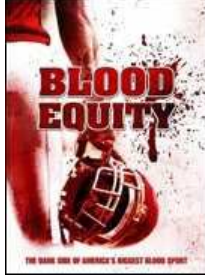



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Case Number 17804: Small Claims Court



Blood Equity

[Walking Shadows](#) // 2009 // 63 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge David Johnson // December 1st, 2009

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Judge David Johnson's NFL career was cut short when security hauled him out of Gillette Stadium.

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Scales of Justice

Judgment: 70

Perp Profile

Studio: [Walking Shadows](#)

Video Formats:

- Full Frame

Audio Formats:

- Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

- None

Running Time: 63 Minutes

Release Year: 2009

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

- [Documentary](#)
- [Sports](#)

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The Charge

The dark side of America's biggest blood sport.

The Case

That blood sport? The NFL of course. The target of this documentary? The arm of the NFL that deals exclusively with players, retired and current: The NFL Player's Association, the union of the National Football League. Director Michael Felix puts the union in his sights, taking them to task for what he and his interview subjects perceive as grievous slights on the health of retired players.

Felix turns his lens towards a selection of former NFL players who have been struggling with injuries and breakdowns, presumably as a result of the consistent beatings they absorbed during their playing days. There are some recognizable names—perhaps more recognizable to hardcore fans of the game—but the biggest celebrity on camera is Mike Ditka who opens up a can of whoop-ass on the Player's Union. 63 minutes later, everyone has piled on, roughing up the players' reps for for dropping the ball on health care.

No doubt, this is a brutal takedown. For an hour-plus you're looking at player after player a) telling their respective sad story and b) dropping the hammer on the union. **Blood Equity** paints a devastating picture of how NFL veterans are treated in their retirement. Here are guys who played full-throttle on short rosters without the advances of sports medicine to cushion the blow. Add to that the huge discrepancy in pay—some of the players interviewed still work, having burned through the small savings from their long ago pro football careers—and these guys have it rough.

What ultimately hurts the case Felix and company are trying to make is the total lack of point of view from the other side. Nothing from union reps, nothing from retired players who aren't as super-pissed, nothing from sports writers or experts offering an alternative perspective.

Hey, whatever, it's not my documentary, but with a subject so contentious and operating within hundreds of moving parts and differing takes, having another look would have been nice and lent more credibility to the production. I still came away from the film thinking there are problems with how the NFL treats its banged-up former gladiators, though the overall tone smells less like an even-handed treatment of the material and more of a full-on hit job.

The DVD is bare-bones, full frame, 2.0 stereo, and no extras.

The Verdict

There's compelling stuff here, but I'd love to hear at least one counterpoint. Wrist slap for one-sidedness.

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