

Charles Oakley takes aim at Knicks: NBA legend files lawsuit against Madison Square Garden and owner James Dolan in connection with violent ejection from arena

 [dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4876890/Charles-Oakley-files-lawsuit-against-Knicks-owner.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4876890/Charles-Oakley-files-lawsuit-against-Knicks-owner.html)

9/12/2017

Retired New York Knicks legend Charles Oakley filed a civil in connection with his violent ejection from Madison Square Garden in February.

The lawsuit, obtained by Dailymail.com, names The Madison Square Garden Company, MSG Networks, and Knicks owner James Dolan as defendants, and claims Oakley was defamed by being accused of assault and being an alcoholic without any factual evidence.

Oakley, 53, is seeking 'an award of damages to the greatest extent permitted under law,' the filing reads. The filing also includes accusations of libel, slander, battery, assault, battery, and wrongful imprisonment.

Knicks owner James Dolan (left) accused Charles Oakley (right) of having a problem with alcohol following Oakley's violent ejection from Madison Square Garden in February

Oakley, who already had an acrimonious relationship with Dolan, was arrested on February 8 after being physically removed from his seat by arena security during a Knicks game against the Los Angeles Clippers. He was later charged with two misdemeanor counts of assault, one misdemeanor count of aggravated harassment, and one misdemeanor count of trespassing.

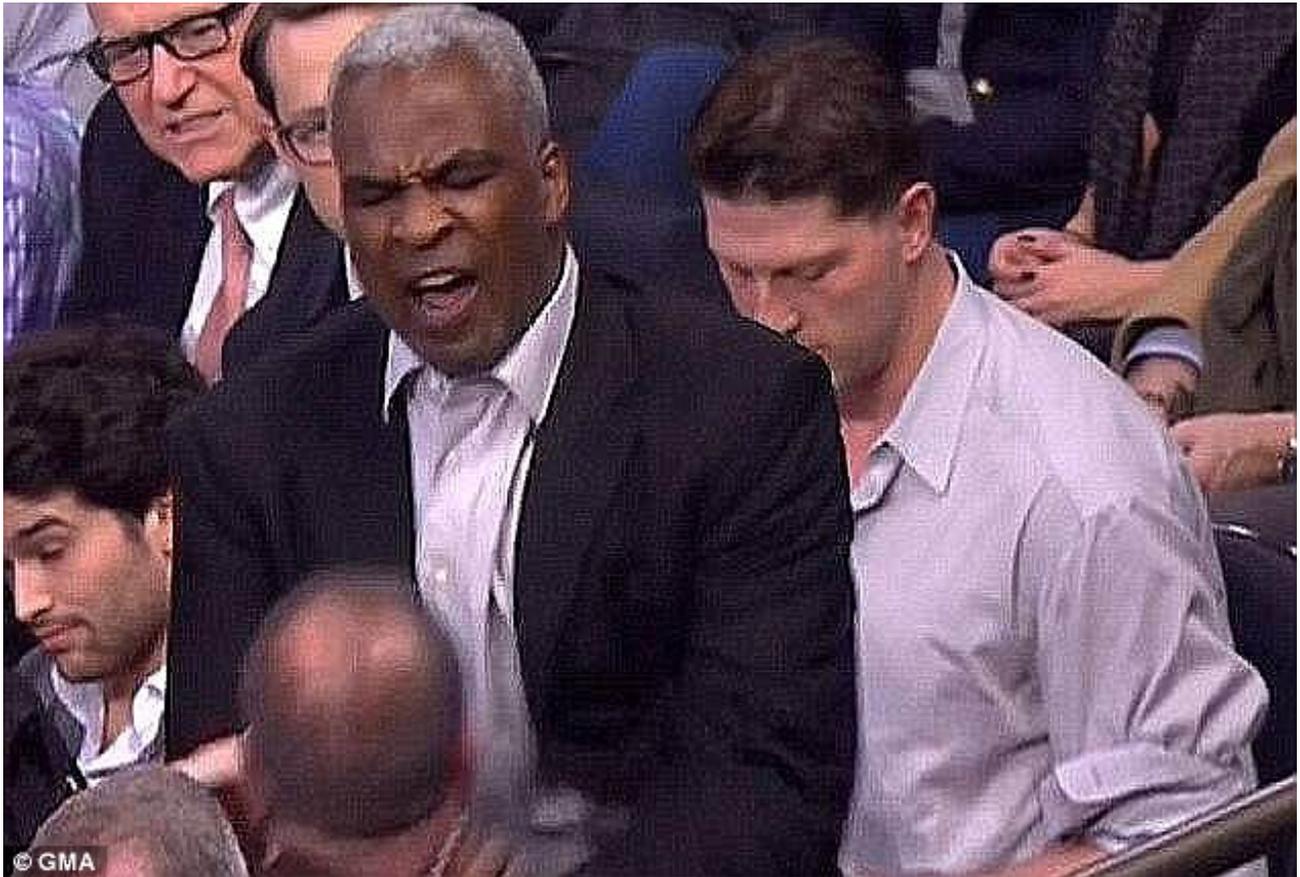
Television cameras showed Oakley shoving security guards a short distance from the Knicks bench, and MSG would ultimately release witness statements from a dozen employees who encountered Oakley that night, alleging that he was physically and verbally abusive. One Garden employee alleged Oakley shouted, 'All of you suck Dolan's d**k!'

Dolan, who took control of MSG and the Knicks in 1999, responded by banning Oakley from The Garden indefinitely and in an interview with ESPN radio suggested that Oakley 'may have a problem with alcohol.'

'It is very clear to us that Charles Oakley came to the Garden with an agenda, with a mission in mind,' Dolan said. 'From the moment he stepped into The Garden, from the moment he walked through the doors, he began with this behavior, abusive behavior, disrespectful behavior, stuff you don't want to say on the radio.'

Dolan lifted his ban days later, but Oakley later accepted a one-year ban from The Garden as part of a plea deal. Oakley, who played for the Knicks from 1988 until being traded to Toronto in 1998, will have the charges expunged from his record if he stays out of trouble for six months.

'I bought a ticket, I was sitting in my seat and eight people walk up on you, and the next thing you know, you're dragged out of the Garden. It's so [disrespectful],' he told reporters outside a courthouse in April.





When security approached and tried to intervene, Oakley allegedly cursed at them, and the altercation quickly escalated into a melee as the two guards tried to toss him from the stadium (pictured). The former All-Star (center) was removed from the building and handcuffed

Charles Oakley was a mainstay for the Knicks in the 1990s, playing power forward and averaging 10.4 points and 10 rebounds a game over his 10 seasons in New York

His problems with Dolan and the Knicks began several years earlier, according to Oakley, around the time he publicly criticized the team for signing Amar'e Stoudemire to a five-year, \$99.7 million contract in 2010.

The feud was ultimately made public, and while Oakley claimed he tried to make peace, he and Dolan's relationship never seemed to improve.

'Everybody in New York liked me except this one guy. Why is this?' Oakley told the [New York Daily News](#) in 2015. 'Everywhere I talk to people — 'Why aren't you working with the Knicks?' I said I try to. They said, 'What, is it Dolan?' I talked to maybe a million people. He's a bad guy.'

The Knicks went 506-314 during the six-foot-eight Oakley's tenure, reaching the playoffs in each of his 10 seasons and making it to the NBA Finals in 1994.

Dolan's Knicks, meanwhile, have not reached the playoffs since the 2012-2013 season and are coming off a 31-51

campaign.

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

-----X
CHARLES OAKLEY,

Plaintiff,

v.

JAMES DOLAN, in his individual and professional capacities, MSG NETWORKS, INC., THE MADISON SQUARE GARDEN COMPANY and MSG SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT, LLC,

Defendants.
-----X

Civil Case No.:

COMPLAINT

Jury Trial Demanded

Plaintiff Charles Oakley ("Plaintiff" or "Mr. Oakley"), through his lawyers, Wigdor LLP, hereby alleges as follows:

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. Charles Oakley, or "Oak," as he is often referred to by adoring fans of the New York Knicks (the "Knicks"), was the heart and soul of one of the most successful periods in the history of the franchise, one which saw the Knicks assume their place among the most successful teams in the NBA.

2. While he never specialized in the type of flashy plays of some of his more famous contemporaries, countless Knicks fans who experienced the gritty and successful teams of the 1990s undoubtedly have memories of Mr. Oakley going toe to toe with some of the legends of the sport, single name icons such as "Michael," "Reggie" and "Magic." What became the hallmark of Mr. Oakley's career was that, no matter how famous the opponent, he never backed down and defended the lane at Madison Square Garden (the "Garden") as if he were protecting his own home. This passion, commitment and toughness made Mr. Oakley a legend in New York, and especially among Knicks fans.

Oakley's lawsuit includes accusations of defamation, libel, slander, battery, assault, battery, and wrongful imprisonment and names Knicks owner James Dolan as one defendant