

Dude in a dress steals show at SB media day

By JENNA FRYER
AP SPORTS WRITER

The bride didn't bother showing up Tuesday.

It's a good thing, too. She might have been upstaged by the dude in the dress.

The oddballs once again crashed Super Bowl media day, mingling among real journalists and shocking some players with the absurdity of their questions and the audacity of their antics.

This year's crowd at the annual rite seemed a bit tamer — did the weakened economy take a bite out of this, too? — and the bride who so persistently pursued New England's Tom Brady and Bill Belichick last year was a no-show.

No worries, gentlemen, a "fairy godmother" picked up a lot of the slack.

Only she was really a he, and there was nothing magical about him. Under the red evening

gown, long blonde wig and layers of thick makeup was Joel Bengoa, a reporter from Telemundo Sports Network, the NBC-owned U.S. Spanish language network, looking for a laugh.

Doing his best — and we use that term lightly — Scarlett Johansson imitation, Bengoa teetered in his heels en route to present several players with boxes of chocolates.

"I'm from 'fairy godmother land' and you need me to win the big game," he purred to Arizona safety Aaron Francisco.

Francisco was a good sport.

"They told me it was going to be crazy, but I just thought it was going to be a lot of media," Francisco said. "Then that he-she gave me candy and I figured out what they were talking about. I think it was some Mexican dude in a dress, and he tried to get me to talk Spanish. But I'm from Hawaii, so I just played along." Bengoa had competition from

his very own network, which also sent anchor Mireya Grisales to find her "Dream Team."

Ines Sainz was back for her sixth Super Bowl for TV Azteca out of Mexico City, measuring players' biceps then comparing them to her 27-inch waist.

At the other end of the festivities, Entertainment Tonight staged a "Dancing with the Super Bowl Stars" contest between hulking defensive tackles: Arizona's Alan Branch claimed the disco ball trophy, claimed he'd keep it forever, then accidentally broke

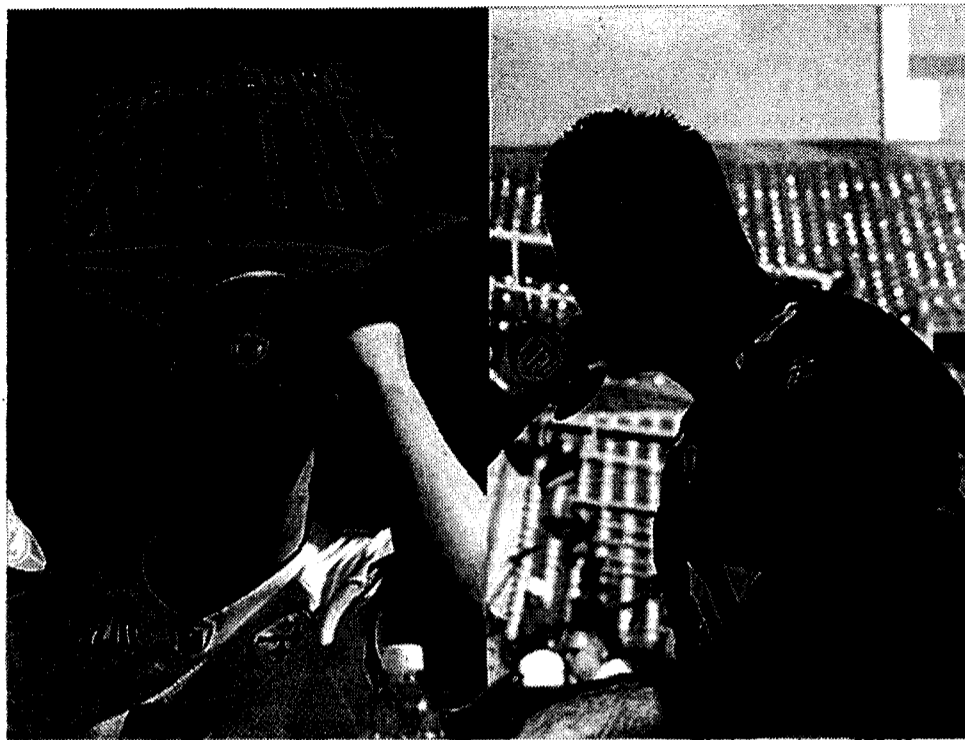


Photo courtesy of Nytimes.

the ball off the base.

It made for an amusing morning, but not everyone loved the attention.

Asked if there was anywhere

else he'd rather be, Pittsburgh left guard Jeremy Parquet didn't miss a beat.

"P.F. Changs," he quipped, "eating some kung pao shrimp."

Grand jury looking at Clemens case

By HOWARD FENDRICH
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Nearly a year after Roger Clemens told Congress he did not use performance-enhancing drugs, a federal grand jury is being asked to determine whether he should be indicted on charges of lying under oath.

The grand-jury probe was confirmed to The Associated Press on Monday by two people who were briefed on the matter. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because grand jury proceedings are supposed to be secret.

Congress asked the Justice Department to look into whether the seven-time Cy Young Award winner lied last February, when he testified under oath at a deposition and a public House hearing that he never took illegal performance enhancers.

That contradicted the sworn testimony of his former personal trainer, Brian McNamee, who said under oath that he injected Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone. Clemens last played in the major leagues in 2007, with the New York Yankees.

The Justice Department brought the case to a grand jury — which is based in Washington — after an 11-month FBI inquiry. A grand jury allows prosecutors to get sworn testimony from witnesses and collect documents. The investigation is being led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel P. Butler, the prosecutor in the D.C. Madam case.

"It's standard operating procedure for a prosecutor, and it's probably been convened for a while," Clemens' lead lawyer, Rusty Hardin, said through spokesman Patrick Dorton.

The grand jury's involvement first was reported by ESPN.com.

Barry Bonds, baseball's career home run leader and a seven-time MVP, is scheduled for a March trial on charges he lied to a federal grand jury in 2003 when he denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs. That is part of a separate investigation in California that also ensnared star Olympic sprinter Marion Jones, who was sentenced to six months in prison for lying about her steroid use.

McNamee's lawyer, Richard Emery, said his client has not been called as a grand jury witness or received a subpoena. But

Emery does expect McNamee to testify again.

"We will be cooperating. We've been in contact with the federal authorities for a year and a half," Emery said. "We look forward to the results, which we fully expect will show that Brian has been telling the truth all along."

Clemens' former teammate, Andy Pettitte, also has not received a subpoena. Pettitte corroborated some of McNamee's claims in a sworn statement to Congress.

Former New York Mets clubhouse attendant Kirk Radomski, sentenced to five years' probation last year after pleaded guilty to distributing steroids and laundering money, led investigators to McNamee.

McNamee told federal agents and baseball investigator George Mitchell that he injected Clemens more than a dozen times with steroids and HGH from 1998-01. Clemens' repeated denials of those accusations drew Congress' attention — and the former pitcher then made more denials under oath.

Clemens also filed a civil defamation suit against McNamee, a case pending in federal court in Houston.

Shaun Kelley, owner of a Houston training center, said he had taken a polygraph test for FBI investigators John Longmire and Heather Young in April and that he had denied meeting Clemens or providing the pitcher or any of the pitcher's associates with illegal substances. Kelley said he employed Clemens' stepsister Bonnie Owens for about a year.

Kelley said neither he nor his lawyers had been contacted by the grand jury.

"It is just not fair for me, because they just come down here and throw me under the bus, and I lose half-a-million of business," Kelly said Monday in a telephone interview.

Rep. Henry Waxman, the California Democrat who chaired the House committee that heard the testimony of Clemens and McNamee last year, declined to comment.

It was Waxman's Feb. 27 memo that outlined the reasons the panel asked the Justice Department to investigate Clemens, summarizing "seven sets of assertions made by Mr. Clemens in his testimony that appear to be contradicted by other evidence before the committee or implausible."

Those areas involve Clemens'

testimony that he has "never taken steroids or HGH;" that McNamee injected him with the painkiller lidocaine; that team trainers gave him pain injections; that he received many vitamin B-12 injections; that he never discussed HGH with McNamee; that he was not at then-teammate Jose Canseco's home from June 8-10, 1998, when their Toronto Blue Jays played a series at the Florida Marlins; and that he was "never told" about Mitchell's request to speak to Clemens before issuing the report containing McNamee's allegations.

The investigation could pose an interesting ethics puzzle for President-elect Barack Obama's incoming team at the Justice Department.

Lawyer Lanny Breuer is expected to be announced any day as Obama's pick to lead the department's criminal division. Breuer was hired by Clemens last year as he prepared for the congressional investigation that has now resulted in a criminal investigation.

When he was hired in January 2008, Breuer said he was "honored" to join the legal team "representing one of the greatest pitchers and athletes in history."