

YAHOO! SPORTS



Renegade Miami football booster spells out illicit benefits to players



By Charles Robinson, Yahoo! Sports 12 hours, 39 minutes ago

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KEARNY,
N.J. – A
University
of Miami
booster,



incarcerated for his role in a \$930 million Ponzi scheme, has told Yahoo! Sports he provided thousands of impermissible benefits to at least 72 athletes from 2002 through 2010.

In 100 hours of jailhouse interviews during Yahoo! Sports' 11-month investigation, Hurricanes booster Nevin Shapiro described a sustained, eight-year run of rampant NCAA rule-breaking, some of it with the knowledge or direct participation of at least seven coaches from the Miami football and basketball programs. At a cost that Shapiro estimates in the millions of dollars, he said his benefits to athletes included but were not limited to cash, prostitutes, entertainment in his multimillion-dollar homes and yacht, paid trips to high-end restaurants and nightclubs, jewelry, bounties for on-field play (including bounties for injuring opposing players), travel and, on one occasion, an abortion.

Also among the revelations were damning details of Shapiro's co-ownership of a sports agency

– Axxess Sports & Entertainment – for nearly his entire tenure as a Hurricanes booster. The same agency that signed two first-round picks from Miami, Vince Wilfork and Jon Beason, and recruited dozens of others while Shapiro was allegedly providing cash and benefits to players. In interviews with federal prosecutors, Shapiro said many of those same players were also being funneled cash and benefits by his partner at Axxess, then-NFL agent and current UFL commissioner Michael Huyghue. Shapiro said he also made payments on behalf of Axxess, including a \$50,000 lump sum to Wilfork, as a recruiting tool for the agency.



In an effort to substantiate the booster's claims, Yahoo! Sports audited approximately 20,000 pages of financial and business records from his bankruptcy case, more than 5,000 pages of cell phone records, multiple interview summaries tied to his federal Ponzi case, and more than 1,000 photos. Nearly 100 interviews were also conducted with individuals living in six different states. In the process, documents, photos and 21 human sources – including nine former Miami players or recruits, and one former coach – corroborated multiple parts of Shapiro's rule-breaking.

While the NCAA declined comment, Miami associate AD for communications Chris Freet told Yahoo! Sports the school has been cooperating with an NCAA probe to unravel claims the booster has made to investigators. He added that the university unsuccessfully sought an interview with the booster last summer.

“When Shapiro made his allegations nearly a year ago, he and his attorneys refused to provide any facts to the university,” Freet said. “We notified the NCAA enforcement officials of these allegations. We are fully cooperating with the NCAA and are conducting a joint investigation. We take these matters very seriously.”

All told, the length, breadth and depth of the impropriety Shapiro has alleged would potentially breach multiple parts of at least four major NCAA bylaws – and possibly many more. Shapiro described acts that could include violations of multiple parts of bylaw 11, involving impermissible compensation to coaches; multiple parts of bylaw 12, involving amateurism of athletes; multiple parts of bylaw 13, involving financial interests; and bylaw 16, involving extra benefits to athletes.

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL		
Current Liabilities	\$	1,525.00
St. John & Partners		69,101.53
Leibson/Lamb Liability		61,000.00
Nevin Note Payable		81,450.29
MLH Note Payable		300,000.00
JSimmons Note Payable		
Total Current Liabilities		513,076.82
Long-Term Liabilities		31,250.00
Note Payable - MSDW		100,000.00
Note Payable - JUBA		75,000.00
Note Payable - WACHOVIA		
Total Long-Term Liabilities		206,250.00
Total Liabilities		719,326.82
Capital		1,500,000.00
Retained Earnings		(3,544,836.71)
Net Income		(106,499.82)
Total Capital		(321,336.53)
Total Liabilities & Capital	\$	397,990.29

Perhaps most troubling is Shapiro's sustained impropriety could trigger the NCAA's "willful violations" exception to its four-year statute of limitations. Under bylaw 36.2.3, an investigation can expand beyond the statute if information reveals that an individual tied to a university has engaged in "a pattern of willful violations" over a sustained period beyond the previous four years.

Some of Shapiro's allegations were outlined in multiple recorded interviews with federal



prosecutors – brought on by charges he misappropriated nearly \$83 million in investor funds with a fraudulent grocery distribution business. And it was Shapiro’s cooperation in his Ponzi case – which encompassed both fraud and money laundering – which opened the door to his conduct at Miami.

“He agreed to cooperate with the government,” said Shapiro’s attorney, Maria Elena-Perez. “He had to be 100-percent truthful. And it has never been the government’s position that he lied about his conduct or the conduct of others in his discussions with the U.S. Attorney’s office.”

[Related: Why Miami should have foreseen problems]

“Once Miami was on the table, it opened up everything in that realm. And his cooperation with the NCAA was another level of him coming clean about conduct that wasn’t above board with investor funds – specifically things he was doing with everyone in the UM athletic program.”

Ultimately, what documents show is a booster who broke NCAA rules while simultaneously making tens of thousands of dollars in annual contributions to Miami’s athletic program. All while incurring massive bills aligning himself socially with a stable of Miami players. A stable that features multiple elite players such as Wilfork, Beason, Andre Johnson, Devin Hester, Kellen Winslow Jr., Antrel Rolle and many more – including at least 12 players currently on the Hurricanes roster.

“Here’s the thing: Luther Campbell was the first uncle who took care of players before I got going,” Shapiro said, referring to the entertainer notorious for supplying cash to Miami players in the 1980s and 1990s. “His role was diminished by the NCAA and the school, and someone needed to pick up that mantle. That someone was me. He was ‘Uncle Luke’, and I became ‘Little Luke.’



“I became a booster in late 2001, and by early 2002, I was giving kids gifts. From the start, I wasn’t really challenged. And once I got going, it just got bigger and bigger. I just did what I wanted and didn’t pay much mind toward the potential repercussions.”

In 15 prison interviews with Yahoo! Sports and hundreds of telephone and email interactions, Shapiro laid out a multitude of reasons for blowing the whistle on his illicit booster activity. Chief is his feeling that after spending eight years forging what he thought were legitimate friendships with players, he was abandoned by many of the same Miami athletes he treated so well. He told Yahoo! Sports that following his incarceration, he asked multiple players for financial help – either with bail money, or assistance to individuals close to the booster. Shapiro admitted some of those inquiries included angry letters.



“Some of those players – a lot of those players – we used to say we were a family,” Shapiro said. “Well, who do you go to for help when you need it? You go to your family. Why the hell wouldn’t I go to them?”

Now feeling outcast, the booster said his goal is to rip away the façade of ‘The U’, and reveal an ugly truth about one of the country’s most celebrated college football programs.

“Yeah, I’m guilty,” said Shapiro, whose plea to counts of securities fraud, conspiracy to commit securities fraud and money laundering resulted in a 20-year federal prison sentence. Shapiro

also has one prior conviction on his record – an assault case from 1995 in which he pled guilty to punching a nightclub owner. Shapiro was sentenced to 18 months probation in that case.

“I’ve pled guilty to my crime,” the booster said. “I understand the public perception of me and that’s going to be what it’s going to be. My name has been dragged through the mud as much as it could be. But remember, when Jose Canseco told the truth about the steroid problems in baseball, he was considered a dirty rat. Everyone said he was bitter, he was out of baseball, he’s out of money, he was this and that. But he changed the face of the game. I don’t care if I change the face of the game. But I’m telling the truth about what happened at Miami. It’s the truth. And you tell me, why should the University of Miami be exempt from the truth?”

Now, almost a decade after he officially became a University of Miami booster, Shapiro’s truth could potentially dismantle a program he says he has loved for much of his life. After initially threatening to write a tell-all book in August of 2010, Shapiro shelved the project and began cooperating with a Yahoo! Sports investigation in December. Four months later, in March, he said he opened a line of communication with NCAA investigators and began turning over materials to corroborate his claims.

“It’s all true,” said one of Shapiro’s ex-girlfriends, who asked to remain anonymous out of fear of reprisals from former Miami players. “He took care of them. What does that mean? It has a lot of meanings. He took care of them by giving cash to make sure they had stuff. He took care of them whenever they wanted to go party. He took care of them by getting them laid. He took care of them if they needed a place to stay. Whatever they needed, at that moment they needed it, Nevin would provide it. Whether it was sex, money, meals, a new TV, if their mother needed something, if they needed a new ring or some jewelry – whatever they needed, Nevin would provide it.”

And Shapiro’s justification for his actions? He said it was simple.

“I did it because I could,” he said. “And because nobody stepped in to stop me.”

A Miami transplant in early childhood from his birthplace of Brooklyn, N.Y., Shapiro, 42, said he became a Hurricanes fan in the same manner of many over the last two decades. He fell in love with “The U” as a young boy living in Miami Beach, voraciously seeking tickets through the turbulent but successful tenures of Howard Schnellenberger, Jimmy Johnson, Dennis Erickson and Butch Davis. Like many, he was drawn to the mixture of grit, flash and swagger of Miami football, which seemed to mirror the soul of the city just north of Coral Gables.



While his financial records prior to 2002 have remained difficult to completely document, sources told Yahoo! Sports that Shapiro was profiting from aggressive real estate deals in a robust and growing Miami Beach market. And that opened some financial doors, including the ability to afford a \$12,000 price tag to become a Hurricanes booster in 2001. It was that season Shapiro became a “living scholar,” which was Miami’s way of pairing up a player who, in theory, was having his scholarship funded by his living scholar booster. The living scholar program is approved by the NCAA.

Shapiro’s first living scholar athlete was a then-little used freshman running back named Willis McGahee. For the 2001 season, Shapiro said the two had an unremarkable relationship – just the modest allowable contact of a home-cooked meal and a few less-than-memorable

conversations at team outings. But Shapiro said his role would quickly change after the team's awards banquet in December of 2001, when he met a mountainous freshman defensive tackle named Vince Wilfork, and junior defensive end Andrew Williams, who had played a key role on one of the best defenses in college football history.

"Everything started when I gave some Miami Heat basketball tickets to Andrew Williams," Shapiro said. "I had given some guys my business card at the [2001] awards banquet, including Andrew. We kept in touch after the season ended, and I ended up giving him the tickets. It was like nothing. I didn't even think about it."

[Related: Who is Nevin Shapiro?]

Williams denied receiving any gifts from Shapiro.

"Who, me?" Williams said. "Man, naw."

But Shapiro insists it was that one simple act that began to change everything. Later in that same offseason prior to the 2002 season, Shapiro says he bought a big-screen television at BrandsMart USA for Williams' apartment. A burgeoning relationship of gifts led to Shapiro's introduction to Williams' two roommates – Cornelius Green and Jerome McDougle.

Shapiro said he liked his three new friends instantly. And he never thought twice about whether he should continue – and deepen – his financial generosity. Particularly after he met Green, a large, charismatic defensive end who Shapiro said wasted little time laying the groundwork for the booster to become acquainted with his teammates. In turn, Shapiro said he quickly indulged the players' interest to take whatever he was willing to provide – offerings that escalated quickly from basketball tickets and televisions to parties on entire floors of suites at South Beach's Mercury Hotel where he said he made scores of prostitutes available.

"It really started with me developing a strong relationship with Corn," Shapiro said. "He was really like a queen bee of the players. Through Cornelius it was like I was meeting every single guy – almost every guy on the roster – [and] specifically the frontline players, the star players.

Other Withdrawals and Service Fees continued

Date	Amount	Description	
10/02	50.00	PURCHASE MERCURY SOUTH BEAC 4828530431901 MIAMI BEACH FL 1048V270070	09/30
10/02	1,165.77	PURCHASE MERCURY SOUTH BEAC 4828530431901 MIAMI BEACH FL 1048V210070	09/30
10/02	4.19	PURCHASE TEL 007790277927 4828530431901 HONG KONG 10482777927	09/30
10/08	6.35	PURCHASE FAMOUS PLAYERS #22	10/05

"As word spread – and it spread fast – guys were just coming up to me. By the time the next season came around, I even recall Antrel Rolle and Sean Taylor, they were just coming off their freshman years and not really stars yet, just walking up and introducing themselves and wanting to get in on the party.

"I didn't even have to push the situations. Once it started and guys knew they could come to me, it escalated quickly."



Green and McDougle could not be reached for comment.

However, eight former Miami players or recruits confirmed receiving illicit benefits from Shapiro.

That included former Miami running back Tyrone Moss, who was one of dozens of players Shapiro named when speaking to federal investigators about his activity with Hurricanes players. According to Shapiro, he hosted Moss on his \$1.6 million yacht and also gave the

player a \$1,000 cash payment.

When contacted by Yahoo! Sports, Moss affirmed being aboard Shapiro's yacht.

Asked if he had been given \$1,000 by the booster during their first meeting, Moss said: "Yeah. It was me and some other players with my incoming [class]. I'm not going to say the names but you can probably figure them out yourself. When I was getting there my freshman year, it was me and a couple more players. ... It was me and a few more of the guys in my incoming class that he kind of showed some love to."

Another player – who also admitted taking benefits but requested anonymity – said he was aware that Moss took money from Shapiro and supported the decision.

"The guy had a kid while he was in college, a little Tyrone Jr.," the player said. "He comes in poor as [expletive] from Pompano and he's got a little kid to feed. I could barely feed myself. I can't imagine having to feed a kid, too. Of course he's going to take it when someone offers him \$1,000."

"Who wouldn't in that situation?"

Yahoo! Sports has detailed Shapiro's specific allegations involving 73 players (Shapiro claims he gave impermissible benefits to 72), seven coaches and three support staff members who he said either received illicit benefits, witnessed the booster giving them, or played some role in his improper activity.

Multiple sources who interacted with Shapiro corroborated in detail the manner in which the booster doled out specific benefits as he violated NCAA rules. Among the sources are three former Miami players who each received benefits from Shapiro, a bodyguard who played a role in facilitating the activity, a high-end restaurateur who benefitted from Shapiro's relationship with players, an ex-girlfriend, multiple friends and a former neighbor who witnessed the behavior firsthand.

Out of fear of retribution from former or current Hurricanes players, the sources asked that their names not be revealed. Among the NCAA violations Shapiro and other sources described:

• **NCAA rule-breaking with coaches**

and staffers: Shapiro said he violated NCAA rules with the knowledge or direct participation of at least six coaches – Clint Hurtt, Jeff Stoutland and Aubrey Hill on the football staff, and Frank Haith, Jake Morton and Jorge Fernandez on the basketball staff. Multiple sources told Yahoo! Sports Shapiro also violated NCAA rules with football assistant Joe Pannunzio, although the booster refused to answer any questions about that relationship. Shapiro also named assistant rulebreaking, and equipment managers Ralph Nogueras and Joey Corey as witnesses to some of his impropriety.



Among the specific incidents, Shapiro or other sources say Hurtt, Hill, Stoutland, Pannunzio and Allen all delivered top-tier recruits to Shapiro's home or luxury suite so the booster could make recruiting pitches to them. Among the players who were ushered to Shapiro while they were still in high school: Eventual Miami commitments Ray-Ray Armstrong, Dyron Dye and Olivier Vernon (prompted by Hurtt); eventual Florida commitments Andre Debose (Hurtt) and Matt Patchan (prompted by Stoutland and Pannunzio); eventual Georgia commitment

Orson Charles (Pannunzio); and eventual Central Florida commitment Jeffrey Godfrey (Allen).

The University of Alabama (Pannunzio and Stoutland), University of Florida (Hill) and University of Louisville (Hurtt) all declined to make the coaches available for interviews. Allen declined comment, calling all of Shapiro's claims "egregious and false."

But Shapiro insists he came in contact with multiple recruits improperly during their official or unofficial visits going all the way back to 2002.

"Hell yeah, I recruited a lot of kids for Miami," Shapiro said. "With access to the clubs, access to the strip joints. My house. My boat. We're talking about high school football players. Not anybody can just get into the clubs or strip joints. Who is going to pay for it and make it happen? That was me."



The booster said his role went one step farther with the basketball program, when he paid \$10,000 to help secure the commitment of recruit DeQuan Jones. Shapiro said the transaction was set up by assistant coach Jake Morton in 2007 who acted as the conduit for the funds, and was later acknowledged by head coach Frank Haith in a one-on-one conversation.

Haith denied Shapiro's claims through a University of Missouri spokesman. Morton, who is now at Western Kentucky, didn't return a call seeking comment.

Shapiro also entertained then-prominent AAU basketball coach Moe Hicks in October of 2008, with a nightclub visit that was attended by both Morton and Fernandez.

• **Prostitution:** Shapiro named 39 Miami players or prospective recruits who he says received prostitution paid for by the booster. Due to the sensitivity of the claims, Yahoo! Sports has chosen not to reveal the names of the players Shapiro claims were involved. However, two players confirmed the booster paid for sexual favors for themselves and others during their careers with the Hurricanes.

As for Shapiro, he said his role in arranging for prostitutes encountered various cosmetic changes over time. From 2002 to 2003, the booster said he used a handful of hotels to either make the services of prostitutes available to individual players, or throw "parties" where services were made available to multiple players. The booster said he would use connections with escorts or at local strip clubs to arrange for the availability of women



In individual situations, he would set up a player with a hotel room and have a woman sent to their location. In group settings, Shapiro said he would use the Mercury Hotel in South Beach, where he would purchase multiple rooms where array of women would be made available to a large group of players. The rooms were typically registered under the alias "Teddy Dupay" – a reference to the former University of Florida point guard whose 5-foot-9 stature and features were similar to the 5-foot-5 Shapiro.

Shapiro described one such party in graphic detail, taking place at the Mercury Hotel during Miami's off-week in September of 2002 and featuring multiple women hired to have sex with

players. The booster said he rented out several suites on a single night and entertained a handful of Hurricanes players.

While Shapiro said he commonly paid cash for rooms and registered them under an alias to avoid a paper trail for the NCAA, Yahoo! Sports was able to identify a handful of Mercury Hotel charges on the debit card from his Wachovia statements. One charge in particular took place for rooms reserved on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2002 and settled on Monday, Sept. 30. The charges, which totaled \$1,215.77, took place on Miami's off week between a 38-6 win over Boston College and a 48-14 win against Connecticut.

Shortly after the purchase of Shapiro's \$1.6 million yacht in the spring of 2003, the booster said he stopped convening larger scale "parties" and began offering prostitutes for individual players on his boat or in hotel rooms. One former offensive starter for the Hurricanes confirmed to Yahoo! Sports that he had sex with a prostitute paid for by Shapiro and confirmed that other teammates did as well. He described in detail how the incident took place, but asked that the specifics not be shared for publication for fear of retribution.



Said Shapiro: "In 2002 and 2003 we were really rocking it for a while and it was just out of control. But I decided to get away from the regular Mercury Hotel situations. I was getting too old for that kind of thing, and I had the boat for prostitution situations. I still set up guys at hotels with individual-type things, but I never really used the Mercury after getting the boat."

The booster said while he paid for prostitutes to be available to players, Shapiro didn't engage in sex with the women.

"I chose to pay and facilitate," he said. "Nothing more."

• **Cash payments/bounties/tournaments:** While Shapiro said he never had a specific "payroll" for players, he did use a number of avenues to pay athletes. With players in his inner circle, Shapiro said he was often asked and never declined to give varying amounts of cash to a player who requested it out of need. Shapiro's ex-girlfriend said the transactions would often take place at Shapiro's home and that she witnessed him giving cash to multiple players while the two were together.

According to summary documents acquired by Yahoo! Sports, it was such a regular occurrence that one of the other defendants in Shapiro's Ponzi case, Roberto Torres, testified to it with federal prosecutors. Torres, who was the chief financial officer of Shapiro's Capitol Investments, told prosecutors he witnessed the booster paying Hurricanes football players in his Miami Beach mansion, and said he had "concern" Shapiro was being used by the athletes.

Torres has pled guilty to a count of securities fraud and is awaiting sentencing.



Shapiro also set up various "tournaments" where players won money for fishing, bowling and playing pool. And in the spirit of Luther Campbell's history with the program, Shapiro said he started a bounty system in 2002 tied to both rivalry games such as Florida State and Florida, and also games against highly ranked opponents.

The system is similar to the one reputed fan of the program Campbell was alleged to be running in the 1980s, in which he reportedly paid athletes for big plays. That activity came under NCAA scrutiny during a Pell Grant scandal revealed in a federal investigation in 1994. Fifty-seven Hurricanes football players were named in that scandal.

Three sources, including two former Miami football players, confirmed that Shapiro offered bounties.

The booster told Yahoo! Sports he had a number of individual payouts for “hit of the game” and “big plays.” He also put bounties on specific players, including Florida Gators quarterback Tim Tebow and a three-year standing bounty on Seminoles quarterback Chris Rix from 2002 to 2004, offering \$5,000 to any player who knocked him out of a game.



“We pounded the (expletive) out of that kid,” Shapiro said of Rix. “Watch the tape of those games. You’ll see so many big hits on him. Guys were all going after that \$5,000 in cash. [Jon] Vilma tried to kill him – just crushed him – a couple of times trying to get that \$5,000. And he almost got it, too.”

Vilma didn’t return a call seeking comment.

• **Jewelry/clothing/travel/televisions/rims:** Various gifts were provided for a variety of reasons – sometimes as tokens to celebrate special occasions, other times as recruiting inducements for Shapiro’s agency, Axxess Sports. The booster said he doled out tens of thousands of dollars in jewelry for players, including watches (Tavares Gooden and Antrel Rolle), diamond-studded dog tags (Sean Taylor) and an engagement ring (Devin Hester). He also spent thousands of dollars on suits and clothing for Hester, Gooden and McGahee at Fashion Clothiers – purchases that were confirmed to Yahoo! Sports by the store’s owner, Shelly Bloom.

Shapiro bought plane tickets for two of McGahee’s female acquaintances to attend the 2002 Heisman Trophy ceremony and flew D.J. Williams’ mother from California to Miami to spend time with her son and meet with Shapiro’s partner at Axxess Sports, Michael Huyghue.

Televisions were purchased for Andrew Williams and Sam Shields, and the booster said he also gave Hester cash to buy rims for his SUV.

Gooden, McGahee, Hester, Shields and D.J. Williams didn’t return calls seeking comment. Andrew Williams denied taking gifts from Shapiro.

• **House/yacht privileges:** Shapiro had two primary Miami Beach residences during his time as a booster – a large \$2.7 million poolside home located in the interior of Miami Beach, and a lavish \$6.1 million coastal Mediterranean estate located on the west side of Miami Beach. The multitude of people in Shapiro’s circle were welcome to come and go at both properties with regularity.



Shapiro often invited players to his home to watch sports, shoot pool, or just relax. And he stocked the house with food, drinks and liquor that were readily available to guests.

One of Shapiro’s neighbors near the \$2.7

million home said the booster invited him inside in 2002, where he met and spent time with McDougale and Green. The neighbor said the house’s driveway and street in front of the property were often filled with cars of players who were at Shapiro’s home.

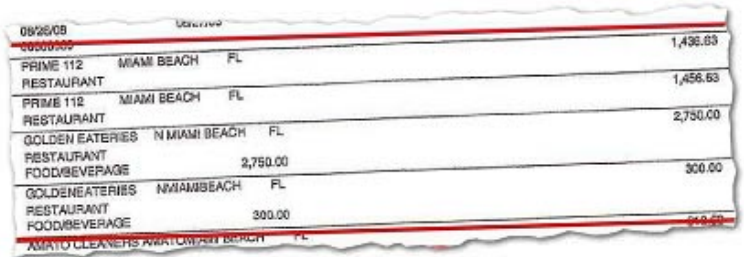
“Put it this way: there were times I’d be on my way home and I’d roll by the house and the whole thing, and there was a lot going on there. A lot,” the neighbor said.

“Players and cars and all that.”

Shapiro’s \$1.6 million yacht was also available to players on a regular basis for fishing trips, leisure trips and lodging for the availability of prostitution. Like his home, Shapiro stocked the boat with food and drinks and paid for fuel and captain fees any time players would take the yacht out – a process that cost in excess of \$2,000 per trip depending on gas prices and maintenance. That reality that was spelled out in additional federal testimony in Shapiro’s Ponzi case, when the booster’s former business partner, Torres, informed federal prosecutors that Miami athletes were taking Shapiro’s boat out “twice a week” while the booster was incurring all of the costs.

• **Strip clubs/night**

clubs: Visits to strip clubs and night clubs were the most consistent staple of Shapiro’s relationship with players, dating back to 2002 and running nearly up to his incarceration in April of 2010. One of Shapiro’s bodyguards said his security detail had a consistent routine in place that it repeated several times a week: travel to a nightclub or strip club prior to Shapiro; make the club security aware that the booster would be arriving with a large group; secure Shapiro’s VIP area; and be on hand to whisk the booster and his contingent of players past any lines and into the privacy of their own area, where Shapiro would often spend thousands of dollars per night on bottles of liquor and champagne.



Date	Description	Location	Amount
08/25/08	PRIME 112 RESTAURANT	MIAMI BEACH FL	1,456.63
09/05/08	PRIME 112 RESTAURANT	MIAMI BEACH FL	1,456.63
	GOLDEN EATERIES RESTAURANT	N MIAMI BEACH FL	2,750.00
	GOLDEN EATERIES RESTAURANT	N MIAMI BEACH FL	2,750.00
	GOLDEN EATERIES RESTAURANT	N MIAMI BEACH FL	300.00
	AMATO CLEANERS	MIAMI BEACH FL	500.00

Shapiro rotated through multiple strip clubs with players on a regular basis – Solid Gold, The Cheetah, Pink Pony and Tootsies Cabaret. Shapiro often arrived to the clubs with thick wads of cash to spend on the dancers. Despite that, his additional credit card charges for just Solid Gold from mid 2005 to 2010 totaled \$32,683.25.

Strip club visits included both coaches and players – something that was referenced in a portion of federal testimony by Chicago real estate investor Sherwin Jarol, who was deposed in Shapiro’s Ponzi case. At one point in his testimony, a recording of which was viewed by Yahoo! Sports, Jarol describes a pair of August 2008 visits to Solid Gold nightclub with Shapiro. He says “the coach of the Miami basketball” team (Frank Haith) attended one trip. Further in his testimony, he testifies that he “believe(s) there were a couple football players” and added “they all seemed to have a relationship with Nevin. Some stayed at his house,” he said.

It was a regular occurrence at the club – when the booster would give dancers cash to engage in whatever behavior the players desired.



Equally consistent if not more frequent were Shapiro’s visits to multiple nightclubs, where he also favored paying his bills with stacks of cash. But that didn’t stop massive charges from overflowing onto his credit cards. According to his statements, the reputed Hurricanes hotspot of Miami Beach’s Mansion nightclub racked up \$83,963.52 in charges on Shapiro’s American Express bills from early 2005 to early 2009.

“We rocked Mansion so many times, I couldn’t even count them,” Shapiro said. “And I never went in there once without players, because it’s just not the kind of place that you’d go to without them.”

One former Miami player who received benefits from Shapiro told Yahoo! Sports he believed that was a credible claim, stating he went to Mansion as many as 20 times with the booster while playing for the Hurricanes, and never knew of occasions when Shapiro hadn’t brought athletes to the club.

• **Meals/entertainment:** Meals were another consistent staple of benefits provided by Shapiro, including meals at Prime 112, Grazie, Prime Italian, Benihana and other establishments.

“He was always bringing athletes in to eat and introducing me to them,” said a restaurateur at one high-end Miami Beach eatery. “Lots of big guys. Lots of University of Miami guys. Nevin did a lot of business with me. He spent a lot of money and made a lot of nights for me.”

• **Lodging/apartment:** Shapiro said he provided lodging on occasion on his yacht or in his homes for players in his inner circle when needed, including varying stints for players such as Devin Hester, Graig Cooper, Kevin Everett, Vince Wilfork. He also allowed Tavares Gooden to use one of his rental properties – a studio apartment in the Mirador condos – for more than a month.

Gooden didn’t return a call seeking comment.

• **Abortion:** In one instance, Shapiro described taking a player to the Pink Pony strip club and paying for a dancer to engage in sex with the athlete. In the ensuing weeks, Shapiro said the dancer called one of his security providers and informed him that the player had gotten her pregnant during the incident. Shapiro said he gave the dancer \$500 to have an abortion performed, without notifying the player of the incident.

“I was doing him a favor,” the booster said. “That idiot might have wanted to keep [the baby].”

Due to the sensitivity of the allegation, Yahoo! Sports has chosen not to name the player allegedly involved.

• **Axcess Sports benefits:** According to Shapiro, the system for recruiting players to sign with Axcess Sports was actually compartmentalized between himself and Huyghue. The booster would use his close relationship with players to make an introduction to Huyghue, and then he would retreat from agency talk from that point forward and leave it to Huyghue to grow his own relationship and sign the player.

In that vein, Shapiro said it was also up to Huyghue to develop his own financial link to kids, providing his own set of extra benefits to athletes as he saw fit, including cash payments, travel and other inducements. And Shapiro told federal prosecutors that’s precisely what Huyghue did, giving multiple illicit benefits, including cash, to several players at Miami. Claims that Huyghue called “fantasy.”

“He’s a convicted felon,” Shapiro said. “I wouldn’t want to even go down that path. I don’t even care what he said. Whatever he could say, there’s just no substance to it.”



But while Huyghue denied ever funneling to players, one former Hurricane told Yahoo! Sports he received multiple extra benefits from both Shapiro and Huyghue during his career. The player described the benefits in detail but asked that they not be revealed, as the specific nature of them likely would reveal his identity.

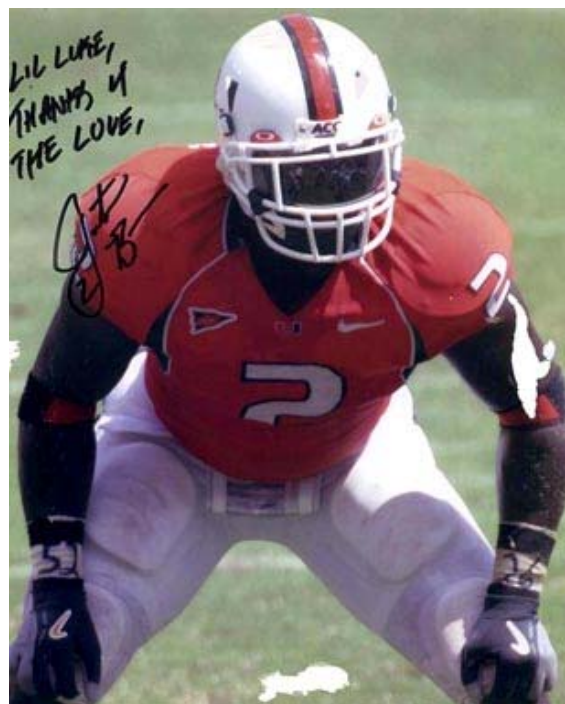
“Nevin just kind of introduced me to Michael and that was it,” the player said. “After that, Michael and I had our own relationship, and it had nothing to do with Nevin. ... Yeah, Michael

did give me some things.”

Moss added that players in the Miami program were well aware how Shapiro and Huyghue worked in unison for a sports agency.

“Nevin basically was the front man,” Moss said. “Nevin got to be close one-on-one with a player. And when it was time to actually come out into the draft, it was like ‘You’re rolling with me and that agent.’ And the thing is, it was almost like he had given so much to where it was like you gotta ride with him with most players. That’s how that was.”

In hindsight, Shapiro says if anything came close to revealing his impropriety, it was his partial ownership in Axxcess Sports. After meeting Huyghue in 2002, the booster paid \$1.5 million for a 30-percent stake in the company with the implicit goal of transforming his relationships with Hurricanes athletes into something positive for both him and the players. Shapiro was looking to build a successful sports representation business, and he believed the players would benefit from having Huyghue as their agent.



By 2007, he’d helped Axxcess Sports land two first-round picks from Miami’s program. The first was Wilfork, thanks to Shapiro’s relationship and a \$50,000 lump sum payment the booster said he gave to the defensive tackle during his junior season. Later, the booster said he provided a pair of \$50,000 Cadillac Escalades to Wilfork and his fiancée shortly after the defensive tackle declared for the draft. The second player was Beason, who according to Shapiro and multiple sources – including another Miami player – had a close relationship with the booster for almost his entire career with the Hurricanes.

But Shapiro said his stake in Axxcess jeopardized his standing as a booster on at least one occasion. During the final game in the Orange Bowl in 2007, with the Hurricanes being embarrassed 31-0 at the half against Virginia, Shapiro, intoxicated, said he confronted Miami’s head of compliance, David Reed. According to a witness to the event, an incensed Shapiro was stalking through the Orange Bowl press box at halftime when he spotted Reed.

In a rage, Shapiro began cursing at the compliance director, calling him a “sissy” and other derogatory names, while attempting to draw him into a fight. In Shapiro’s mind, Reed was part of the problem in a slumping Miami program, largely for what Shapiro thought was too much oversight on relating to players. Shapiro thought Reed was worth fighting pick



“It was a huge scene,” said a witness who helped pull Shapiro away on that day. “All the people in the press box, the people sitting in the seats, they were all watching the entire thing. Nevin wanted to fight him. He was up in his face screaming. I was like ‘Oh my God. He’s going to punch [Reed] in the face.’”

Shapiro was eventually pulled away, but the booster said in the days following the incident, he was contacted by a friend in the Hurricanes athletic department – Associate Athletic Director of Development Lindsey Radeer. According to Shapiro, Radeer said Reed had done a

background check on him following the incident, and was alarmed when he realized Shapiro was part owner of a sports representation agency. But Shapiro said Radeer assured the booster he wasn't going to come under any additional scrutiny.

"I thought [Reed] was an (expletive)," Shapiro said. "But the truth is, he was doing his job. And he was absolutely right, I shouldn't have been around the players."

Yahoo! Sports recounted this incident to a Miami spokesperson and asked that Radeer be made available for comment, however, the university declined due to the ongoing NCAA investigation.

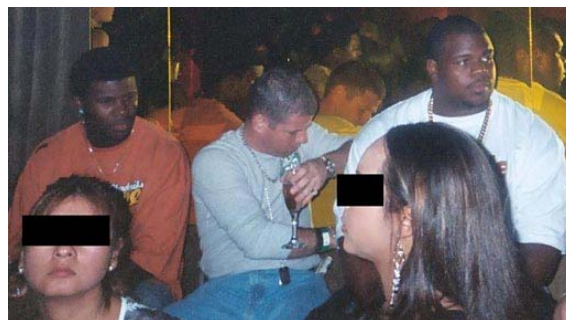
In hindsight, Shapiro said he looks at that moment and realizes Miami could have seized on countless incidents and ended his flagrant assault on NCAA bylaws. Just a 20-minute drive northwest from campus, across one of the causeways and into Miami Beach, Shapiro's high-rolling routine with Hurricanes football players was on display on a daily basis. And according to Shapiro, all Miami needed to do was look.

But instead, Shapiro said he was enabled by the university, allowed to run the entire Miami team out of tunnel and onto the field – twice – and once honored on the field by former athletic director Paul Dee during a game. The same Paul Dee who wagged a finger at USC as the chairman of the NCAA's committee on infractions in 2010, chiding the Reggie Bush/O.J. Mayo scandal as a systematic failure.

"High-profile players demand high-profile compliance," Dee said while announcing USC's sanctions.

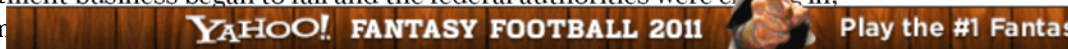
Now Shapiro says Miami's athletic compliance – Dee's own backyard while Shapiro was operating – suffered one catastrophic oversight after another.

"If they had hired a private investigator for a day, it would have been the easiest job that guy ever had," Shapiro said. "It would have been over in five minutes. You would have had all the information you needed. Follow me to a nightclub or a strip club. Lunches. Dinners. The boat. Hotels for parties. All the outings at Lucky Strike. These guys were at my house. There was all kinds of (expletive) going on in. Gambling. Pool tournaments. Prostitution. Drinking."



"Actually, you didn't even need to follow me. You could have just followed my bodyguards, who were taking kids home because they were too drunk to drive at the end of our nights."

But Shapiro says therein lies the twist. He believes the University of Miami didn't want to know what he was doing – that the school looked the other way because it was desperate to retain a booster who had donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the program. Indeed, by the time his investment business began to fail and the federal authorities were closing in, Shapiro had comm



campus being named in his honor. He had also donated \$50,000 to the basketball program in 2008, complete with a photo that Shapiro says summed up the entire problem at the university. In a snapshot from that day, Shapiro is talking into a microphone, with Haith – a coach the booster allegedly helped to buy a recruit – looking on and smiling. In the background, University of Miami president Donna Shalala is grinning at the check Shapiro had just donated, a \$50,000 contribution that he now admits was Ponzi money.


"That's the whole problem right there," Shapiro said of the picture. "Let's not kid ourselves. The whole time I was out there rocking and rolling, they were just waiting for the big check to come. And you know what? If I wasn't sitting in jail right now, they probably would have gotten it, too."

Yahoo! Sports contributor Rand Getlin assisted with this report. Contact Yahoo! Sports investigative reporter Charles Robinson at WindyCityScribe@yahoo.com

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