Bare-knuckle Boardwalk brawl

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"*Leaky windows. Broken air-conditioning. Missing kitchen equipment. A weather-beaten building ... It also has missing kitchen equipment and broken air-conditioning units that have left guest rooms hot and unrentable. Further, it is plagued by a leaky roof, windows and skylights ...* "

Is this the **Tropicana Atlantic City** we're talking about? Heck no, it's **Trump Marina**, as described the attorneys for all-hat, no-cattle buyer (wannabe) **Richard Fields**. His **Coastal Marina LLC** is accusing **Trump Entertainment Resorts** of blowing off Marina maintenance and siphoning away players. There's more -- much more. Fields' suit charges Trump (the company) with doing a chop-shop job on the hotel-casino and The Associated Press' story implies it may have been a **Donald Trump** "screw you" to Fields, a former courtroom adversary.

Assuming for a moment that the allegations are true (Trump's CEO says they're not) ... that's the way the game is played, dude. Just ask **Ed Roski** about his abortive acquistion of the **Las Vegas Hilton** or former **Mandalay Resort Group** employees about the dilapidation places like **Luxor** and **Circus Circus** fell into while the **MGM Mirage** takeover went through its paces. It's standard industry procedure. You don't spiff up a place you're selling; you leave that for the next guy.

In Fields' defense, the Marina's devolution into one of Atlantic City's three lowest-grossing casinos seemingly gives the lie to CEO **Mark Juliano**'s, "*We did the opposite by directing customers back to the Marina in order to maintain it* ." And if Juliano's accurate, then his people did a right rotten job of propping up Marina traffic, especially if Trump stood to suffer financial penalties if business cratered (which it did).

As to the promised repairs that Fields says went unmade, Juliano flatly denies the accusation, saying the work was indeed performed. Given Trump's parlous financial condition, if Juliano is correct, it was costing his company a pretty penny to be rid of the Marina at a rug-bazaar price ($270 million, marked down from $316 million).

Elsewhere on the Boardwalk, dealers and slot techs were lent some extra muscle by the **UAW**. "**Harrah's Entertainment** continues to question the UAW's insistence on interfering with customers who come to Atlantic City for relaxation and entertainment, particularly during these challenging economic times," harrumphed the company after workers had the temerity to stage a march.

Damn that First Amendment! Then again, what did Harrah's *expect* to happen as contract talks crept toward their third year?