

THE QB SWEEPSTAKES

A quarterback derby is shaping up on the Falcons. Three are in training camp and only three will make the roster. Is the competition already over? Hardly. No. 1 draft pick Chris Miller has yet to appear and, as Turk Schonert admits, 'None of us are foolish enough to think that the No. 1 pick isn't going to be here . . . the way I look at it, everybody's tied for second.'

By Glenn Sheeley

OK, here's the deal on the Atlanta Falcons' quarterback situation:

Three quarterbacks are likely to be on coach Marion Campbell's regular-season roster in September.

Three quarterbacks are in camp in August. What's that? Is the competition over before it starts?

Hardly.

On the field at Suwanee Saturday, as the full squad

practiced for the first time, were veterans David Archer, Turk Schonert and Scott Campbell. Not in camp was Chris Miller, the unsigned rookie No. 1 pick from Oregon.

But being a first-round draft pick on a team prone to pick a quarterback No. 1 only once a decade, Miller is guaranteed a spot on the roster.

"None of us are foolish enough to think that the No. pick isn't going to be here," said Schonert. "But the way look at it, everybody's tied for second."

Not quite. Archer, who has started 22 games over the last three

seasons, is clearly No. 1 on the depth chart. At the worst, Miller is tied with Schonert for second without having yet thrown a training-camp pass. Scott Campbell, acquired last season when Archer went down with a shoulder injury in the 11th week, is on the bottom.

One thing is certain as the Falcons begin the selection process as to who will run their offense coming off a 7-8-1 season: While Miller's holdout, now a week old with negotiations having stagnated, is a negative for the Falcons' long-term quarterback picture, it's a positive for Archer, who at some point is expected to be challenged by Miller for the starting job.

"All those guys are getting the work and I'm not," Miller said. "Me being out definitely helps David and the other guys."

Challenged last year when the Falcons obtained Schonert from Cincinnati, Archer emerged as the clear winner in the preseason. He signed a one-year contract last week that provides a base salary of around \$325,000, up from

See QBs

14D .

Sports

SECTION D

The Atlanta Lournal 🗆 the atlanta constitution

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Furman Bisher

Journal Sports Editor

The poisoning of colleges

There was his picture on the cover of Sports Illustrated, battle face turned on, pitching armed cocked, in his new Tampa Bay shirt, and beneath it "The NFL's \$8 Million Man." Vincent Testaverde, business major at the University of Miami, had made it in his real major, football.

Lawrence Taylor was on the cover of Sport with an expression unusually soft, and across his right cheek ran the text of a harsh explanation of what he'd done with his millions since he left North Carolina. He had supplied his cocaine habit and run with trash.

These are among the athlete/students that college athletics departments have been employing in exchange for (b) a scholarshipped education and (a) training for their chosen career, professional football.

These are the kinds of athletes that SMU, Texas Tech, TCU and other such desperadoes have been going over the wall to recruit at penal cost. The school is nailed and sentenced, the athlete goes on his way, signs into instant wealth as a mercenary and never looks back. He has been franked through college, been the subject of largesse, a fancy word for secretive generosity, all the while staking his joyful alumni to bowl games and prime-time television viewing.

College athletics are at their sickest state since Princeton played Rutgers in '69 - 1869. The National Collegiate Athletic Association is under siege because its book of rules, legislated by the members, is as thick as "War and Peace," and because it has the audacity to investigate such vulnerable figures as Tark the Shark and the governor of

What to do with the alums?

We are offered this solution: Pay off the kids and be done with it. From coast to coast, commentators, coaches, columnists, the alumnus on the street say in one voice, give the kids a handout each month. Be honest. Be up front. That'll cure it. \$100. \$300. \$1,000 a month. C'mon, the colleges are making it on TV, share the wealth.

In some cases the little monthly doles wouldn't even cover the kid's drug habit. In other cases, why should he be paid when in reality he is being trained to become an \$8-Million Man? Does he repay his institution once he becomes an \$8-Million Man?

This does not, I know, cover the humble and unglorified lineman who hunkers down and is noticed only when Instant Replay shows him being blocked on his can, or when he recovers a fumble. Or the true blue student who came to school to get an education and football helped.

Pat Dye, who can be quick to anger, has said of Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, the notorious agents, "I'd prosecute them and put them in jail. ... I'd put them away for

Now I would ask the Auburn coach, what he would do with the alums who line the pockets of prospects with money and stake them to automobiles in violation of the rules? Would Dye put Auburn's violators away? And let's not kid ourselves, they are there. Auburn once had an assistant coach caught passing money to football players in a hotel

They are there. They are everywhere. North Carolina is catching the backlash in the case of Derrick Fenner, who was admitted with a 540 SAT score, frequently disciplined, then finally arraigned for a murder in Maryland. Not much to be proud of, not your basic role model. The excuse of state schools, including Georgia, is that federal regulations demand leniency among minorities.

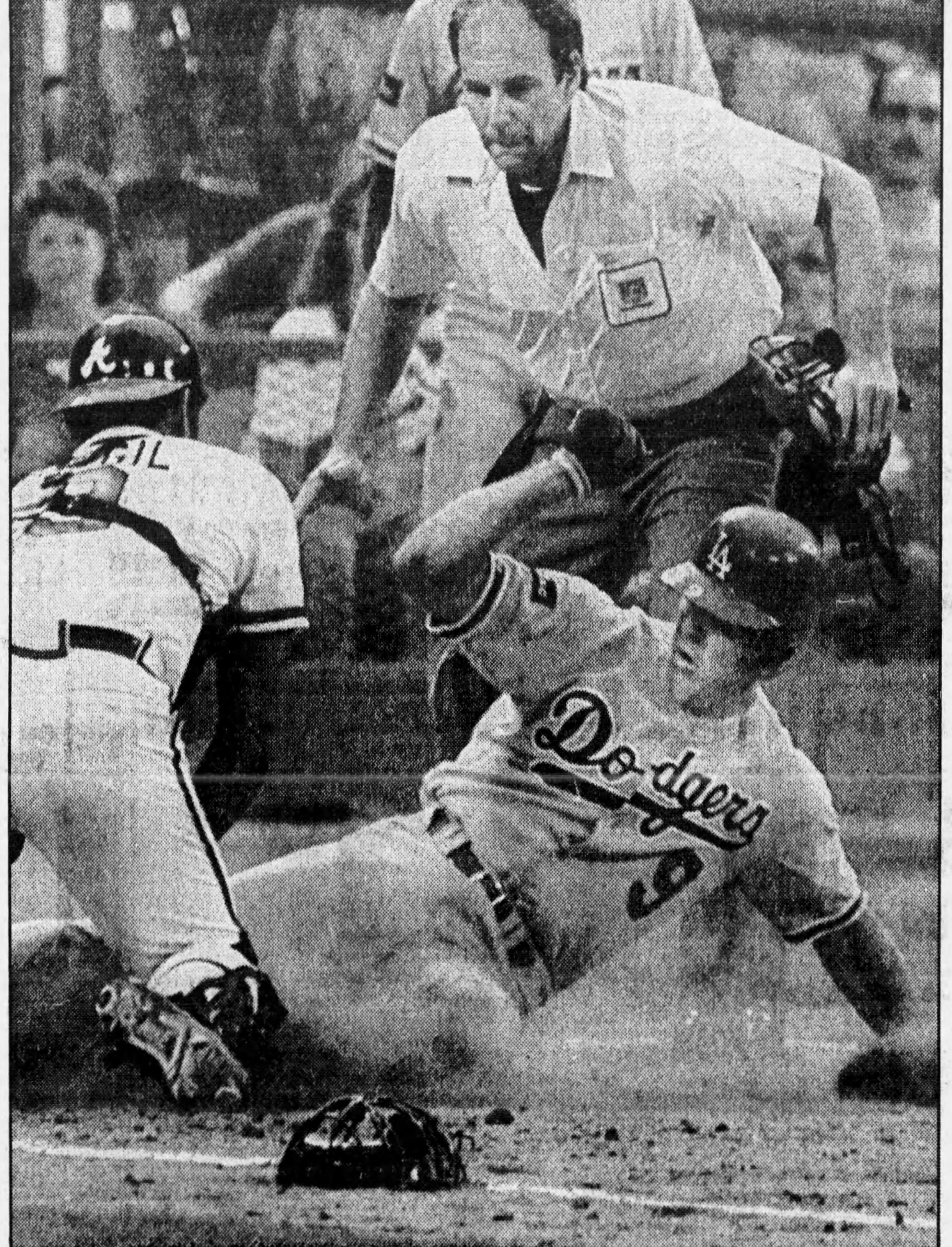
More than a nameplate on a bumper

Bully, give them an education, but keep them off the athletic teams until they've proved they belong in college. Prove to them that there's more to life than having their own sport model with their nameplate on the bumper.

The argument for putting football and basketball players on a payroll is that, well, the school is making a bundle on television and bowl games and the Final Four, give the kids their slice. That can't be denied, but neither does it brighten the image of athletics departments that are allowed to function as a corporation separate from the college administration. There is something putrid about that arrangement. If college presidencies have been so defanged that they are without the bite to deal with an athletic administration because of alumni might, then they need to begin at the beginning again.

Remember the big-cat alum who trampled the president of Texas A&M and brought in Jackie Sherrill? Are you aware of "The Family" at Alabama, who jeer at Joab Thomas, who would restore literacy to The Capstone, and Bill Curry, his un-Family coach? Where are the supporters

of the academic side while all this is going on? Nothing worse has happened to college athletics in this century than television. It is poisoning. It drives honest coaches and athletics directors to extremes to make themselves attractive to Madison Ave., and it drives the middleclass colleges further down the class ladder. OK, let 'em play football and dribble basketballs any time, anywhere, with any degraded kind of enrollee. Then require the ADs to direct their profits into the general scholarship fund. See how that flag flies.



JOELLEN BLACK/Staff OUT AT THE PLATE: Braves' catcher Ozzie Virgil tags out Dodgers' Mickey Hatcher at plate.

LA keeps Braves on the skids

☐ LILLIQUIST AGREES TO TERMS GAME REPORT

By Gerry Fraley Staff Writer

A shoe crashed into the garbage can. A shirt, another shoe, a bat and the rest of Andres Thomas' possessions followed.

Thomas angrily cleaned out his locker Saturday night and threw away every item that carries the stench of this terrible time for the Atlanta Braves. This is a team going horribly bad.

The Braves remained in their funk with a 5-2 loss to Los Angeles. They have lost 25 of their last 36 games and retreat so rapidly that San Diego, baseball's season-long joke, lurks only 6½ games behind the Braves.

This game suggested the Braves will have a version of the sack race with the Padres. The crowd of 43,804 at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium saw the Braves do few things properly and have fortune go against them.

The Braves had only six hits in 83/3 innings against Bob Welch, who beat them for the 10th time in 11 decisions. The Dodgers produced 15 hits against four pitchers.

The Dodgers broke a tie at 2 in the sixth with consecutive broken-bat run-scoring singles against David Palmer. The Braves had two runners on when third baseman Mickey Hatcher caught Dion James' liner in the webbing of the glove for the game-ending

Had the ball gone through, Ted Simmons would have faced reliever Matt Young. Simmons is 9-for-18 against Young. The Braves clutch the broken ripcord of what-ifs as their parachute refuses to open.

See BRAVES

9D :

There's one heavyweight champion: Tyson

By Thomas Stinson Staff Writer

LAS VEGAS — In the 41st month of his professional career Mike Tyson took final control the the boxing universe Saturday with a unanimous decision over Tony Tucker to become the first undisputed heavyweight champion in eight years.

In a fight that was not expected to last five rounds, Tyson, just 21 years old, summoned up some of his best boxing skills. Stalking the circling Tucker, Tyson never threatened to end the fight with a knockout but was nev-

er threatened with losing either. While Tucker was shrewd to keep moving throughout the night, he fought if only just to make the next round. And so he would lose.

"Hoping for a miracle," said Tyson's trainer, Kevin Rooney.

"And there's no miracle around here," said Tyson.

So ended the Heavyweight Unification series, a 10-fight tournament that has taken 16 months and numerous intradivisional squabbles to complete. Already the owner of the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association al Boxing Federation title from Tucker, undefeated in 35 fights and certainly more of a performer than pre-fight wisdom insisted. He went off a 12-1 underdog.

"I took him a little for granted," Tyson said, "and that was a big mistake. He caught me with that uppercut in the first round and I knew he meant

business." "Well, everyone saw it wasn't 12to-1 odds," Tucker said. "I thought I won the fight. I guess I didn't throw enough punches."

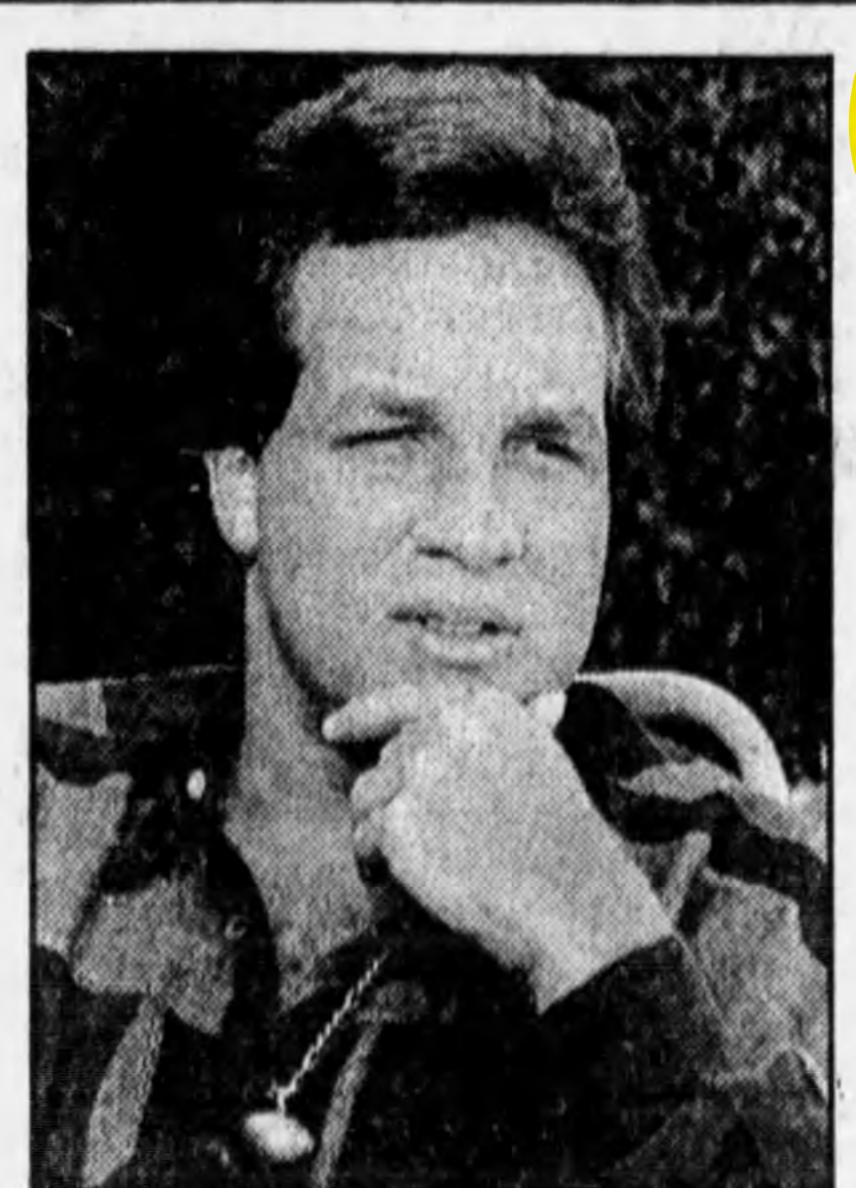
Although one judge, Bill Graham, See FIGHT belts, Tyson (31-0) took the Internation- gave Tucker as many as four rounds,

the scoring was resolute. Graham scored 116-112 for Tyson, judge Julio Roldon had it 118-113 for Tyson and judge Phil Newman graded the fight 119-111 in Tyson's favor.

Tucker's greatest ally was his 6foot-5 height, which helped provide for a 101/2-inch reach advantage. Luther Burgess, Tyson's trainer, sought the best way to use this one advantage and steady movement settled on throughout.

"If you notice," Burgess said, "Ty-

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GEORGE ROSE/Special

EXPANSION: Lloyd Bloom wanted to extend agency to sports.

Bloom basks in spotlight of notoriety

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES - Lloyd Bloom strolls through the lobby of the Beverly Hills Hotel, a famous gathering spot for the stars. Every few steps, he is greeted. "Hello, Mr. Bloom. . . . Nice day, Mr. Bloom. . . . Good to see you, Mr.

Bloom moves into a dining lounge, where he again is treated like a celebrity. "Mr. Bloom, do you wish some privacy?" asks the maitre d', who finds a secluded booth near the back. "Is this suitable, Mr. Bloom?"

"Yes, thank you, Pasquale," replies Bloom, who shakes hands with the maitre d' and passes him a green thank-you note.

The passing of money from Bloom and fellow agent Norby Walters to college football and basketball players has been common, Bloom and Walters have admitted. Their dealings have caused a commotion in college athletics, costing six athletes their NCAA eligibility, triggering a federal grand jury investigation in Chicago and turning

the agents into household names among sports-page readers.

The people at the Beverly Hills Hotel have been reading the sports page.

Walters, 56, was first identified with the scandal when he admitted in an interview published in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on March 12 that he had given cash to numerous college athletes and signed them to contracts before the end of their eligibility. But Bloom, 28, has emerged as a key figure — the architect of the operation, it turns out.

Lloyd Bloom was born in Brooklyn and grew up in Westchester, N.Y., a New York City suburb, the oldest of four children of Stuart and Myrna Bloom, who owned and operated a credit and collection agency. He was a football player and a wrestler in high school.

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See BLOOM

12D *



Norby Walters
Lloyd Bloom

Chronology of a scandal

March 12: Norby Walters, a New York-based agent, admitted in a story published in The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution that he has given cash to numerous college athletes in an effort to sign them as clients — a violation of NCAA rules that could result in players losing their eligibility. Walters defended the practice as good business and noted that the NCAA has no jurisdiction over him. It was also reported that two college seniors allegedly had told the NFL players' union that Walters threatened "to break their legs" for firing him. Walters denied this. While admitting that he's broken NCAA rules, Walters said he has broken no laws.

March 13: At least five colleges opened investigations to determine whether Walters has dealt with their players: Florida, Alabama, Auburn, Michigan State and Ohio State.

March 26: It was reported that the U.S. Attorney's office in Chicago and the FBI had begun investigations into the activities of Walters and his associate, Lloyd Bloom.

March 27: It was reported that Walters and Bloom had filed lawsuits against former college standouts Brent Fullwood of Auburn and Terrence Flagler of Clemson, charging that the players signed contracts and accepted money before their senior seasons last fall — violations of NCAA rules — and then reneged on the contracts. (The agents have filed similar suits against at least five other former college players.)

Rogers, in a lawsuit filed against Walters, gave this account of a meeting with the agent in December: Walters opened his briefcase, said "I came prepared," took \$5,000 cash out of the briefcase and spread it across the living-room floor in front of Rogers. Walters fraudulently told Rogers he would not be breaking NCAA rules by accepting the money and signing a contract, the suit in the Superior Court of Sacramento County, Calif., alleges.

the SEC's player of the year as a junior, ineligible for his senlor season because of evidence that McKey signed a contract with and accepted money from Walters during his junior season.

May 19: A federal grand jury began proceedings in Chicago to investigate the activities of Walters and Bloom. Several athletes and athletic directors were immediately subpoensed to testify. The grand jury, sources said, would consider such charges as fraud, mail fraud, wire fraud, extortion and violation of the RICO (Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations) Act against the agents. The grand jury also would consider indictments against athletes for committing fraud against colleges by signing contracts in violation of the terms of their signed scholarships. At least 50 to 60 athletes have been or will be subpoensed by the grand jury.

May 20: College athletes allegedly involved with the agents were told by a U.S. attorney that they could face up to one year in jail for fraud and tax evasion.

May 23: Walters said he is innocent of any criminal wrongdoing, and he called the FBI and federal grand jury investigations "totally off base." Said Walters: "The federal government has no business sticking its nose in my business. . . . I have broken no laws."

■ June 11: New York State Supreme Court Judge Myriam J. Altman, in denying Walters' request to dismiss an NFL arbitration proceeding, described Walters' practices as pernicious and deceptive in influencing athletes to act unethically.

June 17: It was reported that two football players with eligibility remaining at the University of Pittsburgh would soon be declared ineligible by the school for signing contracts with Walters and Bloom. The players: running back Charles Gladman and defensive back Teryl Austin.

June 26: It was reported that Austin told school officials that Walters stopped \$250-a-month payments and encouraged him to tear up his contract because the player's value as an NFL prospect had dropped.

June 28: In an interview, Walters said, "We've been blamed for everything but the Iran-Iraqi war, and I think that's next."

■ July 14: Former Auburn University running back Brent Fullwood said he testified before the grand jury that Bloom threatened to "bump off" his current agent, George Kickliter, earlier this year. Fullwood said Bloom made the threat after Fullwood severed ties with Bloom and Walters and retained Kickliter as his agent. Fullwood admitted to the grand jury that he accepted money from Walters and Bloom prior to his senior season at Auburn.

■ July 15: It was reported that Ohio State wide raceiver Cris Carter, a two-time All-American, will be suspended from the team because he accepted money from Walters and Bloom.

July 16: At a press conference in Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State announced that Carter is ineligible for the upcoming season. Ohio State athletic director Rick Bay said Carter had signed a representation agreement with Walters and Bloom and had received nearly \$7,000 from them.

w July 18: It was reported that Notre Dame wide receiver Alvin Miller is ineligible for his senior season because of dealings with Walters and Bloom.

In July 20: Carter asked the NFL to hold a special draft so that he can enter the league immediately.

July 12: Bloom, responding to Fullwood's statements of July 14, denied threatening any athlete or agent. He also said no additional players will lose NCAA eligibility because of dealings with the agents. "There will be no more bombshells because Cris Carter was the last one," he said.

chased information — including phone numbers — on college athletes from NFL scouts. This marked the first time anyone in the NFL has been linked to the Walters-Bloom case. College coaches provide NFL scouts access to their players and practices, while trying to keep agents away. Officials in both college and pro football said Bloom's allegation, if true, would damage relations between the NFL and the colleges.

clare James Lott, a defensive back on the football team and a three-time NCAA champion high jumper on the track team, ineligible for his senior season in both sports because he accepted money from Walters and Bloom. Reminded of his earlier statement that all underclassmen who signed with the agents have been exposed and no more would lose their eligibility. Bloom said, "I guess I forgot one."

--- From staff reports

Bloom: 'Hey, it's not that big a deal'

FROM 1D

"I played tight end and linebacker in football; I weighed about 225 pounds, and I thought I was a pretty decent player," says the 5-foot-11 Bloom. "I'm 185 now, nowhere near as big as I used to be."

It was during high school that Lloyd Bloom ran into Norby Walters for the first time. Bloom went to a concert by The Village People and Gloria Gaynor, and backstage he met Walters, a big-time music promoter.

"I remember Norby was Gaynor's agent; everybody said he was a big promoter, and my first impression of Norby was what a great personality and sense of humor he had," Bloom recalls.

After high school, Bloom enrolled in a junior college, but he says he was bored and impatient to begin a career as a businessman. He went to work for his parents at Transcontinental Credit and Collection. But soon Bloom became bored there, too, he says.

He was seeking the limelight, and he scratched its surface when he served as a bouncer at the famous Manhattan disco, Studio 54. He became familiar with the nightclub scene.

Confident he could succeed on his own,
Bloom formed his own business in which he organized parties for corporations and charities.
About this time, he saw Walters again — the
first time since high school.
"I saw him on Don Kirschner's rock concert

"I saw him on Don Kirschner's rock concert
TV show, and they were doing a special on
Norby Walters," Bloom says. "And I said to
myself, 'That's the man I met at the Gloria
Gaynor concert.'

"I called him up and told him I'd like to throw him and Don Kirschner a party, that I would spare no expense, that I would pick up the tab. He loved the idea. Every major star was there. The party was so successful that he told me, 'I would like to have one of these every year.'

"So we kept in touch throughout the year. I'd ask him for concert tickets for myself and my family. Then, finally, I approached him almost three years ago and told him, 'You're the most successful music agent, and music is one part of entertainment, sports is another. Would you like to come into the sports business?' And the rest is history."

In late summer 1984, at age 25, Bloom persuaded the highly successful Walters to expand from the music booking and promotion business to the sports field. World Sports and Entertainment Inc., they called themselves. Originally, Bloom says, he told Walters that it would take about \$100,000 to fund the foray into sports representation.

Off they went, scouring the country for football and basketball prospects, signing between 50 and 60 from late 1984 through early 1987. Almost all of the athletes signed before their college eligibility expired and received thousands of dollars from the agents in return — violations of NCAA rules. The signings stopped after the agents hit the headlines in March.

Bloom says he believes that the very first athlete to sign was Iowa State's all-time leading wide receiver, Tracy Henderson, in '84. At Iowa State, Henderson was the favorite target of Dave Archer, now the Falcons' quarterback.

Henderson was dismissed from the Iowa State team after the '84 season, his junior year. At the time, it was reported that Henderson was kicked off for disciplinary reasons. But former Iowa State coach Jim Criner now confirms that the real reason for Henderson's dismissal was his signing with Walters and Bloom.

Determined to become the biggest players in the sports-agency game, Walters and Bloom spent far more than the projected \$100,000 signing athletes.

"That (\$100,000) is probably just a speck on our legal fees now," Bloom admits. And Walters, who put up most of the money, has said on occasion that he wishes he'd never gotten involved in representing athletes.

The amount of money advanced to athletes is believed to be in excess of \$600,000. And on top of that, "think about all the travel, hotels, meals, entertainment and cash that we spent,"

The agents have filed lawsuits against seven athletes who allegedly reneged on contracts. Others have switched agents since the story broke in March and the agents came under investigation by the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's office in Chicago and the federal grand jury. It is doubtful the agents will pursue legal action against most of these athletes.

The current status of the relationship between Bloom and Walters is unclear. Walters has chastised Bloom in interviews, saying, "He's gotten us into a lot of trouble with his mouth." Both Walters and Bloom say they are still in the sports-representation business, although Bloom admits they are not actively recruiting clients now and says the operation will be scaled down.

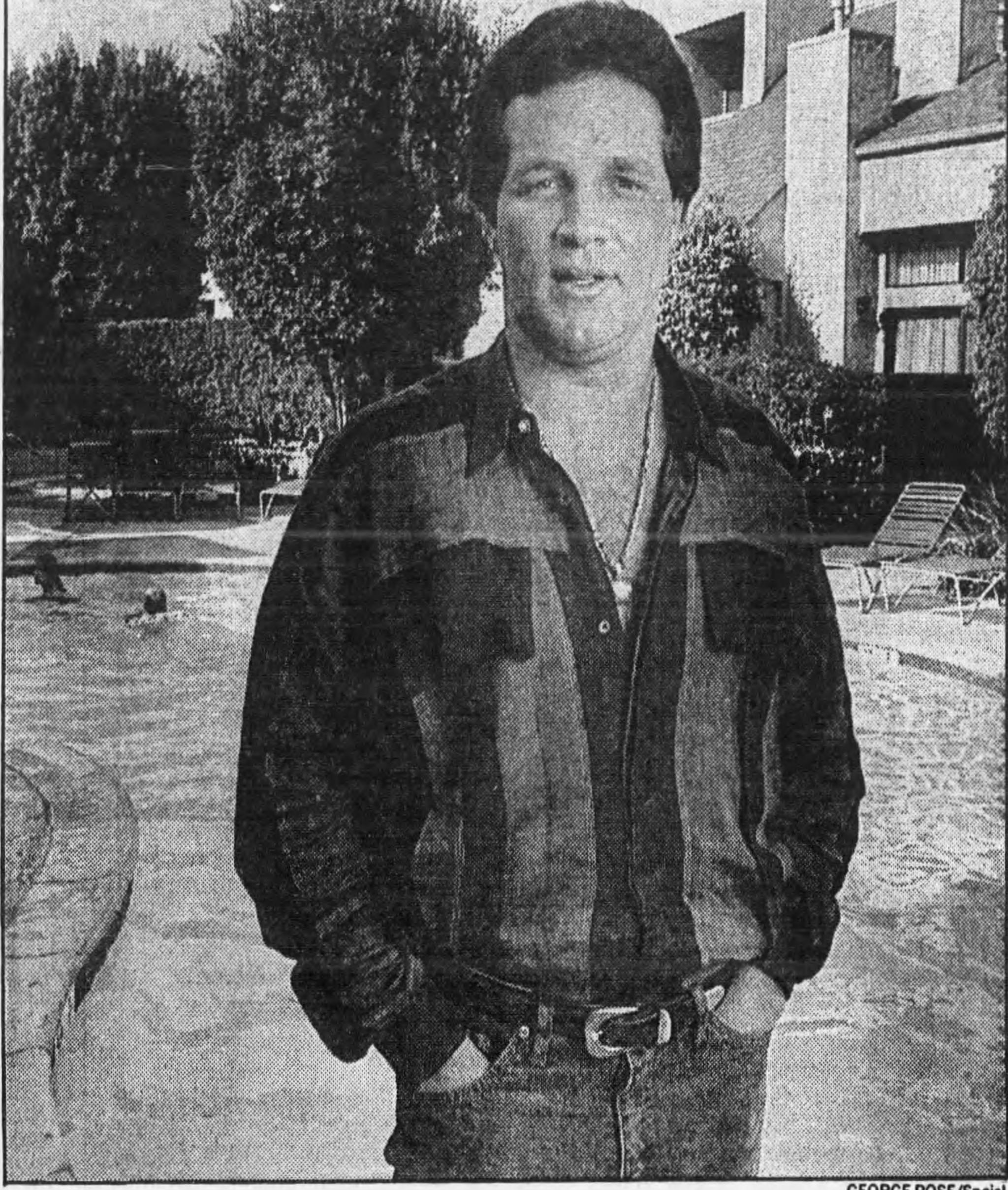
Bloom and Walters formerly worked out of the same office in New York, but Bloom has moved permanently to Los Angeles and last week leased his own office space in Beverly

"It's great in Los Angeles," Bloom says. "In New York, you've got to wear suits all the time. Out here, man, you can't beat it. It's a great life in Los Angeles. Norby and I are fine. We fight, sure. But we talk a couple of times a day. We're still partners, still buddies."

Walters has declined interviews recently on the advice of Gary Walters, his son and one of his attorneys, and was not available for comment for this story.

The story has gone beyond simply signing college athletes and giving them money. There have been reports of threats Bloom and Walters allegedly have made against athletes and rival agents.

Brent Fullwood, the former Auburn running back who signed with Bloom and Walters before his senior season, has said that he testified to the grand jury that Bloom threatened to "bump off" his current agent, George Kickliter.... An NFL Players Association source has said that two college players told the union that the agents threatened to break their legs



GEORGE ROSE/Spcial

'BREAK ANY LEGS LATELY?' Agent Lloyd Bloom says it's possible he's made threats in a fit of anger, but doubts it.

for reneging on contracts.... The FBI reportedly has a tape of a message that Bloom left on a telephone answering machine for SMU wide receiver Ron Morris. The message: Bloom allegedly threatened to break Morris' hands for jumping to another agent.

Bloom and Walters have repeatedly denied making any threats against anyone. Asked if it is possible he ever made a threat in a fit of anger, Bloom shrugs and says, "I guess it's possible, but I don't think so." A couple of times in three days, he asks a reporter: "Do they really have a tape of me threatening Morris?"

About Fullwood's allegation, Bloom asks no questions. "Again, that's so ridiculous I feel stupid myself even responding," he says. "I do not think this kid should be given any credibility. Of all the athletes we dealt with, there are only two I really despise: Fullwood and Reggie Rogers. [Rogers, formerly of the University of Washington and now with the Detroit Lions, has filed a lawsuit against Walters and Bloom.] They're a couple of bad-news bears."

At the Beverly Hills Hotel, where most visitors arrive in limousines and Bloom spends his weekends, the staff and the regulars know about the alleged threats.

"Every time I come in here to get a haircut, the guy asks me, 'Hey, break any legs lately?' says Bloom, laughing. "And when I get a manicure, the first thing the gal does is grab my hands and says, 'Let me look at your knuckles.'"

The threats allegedly were made when players began to slip away from Walters and Bloom after accepting money from them.

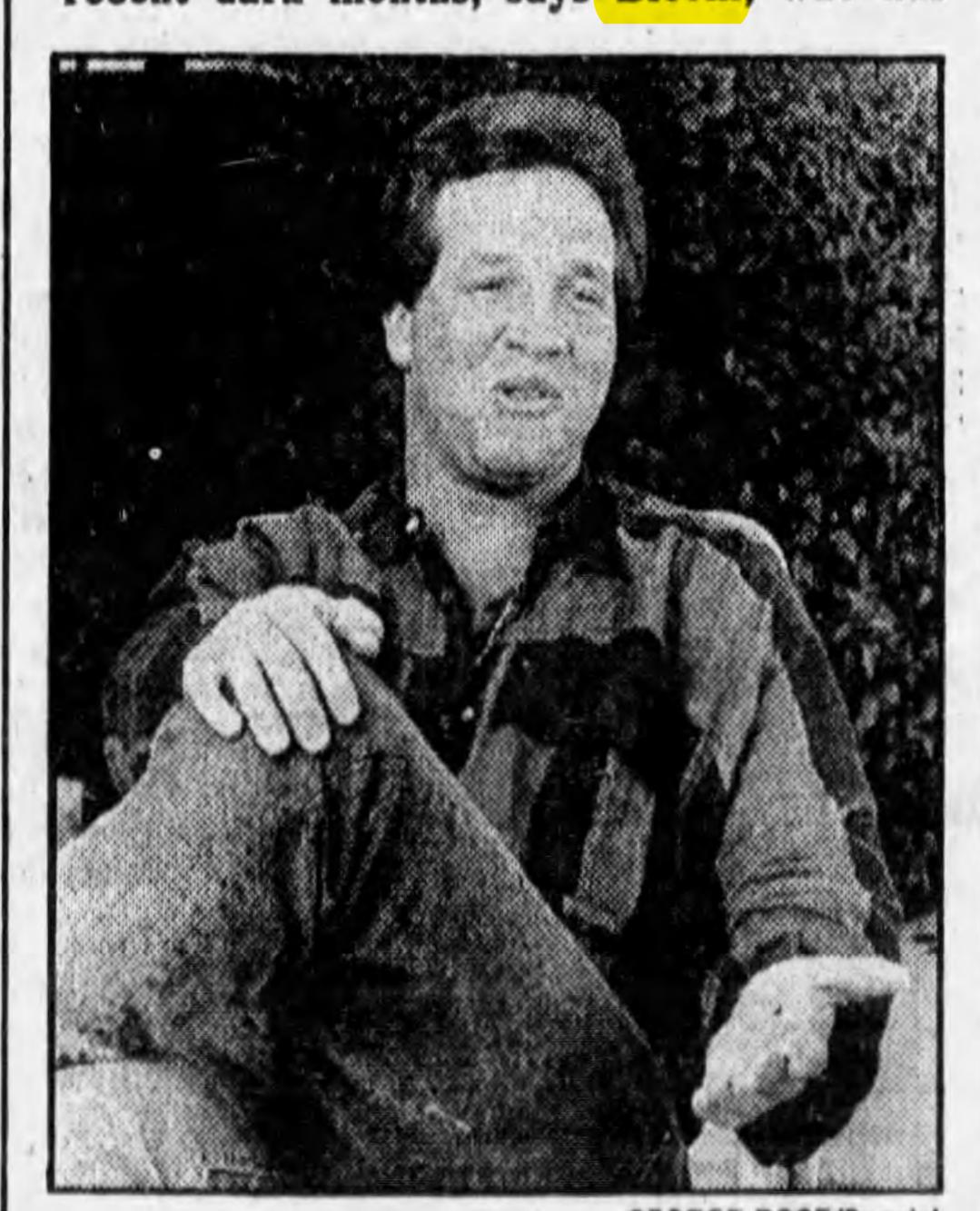
At one time, Bloom and Walters represented eight college football players who would be chosen in the first round of this year's NFL draft. By draft day, all but two had defected to other agents. If Walters and Bloom had kept all eight, they would have represented twice as many first-round picks as any other agent has ever had in one year. Bloom blames other agents, rather than the athletes or himself, for most of the defections.

"Believe it or not, I think they're all nice kids, except for Fullwood and Rogers," says Bloom. "I think they just got off track because they listened to these other agents. On draft day, do you know who I watched the television with? Mark Ingram. And that was after he left us for another agent."

Ingram, a wide receiver from Michigan State, was the No. 1 pick of the Super Bowl champion New York Giants.

The only players who remained with Bloom and Walters through the draft were Heisman Trophy runnerup Paul Palmer of Temple and All-America tackle John Clay of Missouri. They have signed four-year contracts negotiated by Walters and Bloom with the Kansas City Chiefs and Los Angeles Raiders, respectively.

Their loyalty has been a bright spot in the recent dark months, says Bloom, who has



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FORGIVING: 'I think they're all nice kids, except for Fullwood and Rogers,' says Bloom.

grown particularly close to Palmer.

Bloom called Palmer "one of the few athletes who didn't take money early." When told that the grand jury presumably will resolve that question, Bloom retreated from his statement.

"You better check with Norby. Really, all the money came out of his office."

Bloom claims that he and Walters were not seeking a competitive advantage when they signed athletes early. The reason for the early signings, he says, was to develop a good relationship with the athletes and their families.

"I wanted to sign guys early because I wanted a relationship for one or two years before we had to negotiate a contract for them," Bloom says. "I don't see how a kid can finish school, then sign with some agent he doesn't even know a month or two before the draft and expect to trust him."

Asked if the players who eventually defected to other agents developed a distrust for him and Walters, Bloom says, "No, no, no. All these other agents filled these kids' heads with a bunch of garbage. They made up all this stuff about us being involved with drugs and prostitution and the Mafia. They really confused these kids."

The only Mafia tie that has been confirmed is in Walters' past. Though Walters denies any strong friendship or business connection, he has acknowledged "knowing" a reputed mobster now in jail: John "Sonny" Franzese.

"Even if they were friends ... I mean, what's the big deal?" asks Bloom. "They didn't have any business relationship. If they had, and Norby was connected, don't you think he would have been locked up by now? The guy grew up in New York. He's owned restaurants. He's a huge music booking agent. He knows everybody. That's not a crime."

Bloom blames rival agent Steve Zucker for triggering an FBI investigation that led to the grand jury probe. The FBI began looking into Walters and Bloom in March, shortly after Zucker's associate, Kathy Clements, was beaten by a masked man at their office in Skokie, Ill. No link has been made between Bloom or Walters and the beating, and they have denied any role in it.

"Now, if they had any proof we were responsible for the Clements' thing, would we still be on the streets right now?" asks Bloom. "We had nothing to do with it. Did it really happen, anyway?"

Bloom says he and Clements were once in competition to represent former Nebraska running back Doug Dubose. A former Heisman Trophy candidate whose career was hurt by a severe knee injury, Dubose signed with Bloom and Walter, but later switched to Clements and Zucker.

Walters and Bloom previously had lost former Tennessee wide receiver Tim McGee, a first-round draft pick of the Cincinnati Bengals in 1986, to Zucker and Clements. Rogers, this year's No. 1 pick of the Detroit Lions, also jumped to Zucker and Clements.

"I think it's lousy when an agent steals another agent's player," says Bloom. "But no matter what, we're not going to go around beating up people or having somebody beaten up because some player wants to jump ship. Hey, it's not that big a deal. It's not life and death."

Life goes on for Lloyd Bloom, he says. "I'm going to begin representing some actors." But does this mean he plans to fade out of the sports scene into the Hollywood night?

"No, I wouldn't say that," Bloom says. "I'm probably going to be more low-key. Man, what a reptuation Norby and I have gotten. Some days, it's funny. Most days, it's sad. We didn't deserve this. Agents have been signing players early for years. There's a bunch of agents out there right now signing players, but where's the grand jury investigation?

"We've learned a lot the past couple of years. I want to stay in the business but stick to signing maybe five or six blue-chip players, and that's it. No more signing 50 guys. Uh-uh. No more of that. I've had enough of that, and so has Norby."