

Case Study: Mississippi Welfare Fraud, Brett Favre, Ted Dibiase Sr., Ted Dibiase Jr., Brett Dibiase, Marcus Dupree

Mississippi Welfare Fraud with Multiple Former Athletes Case

Background and Overview:

Brett Favre: Brett Lorenzo Favre is a former NFL quarterback. He played for the Green Bay Packers, Minnesota Vikings, New York Jets, and Atlanta Falcons. He is also a University of Southern Mississippi alum. Although Favre has not been faced with criminal charges, he is at the nucleus of this case. He was paid twice by a nonprofit organization called the Mississippi Community Education Center who received 1.1 million dollars from the state Department of Human Services prior to the engagements Favre was supposed to speak at but did not appear. July 2019, court documents revealed that Favre had texted the state governor, Phil Bryant, requesting welfare money to build an indoor practice facility for the USM football team, his alma mater and where his daughter plays volleyball, Bryant later texted Favre saying, “we have to follow the law”. Interestingly, sources stated that, “Favre also is named in the lawsuit as the “largest individual outside investor” of biotech firm Prevacus (now called Odyssey Health) and suggested that the CEO ask about using Human Services grant money for investing in company stock. It turned into \$2.1 million of state money for Prevacus and “corporate affiliate” PreSolMD.” Favre has not replied to the AP’s request for comments.

Ted Dibiase Sr. and Brett Dibiase: All three of the Dibiase men were former wrestlers for the WWF and WWE, Ted Sr. 1980s-90s, Brett and Ted Jr. 2000s-2010s. Dibiase Sr. later became a Christian minister and owns Heart of David Ministries. In this lawsuit, all the Dibiase men were named defendants. According to WKYC Studios, “Heart of David Ministries received \$1.7 million in welfare money “under (the) guise of providing ‘leadership training.’” The organization [was ordered to repay](#) about \$722,000 in welfare money. The eldest DiBiase also received \$250,000 through DiBiase Development Inc. to be a motivational speaker.” DiBiase Sr. would later deny these allegations and two years ago the state requested DiBiase Sr. to repay 3.9 million dollars in which he received from Priceless Ventures to support multiple needs of the inner-city youth, none of which were met. Dibiase would give WKYC a statement saying, “DiBiase repeatedly says the allegations are “not directed” toward him and because he lacks “knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth” of the allegations, he denies them.”

Brett Dibiase, a state human services employee for six months then departing in September 2017, was given 250,000 dollars in welfare funds tied to John Davis, the former director of Mississippi

Department of Human Services. Davis also provided Brett with 130,000 dollars from a different organization to “perform substance abuse training.” Sources have stated, “Davis also had welfare money funneled through a nonprofit to pay \$160,000 for DiBiase to be a full-time resident at a luxury substance-abuse rehab facility in California.” Brett would later plead guilty to a felony charge for 48,000-dollar payment and was requested to pay 225,950 dollars from the state auditor. WKYC states, “he said he is “not guilty of any act, fault, or want of care,” is “in no way liable” to the state and said he “had no personal knowledge of any false misrepresentations or sham agreements regarding illegal use of TANF funds.” TANF is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.”

Marcus Dupree: Dupree was a powerhouse high school running back in Mississippi during the early 1980s. He went to Oklahoma out of high school but left his sophomore year and graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi. He would also play in the NFL for two seasons. He later would become the president of the Marcus Dupree Foundation, being a “celebrity endorser” and motivational speaker. The lawsuit claims “substantial amounts un TANF funds” were given to him. His foundation received hundreds of thousands of dollars, separately, used to be a 15-acre property for himself. ESPN reported, “Dupree has not been charged and has refused to follow a state's order to repay \$789,534, he denied the allegations in the lawsuit.

Discussion Question:

Has this case been thoroughly investigated?

Will everyone involved be held accountable?

Have punches been pulled because of the status, popularity, or relation to politics these men have?

How will Mississippi Government prevent or handle future cases like this?