

THE KARDIGAN SAGA

from various sources

- *Winter of 1854* James Thomas Burdenel, The 7th Earl of Cardigan, leads the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War. The British soldiers wear a knitted jacket fastened with buttons to protect them against the severe cold of the Crimea in the winter of 1854. The jacket is later named eponymously the “cardigan.” One hundred and forty years later, the name is used again by John Powers of *The Boston Globe*, but spelled “Kardigan,” to describe the activities surrounding U.S. figure skaters Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding, this time describing the crimes of the cold in the winter of 1994.
- *February 1991* Tonya Harding wins the U.S. national championships in Minneapolis with Nancy Kerrigan 3rd, also behind Kristi Yamaguchi. Harding’s victory is highlighted by her becoming the first American woman to complete a Triple Axel in competition. Previously, only Midori Ito had ever completed that jump in competition. At the World Championships in München, Germany, Yamaguchi wins, with Harding second, and Kerrigan third.
- *21 February 1992* Kristi Yamaguchi wins the 1992 Olympic gold medal in ladies’ figure skating at Albertville. Nancy Kerrigan wins the bronze medal with Tonya Harding in fourth place. After the Olympics, at the World Championships in Oakland, California, Yamaguchi again wins the title, with Kerrigan second and Harding in fourth.
- *February 1993* Kerrigan wins the U.S. national championship in Phoenix, Arizona. Harding finishes 4th and does not qualify for the World Championships. At the World Championships in Prague, Czech Republic, Kerrigan is favored and leads after the technical program but skates poorly in the free program and finishes 5th. The championship is won by Oksana Bayul of The Ukraine.
- *December 1993* At the NHK Trophy competition in Chiba, Japan, Harding finishes 4th behind Surya Bonaly of France, Yuka Sato of Japan, and Lu Chen of China.
- *6 January 1994* At approximately 2:35 PM, after a practice session prior to the United States’ national figure skating championships (and Olympic Trials), Nancy Kerrigan is assaulted in the interview area by a man who strikes her above the knee with a metal club just as Dana Scarton of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* asks to interview her. The assailant escapes by breaking through a Plexiglass door.
- *7 January 1994* Kerrigan, after examination by doctors, withdraws from the U.S. national championships. The United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA) and U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) begin discussions concerned with naming Kerrigan to the Olympic team based on her past record. The rule concerning who is named to the Olympic team is actually quite open-ended and, under USFSA Bye-Laws, allows a relatively easy escape clause to name Kerrigan to the Olympic team.

- 8 January 1994 Tonya Harding wins the U.S. national championships with Michelle Kwan second. They are tentatively named to the U.S. Olympic team for Lillehammer but Kwan's berth is contingent upon Kerrigan not being named to the team by the USFSA and USOC.
- 9 January 1994 Shortly after midnight, after the end of competition, Kerrigan is named to the U.S. Olympic team and Kwan is named the first alternate.
- 10 January 1994 In Boston, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) study of Kerrigan's knee reveals no damage to the ligaments or tendons around the patella [kneecap].
- 12 January 1994 *The Oregonian* (Portland newspaper) reports that the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) is investigating Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly (with whom she was living at the time of the attack), and her bodyguard, Shawn Eric Eckardt, in the attack.
- 16 January 1994 The Multnomah County District Attorney's office issues arrest warrants against Shawn Eric Eckardt (Harding's bodyguard), Shane Stant (the alleged assailant), and Derrick Smith (the alleged driver of the getaway vehicle).
- 18 January 1994 Harding is questioned for 10½ hours at FBI headquarters. She implicates Gillooly during the testimony and also announces that she is again separating from Gillooly.
- 19 January 1994 In a three-hour interview with *The Oregonian* (Portland newspaper), Shawn Eric Eckardt, Tonya Harding's bodyguard, states that Harding knew in advance of the plot to attack Kerrigan. The Multnomah County District Attorney's office issues arrest warrants against Jeffrey Gillooly (Harding's ex-husband).
- January 1994 Multiple bits of "evidence" are released to the press implicating Harding's involvement in the planned assault. These include (but may not be limited to) telephone calls to a journalist [Vera Marano] to find the name of the rink at which Kerrigan practised on Cape Cod, Massachusetts; multiple telephone calls are found to have been made from the house shared by Harding and Gillooly to the Tony Kent Arena on Cape Cod (actually in Dennis, Massachusetts); Eckardt alleged in an affidavit that these calls were made by Harding to find out Kerrigan's practice schedule; a note is found in a garbage dumpster which has printing on it listing "Toby Can Arena" and then "Tony Kent Arena" - handwriting experts analyze the note but are unable to confirm definitely that it is written by Harding or Gillooly.
- 27 January 1994 Ms. Clair Ferguson, President of the USFSA appoints a five-member hearing panel to investigate allegations made in public records that Tonya Harding was involved in, or had prior knowledge of, the assault on Kerrigan. The Hearing Panel is chaired by Mr. William Hybl, Esquire, Past President of the United States Olympic Committee. The other four members are Dr. Nancy Piro, Ph.D., a psychologist and chairperson of the USFSA Ethics Committee; Dr. Sharon Watson, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council; Mr. James Cygan, a medical student

at Northwestern University and a member of the USFSA's Athlete's Advisory Committee and Sports Medicine Committee; and Col. Kenneth Schweitzer, the Athletic Director at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

- *1 February 1994* Gillooly pleads guilty to racketeering in an arranged plea-bargain agreement. He tells authorities that Harding was in on the final plot and gave the final go-ahead to the plan to attack Kerrigan. Also on this day, the USFSA Hearing Panel holds its initial meeting in Colorado Springs.
- *2 February 1994* Kerrigan skates in front of a panel of judges in order to prove her fitness to skate in Lillehammer. The judges were Chuck U. Foster (secretary of the USOC), Ron Pfenning (Chairman of USFSA competition committee), Lucy Brennan (World Championship judge), and Kathaleen Kelly-Cutone (athletic member of the USFSA board). The judges are impressed and comment that Kerrigan appears not to have sustained any long-term problems as a result of the attack on 6 January 1994.
- *4 February 1994* Nancy Kerrigan skates a charity exhibition at Northeastern University's Matthews Arena entitled "Nancy Kerrigan and Her Friends." Several other well known skaters are also present, including Elaine Zayak, Paul Wylie, and Scott Hamilton. She again shows no ill-effects from the injury to her knee.
- *5 February 1994* The USFSA Panel, headed by William Hybl, Esq. (USOC Past President), unanimously determines that reasonable ground exist to pursue disciplinary charges against Tonya Harding. The panel proposes suspending Harding pending a hearing pursuant to USFSA Bye-Laws, but was told by the USOC that the USFSA could not take such actions without a hearing.
- *8 February 1994* The USOC announces plans to hold a hearing concerning Harding in Lillehammer on 15 February, stating it could charge the skater with seven violations of Olympic and amateur sports rules.
- *9 February 1994* Harding files a \$25 million lawsuit against the U.S. Olympic Committee in an attempt to prevent them from removing her from the team.
- *11 February 1994* The USOC and Harding's lawyers agree to drop the lawsuit and the disciplinary hearings, clearing Harding to compete at Lillehammer.
- *15 February 1994* Harding leaves for the Olympics, accompanied by an entourage of reporters, including those from the American television tabloid news show *Inside Edition*. The show has paid Harding a fee (reportedly between \$200,000 and \$600,000) allowing them exclusive rights to interviews with her.
- *17 February 1994* Kerrigan and Harding practise at the same time and on the same rink in Norway.
- *23 February 1994* In the technical program of the women's competition at Lillehammer, Nancy Kerrigan takes the lead with Tonya Harding only in 10th place. Oksana Bayul is placed second at the end of the technical program.
- *25 February 1994* The women's free program takes place. Bayul skates beautifully as does Kerrigan. In one of the closest decisions in figure skating history, they are

virtually tied. In the free program, Bayul is ranked outright first by four judges, second by two judges and third by two judges. Kerrigan is ranked outright first by four judges, and second by four judges. The ninth judge, Jan Hoffmann of Germany (former GDR Olympic figure skater and silver medalist, two-time world champion), has the two tied in the free skate but ranks Bayul higher on artistic impression. As the tie-breaker, this higher vote on artistic impression gives Hoffmann's nod for first place to Bayul. She is thus ranked first by five judges, achieving a majority for that place and is ranked first in the free skate. Because it counts 66.7% of the overall scoring, this places her ahead of Kerrigan with 2.0 factored places to Kerrigan's 2.5 factored places. Though no longer having any bearing on the outcome, it is noteworthy that in free skating, total ordinals were 15 for Bayul and 14 for Kerrigan, and that Kerrigan's free skating point score [104.7 (51.9 Technical and 52.8 Artistic)] was also higher than Bayul's [104.5 (51.7 Technical and 52.8 Artistic)]. Interestingly, the judging broke perfectly along former East-West lines, with Kerrigan being ranked first in the free skate by the judges from Canada, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States. Bayul was ranked first by the judges from China, the Czech Republic, Poland, the Ukraine, and by Hoffmann, formerly of the GDR.

Harding finishes eighth overall. In the free skate she starts out poorly and then comes to the judges' stand in tears. She has a broken lace and is allowed a re-skate, at the end of her warm-up group.

- *March 1994* A professional wrestling promoter in Japan mentions that he would be interested in having Harding join his wrestling troupe, stating that he would possibly be willing to pay her \$2 million.
- *9 March 1994* Judge Owen Panner of Portland, Oregon issues a temporary restraining order against the USFSA, postponing the scheduled 10 March disciplinary hearing, and allowing Harding the chance to compete at the World Championships in Chiba, Japan.
- *10 March 1994* Scheduled date for USFSA disciplinary hearing on Harding's eligibility for future competition.
- *16 March 1994* Tonya Harding appears in a Portland, Oregon courtroom and pleads guilty to a Class C felony charge of conspiring to hinder prosecution. The guilty plea was a plea-bargain arrangement which allowed her to avoid jailtime or prosecution on any further charges. Harding stated she did not know of the 6 January attack before it occurred but she did learn afterward that people close to her were involved and she did not speak up. Deputy District Attorney Norm Frink said there was "substantial evidence of prior involvement."
Harding was sentenced to three years probation; a \$100,000 fine; a \$50,000 penalty to be donated to the Special Olympics; a \$10,000 payment of legal fees; an agreement to perform 500 hours of community service; and an agreement to undergo psychiatric examination and possible treatment. Harding also agreed to resign her membership in the USFSA. This prevented her from being allowed to compete at the World Championships.
- *21 March 1994* A Portland grand jury releases a nine-page report in which they clearly state that Harding helped plan the attack on Nancy Kerrigan. Her plea bargain gives her immunity from prosecution on any further charges. The

indictment states that Harding, Gillooly, Shawn Eckardt, Shane Stant, and Derrick Smith agreed with each other “to unlawfully, intentionally, and knowingly, cause physical injury to Nancy Kerrigan by means of a dangerous weapon.” The indictment further states that Harding’s involvement in racketeering was between 1 December 1993 and 19 January 1994 and that she was involved in a criminal conspiracy to commit second-degree assault on or about 28 December 1993.

- *3 May 1994* Shawn Eckardt, Shane Stant, and Derrick Smith agree to a plea bargain with Multnomah County Circuit Judge Philip Abraham. The three plead guilty to commit second-degree assault and will serve 18 months in prison.

- *Later* Tonya Harding signed a contract with Zev Braun Productions which produced a movie of her life which aired on U.S. television in late April 1994. She still faces review by the USFSA which may take away her 1994 U.S. National Championship. Stant and Smith have established a 900 telephone number allowing anyone to hear them recite the “facts” concerning the case. They are also marketing police batons and T-shirts which read “Save a Skater, Club a Gillooly.”

Nancy Kerrigan has had both the best and worst of times since the Olympics. She will become a rich and very famous woman because of the furor surrounding the events of the winter and she has already signed multiple contracts worth millions of dollars. Her first difficulty occurred immediately after the figure skating competition when she complained about the delay in the medal ceremony. This was reported in the press as her being bitter and complained that they were waiting for Bayul to re-do her make-up because she had been crying so much. In actuality, the delay was because the Ukraine national anthem was not immediately available. Kerrigan did not attend the Olympic closing ceremonies, for which the press castigated her, nor did she compete in the 1994 World Championships. Her family later stated it was because she had received death threats in Lillehammer. At Disney World, the day after the Olympics, she is on parade with Mickey Mouse and was heard to say, “This is the most corniest thing I’ve ever done.” In response, the press and public further rip her for being ungrateful and not living up to the ideal of an Olympic hero. In early March, she hosts “Saturday Night Live,” an American comedy show, and is panned in the press for her performance, although in her opening monologue she does state that she had been misquoted at Disney World, and actually said, “This is the most horniest thing I’ve ever done.”

The USFSA still plans a hearing by their special Panel which will take place after 27 June 1994, when the temporary restraining order expires. At that time, the USFSA has several options remaining against Harding, including, but not limited to: suspend or ban Tonya Harding to prevent her from re-applying for membership in the USFSA; vacate her 1994 U.S. National Championship and seek to recover the medal and trophy; and to file suit against Harding to recover training expenses which had been dispensed to her.

[Editor’s Note: The preceding information was gleaned mostly from newspaper reports in the United States and from Sports Illustrated magazine. In addition, the entire summary was read and edited by ISOH Members Christine Brennan (The Washington Post), and Phil Hersh (The Chicago Tribune), both of whom covered the story extensively for their newspapers, and by Benjamin Wright, an ISOH Member, figure skating historian, and a former President of the United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA).]