Bloom Feels Heat From Athletes' Testimony in Agents' Trial

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

CHICAGO — If the prosecution and witnesses pointed a finger at anybody this week, it was Lloyd Bloom, the sports agent who heard allegations of threats and mismanagement of clients' funds.

The trial of Bloom and associate Norby Walters enters its fourth full week here in U.S. District Court to determine whether the two men were guilty of racketeering, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion while dealing primarily with more than 50 college athletes from 1985-

The government is expected to shorten its case by a full week by possibly concluding Monday. Walters and Bloom then will begin their defense, and it is expected to be

The past week's highlights:

Former Texas players Everett Gay and Edwin Simmons told of threats Bloom allegedly aimed at Gay. Simmons testified that Bloom told him, "If he (Gay) leaves, then we'll make a phone call to some people in Las Vegas who will come down and make sure Everett Gay doesn't play football again."

Former Pitt star Tony Woods provided a 30-minute taped telephone conversation he had with Walters and Bloom in spring 1987 after his senior season. Woods testified that Walters and Bloom threatened to expose his early dealings and threatened the eligibility of his younger brother Darryl, who still had two years left as a Pitt football

Michigan football coach Bo Schembechler testified of telling former star defensive back Garland Rivers he was a "disgrace" for playing his senior season while under contract to the agents.

Kansas City Chiefs running back Paul Palmer testified that he was "shocked" to learn that \$125,000 he gave to Bloom for investment was spent quickly on personal items ranging from an \$82,000 down payment on a Rolls Royce to karate lessons.

Walters was relatively unscathed in testimony this week. In fact, the majority of athletes who have testified in the trial have admitted they "liked" and "respected" Walters.

Woods is among those who said he "liked" Walters. Woods was more angry that the agents were threatening to expose his younger brother for accepting a plane ticket in violation of NCAA rules.

On the tape, Bloom told Woods, "Norby says I have to do what I have to do now ... because your brother got a plane ticket ... he (Walters) wants to give that to the NCAA so your brother can't play football for the next (two) years."

Walters later comes to the phone and an excerpt the government included in the indictment last summer can be heard.

"This is my life on the line, not it's your life on the line," Walters told Woods on the tape. "To me, I say you have to examine it because it is your life, your reputation, your business, your family, your brother, your school. Everything is going to be tainted and tainted bad."

But Woods admitted under cross-examination by one of W attorneys, Ethan Levin-Epstein, that when the tape was made he had already been served a summons notifying the player Walters filing a breach-of-contract lawsuit.

Thus, the question was asked: Was Walters merely informing Woods of the consequences of public court action?

Walters appeared to be a man who could not understand why one of his potential first-round draft picks would walk away after an enriching relationship.

Testimony from Woods revealed that Walters not only lent the player some \$10,000, he also provided \$6,000 in loans to Woods's parents, who were struggling in a "Mom and Pop" janitorial cleaning service.

In the tape, Walters tells Woods, "The point of it is, man, is why should I be penalized? I'm a guy who did the right thing every step of the way ... took care of you ... whatever your family needed . . . never made a wrong move ... was never disrespectful in any fashion never once did I act like a cutie. pie, a big shot, a wise guy, or any-

thing out of order ever ... always love and friendship, right?"

Woods replied, "Yeah . . . right."

Woods testified that he dropped the agent because of rumors circulating that Walters was connected to the Mafia and drugs. Though prosecutors have have attempted to link Walters to an organized crime family on a "business and personal" relationship, nothing has ever come

forward on drug involvement. There are moments on the tape Walters makes Woods laugh. There also is a reference to pop singer Rick James, whom Woods testified to meeting at a party for

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comedian Eddie Murphy. took Woods to the party.

Any lessening of damage during cross-examination last week was negated by Palmer's testimony. After Palmer signed his first-round contract with the Kansas City Chiefs in July 1987, he gave \$125,000 to Bloo believing that the agent also was putting an equal amount into an "credit repair" company.

Assistant U.S. Attornery Howard Pearl showed Bloom put no money into the investment; in fact, Bloom had filed for personal bankruptcy two months earlier, citing \$200,000

Bloom revitalized was his own. Bloom's first purchase was \$82,000 down on a Rolls Royce Cor-

niche, which has a value of

in bad debts. The first client whose credit

\$160,000. Palmer soon gave Bloom an additional \$20,000, but did not learn until several months later what happened with the money.

Palmer also told the jury that he soon asked Bloom for money to buy a "modest" car for Palmer's older brother and sister. Bloom suggested he buy a "Yugo or a Hyundai," testified Palmer, who had no idea the agent was driving a Rolls Royce with his money.

Though Walters and Bloom by then had suspended their business association, the charge of defraud ing Palmer is covered by the racketeering indictment, meaning Walters could be held accountable.



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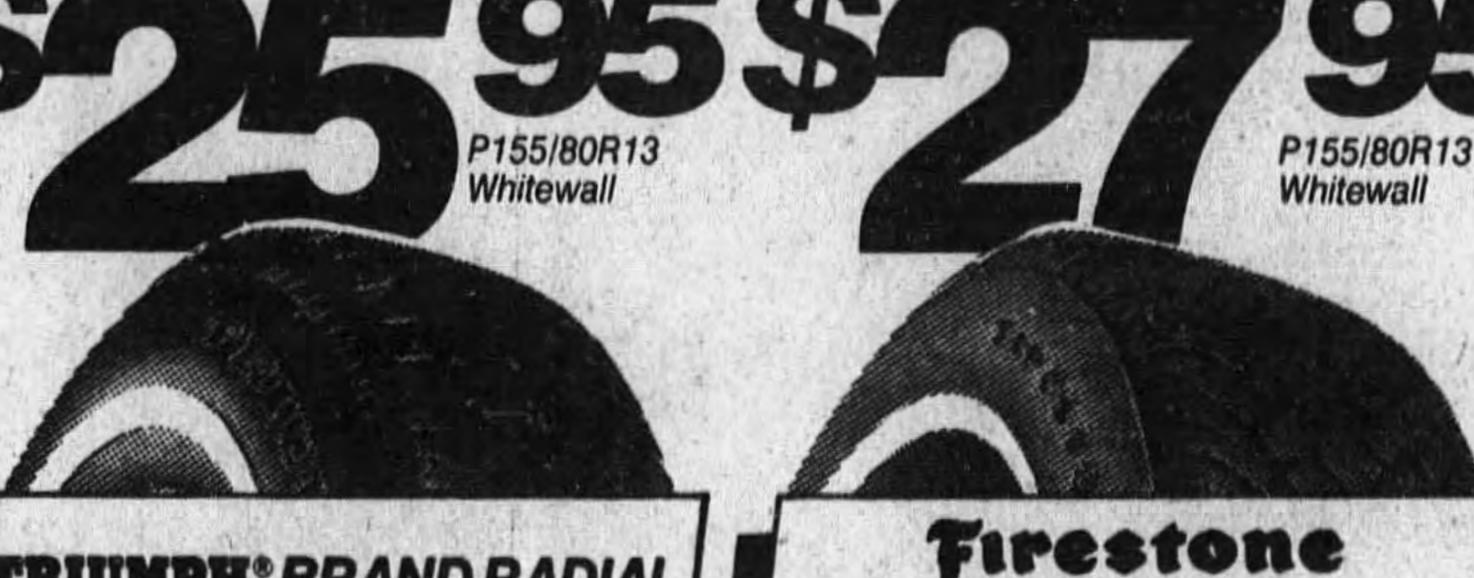
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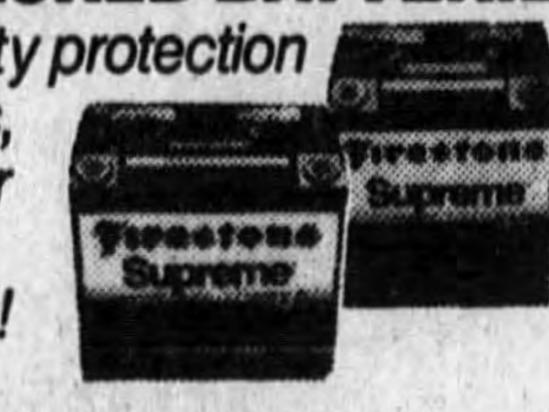


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