

Webb, Jim

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From: David Stern  
Sent: Saturday, August 18, 2007 9:19 PM  
To: Clayton Bennett  
Subject: [SPAM] - Re: Personal - Character set not allowed (n/a)

you and i are fine; i have been acting on the premise that everything you say about aubrey and your efforts is true--well before you said them; it pains me to to see the situation you are in, and i have difficulty conjuring a happy ending in seattle, but i appreciate your efforts and very greatly value our friendship. i have a meeting with the ref advisory board on monday morning, which i will spend the day tomorrow preparing for but we should try to talk early in the week--so i can calm you down.

in friendship

**REDACTED**

david

"Clayton Bennett"

To  
David Stern/NY/NBA@NBA  
08/17/2007 01:29 PM cc  
Subject  
Personal

First and foremost thank you for your leadership on the referee issue. As well managed as could be and I certainly support and agree that your internal response will make the league better.

Now from the home front.

1) As I told Joel on Monday night, without question the most troubling thing about the "Aubrey Episode" is that I am concerned that you may feel that I have betrayed your trust. David you know how I feel about our relationship both personally and professionally. You are among a very few, notwithstanding our relative brief actual physical time together that have significantly affected my life. I view you as a role model as an extraordinarily gifted executive, a deep and compassionate thinker, and a person with a rare and unique

charisma that brings out the best in everyone you touch. You are just one of my favorite people on earth and I so cherish our relationship. Sonics business aside, I would never breach your trust. As absolutely remarkable as it may seem, Aubrey and I have NEVER discussed moving the Sonics to Oklahoma City, nor have I discussed it with ANY other member of our ownership group. I have been passionately committed to our process in Seattle, and have worked my ass off. The deal for me has NEVER changed: we will do all we can in the one year time frame (actually fifteen months) to affect the development of a successor venue to Key Arena, if we are unsuccessful at the end of the timeframe, October 31, 2007, we will then evaluate our options. I have never wavered and will not. Further I must say that when we bought the team I absolutely believed we would be successful in building a building.

2) I am bringing on additional national caliber talent to crank it up in Seattle for the next sixty days. I will leave no stone unturned public and private in the pursuit of a deal. At the same time I hope to improve our public relations standing via an enhanced team and more effective productive messaging. In addition I am arranging my schedule to be in the market nearly full time for the next sixty days. This said I believe we have met our obligation in our efforts and I believe the development of a new building is an extreme long shot. But given the current context I will do my best to make the strongest case possible on behalf of our group and the league that we have exhausted every opportunity.

3) I stand prepared at your direction to do whatever you require at the October BOG Meeting. Any presentation by me and with our professional team and consultants is of course completely available to you.

4) As I also mentioned to Joel, I am thrilled with where we are on the basketball side. Sam Presti is as good a person and professional as I have dealt with on any level. I am so pleased it worked out that P.J. is with us. You know better than I, he is just as good a guy as there is, and we believe the right coach for this team. We are really excited with his opportunity with USA Basketball. I have committed to Sam that we will support his every need on the team side. I talk with him daily and he is managing our political challenges with the players and staff very effectively.

5) I aspire to be a good owner. I aspire to be a GREAT owner. I expect to lead this organization to excellence. We are in an extremely difficult environment. I won't complain about media, we have had that discussion. But how about this- yesterday Starbucks told us they were not renewing their sponsorship. Howard made the decision. In addition Howard and numerous others in the selling group dropped their courtside and premium seats. In addition in the "13th Largest Market" we can't sell tickets. I cringe when I look at how well Portland and Boston are doing as we limp along. I scratch my head. We have done a good job. We made what I believe to be our first real mistake this week and it was out of nowhere and inexplicable. I have no idea what Aubrey was thinking.

I know you're swamped and traveling but when it's time to talk I would certainly like to convey these thoughts

personally.

Please accept my sincere apology for this incident; I assure you I will learn from it as I continue to embrace this dynamic and very challenging business.

Very Best.