



They came like Norway rats landing in 14th century Portsmouth; filthy little bags of poison that knew a party town when they saw it. But this time they had one agenda on their fevered minds: litigation.

I was wintering in my current retirement home at Lac-La-Plonge, Saskatchewan, engaged in the hunt for the epic lunger bonefish. Ice-fishing is a savage sport that will drag the ill prepared to a quick and watery grave, so I was, of course, well provisioned. My supply lines were marginally reliable, and the placement of a small warehouse abutting some burial grounds was provident and necessary.

The local work force, a husky and fur-clad breed, proved amenable enough, as long as the whiskey and fireworks rolled in. I even found time to introduce them to an obscure new faith from New England, called "Three Card Monte".

Then, insurrection raised its ugly mug. The blueprints for my ice-fishing bungalow induced some restiveness among the tribal elders. The six bed servants' quarters, the laboratory, and the two gun turrets, among other features, were deemed "unorthodox", and there were rumblings of a "holy excitement". Nimbly, I stepped forward to diffuse the misunderstanding. A word to the chieftain here, a few well-placed "Rolexes" there, and some random gunfire over the heads of the bourgeoisie calmed the situation, and construction went apace.

And so, to this, my sanctum sanctorum, they had ferreted me out. They descended upon me, a nightmare of pin-striped shapes, flared nostrils and weird eyes, chattering in outrageous jargon. I decided to take the high road.

I selected what appeared to be the lead beast and applied a backhand. The cacaphony ceased.

"Speak, febrile counselor, and state your business, for my patience is short and the polar bears grow hungry."

This produced a new outcry involving phrases such as "fraudulent expenses", "misappropriation", "court costs", "the Mann act", "sedition", and on and on; they waved papers in my face.

I knew I was done. My retirement in peace was a vapor, a will-o-the-wisp, a dream and no more. My editor and his legions of creatures had bested me yet again, may he drown in dog vomit. There was no help for it; write I must.

I set out on the sled the next day for Swan creek, then Smoothstone lake, and then Weyankwin lake before hitting Hwy 2, and a high speed all-night enduro into Prince Albert.

Before I left, I gave my remaining Krugerrands to the village, and told them to treat the lawyers to the hospitality for which they had become legendary.

And, to not take no for an answer.

P.S. To Jim Anderson

Thanks so much for the half-rack of '64 Chateau Latour you sent up so you could use my name in your last column. My boys were a bit non-plussed at not seeing screw-caps, but after a bit of tooth and saw, the whole mess went into the RubberMaid can along with the Spinada, Bali-Hai, and ether with a minimum of effort.

Many Thanks
Mr. BB



Now that the Salary Cap is as dead as a crewman in a red shirt, and the anti-trust protection is under assault by that engine of determination, the U.S. Congress, what can we look forward to? Replacement Players.

Any Minor Leaguer who agrees to this management siren song will suffer the same fate as scabs have earned throughout history. The strike will be settled, the authentic players will return, and these clowns, who saw a brief window of opportunity to use this strike as a stepping stone to the show, at the expense of the real article, will wither and fade into the shadows of bad trivia. A man who uses the integrity of another to advance his own advantage, because his play is obviously inferior and this is his only course... well, by God, the man is a scoundrel and should be horse whipped.

By the way, this is not new. Replacement players, I mean, not horse whipping.

In 1912, Ty Cobb, as was his way, climbed into the Hilltop Park stands in the Bronx, and clocked some punk who was being overly vocal. It turned out he was a war vet who was missing his right hand. Ban Johnson, sensitive as he was to the image of the ballplayer as a drunken womanizing brawler, suspended the game's greatest player... indefinitely.

The Tigers, seeing their World Series checks disappear into Lake Michigan, act as one; they strike.

In a letter to Johnson, the Detroit club says they will "refuse to play in another game until such action is adjusted to our satisfaction." Among the signees were Sam Crawford, Jim Delahanty, Davey Jones, George Moriarty, and Bill Burns.

Ban Johnson is adamant; the next scheduled game, May 18, will be played, or the Navin family will lose its franchise. The Tigers' manager, Hughie Jennings, is beside himself. His solution is to hire replacement players. College, semi-pro, and just general shmuck sand-lot bums will fill out the Tigers' roster.

And so the word goes out, and within 24 hours, 700 hopefuls crowd Navin field, quivering with hope and trepidation. In a scene unnervingly like Mengele at Auschwitz, Jennings walks

the ranks and taps the lucky few on the shoulder with a pool cue. Fifty are culled from the crowd and eventually a final eleven are designated as Tigers for a day. The game will be played, sort of.

The box score for that contest against the Athletics looked like this;

Detroit	
Players	AB H O A E
McGarr, 2B	4 0 3 0 1
McHarg, 3B	1 0 2 0 0
Irwin, 3B,C	3 2 1 2 1
Travers, P	3 0 7 0 1
McGarvey, LF	3 0 1 0 3
L'n'h's'r, 1B	4 0 1 0 0
Sugden, 1B	3 1 2 1 1
McGuire, C	2 1 3 1 2
Smith, 3B	1 0 1 0 0
Meaney, SS	2 0 3 0 1
Ward, RF	2 0 0 0 0
Jennings +	1 0 0 0 0
Totals	29 4 24 4 10

+batted for exercise

Philadelphia	
Player	AB H O A E
Maggert, LF	4 3 0 0 0
Strunk, CF	6 4 0 0 0
Collins, 2B	6 5 0 1 0
Baker, 3B	5 2 0 0 0
Murphy, RF	3 2 1 0 0
McInnes, 1B	6 3 7 0 0
Barry, SS	4 2 3 1 1
Lapp, C	4 1 16 1 0
Coombs, P	1 0 0 1 0
Brown, P	3 2 0 2 0
Pennock, P	1 1 0 1 0
Totals	43 25 27 7 1

R H E	
Detroit	000020000 2 4 10
Philadelphia	30308442X 24 25 1
2B (Meggert, Strunk, Barry, Pennock)	
3B (Strunk, Baker, Murphy, Irwin2, Brown,	
Maggert) SAC (Lapp) SAC Fly (Barry) SB	
(Collins4, Baker, Murphy, McInnes2, McGarvey)	
DP-Detroit 1; LOB (Detroit 4, Phil 4) T-1;42	
Umpires - Dineen and Perrine	

A cursory look at this box scorer reveals what a memorable experience this must have been for fans and players alike. It is nothing short of miraculous that this debacle only consumed an hour and forty-two minutes.

I assembled all this minutiae on the exclusive "Left Edge" huge, monolithic, coal-fire, steam-driven combination main-frame computer, data processor and knife sharpener. I couldn't, however, get it to spit out an attendance figure, more's the pity.

The only thing more abysmal than suffering through a game like this would be if both sides were peopled with clowns, losers, and has-beens. This is exactly what you have to look forward to, possibly 2268 times in this regular season. Happy, happy; joy, joy.



And now, since Baseball seems to exist only in the mind of the dislocated, we offer you this month's morsel of: The Baseball Quiz... á la fantasia...

- 1) Every small child knows Dan Dailey played Dizzy Dean in the movie, "The Pride of St. Louis". But who portrayed his brother, Paul?
 - A) Hugh O'Brien
 - B) Jon Hall
 - C) Richard Crenna
 - D) Stephen McNally
- 2) Who played Satchel Paige in "Don't Look Back"?
 - A) Paul Winfield
 - B) Billy Dee Williams
 - C) Lou Gosset, Jr.
 - D) James Earl Jones
- 3) In "The Odd Couple", Oscar misses a dramatic triple play when interrupted by a phone call to the press box by Felix, who has an important question concerning dinner. Who hit into the game-ending triple killing?
 - A) Bill Mazerowski
 - B) Roberto Clemente
 - C) Willie Stargell
 - D) Jose Pagan
- 4) This is a gimme. Who played Jim Piersall in "Fear Strikes Out"?
 - A) Stuart Whitman
 - B) Anthony Perkins
 - C) Tony Curtis
 - D) Micheal Craig
- 5) Who was the poor sap who took the bad hop in the family jewels in "The Natural"?
 - A) Phil Mankowski
 - B) Bruce Bochte
 - C) Mike Cubbage
 - D) Ray Knight
- 6) The name of the 1938 Broadway musical co-starring Lou Gehrig, in which he dispatched the cowboy antagonists with high and tight billiard balls.
 - A) Rawhide
 - B) Tumbleweeds
 - C) Saloon Lou
 - D) Sagebrush
- 7) We all know Dutch Reagan played Old Pete Alexander in "The Winning Team". But who acted as the

player who got to bean him?

- A) Marty Marion
- B) Peanuts Lowery
- C) Frenchy Bordagaray
- D) Snuffy Stirrweiss

8) Which of these did the Babe not appear in?

- A) Damn Yankees
- B) Headin' Home
- C) Speedy
- D) The Babe Comes Home

9) Which ballpark was used as the home of the "New York Knights" in "The Natural"?

- A) War Memorial, Buffalo
- B) McCormick Field, Asheville
- C) Red Bird Stadium, Columbus
- D) Parkway Field, Louisville

10) Name the town that boasts the yard that has a seating capacity of 84, was the home of the 1988 Black Sox, and has fences consisting of, left to right, corn, corn, and corn?

- A) Spalding, Neb.
- B) Bellevue, Kan.
- C) Davenport, Neb.
- D) Dyersville, Iowa



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Answers:

- 1) C
- 2) B
- 3) A
- 4) B
- 5) A
- 6) A
- 7) B
- 8) A
- 9) A
- 10) D

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