If you are able
5. to answer it, go ahead.

6. Q. She will instruct you when she
7. doesn't want you to answer.

8. A. Okay.

9. Q. I'm sure.

10. A. Yeah, I -- I did that.

11. Q. Okay. And did you tell the
12. investigator -- I am going to the next
13. line -- that was in his opinion needed so
14. to restrict -- I am sorry. That was in
15. his opinion needed, so the players can
16. concentrate and play?

17. A. Well, that too, but that -- that
18. environment that the -- that the players
19. have on -- and I said to her that the bus,
20. the plane, the training room, the locker
21. room, those are -- are player -- player
22. environments, and those environments, you
23. know, are -- are closed, and they -- they
24. needed to be protected.

25. Q. All right. But did you tell the

38

1 THOMAS

2 EEOC investigator that the players needed
3 to concentrate -- that they needed to
4 do so for -- so the players can
5 concentrate and play?

6 A. That would help them concentrate
7 and play.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. If you would cleanse that area

10 Q. I am going to go to the next
11 line. "The charging party was to deal
12 only with the marketing and community
13 relations."

14 Did you tell the EEOC
15 investigator that?

16 MS. EISENBERG: Objection as to
17 form.

18 A. No. I --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I believe I -- I think I -- it
21 is written here, but I think we were
22 talking about what I understood her
23 responsibilities to be, and those were in
24 the marketing areas and also in the
25 community relations area. and --

47

1 THOMAS

2 -- multiple statements contained in that
3 one sentence.

4 MR. SMITH: Sure.

5 MS. EISENBERG: If you can
6 answer it.

7 A. I'll do my best to go line by
8 line and kind of --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- tell you what I was speaking
11 to her about. When -- when we did make
12 these changes -- "According to Thomas
13 charging party did not like the change
14 because now she was not able to schedule
15 players as freely as she did before," I
16 don't -- I don't recall if I said that.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And I definitely can't say to
19 you that Anucha felt that way because I
20 don't know, but in -- in terms of her
21 being restricted from the plane and buses
22 or anything else, I -- I am quite sure I
23 said to -- to her that Anucha had access
24 and could go on the plane and bring
25 marketing people or whoever she wanted to

48

15 A. I was saying to Patricia, you
16 know, the changes implemented again just
17 required notice and if -- if Anucha gave
18 us notice, then we would give her access.

19 Q. I want to go to the next
20 sentence. "According to Thomas, he, the
21 charging party, and Frank Murphy would
22 meet on a weekly basis and when needed to
23 go over schedules."

24 Did you have a discussion with
25 the EEOC investigator regarding that

65

1 | THOMAS

2 A. No, that was before.

3 Q. Okay. And what did Mr. Moran
4 tell you in your discussions regarding the
5 charging party's complaints regarding
6 sexual harassment?

7 A. He -- he asked if -- he asked if
8 I -- I believe they asked me if I swore,
9 did I use profanity, and they asked me a
10 couple of questions about if I ever
11 believe I asked Anucha or asked Anucha I
12 want to go offsite with her or if I was in
13 love with her, and I don't recall my
14 answers to those questions verbatim, but I
15 believe I told them I swore, and I -- I
16 had no -- wasn't in love with Anucha.

17 Q. Okay. I'm going to stay on the
18 document. I am going to go down to a few
19 lines where the sentence starts "Thomas
20 stated that the next thing..."

21 Do you see that sentence?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. It says "Thomas stated
24 that the next thing he was told that there
25 had been" -- "that he has been sued by

69

1. **THOMAS**

2 men said to women, and it is not -- it is
3 not given, taken, or received as a come on
4 so to speak.

5 Q. Okay. And did you give her any
6 examples of how you used the word love as
7 a greeting to men and women or more?

8 A. I could have. I don't recall.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I mean that -- in trying to
11 explain it, I could have said it, but
12 I -- I don't know word for word, verbatim
13 how I said it.

14 Q. Off the document for a second.

15 Have you ever used the greeting love with
16 Anucha?

17 MR. GREEN: Objection to form.

18 MR. PARCHER: Could you read
19 that question back, please.

20 (Record read.)

21 MS. EISENBERG: Objection as to
22 form.

23 A. Maybe in a greeting of hello or
24 goodbye but never to be in love.

25 Q. Okay. Could you describe how

177

1 | THOMAS

2 (Record read.)

3 MR. SMITH: And what was his
4 answer.

5 (Record read.)

6 Q. Have you ever used -- used the
7 term bitch at -- when you -- as --

8 MR. SMITH: Withdrawn.

9 Q. As president of basketball
10 operations for the New York Knicks, have
11 you ever used the term bitch in describing
12 any employee?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Have you ever used the term ho
15 in describing any employee?

16 A. No.

17 Q. As president of basketball
18 operations for the New York Knicks, have
19 you ever used the word bitch?

20 A. At work?

21 Q. Yes, at work.

22 A. No.

23 Q. Have you ever used the word ho
24 at work?

25 A. No.

192

1 THOMAS

2 Murphy. At any time during that
3 conversation did you ever curse at
4 Ms. Saunders?

5 A. I -- I have never cursed at
6 Ms. Sanders, no.

7 Q. Okay. You're saying you've
8 never cursed at her?

9 A. I have never cursed at
10 Ms. Sanders.

12 A. Now, have I ever swore or
13 sweared or used curse words around her, I
14 probably have. But have I cursed at her,
15 no, I have not.

16 Q. Okay. All right. During this
17 conversation on the phone with
18 Ms. Saunders, did you at any time use the
19 word bitch?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Did you at any time use the word
22 fuck?

23 A. That -- that -- that could have
24 come out but not necessarily at her.
25 I -- you know, I -- I could have said I'll

193

1 | THOMAS

2 F'ing handle it or I'll -- I could -- I
3 could have sworn but never at her, and by
4 the way I -- when she -- when that phone
5 call was made, I wasn't upset with her for
6 calling me and informing me. I -- my job
7 was to handle it, and I -- I wasn't -- I
8 wasn't mad or anything that she phoned and
9 told me this.

10 Q. Okay. And during that
11 conversation over the phone, did you ever
12 refer to be Ms. Sanders as a ho?

13 A. Please. No. Come on.

14 Q. Okay. Now, when you first
15 started at -- as president of basketball
16 operations for the New York Knicks, did
17 you ever inform anyone that you wanted the
18 players not to do any community
19 activities?

20 A. No, just the opposite.

21 Q. Did you ever tell anyone that
22 you wanted the players to limit the
23 community activities?

24 A. No, I wanted -- I wanted
25 structure to the activities, and I

1. THOMAS

2. Anucha Browne-Sanders to be attractive?

3. MR. GREEN: Objection to form.

4. A. To me?

5. Q. Yes, to you. Do you find her to
6. be an attractive woman?

7. A. I'm not attracted to her, no.

8. Q. Have you ever told anyone that
9. you found Anucha Browne-Sanders to be an
10. attractive woman?

11. A. No, I don't believe so.

12. Q. Okay. As -- has the Knicks
13. during your time as president of
14. basketball operations ever had an open
15. practice?

16. A. Yes.

17. Q. Okay. And do you recall ever
18. having an open practice around October of
19. 2005?

20. A. Yeah, we -- we have one every
21. year or so.

22. Q. Did you have one in October
23. 2005?

24. A. Yes.

25. Q. Okay. And did you at any time

1. THOMAS

2. during that open practice ever tell anyone
3. that you believed that Anucha
4. Browne-Sanders was attractive?

5.

6. MR. SCHOENFELD: Could you
7. repeat that question. I am sorry.

8. (Record read.)

9. A. No, I -- no, I didn't.

10. Q. Okay. Did you ever tell anyone
11. during that open practice that you
12. believed that it was hard to work with
13. Anucha Browne-Sanders because she was easy
14. on the eyes?

15. A. No.

16. Q. Did you ever tell anyone during
17. that open practice that you believed it
18. was hard to concentrate because Ms. Anucha
19. Browne-Sanders was attractive?

20. A. No, I've never said that.

21. Q. Okay. As president of basketball
22. operations for the New York Knicks, do you
23. have supervisory responsibility over the
24. players?

25. A. What do you mean by

242

1. THOMAS

2 Q. And did you have a meeting with
3 Steve Mills and Mrs. Anucha
4 Browne-Sanders regarding her job
5 responsibilities or your job
6 responsibilities?

7 A. Yes, we did.

8 Q. Okay. Could
9 you -- where -- where did that meeting
10 take place?

11 A. In Steve's office

12 Q. Do you -- do you recall
13 approximately when that occurred?

14 A. I -- I can't recall like te date
15 and --

16 Q. Was it in 2004?

17 A. Yeah, because I got here in
18 December, so it was definitely, yeah,
19 2004.

20 Q. And was it very -- was the
21 meeting very shortly after you had your
22 conversation with -- with Anucha
23 Browne-Sanders when you were -- when you
24 asked what I am -- what -- then why am
25 I -- then why I am fucking here?

243

1. **THOMAS**

2 A. No, that ain't what I said. Why
3 the fuck am I here.

4 Q. Yes. Did that meeting occur
5 shortly after that?

6 A. Yes, it did.

7 Q. Within a few days, a week, a
8 month?

9 A. I would say roughly a few days.

10 Q. A few days. And what was
11 discussed at that meeting?

12 A. Roles and responsibilities, and,
13 you know, Steve outlined the things that
14 he wanted from me, and he outlined the
15 things that he wanted from Anucha, and I
16 assured him and Anucha in a meeting that
17 that I would make sure that I put someone
18 in place so if there was ever a time that
19 I wasn't available because a lot of my
20 time was spent out at the practice
21 facility and traveling and scouting and
22 getting players and trying to make trades,
23 and in a weekly management meeting I
24 assigned Frank to that meeting, and I
25 assigned -- and I told Frank whatever

244

1 THOMAS
2 obligations or responsibilities that we
3 have that need to be fulfilled from
4 basketball operations, player requests,
5 everything else, let's make sure that we
6 get them done. And by the way, when a
7 player shows up, let's make sure that he
8 shows up with, you know, the right
9 attitude and -- and do what he needs to
10 do.

11 Q. Okay. During that meeting with
12 you, Steve Mills and Anucha
13 Browne-Sanders, did -- did Steve -- did
14 Mr. Mills confirm to you the roles of
15 Ms. Browne-Sanders that she was in charge
16 of all profit and loss, marketing and
17 players transactions?

18 A. Steve said that she was -- she
19 was in charge of marketing, and then he
20 went on to -- I think he kind of talked
21 about the inherent conflict between
22 basketball and marketing, and that it
23 always kind of exists, and, you know, and
24 he had said, you know -- you know,
25 if -- and he said to me if -- if Anucha

245

1. THOMAS

2 needs players to show up to -- to execute
3 and be at community relations or whatever
4 it is that they need to be at, you know,
5 your job is to make sure that the players
6 are there, and if there is an event that
7 is scheduled, the players are going to be
8 there, and I said I didn't have a problem
9 with that.

10 Q. Okay. During that meeting, did
11 Steve Mills ever step -- step out the
12 room?

13 A. I don't -- I don't remember if
14 Steve step out or not. I don't -- I
15 remember the meeting. I don't remember if
16 he stepped out or not.

17 Q. During that meeting did you ever
18 curse at Anucha Browne-Sanders?

19 A. I never cursed at Anucha. Now,
20 do I swear? Have I cursed? Yeah, but
21 have I ever cursed at Anucha? No, I -- I
22 don't curse at anyone.

23 MS. EISENBERG: Mr. Thomas, it
24 is getting a little bit late. I want to
25 make sure you are just responding to the

257

1. THOMAS

2 A. It could be.

3 Q. Could it have been more than 20
4 times?

5 A. Yeah, it -- it do because the
6 amount of time -- the games that you play
7 and when you meet. I mean yeah, it could
8 have been. I don't know. I don't know
9 the exact number to that.

10 Q. Did you hug Anucha
11 Browne-Sanders often?

12 MR. GREEN: Objection to form.

13 A. Her and Karen when -- when we
14 would meet, when we would see each other
15 you -- at the game, you -- you give a hug,
16 kiss hello. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay. Did there ever come a
18 time where you became aware that Mrs.

19 -- Ms. Sanders -- Anucha Browne-Sanders
20 didn't want you to hug her?

21 A. One time the -- actually it was
22 a -- the last time before you guys were in
23 the news paper telling me what this was
24 all about. I think it was -- yeah, I -- I
25 went to hug her and, you know, and say

258

1. **THOMAS**

2 hello, and she kind of pushed back
3 and -- and I remember I -- I said no love
4 today, and she was very kind of cold, and,
5 you know, there were ushers and other
6 people around at gate one, and it was kind
7 a little awkward moment, and I -- I
8 thought to myself, well, that's -- that
9 was strange. That was kind of weird. I
10 left it at that.

11 Q. When you -- the time that you
12 came to hug her, when she pushed away -- I
13 am sorry.

14 MR. SMITH: Withdrawn.

15 Q. The times that you would hug
16 Ms. Anucha Browne-Sanders, did you hug her
17 in -- in front -- in front of her, in
18 front, back, side?

19 A. No, we would always see each
20 other coming towards each other, and you
21 shake, hug, how are you doing.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Is that --

24 Q. On the day that she backed away,
25 was it -- did you come in front of her or

259

1 THOMAS

2 from behind her?

3 A. I believe I actually -- I
4 believe it was on the side. I
5 believe -- I think I walked up, and I put
6 my -- this is her here. I think I put my
7 left hand on her. I guess it would be her
8 right shoulder, and I leaned in and I
9 said, hey -- hey, Nuch, how you doing, and
10 I went to give her a kiss on the cheek,
11 and, you know, that is when I got that
12 reaction.

13 Q. Did at any time you ever tell
14 Mrs. Anucha Saunders that I know why we
15 have -- why there is friction between us?

16 MR. GREEN: Objection to form.

17 A. No.

18 Q. Did you ever say to Mrs. Anucha
19 Sanders that you believed that you and her
20 were similar or alike?

21 A. I don't believe so. No.

22 Q. Okay. Did you ever say our
23 relationship is like Love And Basketball?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Have you ever seen the movie of

260

1 THOMAS

2 Love And Basketball?

3 A. No, I have not seen the movie.

4 Q. Did you ever in your
5 meetings --

6 MR. SMITH: Withdrawn.

7 Q. In your -- have you ever -- did
8 you ever in your encounters with Anucha
9 Browne-Sanders ever ask her to go off
10 site?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Did you ever have a hotel suite
13 at the Mandarin Hotel?

14 A. Have I ever had one?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Yes, I have.

17 Q. Was there ever a period of time
18 when you were president of basketball
19 operations for the New York Knicks that
20 you held a suite at the Mandarin Hotel for
21 more than a week?

22 A. That I held the suite for
23 more --

24 Q. That you had a suite at the
25 Mandarin Hotel for more than a week.

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1. THOMAS

2. for the New York Knicks?

3. A. Yes, she did. She was a -- I
4. think she was the head of the dance team
5. and probably had some other
6. responsibilities that I didn't -- that I
7. don't know about.

8. Q. Did you ever request Petra Pope
9. to go visit or check on the refs, NBA
10. refs, referees?

11. A. Yes, I did.

12. Q. And why did you ask Petra Pope
13. to go check on the referees?

14. A. Because when I first got here,
15. the -- again, one of the things that we
16. wanted to clean up was front of the house,
17. and the officiating, you know, I -- I
18. thought the way we were treating the
19. officials, you know, was poor. They -- we
20. didn't give them food. We didn't give
21. them a proper changing room, and I didn't
22. think that we treated them well, and I
23. wanted to treat the officials a little
24. better, and their -- their changing room
25. also didn't have the amenities for a

264

1 THOMAS
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female when she came because there are female officials. So I wanted to make sure that our female -- when a female official came to The Garden that she had a proper changing place, and that Dan's team changed the way they -- their locker room was right next to the officials locker room, and I wanted -- we start catering food and putting food in the officials locker room. So I asked Petra since her -- her locker room is right next door to the officials locker room, could she check and make sure that if the officials needed anything while there because it would -- because our locker room is at the end. Sometimes they need to be taped. Sometimes they have hamstring problems. So if there was any miscommunication, since she was right there, if she could check and see that they were properly taken care of and felt that we as host we were doing whatever we could possibly do for them.

25 Q. Did Mr. Steve Mills ever speak

307

1 | THOMAS

2 being part of a previous regime.

3 Q. Did you tell anybody at MSG that
4 you -- that Ms. Browne-Sanders was upset
5 that you did not give Mr. Nix the
6 assistant general manager position?

7 A. No. Actually he was the
8 assistant GM with me I think through the
9 first draft, and I think I made a change
10 in August after evaluating and assessing
11 his talent, and the Knicks -- at that time
12 I thought we were talent depleted in terms
13 of what was out on the floor. I thought
14 he would be best served in another role,
15 so I assigned him to another role.

16 Q. And what role did you assign him
17 to?

18 A. I made him director of scouting,
19 and I gave Frank more responsibility and
20 made him more or less, you know, the
21 senior vice president of basketball
22 operations, and the skill sets that he
23 had, I needed more because he was more
24 skilled in contract negotiation and the
25 collective bargaining area, and Jeff was