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Statement of Gloria Allred Regarding the NFL

Last Friday, September 26, 2014, I delivered a letter to the NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell at his New York office. In the letter, I explained to Commissioner Goodell that I represented a young woman who alleged that she had been raped by an NFL player and that on September 20, 2014, shortly after the rape, that my client reported what she said occurred to the police in the jurisdiction where she alleges that the rape took place.

I also explained to the Commissioner in my letter, that my client was told that the accused NFL player was contacted by the police and appeared at the police station with a representative of his NFL team. The next day, he was permitted to play and played with his NFL team.

In my letter, I asked the Commissioner if the alleged rape of my client was reported to the NFL, and if so, when it was reported. If it was not reported to the NFL, why was the Commissioner not informed? I also asked if the NFL approved of the decision by the NFL team to allow the accused player to play notwithstanding that the allegation of rape is serious and is under investigation by law enforcement. Finally I asked what the NFL's policy is regarding allowing an NFL football player to play for his team when a rape allegation is pending. I requested a response by today.

On Friday the NFL provided a statement to us through their spokesmen and were quoted as stating, “We have no information on this alleged incident other than Allred’s letter”. (L.A. Times, New York Daily News) Within the last hour we received a letter from the NFL asking for the opportunity to interview our client but which does not respond to any of our questions.

If it is true that they had no information as of Friday about a rape allegation reported to the police six days earlier, why did they not have any such information and when did they first learn that an alleged rape had been reported?

Where is the outrage by the NFL Commissioner that the NFL player and his team had not reported the allegations to the Commissioner immediately as called for by the NFL Personal Conduct Policy which which clearly states that:

“All persons associated with the NFL are required to avoid “conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in the National Football League.” This requirement applies to players, coaches, other team employees, owners, game officials and all others privileged to work in the National Football League.”

“While criminal activity is clearly outside the scope of permissible conduct, and persons who engage in criminal activity will be subject to discipline, the standard of conduct for persons employed in the NFL is considerably higher. It is not enough simply to avoid being found guilty of a crime. Instead, as an employee of

the NFL or a member club, you are held to a higher standard and expected to conduct yourself in a way that is responsible, promotes the values upon which the League is based, and is lawful.”

“Persons who fail to live up to this standard of conduct are guilty of conduct detrimental and subject to discipline, even where the conduct itself does not result in conviction of a crime. Discipline may be imposed in any of the following circumstances:

- Conduct that imposes inherent danger to the safety and well-being of another person; and
- Conduct that undermines or puts at risk the integrity and reputation of the NFL, NFL clubs, or NFL players.

Also, under the NFL Personal Conduct Policy, “the League must be advised promptly of any incident that be a violation of this policy. Failure to report an incident may be a violation of this policy.” “Failure to report an incident will constitute conduct detrimental” and may result in discipline.

Players, club employees and clubs are required to report incidents that come to their attention and the Personal Conduct Policy states under Discipline that “Upon learning of conduct that may give rise to discipline, the League may initiate an investigation to include interviews and information gathering from medical, law enforcement, and other relevant professionals. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Commissioner will have full authority to impose discipline as warranted.”

Given the stated policy of the NFL we must assume that by they have now found out who the team and player was. The League clearly has obligations to investigate and take appropriate action.

Has that occurred? If not, why not? If so, what is the status? Given that there is an alleged rape it appears that their NFL policy was not followed because it appears that both the team and the player failed to notify the NFL immediately and that it was only after I brought it to the NFL's attention that they have found out about it.

Their letter received this date does not ask who the player is, so I have to assume that they know which team and which player are involved.

Did the NFL allow the player to play yesterday with knowledge of the rape allegation?

The NFL Commissioner has been saying that they take allegations of violence against women seriously and they indicate that they are turning over a new leaf, but here, even though a rape allegation should have been reported to them it was not and what are they doing about that?

Is the NFL really concerned that a woman may have been raped by an NFL player? Are they waiting for an instant playback or a video of the alleged rape? Despite Commissioner Goodell's press conference on September 19, 2014 where

he promised to get his house in order, it appears to still be the same old NFL. Here we have an allegation reported to the police and my client went to the hospital and had a rape kit.

Does the NFL intend to impose discipline on the player and the team for failing to notify them as required under their own policy?

Clubs and players are required to report incidents that come to their attention. Is the NFL taking any action against the Club and player involved for not complying with their policy? Also, what are they doing as a result of the incident? The Policy requires a formal clinical evaluation of persons “appearing to have engaged in conduct prohibited under the policy”. When will this take place? What investigation, if any, have they done?

On September 19, Goodell announced plans to provide funds to domestic violence hotlines. He stated that the NFL was going to implement education and educate teams on domestic violence and sexual assault. His statements suggest that he cares, but actions always speak louder than words. Our client claims that she was raped. Other than belatedly asking for the opportunity to interview our client, there is no indication that they are taking this seriously.

On September 26 Commissioner Goodell reportedly met for hours with representatives of teams regarding domestic violence and the NFL Personal Conduct Policy. On Saturday, September 27, the day after he received my letter, instead of addressing the issue which I raised, he went to Texas for a photo

opportunity with a domestic violence hotline in Austin and refused to take questions.

Time and time again, Commissioner Goodell has been presented with opportunities to show he takes these issues seriously but despite all the rhetoric the NFL has failed in its responsibilities to show that it takes rape allegations seriously.

I am outraged that a woman can go to the police and make a report and the player and the representative of the team goes to the police and that NFL Commissioner says he doesn't know about it. Once again the NFL Commissioner has dropped the ball.

We need someone in charge who demonstrates by his actions that this is a very serious matter and he must demonstrate that it is serious by his actions.

The NFL policy says that even if there is no crime, the player is held to a higher standard. Where is the higher standard for the NFL Commissioner and when will he stop the photo ops and demonstrate through his actions that he will enforce the NFL's Personal Conduct Policy and take appropriate action when there is an allegation of violence against a woman by an NFL player?

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September 29, 2014