

[Coach] Knight Investigation Results Press Conference

**Christopher Simpson** [00:02:04] Alright is everybody ready? Good afternoon and welcome. We're here to discuss the findings of the investigation into Coach Knight and the activities that have been the subject of discussion for about seven weeks now. On my far right is trustee Frederick Eichorn, my immediate right trustee John Walda and President Brand on my left. You have correct spellings and bio's throughout. President Brand will speak then, Mr. Walda. President Brand, a few more comments, President Walda, then we'll throw it open to questions. President Brand.

**Myles Brand** [00:02:40] In early March, I asked the trustees, John Walda, Fred Eichorn, to take a very difficult and important task for the university. They agreed to investigate the allegations of former player Neil Reed, which were made in the television report. I chose these two men because of their impeccable integrity, their strong devotion and knowledge to Indiana University and because of their professional backgrounds as successful trial attorneys. As you know, Mr. Reed alleges that he was choked by Coach Knight. This is a serious allegation. Trustees Walda and Eichorn conducted a seven week exhaustive investigation. This was done in the glare of public media attention and it came to an end yesterday. The trustees have gathered ample information to make a thorough assessment of these issues. Indiana University, its family, its friends, its community owe Mr. Walter, Mr. Eichhorn a great debt of gratitude. I'd like to now ask Mr. Walda to describe the investigation and the conclusions.

**John Walda** [00:03:55] Thank you, Myles. On March twenty third of this year, trustee Fred Eichhorn and myself were asked to conduct an investigation of certain allegations which have been made by former Indiana basketball player Neil Reed regarding his experience at Indiana University. Those allegations included one that he was choked by Coach Bob Knight, that President, Myles Brand, was verbally abused and ejected from a practice, and that Coach Knight had displayed soiled toilet paper in a heated discussion with players in the locker room. We begun the investigate investigation shortly after we were asked. Our investigation was conducted with the assistance of an experienced, licensed private investigator who assisted Mr. Eichorn and myself in conducting the interviews. An attempt was made to contact all of the witnesses to the events which were described in which I have enumerated. In a few instances, individuals were were gone. We couldn't contact them. There were a few incidents or rather a few individuals who would not cooperate with the investigation. In the end, however, I believe that each of the investigations with regard to these incidents has been conducted thoroughly, and I believe that there are no important pieces of evidence that have not been reviewed and considered for our final report. At this time twenty nine individuals have been interviewed regarding the allegations. Twelve of them were

employees of the Indiana University Athletic Department, or part of the Indiana University basketball staff. Nine of the individuals were student managers or trainers, and seven of those interviewed were former Indiana basketball players. In addition to the interviews, we analyzed a videotape of a basketball practice, which apparently occurred in early 1997. The process by which that videotape became available is now well known. In addition, a forensic video expert has analyzed that videotape. This expert has more than twenty eight years of high level experiences in reviewing and analyzing video content. After examining the video in question, he concluded that it was authentic that a frame by frame review shows no evidence of any relevant action being removed or inserted. It indicates there is contact to the neck of the individual Neil Reed being confronted by Coach Knight. There appears that there is a grab and it is clear the expert has explained to us that the action was a grabbing of the neck and not just a grabbing of Mr. Reed's shoulder or jersey. The elapsed time for the contact is two point three seconds. As a result of these interviews and of the investigation, including the videotape, we have reached certain conclusions with regard to the incidents described. First, we could not accurately determine if a locker room incident concerning soiled toilet paper actually occurred. Each witness was asked about that particular incident. Many claimed that this incident actually wasn't real, that it was alleged. Our investigation also also found that President Brand was not dismissed from practice as has been alleged. Nearly all witnesses, with the exception of two or three, claimed that they had never seen such an incident, but they'd only heard about it in the rumor mill. And, the final incident, which is the most serious, our videotape analysis, we conclude, has confirmed that Neil Reed was grabbed at the neck. He was not injured. But this action by Coach Knight was clearly inappropriate and one which cannot be tolerated. This review is the first of its kind during Coach Knight's 29 year tenure. It also uncovered new information that illustrated a protracted and often troubling pattern in which Coach Knight has a problem of controlling his anger and confronting individuals. In order to ensure the integrity of the review, we promised at the beginning that all of those who were interviewed would be interviewed with confidentiality, and we intend to stick with that and therefore can't get into all detail on the incidents, which I'm referring to. Unfortunately or fortunately, many of the details of these incidents have been widespread and they've gotten much attention, so you know what most of them are. But what we found was a lengthy pattern of troubling behavior by Coach Knight. The trustees of Indiana University are primarily concerned with the fortune and the reputation of this university that we love so much. Our goal is to protect and enhance the image of Indiana University. And because that is our goal, we will not tolerate conduct from any persons who work for us that we consider to be embarrassing or that does not live up to the high standards that we expect of all who represent our university. Therefore, we are resolved that if Coach Knight persists in the kind of conduct which we've discovered, it will not be tolerated. And as I said earlier, and I reiterate now, there

are no sacred cows in Indiana University. This certainly includes the basketball program.

**Christopher Simpson** [00:09:31] President Brand.

**Myles Brand** [00:09:33] During my tenure at Indiana University since 1994, each of the allegations that became known have been dealt with appropriately and investigated. But viewed by themselves each allegation does not individually rise to the level of dismissal. But the review of the Neil Reed incident caused us to look at the sum total, the pattern of behavior. And from that perspective, it is troubling. This behavior cannot and will not continue or be tolerated at Indiana University. I believe Coach Knight to be a man of integrity. We also have to remember that he has an illustrious career, Indiana University. His players have extraordinarily high graduation rates, and many of those young men have gone on to be excellent and productive citizens. On Saturday night, I spent a number of hours with the coach and he and I have had some discussion since then. In these discussions, he has given me his word that he will take extraordinary steps to change his behavior and represent Indiana University with honor and dignity. He's formally apologized and will do so to Jeanette Hartgraves, the administrative assistant to the athletic director, for a 1998 incident in which Coach Knight verbally abused her. I've conferred at length with the IU trustees and they've delegated to me the responsibility of personnel decisions. Two trustees. Steve, trustee, Steven Ferguson recused himself from the beginning of these deliberations and in the final deliberations, trustee Peter Obremski also recused himself, both because they have had legal dealings with the coach. I am acting then with the full concurrence of the remaining seven trustees and after lengthy, very difficult deliberations, I recommended to the trustees that Bob Knight continue his duties as basketball coach. But I also recommended that he do so under very specific, very firm guidelines. And these guidelines and sanctions will send a clear message that abusive, uncivil, embarrassing behavior will not be tolerated. Let me repeat, we have established tough, specific guidelines which send a clear message that abusive and embarrassing behavior will not be tolerated. Let me read to you the directives and the guide and the sanctions. As a result of the review, which found a pattern of inappropriate behavior, the sanctions for Coach Knight are a three game suspension during the 2000 2001 regular season and a thirty thousand dollar fine, the fine will be withheld from his salary. Two, any verified, inappropriate physical contact with players, members of the university community or others in connection with the coach's employment at IU will be cause for immediate termination. Three, public presentations and other occasions during which Coach Knight is a representative of Indiana University will be conducted with appropriate decorum and civility. Included among these are interactions with the news media. Any failure on Coach's Coach Knight's part to meet these standards will be cause for further sanctions

up to and including termination of his position as head coach of Indiana University's basketball team. Four, a commission will be established to develop policies for appropriate behavior for all coaches, student athletes and the IU athletics director department employees. The Code of Conduct will outline sanctions for inappropriate behavior. The commission will be chaired by athletic director Clarence Doninger, and it will contain, among others, faculty members from the IU Athletics Committee. The commission will make these recommendations to the Athletics Committee, the president, for approval by the trustees. These sanctions and directives are effective immediately. The trustees and I are in absolute agreement. Should Bob Knight violate any of these requirements, he will be terminated. This is a zero tolerance policy. If Coach Knight had not agreed to all these steps, I would have recommended to the trustees that he be terminated now. And I believe the trustees would have concurred with that recommendation. Now, this process has forced us to question how well Indiana University has handled the individual controversies and incidents in the past. Could these problems have been dealt with earlier and in a better way? The answer to that question is yes, I believe we could have dealt with it more effectively in the past. We have a systemic problem that allowed this persistent problem of unacceptable behavior to exist. In developing a strict code of conduct for all coaches, student athletes and the athletic department employees, we are taking our steps to rectify the systemic problems. We cannot change the past, but we can shape the future. Any coach or student athlete who violates the code, including Coach Knight, will face sanctions up to and including immediate termination. Now, let me close my comments on a personal note. This has been an extraordinarily difficult and troubling process. On the one hand, we're dealing with sensitive and very personal issues. Even more so the trustees and I have had to deal with these issues in the spotlight of national attention. It has created an avalanche of responses from alumni, friends, and some who don't know us at all. The media attention is focused on the negative aspects of Bob Knight's public career and his personality. There is a profound good side to him as well, not only do his student athletes graduate and they become good citizens. But that good side has been floored by his temper. I have struggled, as have the trustees, to offer a balanced, tough, fair, ethical solution in light of what Bob Knight has been told in the past in the directives he's had in the past, as well as the current situation. I believe we have reached that conclusion. I turn it back to John to read a statement now from the coach.

**John Walda** [00:17:07] Coach Knight has asked that the following message be conveyed on his behalf. It's dated today. President Myles Brand, in a meeting with me, gave me a set of guidelines he expects me to follow if I want to continue as Indiana University's basketball coach. I have absolutely no problem with the guidelines. The establishment of effective and proper guidelines can, in the long run, help me become a better coach. As I have said before, I recognize that I have a problem with my temper.

For those times it has ever caused me to do anything that gave anyone understandable and justifiable reason to be upset, I am sincerely sorry. Signed Bob Knight.

**Christopher Simpson** [00:17:56] Questions, please identify yourself and ask me a question.

**Audience member** [00:18:01] (inaudible)

**Myles Brand** [00:18:16] These are tough directives, we're asking Bob Knight to live up to a code of conduct above that of any coach in the country, it's a zero tolerance policy. He is a man of integrity and says he will live up to it. If he cannot, then he will be terminated. Given the fact that he has not in the past had such a clear set of guidelines or such strong sanctions or such a review, I believe the ethical approach is to give him one last chance.

**Audience member** [00:18:57] To back from free press. Would we be here today? Would this investigation have taken place if Indiana was coming off of a championship, instead of being seven years removed from a championship caliber program which you guys have become accustomed to?

**Myles Brand** [00:19:14] There are two parts to that question. The first part is we still have an excellent basketball program. We've been in the NCAA 15 years. We had a group, a group of student athletes who performed well above the expected expectation of the sportswriters. We've got a successful basketball team. That's part of the answer. But that's not the real part of the answer. The real part of the answer is this is about integrity. This is about the nature of our basketball program and the role that the coach plays as a representative to the university. So it was not made on the basis of winning or losing.

**Audience member** [00:19:49] Then why hasn't, this man has had a history of unacceptable conduct and this is the first time the school has taken any initiative.

**Myles Brand** [00:19:54] Each incident was evaluated and there were steps taken in each case, including sanctions at each case that have not been effective in the past. Nothing this strongly and systematically has ever been done before.

**Christopher Simpson** [00:20:08] Yes, right here.

**Audience member** [00:20:10] (inaudible)

**John Walda** [00:20:22] Well, during our investigation, we understandably had incidents brought to our attention that weren't part of the Neil Reed issue. Most of those have been well aired in the media, the abuse of a secretary in our athletic department to the incident between Coach Knight and an assistant coach following the assistant coach's firing, an altercation between the coach and our athletic director, which is intolerable. Some that haven't been aired came to our attention. We learned of an incident where there was a fight at a practice of our basketball team that was inappropriately broken up or handled by the coaching staff. And we followed each of those stories and spoke to all of the witnesses. And I think we have a pretty good understanding of what's out there. Those incidents are what led to us, led us to the conclusion that a pattern of behavior, which we were not fully familiar with as trustees previously existed. And it's a pattern which we cannot tolerate.

**Audience member** [00:21:34] Those substantiated. You are our there. Are you saying those exact words, substantiated allegations?

**John Walda** [00:21:41] There were witnesses who substantiated each of the stories that I have described.

**Christopher Simpson** [00:21:45] Right over here.

**Audience member** [00:21:46] (inaudible)

**Myles Brand** [00:21:58] Coach will apologize to Miss Hargraves. He offered a general apology to others all others involved.

**Audience member** [00:22:12] Critics will say perhaps that Bob Knight, one man, has been and always will be bigger than Indiana University as a whole. Is Bob Knight bigger than IU?

**Myles Brand** [00:22:21] I think we've just proved that's not the case. These are tough directives. We're holding him to zero tolerance. We are taking steps to ensure that his pattern of behavior changes. If it does not, he will be terminated. That does not make him bigger than Indiana University. The integrity of the institution is first.

**Audience member** [00:22:43] (inaudible)

**Myles Brand** [00:23:08] In fact, talking about the Neil Reed case? Neil Reed did not speak out when this happened. We had an investigation at that time. He refused to talk to the persons investigating, claimed that he had to consult with his attorney. We didn't

know of any attorney and no one got back to us. The problem is that no one spoke out in the past. That has been a difficult issue. We want to revise the system so that people can speak out in the future. And that should be encouraging to student athletes.

**Audience member** [00:23:38] Yes, sir. In the back.

**Audience member** [00:23:41] (inaudible)

**Myles Brand** [00:23:55] The conversation I had with Bob was clearly unique. I have never seen him before, contrite and apologetic, sincere. He understood his actions. He made a personal pledge to me that he would change his behavior and I believed him. I think he is a man of integrity. Every time I've asked him to do something, he has given me his word. Let me give you a concrete example. After the shouting match with Clarence Doninger after the Ohio State game this past year, I went down to look the coach in the eye and said, I don't ever want to see you argue with Clarence Doninger again. Gave me his word. He didn't. And that has not happened. In all cases that he has approached it this way. He's been a man of his word. And I - my expectations that will remain as so to the best of his ability.

**Audience member** [00:24:48] I think, a lot of people look and this and say that if they behaved that way in the workplace, they wouldn't get a second chance. What is it about, Bob Knight that allows him to get a second chance and to go on from this point?

**Audience member** [00:25:04] Each incident was reviewed carefully to see what actually happened. Not all allegations are true, as you understand. Not all incidents as described by those who are reporting it are true. Each one was investigated. Appropriate sanctions were taken in each case, Bob Knight got away with nothing. And he certainly will get away with nothing in the future.

**Audience member** [00:25:24] (inaudible)

**Myles Brand** [00:25:45] A certain verbal activities will be cause for dismissal, immediate dismissal, a passing word, a profanity. We have to be sensible and reasonable about this, but otherwise no one would be employed. But the kinds of incidents that took place in the past are not acceptable. The NCAA tirade you're talking about, for example, would be cause for immediate dismissal.

**John Walda** [00:26:18] I think that's a question that deserves a trustee response as well. This the evaluation of of actions in the future is more of an art than a science, but the standard that I will apply and that the trustees will apply is this: we will not tolerate

any conduct on the part of our basketball coach, which is an embarrassment to Indiana University. Whether it is verbal or physical or a combination of the two, it will not be tolerated.

**Audience member** [00:26:59] People are such creatures of habit. Do you really think that after behaving in the intense cauldron that is NCAA basketball for thirty years this guy is gonna be able to flip a switch and do you really believe that?

**Myles Brand** [00:27:12] I think he deserves one last chance. If he cannot pull it off, then it's up to him and we will act.

**Audience member** [00:27:18] What do you think? What's your personal opinion?

**Myles Brand** [00:27:21] My personal opinion is that he will give it as good an effort as he possibly can and has a good chance of pulling it off.

**Audience member** [00:27:28] (inaudible)

**Myles Brand** [00:27:45] It's important for Indiana University as an institution to exhibit fairness and ethical behavior and treatment of all employees. I believe if we did not treat Bob Knight in this way, we would be abridging those ethical standards.

**Audience member** [00:28:04] What assistance is the university prepared to give Knight through anger management counseling or is that something he needs to get on his own?

**Myles Brand** [00:28:13] We will assist Bob in any way he desires. I will not talk with you about what Bob's doctor's appointment list looks like, but the fact of the matter, any assistance that will be made available to him.

**Audience member** [00:28:32] At some point Bob Knight's yelled at us, is there any way you could get him to make an apology to the media just to let us know what's going on here?

**Christopher Simpson** [00:28:39] Next question. Right here. Yes.

**Audience member** [00:28:45] President Brand, you and John Walda coauthored a letter two years ago in staunch defense of Coach Knight. Did you in any way feel that that could have compromised the impartiality in conducting the investigation?



**Myles Brand** [00:28:57] No, no, not at all, from my point of view. I think we laid down quite clearly what the guidelines were. And let me repeat what I said at the beginning. There was no incident that by itself rose to the level of termination.

**John Walda** [00:29:14] I really don't know how you could conclude that our investigation was anything but thorough and impartial. You may disagree with the action taken, but I don't know. I don't think you'll find any room to contest whether or not we did a thorough, impartial and judicious evaluation of the facts as they pertain to the allegations against Coach Knight. We followed every lead that became available. We interviewed all witnesses who were willing to talk, and we reported the results of that investigation accurately.

**Audience member** [00:29:50] (inaudible)