The publication of our Eight Myths Out project this spring has shined a glaring spotlight on Eliot Asinof’s best-selling book.

For decades, Eight Men Out has been called the “definitive” story of the Black Sox Scandal, but modern scholarship has illuminated its many flaws, discrepancies, and factual errors.

Even the central thesis of the book — the idea that the underpaid White Sox players threw the 1919 World Series because of resentment at Charles Comiskey — has been challenged. This raises some important questions: Where did it all go wrong ... and why?

Eight Men Out was not
Scandal on the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox, edited by Jacob Pomrenke, with associate editors Rick Huhn, Bill Nowlin, and Len Levin, is now available from the SABR Digital Library.

Scandal on the South Side is the first comprehensive book focused on the star-studded, dissension-riddled team that won the 1919 American League pennant and then threw the World Series — with full-life biographies of every player and official involved with that fateful team.

This book isn’t a rewriting of Eight Men Out, but it is the complete story of everyone associated with the 1919 Chicago White Sox.

Order the book:
The book can be ordered online at SABR.org/ebooks.

All SABR members can download the e-book edition for free in PDF, EPUB, or Kindle formats. SABR members also get a 50% discount to purchase the paperback edition. The retail price is $19.95 for the paperback or $9.99 for the e-book.

Read the bios online: All biographies from the book can also be read online at the SABR BioProject. Visit SABR.org/category/completed-book-projects/1919-chicago-white-sox to find them all.

Black Sox Scandal Research Committee Newsletter, Vol. 11, No. 1, June 2019

Download your free copy of
Scandal on the South Side

Our annual Black Sox Scandal Committee meeting at the SABR 49 convention in San Diego is scheduled for 3:10-4:10 p.m., Thursday, June 27, 2019 in the Seaport A/B Ballroom at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, 1 Market Place in San Diego.

The meeting will feature a panel discussion on the 100th anniversary of the 1919 World Series, with Rick Huhn, author of Eddie Collins: A Baseball Biography; Bill Felber, author of Under Pallor, Under Shadow: The 1920 American League Pennant Race That Rattled and Rebuilt Baseball; Bruce Allardice, Professor of History at South Suburban College near Chicago; and committee chair Jacob Pomrenke.

In addition, committee member Steve Klein will be giving two presentations: “The Afterlife of Hugh Fullerton: What Happened After the Black Sox Scandal” from 3:55-4:25 p.m. Saturday, June 29; and “How Hugh Fullerton Created an Ethical Impulse in Sports Writing” from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Saturday. Committee member Steve Steinberg will be presenting on “World War One & Free Agency: The Fateful 1918 Battle for Jack Quinn between the New York Yankees and the Chicago White Sox” from 4:15-4:40 p.m. on Thursday, June 27.

You must register for the convention in order to attend, but all are welcome. Visit SABR.org/convention. Day rates ($179) are also available for purchase on-site.

A very limited number of Scandal on the South Side paperback editions will be available for purchase for $20 (cash or check only) afterward. See Jacob Pomrenke for details.
Registration is now open for the SABR Black Sox Scandal Centennial Symposium on September 27-29, 2019, in Chicago. The SABR Black Sox Scandal Research Committee will host this once-in-a-century event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 World Series.

Visit SABR.org/2019-black-sox-symposium to register for the SABR Black Sox Scandal Centennial Symposium online in advance.

The event — which is open to all baseball fans — will be highlighted by a research symposium from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Saturday, September 28 at the Chicago History Museum. The museum is home to an extensive collection of Black Sox artifacts and documents, and we’ll gather in the beautiful Morse Genius Chicago Room event space to discuss the continued relevance of the 1919 World Series and its aftermath.

A book signing with SABR authors, including our own Scandal on the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox, will follow. More details on panels and presentations will be announced soon.

Our special All-Inclusive Package ($45 for SABR members, $60 for non-members) includes admission to the Black Sox Scandal symposium at the Chicago History Museum; a ticket to the Chicago White Sox game on Friday, September 27; and a guided walking tour of downtown Chicago baseball history sites.

Registration for the symposium only is $20 for SABR members, $25 for non-members. Extra tickets to the White Sox game are $20 each and the walking tour (scheduled for 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on either Friday, September 27 or Sunday, September 29) is $10. Please note: The tours are limited to the first 50 people who sign up. Following the symposium, from 8:00-10:00 p.m. on Saturday evening, we will also gather for a reception at the historic Nisei Lounge near Wrigley Field. The reception is included in your symposium registration. For questions or more information, please contact Jacob Pomrenke at buckweaver@gmail.com.

The SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

**Friday, September 27**
- 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.: Chicago baseball history walking tour #1
  *Meet at Chicago Public Library’s Harold Washington Branch, 400 S. State St.*
- 7:00-10:00 p.m.: White Sox vs. Tigers baseball game, Guaranteed Rate Field, 333 W. 35th St.
  *Meet at 5:30 p.m. at “home plate” of Old Comiskey Park in parking lot north of the ballpark*

**Saturday, September 28**
- 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.: SABR Black Sox Scandal Centennial Symposium at Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street
- 1:00-5:00 p.m.: Book signings/museum visit afterward
- 8:00-10:00 p.m.: Evening reception (cash bar), Nisei Lounge, 3439 N. Sheffield Ave.

**Sunday, September 29**
- 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.: Chicago baseball history walking tour #2
  *Meet at Chicago Public Library’s Harold Washington Branch, 400 S. State St.*
Collyer’s Eye digitized, now available online

By Bruce Allardice
bsa1861@att.net

The first printed accusations that the 1919 Chicago White Sox had thrown the World Series were leveled only weeks after the Series by Collyer’s Eye, a Chicago-based weekly publication that specialized in the world of horse race betting.

Until recently, baseball scholars were forced to use the only copy of Collyer’s Eye still existing, microfilm reels housed at the University of Illinois. No longer.

The Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections project has now digitized and placed Collyer’s Eye online for free viewing at idnc.library.illinois.edu for the years of 1918 to 1922. The online collection can also be found at a subscription-only newspaper website, NewspaperArchive.com. Both sites have an easy-to-use search feature.

Recent Black Sox scholarship gives Collyer’s Eye credit for being the first to report publicly on the Black Sox Scandal. In a remarkable series of articles starting October 18, one week after the Series ended, and extending through the end of 1919, Collyer’s Eye named the names that the rest of the publishing world did not dare to.

Collyer’s Eye named seven of the Eight Men Out — all but Buck Weaver — and pointed a finger at Abe Attell as one of the gamblers involved in the fix. It gave details of the ballplayers’ activities during and after the Series and offered to furnish its findings to baseball authorities. Collyer’s Eye published all of this months before any of the more reputable publications, and almost one year before Eddie Cicotte and Shoeless Joe Jackson admitted their involvement to the grand jury.

As we now know, Collyer’s Eye received most of its “inside” information from famed reporter Hugh Fullerton of the Chicago Herald-Examiner, who used Collyer’s to level charges that his own newspaper refused to.

Collyer’s Eye contains a lot more baseball gossip, over and above its coverage of the Black Sox Scandal. Collyer’s Eye was overtly sensationalist and not over-scrupulous in sourcing its stories — thus being free to report items that reputable newspapers didn’t. For example, in the May 4, 1918 issue, it passed along a rumor that the Chicago White Sox had offered to purchase Babe Ruth from the Red Sox for $100,000, an offer Red Sox owner Harry Frazee reportedly declined.

The publication is especially valuable in tracking how the betting markets set the odds for the pennant races. Publisher Bert Collyer knew the world of gambling, especially racetrack gambling, and many of the same bookies who fixed horse races also fixed baseball games. It is hoped that more years in the 1920s and 1930s will be added to the online collection now available.

Dickey Kerr’s 1920 contract to be donated to museum

SABR Black Sox Scandal committee member Bruce Allardice recently received three valuable artifacts of Chicago baseball history.

The prize item is the original 1920 Player Contract of Dickey Kerr, the White Sox pitcher who won two games for the Sox in the tainted 1919 World Series. Kerr went on to win 40 games the next two seasons.

The contract is dated as received by the American League on May 3, 1920. It bears the signatures of Kerr and White Sox President Charles Comiskey, along with that of AL President Ban Johnson.

Kerr’s contract wouldn’t make modern players jealous — he signed for $4,500 that season, with an option by the White Sox to renew the contract for 1921 at the same rate. As it turned out, Comiskey offered Kerr a $500 pay cut the next year, prompting Kerr to quit major-league baseball. It took three more years before he returned to the White Sox, but he had lost his effectiveness by then.

Allardice also received two unused “game passes” from the Chicago White Sox and the Federal League Chicago Whales, both from the 1910s. All three artifacts are in pristine condition.

The items were given to Allardice by a relative of Bill Veeck, who owned the White Sox in the 1950s and beyond. Allardice plans to donate the items to the Chicago Historical Society.

Allardice is a professor of history at South Suburban College. He has authored or co-authored seven books, and numerous articles, on baseball history and the American Civil War.
New evidence White Sox threw more games in 1920

By Bruce Allardice
bsa1861@att.net

Now that Collyer’s Eye is available online, it may be easier for historians to discover more gems of reporting about the Black Sox Scandal that have been overlooked until now.

For example, this item from Collyer’s Eye on September 11, 1920, just two weeks before the scandal story broke, makes it clear that the “Clean Sox” knew their less honest teammates were throwing games in 1920, as well:

Ouster of ‘Wrecking Crew’ demanded of White Sox
Old guard plans drive to clean out team
By Joe LeBlanc

Internal dissension, which earlier in the season threatened to shatter the pennant chances of the White Sox, has again broken forth. Bitter recriminations fill the air both on the field and in the club house. The “old guard” who have at all times given their best and who came through the last world’s series “clean as a hound’s tooth,” have arranged to make demands on Comiskey looking to the ousting of the “wrecking crew.”

“We went into New York and Boston looking like pennant winners,” said one of the players, “and came out of the series looking like amateurs. We have a good ball club, but it’s a house divided. Just why players should toss off four or five thousand dollars of world’s series money is quite beyond me.”

“Take Risberg, for instance. Over in Boston he struck out three times without taking his bat off his shoulder. Did you notice that Cicotte failed to win a game at Boston, also in New York? Then as a crowning piece of Merkleism, did you see Felsch get nipped off of second base? All of this may be ‘the breaks of the game,’ but then there is another name and like murder it ‘will out’ sooner or later.”

Over at skull practice Wednesday morning it was said that several of the White Sox players were “interested” in the grand jury probe into the alleged scandal surrounding the Cubs-Philadelphia games. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that Sherry Magee will have plenty of company and that said company would not be confined to members of the Cubs’ playing staff.

“Joe LeBlanc” appears to have been yet another pseudonym for Collyer’s Eye publisher Bert Collyer.

The references to the New York and Boston series were for the games of August 26-28 and September 1-3, 1920, respectively. After winning the opener against the Yankees 16-5, the Sox had a 3½-game lead over Cleveland. The Sox proceeded to lose the next five games.

In 2016, Bruce Allardice uncovered evidence of the Chicago White Sox fixing games — “at a minimum three, and perhaps as many as a dozen” — in the 1920 season. He wrote of Swede Risberg (above) and the others, “At one time or another every “Clean Sox” regular accused their “Black Sox” teammates of throwing games in 1920. (Photo: SABR.org)

For more on the Sox throwing games in 1920, see Bruce Allardice’s article, “‘Playing Rotten, It Ain’t That Hard to Do’: How the Black Sox Threw the 1920 Pennant,” in the Spring 2016 SABR Baseball Research Journal.

Risberg’s three strikeouts in Boston also refers to the August 26-28 series against the Red Sox. Cicotte’s losses were in the August 27 game against the Yankees (by a 6-5 score) and on August 31 against the Red Sox (7-3).

Chicago Tribune writer I.E. Sanborn used the Fred Merkle reference about Happy Felsch in his column on the White Sox’s September 7 game against Detroit. With the bases filled, no one out, and the Sox down 5-0, “Felsch strolled so far off second that [Detroit catcher Oscar] Stange picked him off the bag by a yard, there being nothing close about the verdict. … There was no possible play to call for his taking a lead off the bag.” See I.E. Sanborn, “Asleep on Feet, Sox Dropped by Tigers, 5 to 0,” Chicago Tribune, September 8, 1920.

Who was the Sox player quoted anonymously in this story? Star second baseman and team captain Eddie Collins is the most likely candidate. Collins went public with his accusations the following month, telling sportswriter Otto Floto he was through with baseball unless Charles Comiskey fired the crooked players. See the Denver Post on October 15, 1920, and also Collyer’s Eye on October 30, 1920.
always considered to be a definitive work of history. The Chicago Tribune’s original review of Asinof’s book, by William Leonard in 1963, pointed out some of its “imaginative minutiae,” especially the “disconcerting” way he narrated secret conversations between gamblers or relayed the inner feelings of people who were long dead. Leonard preferred to call it “rather, the most [thorough] investigation of the Black Sox on record.”

Over the years, those flaws were forgotten in the wake of the book’s resounding success. Bob Broeg of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch was the first prominent writer to call Eight Men Out the “most definitive” account of the scandal, following Eddie Cicotte’s death in 1969. But it was not until Red Smith of the New York Times called Asinof’s book “the definitive work on the scandal” in a widely read 1975 column after Swede Risberg’s death that the book began to take on a reputation as great history.

It’s crucial to remember that Asinof himself never set out to write an air-tight, scholarly work of history, although he was happy to reap the benefits of the book’s legacy. He was originally hired in 1960 to write a screenplay for a Dupont television special and his research eventually led to a book deal. But his goal was to write a dramatic narrative that hooked in readers, a compelling account that sold many copies. In this regard, he was immensely successful. His book has been in print for more than a half-century and Eight Men Out’s cultural relevance makes it the foundation upon which all future Black Sox scholarship has been based.

But that doesn’t make its errors any less problematic, and it’s instructive to explore why those errors came to exist. Many questions about Asinof’s narrative could be cleared up if he had included specific source citations, but he can be excused for their exclusion. Most baseball or history books from that era failed to include a bibliography (Baseball: The Early Years, written in 1960 by Dr. Harold and Dorothy Seymour, is a notable exception.) When pressed for more details years later by author Gene Carney, Asinof testily replied, “No! My sources were an amalgamation of hundreds of conversations, impossible to document!”

Asinof’s book came out in the same era when “New Journalism” rose to fame, the narrative nonfiction style pioneered by the likes of Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, and Norman Mailer. These writers sought to tell stories using “all the techniques of fictional art” but with reporting that was “immaculately factual.” The problem is that Capote’s In Cold Blood, Asinof’s Eight Men Out, and so many other stories utilizing that popular style in the 1960s suffer from the same credibility problems: they play fast and loose with the facts, and it’s impossible to tell which details are accurate and which are … well, completely fictional.

Esquire’s Gay Talese once described the purpose of the narrative nonfiction style as “seeking a larger truth than is possible through the mere compilation of verifiable facts.” There is merit to this idea and great works of fiction can teach us as much about the world we live in as nonfiction can. But even with this generous description, Asinof’s book comes up short. His “larger truth” in Eight Men Out focuses on the victimhood of the underpaid players, who he felt had no choice but to throw the World Series because of their miserly team owner.

The verifiable facts, as we documented in Eight Myths Out, tell a much more complex story. But that’s not the one Asinof chose to tell. One hundred years after the 1919 World Series, the cracks in the foundation of the traditional Black Sox story that we all grew up with are getting harder to ignore.
Alfred S. Austrian, White Sox corporate counsel

By Bill Lamb
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To certain chroniclers of the Black Sox Scandal, the actor most deserving of censure is not 1919 World Series fix organizers Chick Gandil or Eddie Cicotte, gamblers Abe Attell or Bill Burns, or even New York City underworld kingpin Arnold Rothstein, the reputed fix financier. Rather, the villain-in-chief is Chicago White Sox owner Charles A. Comiskey.

To novelist Eliot Asinof and filmmaker John Sayles, Comiskey is a skinflint boss whose miserly treatment of his players drove them to wrongdoing. Modern Black Sox scholar Gene Carney appreciates that tales of Comiskey’s cheapness are fictional — the Sox actually had one of the highest player payrolls in baseball — but condemns Comiskey for failure to act upon evidence of player perfidy quietly collected by his private detectives, and trying to keep a pennant-winning team intact instead.

In these accounts of the Black Sox affair, Comiskey is aided and abetted by Alfred S. Austrian, legal counsel for the White Sox corporation. Via the powers of artistic invention which pervade his 1963 book *Eight Men Out*, Asinof presents vivid scenes of Austrian’s scheming. But his portrayal of the attorney tends toward the schizophrenic.

First, Asinof depicts Austrian as a Black Sox nemesis, inducing confessions of fix complicity out of cowed, uncounseled ballplayers, and then immediately handing these wretches over to the government for criminal prosecution. Later, Austrian is operating behind the scenes to thwart the prosecution that he has just set in motion, teaming with Arnold Rothstein to orchestrate the disappearance of crucial documentary evidence and secretly arranging for the accused Sox players to be represented by the cream of the Chicago criminal defense bar.

Not to be outdone in the fantasy department, Sayles embellishes his 1988 film *Eight Men Out* with make-believe of its own. In this version, the erudite and patrician Austrian is presented as a glib shyster, smooth-talking the innocent Buck Weaver out of retaining his own lawyer, and devising a strategy of silence that the Black Sox will deploy at trial.

While Carney knew better than to accept the fabricated events of the Asinof book and Sayles movie at face value, his 2006 examination of then-available scandal evidence also places Austrian in the dock. But Carney’s judgment of Austrian strikes this writer as speculative, largely premised on guesswork about Comiskey-Austrian interaction. It’s likely colored by Carney’s peculiar notion that the fix cover-up was an offense graver than the corruption of the Series itself (which is sort of like thinking concealment of a murder victim’s body is a crime worse than the killing.)

The purpose of this essay is to extricate Alfred Austrian from the nonsense concocted by Eliot Asinof and John Sayles, and the postulates of Gene Carney, and to present a portrait of Austrian grounded in the historical record.

Austrian was one of Chicago’s most distinguished attorneys, with a roster of high-profile clients that kept his name in newprint for almost 40 years. But to the extent that his services to Charles Comiskey in the Black Sox case can be reliably established — and the two men were mostly closed-mouthed about their dealings — events do not always show Austrian in favorable light. In the end, however, Austrian’s conduct always seems driven by the overarching first duty of every attorney: safeguarding the interests of his client.

Alfred Solomon Austrian was born in Chicago on June 15, 1870, the second of five children born to Solomon Austrian (1836-89), a recent Jewish immigrant from Bavaria, and an attorney, and his Mississippi-born wife, the former Julia Rebecca Mann (1848-1933).

Shortly after Alfred’s birth, the Austrian family relocated to Cleveland, Ohio, where Rebecca’s kin operated a large wool mill and ran a thriving clothing wholesale business. In short order, Solomon rose to name partner in Mann, Austrian & Company, allowing him to raise his children in comfort.

After graduating from high school, Alfred matriculated to Harvard University. There, Austrian played third base for his class team. If this is so, Austrian soon lost interest in the game — for during the many years that he served as legal counsel for the White Sox (and later, the Cubs, too), Austrian rarely, if ever, attended a ballgame. Aside from family, Austrian’s interests were scholarly: savoring classical literary verse and collecting original book manuscripts and rare first editions.

Shortly before his death in late 1889, Solomon Austrian returned the family to Chicago. That is where Alfred began his working life upon receiving his A.B. degree from Harvard in 1889.

Alfred S. Austrian was a high-profile Chicago attorney whose clients included the Chicago Tribune, William Wrigley, Albert D. Lasker, the Cook County Democratic Committee — and the Chicago White Sox and Cubs. (Photo: Chicago Tribune)

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Harvard in June 1891. Although a lifelong scholar, Alfred Austrian did not attend law school. Rather, he prepared for entry into the legal profession by clerking and reading law at the offices of the eminent Chicago law firm of Kraus, Mayer, and Stein.

Austrian was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1893 and quickly became a courthouse luminary. His gifts included formidable presence (he was a shade under six feet tall, lean, and impec- cably tailored), a first-class intellect, and a quick, often acerbic, tongue. In time, Austrian also became a master of legal precedent and statutory construction, and a skillful out-of-court negotiator. All the while, Austrian benefited from the guidance and friendship of senior firm partner Levy Mayer, a powerhouse attorney with prominent clients and a close connection to Chicago’s Democratic Party.

In May 1895, young attorney Austrian was in the news as counsel for a consortium of whiskey distilleries, exchanging public insults with the ousted president of the concern. Less than two months later, he was identified as one of three incorporators of a reconstituted “Whisky Trust,” a venture designed to corner the country’s manufacture and distribution of bourbon and rye. Other Austrian clients included Chicago saloonkeepers, jewelers, theater owners, and politicians. Nor did he neglect social life. He was active in various civic and fraternal organizations, and in October 1901, Austrian took a bride, marrying 22-year-old Mamie Rothschild in a society wedding at Chicago’s Hotel Metropole. The birth of their daughter, Margaret, in 1904 would complete Austrian’s small, exceptionally tight-knit family.

While Alfred Austrian was making a name for himself in Chicago legal circles, Charles Comiskey was scouting out a new home for his Western League baseball club, the St. Paul Saints. In 1900, Comiskey’s relocation of the club to Chicago spearheaded the efforts of league president Ban Johnson to upgrade the Western League from a regional circuit to a national one, with its major-league aspirations reflected in Johnson’s renaming of the circuit the American League for the 1900 season.

The circumstances that brought club owner Comiskey and attorney Austrian together have not been discovered, but politics may have figured in. While not politically active himself, Comiskey was the son of a Democrat politician, one-time alderman Honest John Comiskey, while Austrian regularly represented Chicago Democrats. The Comiskey-Austrian relationship may date from the 1900 incorporation of the American League Base Ball Club of Chicago, or shortly thereafter. But this is just a guess.

Whatever the case, Austrian was in place as White Sox corporation counsel no later than July 1903, when he appeared in court to obtain a court order restraining star shortstop George Davis from jumping the club to play for the New York Giants. Once the Davis kerfuffle was resolved, however, Austrian’s name disappeared from the sports pages for almost 15 years.

But that is not to say Alfred Austrian became invisible. To the contrary, his fortunes continued to rise with well-paying clients and newsworthy cases burnishing a growing reputation as one of Chicago’s ablest lawyers. In fact, only months after Austrian got George Davis safely back inside the White Sox fold, he took up perhaps the highest profile assignment of his long career: co-defense counsel in the Iroquois Theatre fire case.

On the afternoon of December 30, 1903, Chicago’s newly opened Iroquois Theatre was packed well beyond its 1,602 seating capacity for a matinee performance of the musical Mr. Bluebeard. During the second act, a spark from an arc light set a muslin curtain ablaze. Within minutes, the theatre became a raging inferno in which some 600 perished, many of them children.

Public outrage led to charges of criminal neglect and involuntary manslaughter being leveled against theater manager Will Davis. Levy Mayer, assisted by Austrian, was retained to defend Davis. Whether a reflection of devotion to his mentor Mayer, professional ambition, or cold-bloodedness, Austrian was not deterred from defending Davis by the toll the tragedy had taken within his own clan. Among the fire’s victims was his cousin Joseph Austrian, a 17-year-old Yale undergraduate home for the holidays.

While the proceedings in the Iroquois Theatre case plodded on, Austrian was elevated to full partnership in the firm, now called Mayer, Meyer, Austrian, and Platt. During the ensuing decade, Austrian’s stable of prominent clients expanded to include the Chicago Tribune, chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley, the Chicago sanitary committee, a Kentucky racetrack, the Cook County Democratic Committee, and advertising pioneer Albert D. Lasker. It was the connection to Lasker that returned Austrian’s name to newspaper sports pages.

In January 1917, cash-strapped Chicago Cubs owner Charles Weeghman offered the wealthy Lasker a significant stake in franchise stock. Among Lasker’s purchase conditions was the Cubs’ retaining of Austrian as franchise corporate counsel. Lasker also maneuvered William Wrigley onto the Cubs’ board of directors. The following year, the two bought Weeghman out and assumed joint stewardship of the club.

Meanwhile, another Austrian client, Chicago White Sox owner Charles Comiskey, had grown estranged from one-time friend Ban Johnson, and joined the new owners of the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox in public remonstrance against Johnson’s leadership of the
American League.

Tensions came to a boil in mid-September 1919 when an insurrection-minded AL board of directors authorized a probe of Johnson’s expenditures. The inquiry was to be conducted by White Sox counsel Alfred Austrian.15 While the board awaited Austrian’s report, the infamous 1919 World Series — which Austrian did not attend — was played by Comiskey’s White Sox and the Cincinnati Reds, and won in eight games by the National League champions.

Reports that members of Comiskey’s team had agreed to dump the Series in return for a gamblers’ payoff reached the White Sox by the end of Game One, if not before. Yet he did nothing visible in the immediate aftermath of the Sox defeat. Instead, Comiskey directed manager Kid Gleason and front office functionary Norris “Tip” O’Neill to make a discreet inquiry into fix rumors emanating from St. Louis.16

Comiskey was disturbed by the scuttlebutt that Gleason/Norris brought back, but publicly dismissed insinuations about the integrity of White Sox play, offering a $10,000 reward for credible information about Series wrongdoing by his players.

East St. Louis theater owner-gambler Harry Redmon and St. Louis pool hall operator-bookmaker Joe Pesch took up the reward offer, journeying together to Chicago in late December. During a face-to-face meeting with Comiskey conducted in Austrian’s law office, the two men related what they knew about Series corruption, including a Sherman Hotel meeting in Chicago organized by St. Louis gamblers Carl Zork and Ben Franklin to revive the fix after the corrupted players went off-script and won Game Three.

Word of the Austrian office parley promptly leaked to the press, but White Sox club secretary Harry Grabiner downplayed the encounter, declaring that Redmon and Pesch “could give no direct evidence or any new information concerning the alleged [Series] scandal.”17 Happily for Sox brass, the Grabiner statement was accepted at face value by the sports press and public, taking the pressure to act off — at least for the time being.

The extent to which Comiskey’s post-Series conduct was influenced by club counsel Austrian is unknowable, but Comiskey biographer Tim Hornbaker asserts that the Old Roman, ailing and distraught, left management of the simmering scandal mostly in the hands of Austrian and Grabiner.18

Increased Austrian involvement in club affairs is undeniable, embodied in his designation as a Chicago White Sox vice-president (while retaining his position as corporation counsel) in club reports filed in early 1920. It was Austrian, for example, who quietly retained the J.R. Hunter Detective Agency to shadow suspected Sox players and prowl around for evidence of fix payoff spoils. But the reports submitted to Austrian by detectives were pretty much a dud.19

Holding the view that unsubstantiated allegations of player corruption did not justify retributive action by the club — or so Comiskey testified during post-scandal civil litigation in 1924 — Austrian recommended that new contracts, with handsome salary increases, be extended to suspected fix participants Joe Jackson, Lefty Williams, Happy Felsch, and Swede Risberg during the offseason.

However self-serving and duplicitous the Comiskey-Austrian maneuvers appear today, as a strategy they worked, at least temporarily. World Series corruption rumors died out, and the throngs attending Comiskey Park to watch the Sox battle the Cleveland Indians and New York Yankees for the 1920 AL pennant shattered club attendance records.

The scandal dam cracked in September when a Cook County (Chicago) grand jury was called to investigate allegations that a recent game between the Cubs and Philadelphia Phillies had been fixed by gamblers. Itching for revenge against insurrectionist Charles Comiskey, AL President Johnson prevailed upon Judge Charles McDonald, who presided over the grand jury and was a longtime Johnson acquaintance, to widen the panel’s probe to include inquiry into the integrity of the 1919 World Series.

Unseemly revelations about baseball corruption presented to the grand jury quickly found their way into newsprint, but concrete evidence of 1919 World Series corruption was thin. That abruptly changed, however, when fix insider Billy Maharg went public with claims that Eddie Cicotte, Joe Jackson, and Lefty Williams had dumped Games One, Two, and Eight in return for a gamblers’ payoff.20

Austrian immediately realized that club boss Comiskey had to be placed on the right side of now-cascading allegations of Series corruption, and he acted with dispatch. Summoned to Austrian’s office on the morning of September 28, a stressed-out and seemingly remorseful Cicotte quickly

★ Continued on page 10 ★
broke down under questioning by Austrian, admitting his complicity in the Series fix and naming seven teammates as co-conspirators.

Austrian thereupon marched Cicotte over to the Cook County Courthouse and delivered him to lead grand jury prosecutor Hartley Replogle. Decades later, Eight Men Out author Eliot Asinof maintained that Austrian was the one who induced Cicotte to sign a pre-testimony waiver of immunity from prosecution, but this claim is belied by the record. The waiver was presented to Cicotte within the grand jury room by Replogle, and signed by Cicotte before the grand jurors.21

Not as easily refuted is Asinof’s charge that Austrian’s conduct toward the Sox players was adversarial and betrayed a conflict of interest. Strictly speaking, the conflict charge is unfounded, as nothing in the canons of professional ethics conferred upon Austrian any duty to individual White Sox players. His professional obligation was to safeguard the best interests of his client: Charles Comiskey and his corporate alter ego, the White Sox corporation.22 That said, some modern Black Sox commentators (but not this writer) deem Austrian’s procurement of the player confessions to be morally indefensible, if not ethically so.

As scandal events rapidly unfolded in late September 1920, nothing suggests that Austrian devoted attention to parsing modern-day ethical questions about conflicts of interest. Rather, he continued to focus on protecting Comiskey and the ballclub. To that end, Joe Jackson and Lefty Williams were summoned to Austrian’s office, admitted Series fix complicity under questioning by Austrian,23 and were then delivered to prosecutors to repeat their admissions of fix guilt to the grand jurors. On September 29, the eight White Sox players reportedly indicted by the grand jury were immediately placed on suspension pending the disposition of any charges officially preferred against them.

A day later, Austrian rescued those charges from being undone by lame-duck Cook County State’s Attorney Maclay Hoyne, who publicly questioned the validity of grand jury investigation of what he deemed to be non-indictable offenses.24 A widely published Austrian tutorial on the applicability of conspiracy law and other Illinois felony statutes embarrassed Hoyne,25 and he quickly backed off. Hoyne would not interfere further with the grand jury’s work.

In the short term, Austrian’s strategy of preemptive action served Comiskey well, with press commentary portraying the club boss as selflessly sacrificing his own interests in the effort to purge the game of corruption. And while his press notices were still good, Comiskey struck back at Ban Johnson. He threw his support behind Albert Lasker’s plan to reconstitute the National Commission, the three-member governing body of Organized Baseball largely perceived as

under Johnson’s thumb, filling its posts with new members unconnected to the game’s establishment.26

Although he had no great personal interest in baseball, business formation and corporate restructuring were right in Alfred Austrian’s professional wheelhouse, and he was widely assumed to be the draftsman of the Lasker Plan. Comiskey and his allies then doubled down, threatening to transfer the White Sox, Yankees, and Red Sox to the National League if the Lasker Plan was not adopted. Their secession warning was buttressed by an Austrian legal opinion that player contracts were the exclusive property of the players’ respective clubs, not the American League. The teams, not the AL, controlled where the players played.27 For the time being, however, further hostilities were deferred pending the outcome of the Black Sox criminal trial.

Despite his pivotal role in procuring the confession evidence, Austrian was only a minor witness at the July 1921 Black Sox trial. He did not testify about the out-of-court admissions of fix complicity made in his office by Cicotte, Jackson, and Williams. Nor was he called as a witness during the mid-trial hearing on the admissibility of the players’ grand jury testimony. Austrian only appeared in court briefly as a prosecution rebuttal witness, denying that he had ever called gambler-informant Harry Redmon a blackmailer or otherwise denigrated Redmon.28

But Austrian was hardly idle. At the time the Black Sox were being tried and ultimately acquitted, Austrian was in court battling attorneys for Peggy Hopkins Joyce, a photogenic gold digger and actress wanna-be whose serial acquisition and discard of millionaire husbands made a tabloid sensation. In the end, Austrian was able to procure the divorce decree sought by lumber baron W. Stanley Joyce, while Peggy obtained an alimony settlement sufficient to tide her over until another wealthy husband could be snared.29

In the aftermath of the Black Sox criminal trial, Austrian coordinated the White Sox’s defense against the civil suits instituted by Joe Jackson and several other banished Sox players. Of critical importance in the Jackson case, the only one of these suits that ever went to trial, Austrian obtained the transcript of Jackson’s grand jury testimony from disappointed Cook County prosecutors who were only too happy to oblige. Devastating use of that transcript during Jackson’s cross-examination led to a vacating of the monetary judgment awarded him by a Milwaukee jury, and a perjury citation being slapped on Jackson by the trial judge.30

Called as a defense witness late in the civil trial, Austrian recounted the statements given in his office by Cicotte, Jackson, and Williams; outlined his dealing with Arnold Rothstein and attorney Hyman Turchin prior to Rothstein’s grand jury appearance; and explained the basis for the 1920 salary increases offered to the suspected fixers. According to Austrian, he and club owner Comiskey lacked concrete proof of fix complicity that would only emerge later, and they declined to punish the players based solely on suspicion

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SABR Black Sox Scandal Research Committee Newsletter, Vol. 11, No. 1, June 2019
and then-unsubstantiated allegations. Although White Sox vice-president Austrian and/or club secretary Harry Grabiner sometimes attended club owners’ meetings in place of an ailing Comiskey, the Black Sox-connected litigation was the last of Austrian’s baseball-related court appearances. But he did institute a $50,000 libel suit on behalf of client William Wrigley after a weekly magazine called Tolerance accused the Cubs boss of being a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Austrian also represented meat packing giant Armour & Company in high-stakes proceedings conducted before the US Department of Agriculture. There were also the constant legal difficulties of Chicago politicians to keep Austrian busy. In his precious spare time, Austrian pattered around posh Lake Shore Country Club. In 1929, an Associated Press wire story regaled readers with the improbable tale that Austrian, for years a high-handicap hacker who rarely broke 100, had whittled his score down into the 70s by taking a year’s worth of expensive lessons from the Lake Shore golf pro. Austrian had reportedly paid $10,000 for his lessons in order “to win a $5 bet” with cronies.

Sadly, Austrian would have little time to enjoy his newfound golfing prowess. In September 1930, he underwent surgery of an undisclosed nature and was prescribed extended rest afterward. He never fully recovered and spent most of his final months confined to bed. Alfred Solomon Austrian died in his Chicago home from a gastrointestinal malady (probably stomach cancer) on January 26, 1932. He was 61.

During funeral services at Rosehill Cemetery attended by Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak and a host of other dignitaries, Rabbi Solomon Freehof eulogized Austrian as “a joyous warrior, a leader in civic affairs, and an intellectual force in the community.”

Although hardly beyond criticism, Alfred Austrian led a life of distinction. But what lingers in today’s consciousness are the unflattering decades-after-the-fact portrayals of Eight Men Out novelist Eliot Asinof and filmmaker John Sayles. Cruel, indeed, is the fate that supplants an estimable real life story with the caricatures of modern pop culture.

Notes

2. The movie version Eight Men Out was released by Orion Pictures in 1988.
4. Much of the Comiskey-Austrian relationship was shrouded by the attorney-client privilege.
5. Alfred’s siblings were Bertha (born 1868), twins Delia and Celia (1874), and Harvey (1879).
7. According to author Harvey Frommer, “Alfred Austrian never read the sports pages, cared very little for baseball, and looked at the [White Sox and Cubs] teams he represented merely as corporate clients.” Frommer, Shoeless Joe Jackson and Ragtime Baseball (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1992), 137. As of 1924, it was reported that Austrian had attended exactly one major-league baseball game in his entire life. See the Milwaukee Sentinel, February 8, 1924.
9. “Greenhut Squelched Again,” Chicago Inter-Ocean; “Some Hot Word,” Cleveland Plain Dealer; and “Filed a New Suit,” Omaha World Herald, all published May 9, 1895.

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July 2, 1895.


13. To this day, the Iroquois Theatre tragedy remains the deadliest single-building fire in American history.


16. At his own expense, Chicago filmmaker and ardent White Sox fan Clyde Elliott accompanied Gleason and O’Neill on the St. Louis trip.


20. The Maharg revelations were published in the *Philadelphia North American* on September 27, 1920, and re-published in newspapers nationwide the following day.

21. The transcript of Eddie Cicotte’s grand jury testimony has not survived intact. But the record inarguably emerges from the briefcase of White Sox defense attorney George Hudnall is just one of the many Asinof fabrications that hamper enjoyment of his book.

22. By 1903, Comiskey had bought out the minority shareholders in the White Sox corporation. From then on, Comiskey would exercise complete and unilateral control over the franchise until his death in October 1931.

23. The extent to which Jackson revealed his fix complicity in the Austrian office is unclear. The record only establishes that the telephone calls Jackson made to Judge McDonald to arrange his appearance before the grand jury were placed from Austrian’s office. Once in chambers, Jackson admitted his involvement in the fix to Judge McDonald. He thereafter repeated those admissions under oath before the grand jury.

24. Hoyne lost his bid for re-nomination to the State’s Attorney’s post in the September 1920 Democratic Party primary, and left the office in a huff to vacation out the remainder of his term in New York City.


30. For more detail on the Jackson perjury citation and the civil proceedings from which it emanated, see William F. Lamb, *Black Sox in the Courtroom: The Grand Jury, Criminal Trial, and Civil Litigation* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2013), 149-198. The scene in *Eight Men Out* where the Jackson grand jury transcript mysteriously emerges from the briefcase of White Sox defense attorney George Hudnall is just one of the many Asinof fabrications that hamper enjoyment of his book.


32. See e.g., “American and National League Club Owners Assembled in New York,” *The Sporting News*, December 19, 1929. Published with the article is a photograph showing Austrian and Grabiner among AL magnates.


“You can’t tell the players without a scorecard!”

The scorecard was an essential item for baseball fans in 1919, a decade before uniform numbers were added to major-league players’ jerseys.

The Cincinnati Reds produced a special souvenir scorecard for the World Series games that were played at Redland Field 100 years ago, with an iconic cover photo of manager Pat Moran standing on the top step of the dugout.

Many baseball fans have seen the cover of this scorecard — but there were 24 other pages inside the program that have rarely been viewed by the public.

Thanks to Cam Miller, an independent filmmaker who works closely with the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame and Museum, we are pleased to show you the rest of the 1919 World Series program, which sold for 25 cents at Redland Field.

Visit bit.ly/1919-WS-program to download a copy of the 1919 World Series program (PDF)

The program includes rare photos of the 1919 Reds players in civilian clothing, along with biographical sketches of their careers, plus essays by sportswriters W.A. Phelon, Tom Swope, and Ren Mulford Jr., and photos of the celebrated 1869 Red Stockings and 1882 American Association pennant winners. Highlights also include a photo of the Reds inside their clubhouse on the day they clinched the National League pennant, in an advertisement for the Piqua Hosiery Co., and promotions for a few concession items sold at the ballpark: Partridge ham and baked meat loaf sandwiches and French Bros.-Bauer ice cream.

The most noteworthy ad of all is one placed by the Cal Crim Detective Bureau — Crim was the former chief of detectives for the Cincinnati Police Department who was hired by American League president Ban Johnson to help investigate rumors about the fixed World Series (as detailed in Dr. Susan Dellinger’s book, Red Legs and Black Sox).

Another harbinger of the scandal to come is in an ad from the Goldsmith sporting goods company, which explains, “Put a bet on the Reds in the World’s Series.”

◆ Committee member Michael Miller has published a collection of his original research into Shoeless Joe Jackson’s life and career in the Joe Jackson Reference Book, which is available for download online at the Greenville (South Carolina) Public Library website.

The PDF file includes more than 1,500 pages of notes from local newspaper accounts of games and stories from throughout Jackson’s baseball career, beginning with his minor-league days on the Greenville Spinners in 1907 to his major-league career with Cleveland and Chicago to his outlaw days back in his hometown in 1932.

◆ The launch of our Eight Myths Out project in March has brought forth a good deal of positive publicity about our committee’s work. Here are some highlights:

Phil Rosenthal of the Chicago Tribune included a link to our project in his syndicated column about MLB’s new partnership with gambling entities on April 3.

Richard Deitsch of The Athletic mentioned the project in his Media Circus column (scroll down to item #5) on April 1.

Sean Crawford of NPR Illinois highlighted the project in his feature story that ran on public radio stations around the country on March 27.

Colby Cosh of the National Post in Toronto called our project “a fascinating exercise in historiography” in his column on March 25.

Keith Olbermann gave us a nice shoutout, calling Eight Myths Out “spectacular research … SABR at its finest.”

Ben Lindbergh had a segment about our project on FanGraphs’ Effectively Wild podcast on March 26.

Justin McGuire of the Baseball by the Book podcast showcased our Scandal on the South Side book in an episode that aired on March 25.

Bill Felber expanded on the Eight Myths Out misconceptions in a story at Call to the Pen on March 20.

The Inside Game: Black Sox Edition

This month’s SABR Deadball Era Committee newsletter, The Inside Game, will be a special issue devoted entirely to Black Sox-related material.

The June 2019 newsletter, available for download at SABR.org, features original research articles by Bill Lamb, Jacob Pomrenke, Bruce Allardice, and David Fletcher, plus reviews of three notable entries in the Black Sox canon. There will also be critical analysis of the book and film versions of Eight Men Out, and review of a recently-debuted Black Sox opera, The Fix.
The Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum is once again planning to move — this time about 100 yards south — as a developer plans to build a luxury apartment complex next to Fluor Field in Greenville, South Carolina. The museum has been at its current location at 356 Field Street, across from the ballpark entrance, since 2006. The house was moved from its original location on Wilburn Street, where Jackson lived for the final decade of his life until his death there in 1951.

This move is precipitated by a developer’s plans to open a sprawling, five-story apartment complex called .408 Jackson, named after Jackson’s record-setting batting average in his rookie season in 1911. The Charlotte-based Woodfield Development would also build a public plaza at the corner of South Markley and Field streets to house the museum, which would retain its current address. The site is directly behind home plate of Fluor Field, home of the Greenville Drive, the Single-A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox.

The development will include some structural changes to the museum and the addition of a brand-new Shoeless Joe Jackson Store.

The museum’s Board of Directors supports the move, releasing a statement saying, “What we see is a very bright future with bigger and better things to come. Just as Greenville is going through such tremendous growth, look for our museum to do the same.”

To learn more about the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum, visit ShoelessJoeJackson.org.

◆ Patricia Anderson, Buck
Weaver’s niece and surrogate daughter, died at the age of 92 on April 14.

As David Fletcher wrote in his tribute to Pat at the Chicago Baseball Museum website, “Pat was one of the last living direct links to the Black Sox Scandal and an unlikely front person for the campaign to reinstate her beloved uncle.”

At age 77, Anderson took up the fight to clear her Uncle Buck after the death of her sister Bette Scanlan, who had previously been the family’s spokesperson to promote Weaver’s cause. Buck and Helen Weaver helped to raise Pat and Bette after the death of their father, William Scanlan, in 1931.

Anderson was joined by another Weaver niece, Marjorie Follett of Pontiac, Illinois, in a “Clear Buck” protest at the 2003 All-Star Game at Chicago’s U.S. Cellular Field. The protest took place at 35th and Shields, only a few feet from the site of the original Comiskey Park.

We were honored to have Pat participate in a panel discussion on the Black Sox Scandal at the 2013 SABR convention, traveling to Philadelphia along with her daughter Sandy Schley and granddaughter Kristi Berg.

Originally, the panel was intended to be about the 50th anniversary of “Eight Men Out,” but we could not pass up the opportunity to have Pat tell stories about growing up with her uncle Buck and aunt Helen. Watch highlights from the panel at SABR.org.

◆ The popular Comedy Central show Drunk History aired a Black Sox Scandal segment in its baseball-themed episode on January 29.

ESPN personality Katie Nolan drunkenly narrated the Black Sox segment. The other two segments were about black baseball pioneer Moses Fleetwood Walker and the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

One of the actors on the show, Eric Edelstein, who plays Shoeless Joe Jackson, said he brought in a copy of our Scandal on the South Side book to the set to use as a resource while they were filming the episode.

Edelstein said the crew was “magically” able to acquire the same White Sox and Reds uniforms that were used in the film Eight Men Out thirty years ago (although in characteristic Drunk History fashion, they covered up the original logos to avoid licensing issues with MLB.)

Edelstein is a big fan of Black Sox history and says making this episode was “a dream come true.” He has collected vintage baseball cards of seven of the Eight Men Out — missing only a Fred McMullin card.

You can watch the complete episode online at the Comedy Central website.
By Thomas E. Merrick
judgetom1950@outlook.com

It is a long way from Chicago to Jamestown, North Dakota, especially for a ballplayer. Charles A. “Swede” Risberg could attest to that. From 1917 to 1920 he played shortstop for the White Sox, and twice appeared in the World Series under the scrutiny of an entire nation.

A decade later in 1929 and 1930, following his banishment from professional baseball in the Black Sox Scandal, Risberg plied his trade as an infielder and pitcher for an independent baseball team in Jamestown, playing mostly against other small-town nines or barnstorming teams before a few hundred people. He went from the “City of Big Shoulders” with 2.7 million inhabitants to a prairie town of 8,000.1 Of course, it was a detour Risberg took voluntarily, if unexpectedly.

Risberg was born in San Francisco in 1894. He had little formal education, something commentators have pointed to as contributing to “a divisive clubhouse” on the 1919 White Sox.2 He and Chick Gandil, a former professional boxer, were boisterous card players, with “crude manners and connections to gamblers,” and were often in conflict with gentlemanly Ray Schalk and college educated Eddie Collins.3 Even though they formed a potent double play partnership, Risberg reportedly hated Collins.4

In 1920 Risberg was still playing shortstop for the White Sox, and had perhaps his finest season. In 124 games, he played stellar defense while batting .266 with 33 extra-base hits and 65 RBIs; more RBIs than any other major-league shortstop that season. One source claimed Risberg possessed the greatest throwing arm of any infielder in the big leagues.5 According to another commentator, “He boasted one of the greatest arms in the national sport and covered more ground in the infield than a week’s rain.”6

Late in 1920, however, the World Series fix was exposed. Despite his acquittal by a Chicago jury, Risberg and the other Black Sox players were banned from Organized Baseball by Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis.

Even though his days in the major leagues came to an end, Risberg’s baseball career continued for the rest of the 1920s and into the mid-1930s. He enjoyed a lucrative career playing baseball every summer for teams based in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana, and Western Canada, often with or against some of his former White Sox teammates.7

According to Happy Felsch, at a time when the average income in America was roughly $100 per month, he and Risberg were each paid $600 per month plus expenses in 1925 to play for a team in Scobey, Montana.8 Risberg’s son Robert later claimed his father made far more money playing baseball after his banishment than he ever did with the White Sox.9

Risberg, Felsch, and the other Black Sox players could continue to ply their trade because of the extensive network of independent professional, semipro, and amateur teams that were unaffiliated with Organized Baseball.10 During this era, which lasted through the end of World War II, Jamestown — and thousands of other towns like it — sponsored their own teams, with civic boosters and business owners putting up the money to operate a full schedule of games every summer. Sometimes, they raised enough to bring in talented players...
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from the outside — such as the Black Sox and other major-leaguers who had been banned from Organized Baseball. These independent teams were sometimes integrated, with Negro Leagues stars like Satchel Paige agreeing to pitch for any team willing to meet his salary demands.

Organized Baseball and this brand of “outlaw” baseball often intersected. Minor-league and major-league teams would sometimes play independent teams on open dates in their schedule for added income. After their season concluded, some big-league players would tour the country playing for or against independent teams to make extra money.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, salaries of minor-leaguers and major-league rookies were extremely low, and semipro teams were an attractive alternative. Many players jumped back and forth between Organized Baseball and independent teams. The baseball played in Jamestown during Risberg’s stay, while certainly not major-league caliber, was quite good.

Many factors made Jamestown an ideal location for an independent team. In the days before air conditioning, television, and the Internet, baseball truly was the national pastime, dominating newspaper coverage year-round. It was one of the few recreational outlets available to many Americans.

That was certainly true on the Great Plains, where even electricity was unavailable to most people in 1930. Although Jamestown was small, it was the largest town for about 90 miles in any direction. US Highways 10 and 52 intersected the town, and the city was a stop on the Northern Pacific Railway between St. Paul and Seattle, making it easily accessible to popular barnstorming teams, Negro League teams, and teams from the Northern League or American Association. The Central Hotel in Jamestown also was known for its practice of integration, hosting African American ballplayers, the Harlem Globetrotters, and traveling musicians on a regular basis. Jamestown had a fine ballpark at McElroy Park and rabid hometown fans.

Jamestown’s baseball bona fides were established years before, with the game becoming popular as early as 1879, before the town was incorporated. Many star players took the field in Jamestown either before, after, or during their time in the major leagues, including a dozen Baseball Hall of Famers who donned their flannels, spikes, and mitt for at least one game in Jamestown.

It is also the birthplace of two more recent major-leaguers: Travis Hafner, who grew up in nearby Sykeston, and Darin Erstad, the first overall pick in the 1995 MLB amateur draft. Hafner and Erstad played in the same ballpark where Risberg and those Hall of Famers played. Now known as Jack Brown Stadium, it remains an idyllic setting, hosting more than 100 college, American Legion, high school, and amateur baseball games each summer.

Risberg played in Jamestown’s peak years of 1929 to 1935 when it fielded integrated semipro teams that rivaled any independent team in the nation. During that era, all-black pitcher and catcher batteries were all the rage in the Upper Midwest. One of the most notable players was legendary Negro Leagues star John Donaldson, who combined with Sylvester Foreman in Bertha, Minnesota, to turn the small town into a baseball powerhouse in the early 1920s. To stay competitive, other small towns, including Jamestown, followed suit.

In 1929, the year Risberg joined the team, pitcher Freddie Sims and catcher Roosevelt “Chappie” Gray, who had played briefly in the Negro National League and was “a legendary baseball figure throughout the Midwest,” were signed to become Jamestown’s first African American battery. A few years later, following Risberg’s departure, Wilber “Bullet” Rogan, a future Baseball Hall of Famer, compiled a 20-3 record on the mound for Jamestown’s 1932 team with catcher Charlie Hancock.

During that era, Jamestown regularly hosted games against top professional teams such as the Minneapolis Millers and Philadelphia Athletics and notched wins against several Northern League teams, the House of David, Kansas City Monarchs, Minneapolis Colored Giants, Chicago American Giants, and a barnstorming team of major-league all-stars that included Jimmie Foxx, Heinie Manush, and Ted Lyons. Satchel Paige — who compiled a 30-2 record for Bismarck’s team in 1935 — lost 2-1 to Jamestown that summer.

Risberg, “the famous outlaw of big-league ball,” joined Jamestown on August 11, 1929, playing second base in a victory over Enderlin. He needed no introduction to one of his teammates: Duckie Guidas had been Risberg’s catcher in Scobey, Montana in 1925, which may partially explain how

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Swede ended up playing in North Dakota four years later.23 Harry Drumbeater, a Cass Lake Chippewa who had played several seasons for Jamestown, replaced Risberg defensively in the seventh inning and hit a home run in the eighth.

Risberg played again the next two evenings as Jamestown extended its winning streak to 16 games before losing to Hatton despite four hits from Risberg. The 34-year-old former major-leaguer was recruited to provide pitching help to Freddie Sims and to play first base.24 In his first at-bat on August 16, he hit a home run “over the riverbank in right field,”25 as Jamestown beat Hatton in a rematch. “Risberg at first base was the real batting mogul and played a sensational defensive game as well,” the Jamestown Sun reported.26 The team he joined was an experienced semi-pro team, but Risberg made it much better.

Pitching was not out of character for Risberg. He had won wide acclaim as a teenager pitching in semipro leagues in San Francisco, and pitched occasionally in the minor leagues before making his debut with the Chicago White Sox as a shortstop in 1917.27 Pitching was in demand in independent ball, and Risberg pitched frequently and effectively after his banishment.

Risberg played first base or pitched for Jamestown during the remainder of the 1929 season, compiling 25 hits, including four home runs, in just 49 at-bats, and finishing 3-1 on the mound. One of his victories was over the Virden (Manitoba) Royal Canadians — which featured player-manager Happy Felsch.

Before joining Jamestown in mid-August, Risberg had played at least one game for a team based in Watertown, South Dakota28 and spent several weeks that summer touring Western Canada with Felsch on the Virden team.29 A March 29 newspaper article said the Havre (Montana) baseball team had received a letter from Risberg “offering to don a local uniform.”30 Apparently, they had been unable to meet his terms.

Virden, located 180 miles west of Winnipeg, was a small town with a big baseball following.31 Risberg played with Virden from July 11 until August 5 when their season ended.32 Most of their games were played in regional tournaments, which sometimes featured up to three games in one day.33 A player’s pay likely depended on a split of the prize money. For instance, a tournament in Brandon (Manitoba) in which Virden participated guaranteed $500 for the tournament champions, $300 for the runners-up, $200 for third place, and $50 for fourth through eighth places.34

It is unclear whether Risberg lodged in Virden while with the team, or lived in Minnesota and traveled to Virden’s games. The Havre letter indicates he was in the Rochester area, and his June appearance for the Watertown team was in southern Minnesota.

It seems unlikely he would have taken his wife, Mary, and their young son, Robert, to a small town in Canada for such a brief time. Whether he had been traveling from home for Virden’s games, or had been separated from his family for the three weeks he played for Virden, the chance to play in Jamestown — with housing, year-round employment, limited travel, and predictable pay — must have been appealing.

The 1929 Jamestown team was successful on the field and turned a profit of just over $500.35 Based on ticket receipts, paid attendance was 23,133, averaging more than 600 fans per home game. Player salaries for the year totaled $4,801.56 and all players on the team were paid on a per-game basis. The directors voted to continue that policy in 1930.36

When the 1929 season concluded, Risberg remained in Jamestown. According to the City Directory, Risberg and his wife, Mary, lived at 801 Milton Avenue South (now 6th Avenue SE), a newly constructed stucco bungalow which still stands. He was employed as a tire repairer at B&B Tire Jobbers. Both the house and the business were owned in part by O.K. Butts, the baseball team’s manager. It is likely the house was provided rent-free as part of Risberg’s compensation, and, since games were played on weekends or evenings, Risberg worked at B&B Tire during the season as well as over the winter.

In March 1930 the Jamestown Baseball Association announced that “Fred Sims, Negro pitching ace of last year, has already been signed up for the coming season, and ‘Swede’
RISBERG
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Risberg of Chicago White Sox fame, who finished the season with the local club, has been a resident of the city ever since, and can be counted on to be a pillar of strength both on the mound and at the initial bag.” Catcher Eddie Deal joined the team from the House of David, and O.K. Butts returned as manager.

Once play began, Risberg was the regular second baseman rather than first baseman and the number two pitcher behind Sims. In June they added pitcher and outfielder Joe Johnson, “one of the best athletes ever to attend the University of Minnesota,” who had been with the Gilkerson Union Giants, a Chicago-based barnstorming Negro Leagues squad. Local ballplayers of varying talent levels filled out the roster.

Risberg hit and pitched well for Jamestown all summer. He finished with an 8-4 record on the mound, highlighted by a no-hitter on July 11 against a team from neighboring LaMoure, North Dakota. Jamestown won 4-0 “in sweltering heat” and “the nearest thing they ever got to a hit was when Sperling sent a hot one into left field and George Deeds ran and got it safely in his mit (sic).” LaMoure did not advance a runner past first base. Risberg also stole a base, scored Jamestown’s first run of the game, and drove in a run.

It was not Risberg’s first no-hitter as an outlaw player. He had also thrown one in 1923 while playing for Rochester, Minnesota.

On Labor Day, with both Sims and Johnson unavailable, Risberg pitched and won both games of a doubleheader; “the tall moundsmen being master of the situation every minute.” For the season, Risberg pitched 94 1/3 innings, allowing 89 hits, striking out 67 and walking 23. As a batter, he hit .436 with eight home runs, 11 doubles, three triples, and six stolen bases in 47 games, as Jamestown compiled a 31-16 record.

Risberg received favorable coverage in the Jamestown newspaper, but that was not always true of opposition press. After the Fargo-Moorhead Twins “jumped on Sims” and beat visiting Jamestown 13-4 behind the pitching of Harold Anderson, their hometown reporter derisively proclaimed, “The mighty Swede Risberg was just another ballplayer, one of the most helpless against Anderson.”

The 1930 season was summed up in this way: “The team this year played very few easy teams and won from the toughest aggregation in the state and the traveling teams. Many of the best went out having lost to mighty Jamestown.” No financial information for the season has been discovered. A Memorial Day crowd of over 1,800 was described as one of the largest in many years, and indicates fan support was robust despite the stock market crash the previous fall.

After the season, Risberg remained in Jamestown, only to be stalked by misfortune. In addition to his job at B&B Tire, he opened a miniature golf course. On November 18 he was robbed at gunpoint. The thief fled after Risberg handed him the $18 in the till.

On March 20, 1931, he was traveling with teammate Harry Fergus and three others to watch a basketball tournament in which another teammate, Lloyd Withnell, was scheduled to play. Their car struck a vehicle while attempting to pass, and the driver, Pierce Scott, was thrown from their vehicle and killed instantly. “No one in the car save Mr. Scott was injured.” The other passengers, including Risberg, “escaped with minor bruises.”

It can be inferred from the accounts of these tragic events that Risberg was fully involved in the Jamestown community and was socializing with other ballplayers off the field. There is no evidence Risberg ever caused trouble, as he had in Scoby, Montana, or caused dissension, as he had with the White Sox. He fit in well on a predominately working-class team, stepping onto the diamond anywhere he was needed.

In April, the Jamestown Baseball Association made an announcement that, in our day, makes the jaw drop. In an article titled “Jamestown to have All White Team this Year,” they notified the public that “because of the many requests of the fans, Jamestown will have an all-White team this year and have secured the services of a white battery — considered superior to any battery we have had in the past.”

Middling semi-pros Art Vetter and Andy Padavan were not superior to Freddie Sims and Chappie Gray, whom they replaced. Marty O’Neill, a talented shortstop from the Twin Cities, was also added to the roster. But the 1931 team was by far Jamestown’s weakest of that era. The decline in play caused Jamestown to reverse course for 1932. After signing Negro Leagues veterans Bullet Rogan and Charlie Hancock, they compiled a 32-7 record and enjoyed great fan support.

In May 1931 it was reported Risberg had signed to play for Little Falls, Minnesota. Instead, he spent 1931 and 1932 playing for the Sioux Falls Canaries. Why did Risberg leave Jamestown for Sioux Falls? The Jamestown Baseball Association, yielding to base prejudice and economic fears, had clearly lowered its sights and got rid of several talented players. It may not have wanted Risberg either, at least not on the more lucrative terms that had compelled him to sign there in 1929.

Risberg had no ties to Jamestown other than baseball, and the winter had been unkind, so perhaps he had decided to go elsewhere. The late start to Risberg’s search for a new team, however, indicates that he originally planned to play in Jamestown but could not reach an agreement.

Sioux Falls was a very strong team with players from all over the country and a 95-game schedule in 1931. Attendance was between 1,000 to 3,000 per game. It was clearly a step up from Jamestown. Whether initiated by Risberg or Jamestown’s baseball officials, leaving North Dakota was no doubt an economic decision. While fans think in terms of loyalty and community pride, teams think of the bottom line.
and players, then and now, think about financial obligations and family. Jumping from team to team was the norm for independent players. After two seasons playing for Sioux Falls, Risberg moved his family to Klamath Falls, Oregon, and continued playing ball for a few years into his early 40s. They eventually settled his family to Klamath Falls, Oregon, and continued playing in independent players.

Heinie Manush, Satchel Paige, Bullet Rogan, Al Simmons, Charlie Gehringer, Lefty Grove, Goose Goslin, Ted Lyons, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Cool Papa Bell, Jimmie Foxx, and Hilton Smith played in Jamestown.

Notes

1. The quotation is from Robert Frost’s poem, Chicago.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
7. Sagert and Nelson, op. cit.
8. Nitz, op. cit.
10. The distinction is explained well by Mark Metcalf in Organized Baseball’s Night Birth, SABR Baseball Research Journal, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Phoenix, Arizona: SABR, Fall 2016), 47: “Organized Baseball was the term used to describe Major League Baseball and the associated minor leagues.” Although Jamestown fielded minor-league teams in 1922, 1923, 1936, and 1937, at the time Risberg played it was not part of Organized Baseball.
12. Ibid.
13. In 1930, only about 10% of rural and small-town homes had electricity. See: Rural Electrification Administration, Roosevelt Institute, accessed on May 20, 2019.
16. The author’s research has identified games in which Grover Cleveland Alexander, Cool Papa Bell, Jimmie Foxx, Charlie Gehringer, Lefty Grove, Goose Goslin, Ted Lyons, Heinie Manush, Satchel Paige, Bullet Rogan, Al Simmons, and Hilton Smith played in Jamestown.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 100.
20. The 1934 American Association champions left Jamestown with a 5-1 victory.
21. Although billed as the Athletics, the team would be better described as the Earle Mack All-Stars since it included players from the Senators, Tigers, and White Sox. They edged Jamestown 3-2 on October 4, 1932.
22. Jamestown Sun, August 12, 1929. That was the newspaper’s only reference to the Black Sox Scandal during Risberg’s entire stay in Jamestown.
24. Jamestown Sun, August 14, 1929.
25. Jamestown Sun, August 19, 1929.
26. Ibid.
27. Sagert and Nelson, op. cit.
28. Waterloo (Iowa) Evening Courier, June 20, 1929.
29. Muchlinski, op. cit. 69-70.
31. Muchlinski, op. cit.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Brandon (Manitoba) Daily Sun, July 17, 1929.
35. Jamestown Sun, March 27, 1930.
36. Ibid. Jamestown sold 10,530 grandstand tickets at 10 cents each and 12,581 admissions at 50 cents each for approximately 36 home games.
38. Ibid.
40. Jamestown Sun, July 12, 1930.
42. Jamestown Sun, September 2, 1930.
43. Jamestown Sun, September 13, 1930.
45. Ibid.
47. Bismarck Tribune, November 19, 1930.
49. Ibid.
51. Muchlinski, op. cit., 34.
52. Jamestown Sun, April 9, 1931.
53. Jamestown Sun, August 24, 1932.
56. Ibid.
57. Sagert and Nelson, op. cit.
Like many other aspects of the 1919 World Series, reports relating to odds-making and betting on the outcome of the Series are contradictory. On one hand, some accounts claimed the action was hot and the odds shifted dramatically toward Cincinnati as “hundreds believed that the thing was fixed” before Game One. On the other hand, almost all contemporaneous reports describe sluggish handle and typical odds movement from the day after the Chicago White Sox clinched the American League pennant to the day the Cincinnati Reds clinched the Series with a 10-5 win in Game Eight.

The media’s coverage of the 1919 World Series presents a textbook example of the “golden age of media coverage of sports betting.” Reporters covered the betting action on the Series with every bit as much — and perhaps more — detail as David Purdum of ESPN or Darren Rovell of the Action Network do today.

Betting on sports was less centralized in 1919 than it is today and, of course, reporters did not enjoy the advantages that digital network communications provide today. Still, a reasonably representative data set supplemented by anecdotal evidence is available to be analyzed.

There is little to no reason to think the fundamental economics of odds-making in the early 20th century was radically different from the fundamental economics of odds-making in the early 21st century. For this paper, the fundamental economics of odds-making are contained in economist Koleman Strumpf’s 2003 paper *Illegal Sports Bookmakers*. In his paper, Professor Strumpf found that:

- Economic self-interest plays a central role in shaping the industrial organizations of bookmakers.
- Bookmakers are not risk-averse or perfectly diversified, but rather gamble and take positions on games.
- Bookmakers have some limited market power and use that power to price discriminate by setting adverse odds for home-town teams, the sentimental favorites.

This paper will focus on odds-making and betting on the 1919 World Series in Cincinnati, Chicago and New York. The focus on Cincinnati and Chicago is justified by Professor Strumpf’s findings that bookmakers in those cities should have been able to charge local fans higher prices in the form of worse odds on the Reds and White Sox, the sentimental favorites. The focus on New York is justified by the fact that much of the planning and preparation to fix the 1919 World Series occurred in New York.

The analysis in this paper includes examination of the following aspects of the 1919 World Series odds-making and betting markets:

- Comparison of the odds that the favored White Sox would win the 1919 World Series to the odds on other World Series favorites, particularly favorites since 1985;
- Key injury reports, Game One starting pitcher speculation, and a key expert report from former New York Giants’ star pitcher-turned-analyst, Christy Mathewson;
- Opening odds and betting and changes in the odds and betting as the 1919 World Series played out;
- Betting practices of celebrity/quasi-professional bettors Nick “The Greek” Dandolos, Abe Attell, and George Cohan; and discussion of reasons to doubt Abe Attell ever stood atop a chair in the lobby of the Sinton Hotel in Cincinnati clutching $1,000 bills and frenetically booking bets on the White Sox; and
- Odds-making and betting at two of the most renowned and respected betting establishments in the country: Jack Doyle’s pool room in Times Square in New York and James O’Leary’s handbook in the Stockyards District on the South Side of Chicago.

Don’t believe the dope: Few saw fix coming

By Kevin P. Braig

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Based on the analysis contained herein, this paper concludes that with one important exception — odds-making and betting at James O’Leary’s handbook — odds-making and betting on the 1919 World Series looked pretty much like one would expect it to look if the Series had been played completely on the level.

It does not appear that other than at O’Leary’s handbook the odds changed much from the open until after the White Sox lost Game One and did not change dramatically until after Chicago also lost Game Two. Further, it does not appear that “hundreds of people” knew the 1919 World Series was fixed before the first pitch of Game One was thrown or that any significant number of people had pre-Series knowledge of The Fix and acted to bet Cincinnati based on such knowledge.

Make no mistake: The 1919 World Series was fixed. A few people outside of The Fix operators really knew or were actionably confident that “The Fix was in” and, undoubtedly, a significant number more were suspicious.

But no contemporaneous odds-making or betting evidence has been located that would support Hugh Fullerton’s October 3, 1920 claim that “[s]o openly and notoriously was the attempted prostitution of the world series carried out that before the first ball was pitched hundreds believed that gamblers at last had succeeded in corrupting the sport which had been considered incorruptible.”

Comparison to Other World Series Favorites

A good place to begin analyzing the odds-making and betting on the 1919 World Series is by comparing the odds on the favored White Sox to the odds on other World Series favorites. On October 3, 1920 — after Chicago pitcher Eddie Cicotte confessed his involvement in The Fix to the Cook County Grand Jury — Hugh Fullerton wrote:

Never before in a world’s series (with one exception) had any team been as greatly outclassed as the Reds were in that series…. The odds quoted by the gamblers three days before the Series opened [September 28] were at two and a half to one [-250, 71.43% implied probability] that Chicago would win.4

Fullerton’s facts are plainly incorrect. The White Sox clinched the American League pennant on September 24, 1919. The next day, the Chicago Tribune reported Chicago’s bookmakers had installed the White Sox as a 4 to 5 favorite to win the World Series [-125, 55.56%]. According to a September 29 column by Harvey T. Woodruff, that figure attracted an $8,000 bet [$121,809.94 in today’s dollars] on the Reds from Milwaukee. Still, the odds moved in Chicago’s direction to 13 to 20 [-154, 60.61%].

No reports were found in Chicago, Cincinnati, or New York newspapers of the pre-Game One odds favoring the White Sox that topped the 61 percent implied probability of victory in the Series, much less approaching Fullerton’s implied probability that Chicago was 71.43% likely to capture the Series.

Further, one only has to look back to the 1916 World Series between the Boston Red Sox — led by star pitcher Babe Ruth — and the Brooklyn Robins to find a bigger opening favorite than the 1919 White Sox. In 1916, Ruth’s Red Sox opened as 5 to 7 favorites [-140, 58.33%] at Jack Doyle’s pool room in Times Square in New York City and within an hour after the Robins were declared National League champions, $3,500 was placed on deposit at Doyle’s to be bet against $2,500 that the Red Sox would win. As The (New York) Evening World observed, “The money at Doyle’s is the only real coin that has been shown, and the odds fixed there are probably correct.”

Comparisons to the odds on favorites in more recent World Series reveal that the opening odds on the White Sox would tie for the fourth weakest odds on a World Series favorite since 1985 (See Table 1. In other words, since 1985, odds-makers thought more highly of the World Series

![](image1)

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Favorite</th>
<th>Fractional Odds</th>
<th>American Odds</th>
<th>Implied Probability</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>White Sox</td>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>-125</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>Lost to Reds (5-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Twins</td>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>-125</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>Def. Cardinals (4-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Blue Jays</td>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>-125</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>Def. Braves (4-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Angels</td>
<td>5 to 6</td>
<td>-120</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>Def. Giants (4-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Mets</td>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>-116</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
<td>Lost to Royals (4-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Royals</td>
<td>10 to 11</td>
<td>-110</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
<td>Lost to Giants (4-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⇒ DOPE

Continued from page 20

Based on the analysis contained herein, this paper concludes that with one important exception — odds-making and betting at James O’Leary’s handbook — odds-making and betting on the 1919 World Series looked pretty much like one would expect it to look if the Series had been played completely on the level.
favorite than odds-makers thought of the White Sox in 29 of 34 World Series matchups (85.29%).

These figures demonstrate that while Hugh Fullerton strongly thought Chicago was nearly a lock to win the 1919 World Series, Chicago’s odds-makers and bettors had much more respect for Cincinnati and expected the matchup to be one that was fairly even and would be closely contested.

Key Injury Reports

It is well-established that key injuries, starting pitcher matchups and the views of key experts can move betting odds in baseball. The 1919 World Series was no exception. Yet, prior discussion of odds movement and betting on the Series has heretofore dismissed or minimized these factors.

In Eight Men Out, Eliot Asinof relied on an October 1, 1919, report in the New York Times that odds in New York shifted toward the Reds on September 30 as evidence The Fix had become “actionable information” in the betting markets. But Asinof dismissed the first sentence of the report which clearly identified the reason for the move: “The report to the effect that Eddie Cicotte has a sore arm, which was current in New York yesterday, had a material effect on the odds in New York 1919, report in the New York Times Series has heretofore dismissed or minimized these factors.

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Rather than accept at face value that doubts about Cicotte’s pitching fitness and form had emerged, Asinof drew the following conclusions: “The smart money had abandoned the White Sox. The excuse given for — or so it was rumored — was a report that Cicotte’s arm was sore. Gamblers knew this was nothing more than a cover-up for the fix.”

There are numerous alternate, reasonable bases to reject Asinof’s conclusion that information, whether accurate or inaccurate, about Cicotte’s fitness was a “cover-up for the fix,” including:

◆ No first-hand source with direct, personal knowledge of both The Fix and the origin of the information about Cicotte’s fitness has been located that would corroborate the conclusion that the health status of Cicotte’s arm was a “cover-up.”

◆ As Professor Strumpf has stated, gamblers are economically self-interested and creating a “cover up” that weakened the odds on Chicago — such as Cicotte was suffering from a sore arm — would have conflicted with the economic self-interest of Reds’ backers — including those with knowledge of The Fix, who would make more money if the White Sox odds strengthened.

◆ On September 28, the most popular and respected pitching expert in New York, Christy Mathewson, wrote in the New York Times that bettors should beware putting too much faith in Cicotte and that he believed the Reds hitters would enjoy success against Cicotte.

As is discussed below, several reports relating to the odds the morning of Game One indicate money did not “abandon” Chicago on September 30 or the morning of October 1.

As is also discussed below, one of the places in New York where the odds moved toward Cincinnati was Jack Doyle’s Times Square pool hall and, if other gamblers had knowledge of The Fix, it is likely that Doyle would have had that knowledge too. Finally, Cicotte was hit fairly hard in his last two appearances during the 1919 regular season, which may have been an alternate basis for bettors to believe Cicotte was not fit or in top form.

Health and pitching uncertainty also swirled around the Reds during the days before Game One. On September 30, Frederick G. Lieb reported in the New York Herald that “Cincinnati fandom received quite a shock to-day when Heinie Groh, the little captain and star third baseman of the Reds, confessed that the injury which kept him out of the Redland lineup for the last month of the season wasn’t a bruised finger, as was announced by the club, but that the finger actually was broken.” However, the report also confirmed that Groh would in fact play in the Series as he had in the last two regular-season games after missing a month of action.

Until at least the night before Game One, most scribes believed manager Pat Moran would start 21-game winner Slim Sallee against Cicotte. However, on September 30, Moran and White Sox skipper Kid Gleason “established somewhat of a world series precedent” by announcing the day before Game One that Dutch Ruether and Cicotte would oppose each other in Game One.

Without any first-hand, corroborating evidence that anyone in New York outside a small band of fixers had actionable information about The Fix and with publicly available information that the White Sox’s star pitcher possibly was less than 100% fit and an esteemed ex-New York pitching star believed Chicago was relying too heavily on its star hurler (even if completely healthy), Asinof’s contention that movement of the odds in New York toward Cincinnati is best characterized as evidence of the author’s “hindsight bias,” not evidence The Fix had attained the level of actionable information in the New York betting market.

A more reasonable analysis of all the information that was available in 1919 is that the odds in New York moved slightly toward Cincinnati on September 30 as:

◆ Bettors absorbed the uncertain information about Cicotte’s fitness and Mathewson’s views on Chicago’s over-dependence on Cicotte; and

◆ Bettors became more certain of the identity of the Reds’ starting pitcher and that Groh’s injured finger might inhibit his performance, but not keep him out of the lineup entirely.

Opening Odds and Changes in Odds

The work week of the 1919 World Series began on
Monday, September 29 in Cincinnati. According to the Reds’ beat writer, Jack Ryder, there was heavy betting that day. It just was not betting on baseball … or even in Cincinnati. Ryder reported:

It was a big afternoon at the Latonia track, for most of the baseball bugs, including a large delegation of the Red players, dashed over the river to glance at the ponies. The track officials reported that it was one of the biggest Monday crowds they have ever entertained and that the mutual machines did an unusually heavy business.18

Back in the city, according to Ryder and others, there was “very little betting” on the World Series before Game One.19 But that was not due to a lack of money backing the White Sox. On the same day the Latonia track was enjoying record handle, Harvey T. Woodruff reported in the Chicago Tribune the Chicago “board of trade has $25,000 [$365,871.15 in today’s dollars] seeking even money, which will be taken to Redland and offered at 5 to 4 [-125, 55.56%] if even money cannot be secured.”20

One would think the fixers would have pounced on the Chicago Board of Trade’s $25,000 the moment it hit the city limits. To the contrary, on October 1, not only did the Chicago Tribune not report anyone willing to cover the Board of Trade’s proposed big bet, but it also reported that “big money” from New York seeking action on the White Sox was being ignored at stronger odds, stating:

The New York money also was to be placed at 6 to 5 [-120, 54.55%] that Chicago wins the first game, and the commissioner in charge of the bank roll found few takers. It looks as if the odds might go as high as 2 to 1 [-200, 66.67%] in favor of the Sox before the first game tomorrow.21

As shown in Table 2, in Cincinnati, according to the Chicago Tribune, on Tuesday, September 30 — the day before Game One — the White Sox “still rule[d] a heavy favorite at odds from 7 to 5 to 3 to 2.” On October 1, the Cincinnati Enquirer reported:

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There has been very little betting on the series to date. White Sox money is prevalent, but nearly all of it is offered at evens, or six to five at best. There are many thousands of dollars in town to bet on the White Sox at even money, but no takers. The Reds supporters, while expressing great confidence in their team, are demanding seven and eight to five, and this is a little more than Sox speculators care to offer.

Not a single wager of any considerable size had even registered up to a late hour last evening. There may be some action today, but there will have to be mutual concessions. All day yesterday Sox money was going begging all over town with no one to cover it at even money. The White Sox continue favorites in the dope and betting talk. It is mostly talk. Owing to the weak purchasing power of a dollar these days money speaks in whispers.22

On October 2, the Chicago Tribune reported, “With the arrival of out of town visitors, betting on the series became brisker and more Cincinnati money was in evidence, but odds were demanded.” Several substantial wagers were placed at 6 to 5 that the White Sox would win the first game and 7 to 5 [-140, 58.33%] the Sox would win the Series.23

The New York Times also reported...
the odds in Cincinnati the morning of Game One still had the White Sox 5 to 7 favorites [-140, 58.33%] and that “Bets of $33,000 [$502,466.00 in today’s dollars] were lost on Wednesday’s game by the Woodland Bards, the 234 ‘sweet singers’ from Chicago, who came here in an effort to root the White Sox to victory.”

On October 3, the Boston Globe reported Chicago as an even bigger 5 to 8 favorite [-160, 61.54%] in Cincinnati the morning of Game One. These real-time, on-the-scene reports flatly contradict accounts that the odds moved dramatically in Cincinnati toward the Reds the morning of Game One.

Even after Cincinnati trounced Chicago, 9-1, in Game One, odds reports on the ultimate outcome of the World Series were conflicting. In New York, according to the Chicago Tribune, Cincinnati moved to a 7 to 10 favorite. The Boston Globe reported the Reds had transitioned to 5 to 6 favorites in Cincinnati. But the Chicago Tribune reported Reds’ supporters still were asking even money on the outcome of the Series. The New York Times added additional detail to the change in the odds, reporting:

There had been up to this morning very little Cincinnati money in evidence. It appears, however, that it was not lack of confidence in the team and its ability to mow down the White Sox which kept the local partisans from letting their money talk as it was a canny desire to get better odds by withholding their wagers. At any rate when followers of the White Sox began today in the after breakfast hours to offer odds hovering around 7 to 5, the concealed backers of the Reds made their appearance, and considerable money was bet at these odds or thereabouts.

... [As a result of the Reds’ Game One victory,] the complexion of the betting has entirely changed. Instead of demanding 7 to 5, or even 8 to 5, as was the case last night and this morning, some Cincinnati money has been placed at evens tonight. It has appeared, in spots, but not in bulk, at more preferential rates for the White Sox backers, some of whom have received odds of 11 to 10, and occasionally 6 to 5, in small wagers placed at about the dinner hour.

After Cincinnati won Game Two, 4-2, and jumped to a 2-game lead in the Series, the odds, finally, dramatically moved toward the Reds. In a story titled “Chicago ‘Wise Ones’ Are Putting Their Money on the Redlegs,” the Cincinnati Enquirer reported on October 3 that Cincinnati had become a solid 3 to 5 favorite [-166.67, 60%] and reported on October 4 that the odds strengthened further to 5 to 9 [-180, 64.48%] before Game Three.

White Sox backers in New York had become even more skeptical, refusing to wager on Chicago at inflated odds as long as 1 to 4.5 [-450, 81.82%] according to a New York Times report on October 3. According to Bozeman Bulger of The Evening World in New York, the White Sox’s 3-0 win behind pitcher Dickey Kerr in Game Three temporarily restored the faith of Chicago’s backers. Bulger wrote:

With the count two to one in favor of the Reds so far, the betting commissioners are badly confused in fixing the betting odds. In a nine-game series it is quite different from a seven game affair. The moral effect is telling. Cincinnatians are loath to step out. And with the White Sox backers overanxious several big bets were placed this morning at 6-5 [-120, 54.55%], despite the fact the Reds still have the edge.

But that faith was short-lived. After Cincinnati’s Jimmy Ring won a 2-0 pitcher’s duel against Eddie Cicotte in Game Four to put the Reds up 3-1 in the World Series, the Reds skyrocketed to 1 to 6 [-600, 85.71%] favorites in New York, although Cincinnati remained a somewhat more modest 2 to 7 [-350, 77.78%] favorite in Chicago.

Reds manager Pat Moran could not contain himself, saying, “It was amusing to me when the White Sox people were offering big odds that they would beat us. How are they going to beat pitching like Ring displayed yesterday? Not a chance in the world.”

When Cincinnati’s Hod Eller again blanked the Sox, 5-0, in Game Five and the Reds took a commanding 4-1 lead in the World Series, the media proclaimed betting on the outcome of the Series over. Under the headline, “Series Betting Ends,” the New York Times observed, “The betting in Chicago on the world’s series has become almost entirely a matter of one game at a time. There is talk tonight of a few wagers at long odds, two of them being at fifteen to one [-1500, 93.75%], on the ultimate result, but the sums were comparatively small.”

In general, there is little about the odds-making or betting on the 1919 World Series that suggests a significant number of bettors possessed actionable knowledge that “The Fix was in.” Almost everywhere, the White Sox opened up as somewhat weak favorites and — after the odds bounced around a little in response to pre-Game One uncertain information stemming from injury reports and Christy Mathewson’s expert analysis — went off the morning of Game One as favorites.

After Cincinnati seized early control of the Series, White Sox backers began to beat a retreat and completely abandoned Chicago after the Reds took an insurmountable 4-1 lead in the Series. From afar, the action on the World Series looks almost perfectly normal.

However, because there is no dispute the 1919 World...
Series was fixed, a closer, more personal examination of some of the bettors and odds-makers is warranted. When a micro-examination of celebrity/quasi-professional bettors and leading odds-makers is undertaken, a clear anomaly is revealed. But this anomaly did not arise in Cincinnati as Eliot Asinof, Hugh Fullerton, and James Crusinberry would have you believe. Nor did the anomaly arise in New York, where The Fix was masterminded.

Rather, the anomaly arose in Chicago, right in the shadow of Comiskey Park: at James O’Leary’s handbook in the Stockyards District on the South Side.

Celebrity Betting Practices

There is no doubt celebrity and quasi-professional bettors wagered on the 1919 World Series. Under the headline, “Celebrities Were There,” the Dayton Daily News identified a roster of celebrities present in the lobby of the Sinton Hotel in Cincinnati, including members of the National Commission, theater magnate George M. Cohan, former boxer Abe Attell, and a host of major-league ballplayers, including Chicago Cubs shortstop Joe Tinker, who the newspaper caught “listening in while his friend tried to place a bet on the later battered Hose team.”

But the Dayton Daily News did not mention the most famous gambler in Cincinnati for Game One of the World Series: Nick “The Greek” Dandolos. By the time Game One arrived, Nick the Greek already was a gambling legend in Chicago and beyond. In 1919, in addition to wagering on the World Series, he reportedly “broke one of the roulette banks in Monte Carlo.”

According to the Chicago Tribune, on the morning of Game One, Nick the Greek “wagered $6,500 [$98,970.59] on the Sox against $5,000 [-130, 56.52%].” The report does not identify who booked Nick the Greek’s bet, but the bet is strong evidence that the White Sox remained the favorite the morning of Game One and that Nick the Greek did not have any knowledge of The Fix that morning.

Broadway actor and writer George M. Cohan also was a hard-core baseball fan and a respected sports bettor in 1919. On the morning of Game One, Cohan was in the lobby “all foosed up and ready to applaud any good playing, although a supporter of the Reds.” The Dayton Daily News probably believed Cohan was backing Cincinnati before Game One because Cohan had been in Cincinnati on September 27 on theater business, attended one of the Reds’ last regular season games, and “announced after the game that he would back the Reds in the coming world series if he received the proper odds.”

On the other hand, on October 2, the Akron Beacon Journal reported Cohan “came here as a White Sox supporter, and brought something like $25,000 to place on the Gleasonites.”

In Eight Men Out, Eliot Asinof claimed Cohan did not bet his bankroll ($30,000) in Cincinnati on the White Sox because fixer Abe Attell tipped Cohan off that “The Fix was in” and Cohan switched his backing to the Reds via a phone call to direct his partner, Sam Harris, to bet Cincinnati in New York.

No evidence of Cohan giving such direction has been found. Also, the need for Attell’s tip is contradicted by Cohan’s own September 27 statements to the Cincinnati Enquirer that he was strongly considering backing Cincinnati to win the World Series days before Asinof claims he ran into Attell.

There is still more evidence that contradicts Asinof’s theory. On October 2, after the White Sox lost Game One, the Pittsburgh Daily Post reported that “George Cohan [still] wanted to bet $25,000 on the Sox before the second game.” Likewise, the St. Louis Star and Times reported “George Cohan is carrying a roll of $25,000 and he is still anxious to wager that the Chicago White Sox will win the series. At game time today Mr. Cohan had placed little of his money.”

On October 4, the Star-Gazette in Elmira, New York reported “George Cohan was around the Blackstone lobby yesterday [before Game Three in Chicago] toting a bank roll that was big enough to choke a hippo. The Yankee Doodle Boy wanted to bet on the Sox despite anything and everything.”

On October 6, with the Reds dominating the Series 4 games to 1, the Boston Globe reported, “Even the World’s Series fails to cheer George M. Cohan. He has been backing the Sox.”

The only first-hand 1919 reports of Abe Attell’s betting that could be located were from James C. O’Leary of the Boston Globe (presumably no relation to the eponymous Chicago bookmaker.)

On October 2, O’Leary reported from Cincinnati that “Abe Attell won about $2500 [$38,065 in today’s dollars] on yesterday’s game and is playing the Moranites to win again today.” The next day, O’Leary reported:

Abe Attell, who cleaned up about $2500 yesterday, repeated today, and altogether has cleaned up about $10,000 [$145,148.46 in today’s dollars] on the two business days. It has been said that Abe is betting George Cohan’s money.

O’Leary’s reports corroborate that Abe Attell was in Cincinnati, betting, doing very well, and possibly assisting George Cohan. But O’Leary’s account of Attell’s behavior is still more muted and mundane than the legend created by James Crusinberry’s 1956 account in Sports Illustrated.

Crusinberry claimed he saw Attell in the Sinton Hotel lobby the morning of Game One “standing on a chair — his hands filled with paper money — calling for wagers on...”

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the ball games. ... He was waving big money. There were $1,000 bills between his fingers of both hands and he was yelling in a loud voice that he would cover any amount of Chicago money.”

There are numerous reasons to doubt Crusinberry’s claim. First, the media recognized Attell as a “celebrity” as evidenced by the Dayton Daily News including him on its “World Series Celebrity A-List.”

But there are no 1919 reports of Attell standing on a chair, booking bets, and making it rain $1,000 bills. If such a scene occurred, it seems likely the media would have reported it.

Most conspicuously, reports from Crusinberry’s own paper, the Chicago Tribune, do not report anything at all about Attell. Rather, the paper reported the most attention-grabbing activity occurring in the Sinton Hotel lobby the morning of Game One was White Sox first baseman Chick Gandil mending fences over breakfast with Cleveland outfielder Tris Speaker following their fistfight at Comiskey Park earlier in the season.

The story Crusinberry filed for the Tribune gave no indication that he believed gambling was influencing play on the diamond, but rather Chicago merely had been overconfident of its superiority. Crusinberry wrote:

> When an 8 to 5 favorite in a world’s series is beaten by a score of 9 to 1 in the first game, it looks as if all the dope has been upset and all the wise experts are cuckoos. Before the Sox began the combat today, the betting was 8 to 5 in their favor, but the Reds beat them just the same. Something was wrong, and it looks as if it was nothing else but overconfidence on the part of Chicago’s team.

If that was the main cause of defeat, the severe beating was better than if the Sox had hooked up in a close contest and lost. There will be no overconfidence on the Sox team tomorrow when they meet the Reds in the second battle. The confidence may be on the other side. The best thing that could have happened to the Sox in their present mental condition was the crushing defeat today. From now on they will fight.

Second, reports of conspicuous, big betting in Cincinnati did emerge, but not until after the World Series started and the betting did not involve Attell and it was not at the Sinton Hotel. Westbrook Pegler reported “a party of wild Western oil men” bet thousands of dollars on both the White Sox and the Reds from their seats behind home plate before Game Two. The New York Times reported after Cincinnati won Game One: “Betting appeared more active in the Hotel Havlin than in any of the other hotels, with the Reds as favorites.”

Third, by 1919, boxers in general and Attell in particular were already perceived by the media and public as sketchy figures. In 1912, accusations were so strong that Attell had attempted to fix his fight with “Harlem Tommy” Murphy that Attell threatened to sue for libel.

The media’s low expectations for boxers like Attell is illustrated by a 1906 report in The Daily Times of Davenport, Iowa, which opined with respect to another fighter, “[he] is about 32 years of age and has been fighting for more than 12 years. ... While he may have participated in one or two fakes, he has not done so often enough to be classed a ‘crooked boxer.’”

Finally, perhaps most importantly, unlike Chicago, Cincinnati was definitely not a “wide open” gambling town when the 1919 World Series arrived. After Henry T. Hunt claimed the mayor’s office, Cincinnati law enforcement created a “gambling squad” that by the end of 1916 shut down all sports betting handbooks in the city and drove gambling across the Ohio River to Newport, Kentucky.

Cincinnati law enforcement’s gambling squad appears to have been on high alert when the Latonia race track — now known as Turfway Park, located just 10 miles from downtown Cincinnati across the Ohio River in Northern Kentucky — held a meet.

In 1914, Ohio native Hugh Fullerton documented Cincinnati City Hall’s “crusade” against sports betting handbooks as part of a three-part series he wrote for The American Magazine. In that series, Fullerton wrote, “Cincinnati affords a unique case proving that gambling can be suppressed if the authorities really desire it.” In Eight Men Out, Asinof claimed it was Fullerton who saw Attell making a scene in the Sinton Hotel. But no evidence that Fullerton ever made this particular claim has been located.

Further, no evidence was found to support Asinof’s claim that Fullerton wired a pre-Game One warning to the newspapers that published his syndicated column and advised them to print “ADVISE ALL NOT TO BET ON THIS SERIES. UGLY RUMORS AFOAT.” It is clear Fullerton did not mention that he had issued such a warning in his post-World Series reports that were published on October 10 and December 15 of 1919 or in his reports in the immediate aftermath of the White Sox player confessions to the grand jury on October 3 and October 20, 1920.

Rather, Fullerton did not make any claim until 1935 to have seen The Fix coming and to have tried to warn the public not to bet when he made the claim in a column

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for *The Sporting News*.65

Fullerton’s pre-Game One confidence in the White Sox appears to have evolved in the weeks leading up to the meeting in Cincinnati. On September 18, 1919, Fullerton wrote, “The world’s series of 1919 presents one of the toughest doping problems ever offered.” He added the Chicago vs. Cincinnati matchup “is unlike any ever played in modern baseball with the exception of the battle royal between Detroit and Pittsburgh [in 1909].”66

On September 30, after putting the matchup through his system,67 Fullerton concluded “Chicago’s White Sox dope to win the world’s series in five out of eight games. The extension of the series to nine games gives the Reds three victories and prolongs the struggle which in a four out of seven series the White Sox probably would have won in four out of five — on the dope.”68

It appears that it was not until October 6, after the Reds had taken an insurmountable 4-1 lead, that Fullerton first publicly articulated concern about the integrity of the World Series. On that day, under the sub-headline, “More Ugly Talk Heard,” newspapers in San Francisco and Muncie published Fullerton’s report which raised the issue that gamblers might be trying to fix the World Series. However, Fullerton concluded his report by saying that fixing the Series would be impossible:

There is more ugly talk and more suspicion among the fans and among others in this series than there ever has been in any word’s series. The rumors of crookedness, of fixed games and plots are thick. It is not necessary to dignify them by telling what they are, but the sad part is that such suspicion of baseball is so widespread.

There are three different lies making the rounds — all equally ridiculous. The only answer to such stories is that if anyone can evolve a way of making baseball crooked without being discovered in his second crooked move he probably could peddle his secret to some owners for a million. It cannot be done.69

Why would Fullerton have felt the need to warn the public before Game One against betting on the World Series if he still believed after the White Sox had fallen behind 4-1 that The Fix could actually be executed was “ridiculous?” To believe Fullerton voluntarily assumed a duty to warn anyone before Game One is to believe he acted to warn against an idea he (publicly) said was absurd. This would have risked jeopardizing his long-standing relationships in baseball — particularly with Chicago owner Charles Comiskey — with little or no expectation of positive compensation in return.

Based on the information available that reflects Fuller-
degree of accuracy.”73 In its obituary of Doyle, the New York Daily News observed:

He quoted odds on all presidential elections and other political fights; set the “line” on the big league pennant races; made the Winter book prices on the Kentucky Derby; and gave betting figures in all important racing stakes, football games, fights and other sports events.

His word was gospel in the gambling world. The newspapers accepted his quotations without question and pinned the honorary title of “Betting Commissioner” on him.74

Further, no odds-maker was more plugged into baseball than Doyle. His partner when he opened his first pool hall in New York was none other than New York Giants manager John McGraw, who remained a life-long friend.75 He held pool tournaments for newspapermen in New York, including Grantland Rice.76 Finally, most importantly, he had a long relationship with Giants first baseman Hal Chase, a pool hustler who played in Doyle’s establishment, sometimes worked for Doyle as a cashier,77 and indisputably had prior knowledge of The Fix.78 If any person in the business of betting outside the fixers was likely to know about The Fix, it was Doyle.

But there is no evidence that Doyle knew about The Fix before Game One. If he did, he might not have taken bets on the World Series or, at least, not taken bets on the Reds. However, even if he knew, he still could have taken the bet on Cincinnati.

Given Doyle’s position in the business of betting in New York and his access to information, the fact Doyle covered a significant bet on the Reds indicates only that Doyle had plenty of White Sox money to off-set the bet,79 not that the bettor who backed Cincinnati knew that “The Fix was in.” There is no evidence in the historical record that odds-making, bookmaking, and betting at Jack Doyle’s reflected anything other than “business as usual” during the 1919 World Series.

The same cannot be said for the odds-making, bookmaking, and betting at James O’Leary’s handbook in the Stockyards District of the South Side of Chicago. It is at O’Leary’s — and only at O’Leary’s — where the betting market on the 1919 World Series looks peculiar.

Pursuant to Professor Strumpf’s findings that bookmakers possess market power to charge backers of hometown sentimental favorite teams more in the form of stronger-than-market odds, the odds on the White Sox in O’Leary’s handbook should have been stronger than anywhere else in the country given its location in the shadow of Comiskey Park.

Interest in Chicago in the World Series was massive: the franchise was flooded with 100,000 ticket applications for 18,000 seats at Comiskey Park and the Internal Revenue Service announced it would send 40 agents to Chicago to chase a 50 percent tax applicable to scalped tickets.80 O’Leary should have been awash in White Sox money, much like Rhode Island sports books were awash in New England Patriots money in 2019 when the Patriots defeated the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl LIII.81

But that does not appear to have been the case. On October 1, 1919, under the headline “Red Money Appears,” the Chicago Tribune reported:

At the establishment of Jim O’Leary, near the stockyards, the best known clearinghouse for wagers in this city, Cincinnati money was more in evidence than White Sox money, much of the money which arrived to depress the odds given the Reds was from out of town. There was considerable wagering.82

Such strong backing of Cincinnati at O’Leary’s handbook must have come as a shock. After all, the Chicago Board of Trade and the Woodland Bards reportedly took a combined $58,000 [$883,123.06 in today’s dollars] to Cincinnati before Game One because they expected to find weaker odds on the White Sox in Cincinnati than were available when they left Chicago [13-20, -153.85, 60.61%].83

The change in the odds in Chicago after the city’s big bettors left for Cincinnati seems to have surprised those who remained in Chicago. On October 3, the New York Times reported:

White Sox fans who are here for the series reported that telegrams from their home city indicated that plenty of Cincinnati money had appeared upon Lake Michigan’s border, and that it was aggressive money — so aggressive in fact that White Sox supporters could get even better terms for their wagers in Chicago than in Cincinnati.84

Confronted with the wave of Reds money, it appears that O’Leary plunged deeply on the White Sox by opening his handbook to Game One action on Cincinnati that morning. In a special dispatch from Chicago on October 2, Walter Eckersall of the Cincinnati Enquirer reported:

In the Stock Yards district a lot of money was won on...
the Reds. According to a well-known gambler the tip went out through the yards that Cicotte was not in his best form, and as soon as it was known he was Manager Gleason’s selection there was enough Cincinnati money to cover all Sox offerings.85

That a bookmaker like O’Leary would form and back an opinion and plunge on the White Sox is not suspicious. After all, Professor Strumpf found that bookmakers are not risk averse, but rather gamble and take positions on games. Clearly, the evidence that O’Leary refused action on Game One until after the big Chicago bettors left for Cincinnati and then plunged deeply on the hometown White Sox shows that he believed strongly in the Sox and wanted to back his opinion that Chicago would prevail in both Game One and also the entire Series.86

It also seems clear O’Leary had no knowledge of The Fix. Given that he was one of the biggest bookmakers in Chicago and doing business in the same neighborhood where the White Sox played their home games, O’Leary’s lack of knowledge indicates The Fix was a well-kept secret prior to Game One and few saw the Black Sox Scandal coming.

While O’Leary’s odds-making and bookmaking behavior is understandable, questions abound regarding the “aggressive out-of-town money” that flooded his handbook with action on the Reds. Who aggressively bet all that money on Cincinnati? Why did the bettors wager at stronger odds on the Reds with O’Leary when it appears they could have gotten weaker odds on the Reds in either New York or Cincinnati?

As Professor Strumpf found, gamblers are economically self-interested so it is puzzling why these Cincinnati backers appear to have chosen to pay a higher price to bet on the Reds and cost themselves marginal profits by hammering O’Leary. These questions are intriguing and may never be definitively answered.

Notes

3. Fullerton, op. cit.
4. Ibid. Fullerton’s reference to his “one exception” is likely to the 1914 “Miracle” Boston Braves, who upset the Philadelphia A’s in a four-game sweep.
5. “Bookies Favor Sox,” Chicago Tribune, September 25, 1919. In 1919, odds on the World Series and other more exotic propositions — known in 1919 as “freak bets” — were expressed exclusively as “fractional odds,” e.g., “4 to 5.” For the purposes of this paper, odds also will be expressed in brackets as “American odds” and “implied probability” that the outcome will actually occur, e.g. “[{-125, 55.56%}].”

6. Harvey T. Woodruff, “If Your Money Goes on Sox The Odds Are 13-20,” Chicago Tribune, September 29, 1919. Woodruff, the Tribune’s sports editor, also noted in this report, “One $10,000 pool from Cincinnati was placed at evens more than a week ago.” In other words, this bet was made after the Reds clinched the National League pennant on September 16, but before Chicago clinched the American League pennant on September 24.
7. Ibid. This shift in the odds in the direction of the White Sox despite a large bet on Cincinnati ($121,809 in today’s dollars) is evidence Chicago’s status as the favorite was strengthening at this time and place.

8. Rumors of 2 to 1 odds [{-200, 66.67%}] in Boston were reported in Cincinnati, but no local Boston newspaper reporting such odds could be located. See Jack Ryder, “Sallee and Cicotte May Open World Series in Cincinnati,” Cincinnati Enquirer, September 30, 1919.
10. Sports Odds History, https://www.sportsoddshistory.com/mlb-odds. The strongest favorite to win the World Series since 1985 was the 1990 Oakland A’s, who were 1 to 3 favorites [-300, 75.00%] to

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ARNOLD ROTHSTEIN WEBINAR

From September 4 to December 31, 2019, you can join the author of this paper, Kevin P. Braig — a partner with the law firm of Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP and a member of the International Masters of Gaming Law — for an on-demand webinar, Rothstein on Trial: The Evidence Against “The Brain” That Bribed the Black Sox.

The cost is $50. The webinar does not constitute legal advice and purchasing the webinar will not obligate you to purchase any legal services or create an attorney-client relationship. For a 10 percent discount, visit www.shumaker.com/rothstein when the webinar is released and enter the product code “SABR.”
beat Cincinnati. However, as in 1919, the Reds confounded the "dope" and swept the A's, a result that truly can be classified as shocking!


14. In his last two 1919 regular-season appearances, Cicotte pitched 9 innings and posted a 6.00 ERA and 1.67 WHIP. It is generally accepted that sports betting is an environment where many inhabitants are prone to "recency bias," where a person remembers or overvalues events that happened most recently at the expense of in proportionate value to events that occurred at a point more remote in time.


18. Ryder, op. cit.


20. Woodruff, op. cit.


23. "Nick the Greek's $6,500 Goes on Sox to Cop Series," *Chicago Tribune*, October 2, 1919.


25. "Scores Posted In Cincinnati Schools," *New York Times*, October 3, 1919. The Woodland Bards was an informal gentlemen's club organized by White Sox team owner Charles Comiskey in the early 1900s whose membership included most of Chicago's political power brokers, top businessmen, sportswriters, and celebrities, as well as prominent ballplayers.


29. "Nick the Greek's $6,500 Goes on Sox to Cop Series," op. cit.

30. Even with a 2-0 lead in the World Series, it appears a few unreasonably stubborn Cincinnati backers were demanding even money odds before Game Three. Jack Casey, a writer with the *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, said, "The series so far has had more surprises in it than a Kentuckian has liquor. Cincinnati is the birthplace of the hard-boiled egg. Think of a gang of fans wanting even money on a team that has won two games. They were yelling at first that they wanted odds of eight to five before the series started, and now when the Reds have the jump they demand even money." See "American League Scribes Waver In Hopes For White Sox," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 3, 1919.

31. Walter Eckersall, "Sharps Are Laying 5 To 3 That Cincinnati Will Be Champions of World; Betters Find Plenty of Queen City Cash," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 3, 1919.


34. Bozeman Bulger, "Backers of the White Sox Refused to Hedge Bets Even With Reds in Front," *The (New York) Evening World*, October 4, 1919. Like those 1919 betting commissioners, the author is confused as to whom Bulger was identifying as the favorite. Given the context of the paragraph in which the odds appear, it appears Chicago again had become the favorite. But it would also be reasonable to interpret that Cincinnati remained the favorite, albeit a weaker one. For purposes of this analysis, it is of little matter which team actually was the favorite after Game Three. The odds and narrative reporting clearly demonstrate that the bettors again considered the matchup as still "up for grabs."


36. "Reds Favored At 7 To 2; Chicago Fans Complain Odds Are Too Short and Refuse to Bet," *New York Times*, October 5, 1919.


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Hold Palavar; Melodramatic Raid Made on Offices of Sam Hirsch; Alleged Bet Notations and Codes Are Found – Telephone Nestles Within a Vault,” Cincinnati Enquirer, November 14, 1916.

58. “Abe Attell to Sue Buckley for $20,000 for Charging He Tried to Fake,” San Francisco Chronicle, March 12, 1912; “Did Buckley Tell All He Knew of Puzzling Attell-Murphy Match?” San Francisco Examiner, March 13, 1912.


63. Asinof, 47.


66. Hugh Fullerton, “1919 World’s Series Difficult to Figure Declares Fullerton,” San Francisco Examiner, September 18, 1919.

67. Ibid. Fullerton described his “system” as follows: “The full strength of a team is 100 percent. If the defensive value of all teams exactly equaled the attacking value no team ever would score a run. By taking figures for a dozen years, I discovered that the attacking strength of any team is 64 percent and the defensive strength is 36 percent. Those figures may not be exactly right, but they are approximately correct. I reached the figure by taking the number of bases advanced in comparison with outs and the proportion holds good year after year. That means that batting, base running, etc. all the elements of attack, are more valuable than the elements of defense.” An analysis of Fullerton’s system is beyond the scope of this paper.


69. Hugh Fullerton, “White Sox Roiled, No Doubt About It; But Fullerton Dopes A Victory For Them if It’s Williams vs. Ruether; Ugly Talk and Suspicion,” The (Muncie, Indiana) Star Press, October 6, 1919; Hugh Fullerton,
“Chisox Should Beat Ruether Next Time Out, Says Fuller-
ton,” San Francisco Examiner, October 6, 1919.
70. See, e.g. Lumen Learning, Memory Distortions, accessed online on June 2, 2019.
71. It also seems incredible that Sleepy Bill Burns told Fullerton to “get wise and get yourself some money” the day before Game One. Again, Fullerton never made this claim in 1919 or 1920, but first made this claim as a wit-
ess in Shoeless Joe Jackson’s 1924 trial for back pay. It would have been reckless indeed for Burns to even hint of The Fix to Fullerton before Game One. By 1919, Fuller-
ton had thoroughly published his distaste for gambling on baseball. Some writers, like Grantland Rice, who reportedly participated in a media pool tournament at Jack Doyle’s pool room in Times Square and golfed regularly with Babe Ruth, appear to have been comfortable with gambling on baseball. But Fullerton’s position on gambling was more nuanced. Fullerton distinguished between “gambling” and “sure thing play” and he considered New York gamblers to engage in only the latter. See Hugh Fullerton, “American Gambling and Gamblers: Preying Upon the Wage Earners,” The American Magazine, February 1914. Given Fullerton’s bias against New York gamblers and his enthusiasm for revealing objective truth, it does not seem possible that Fullerton could have cultivated a relationship with a person like Burns that would have put Burns at ease to tell him “get wise and get yourself some money.” If Burns in fact told Fullerton as much, then Burns was as reckless and stupid as Attell.
72. Asinof, 42. According to the New York Times, the bet Doyle covered was “$5,000 to $7,000 on the Reds.” In other words, the bettor appears to have risked $5,000 to win $7,000, which is equivalent to odds of 7 to 5 (+140, 41.67%). This would have been approximately consistent with the odds reported in Chicago the day before (September 29) on the White Sox [13 to 20, -153.85, 60.61%] and exactly the odds that Harvey T. Woodruff of the Chicago Tribune opined the odds should be.
73. “Gothamites Dig Up Some Bets On Reds,” op. cit.
82. “Red Money Appears,” Chicago Tribune, October 1, 1919. Only this single report on O’Leary’s operations provides any evidence of how bookmakers in 1919 set “mar-
gins.” Because O’Leary’s odds on the White Sox and the Reds sum to 98.99%, he was creating a market with a 1% margin. The existence of such a small margin at O’Leary’s suggests he was behaving almost like “just another gambler” rather than a bookmaker. Margins in baseball tend to be quite low and typically not greater than 5%. But it is still rare to offer near zero-margin bets on baseball; doing so is essentially forfeiting the inherent edge of being the book-
maker — which is establishing odds that favor the book-
maker. For an explanation on how bookmakers calculate betting margins to both attract business and profit, see “How to calculate betting margins,” Pinnacle.com, August 15, 2016, accessed online on June 2, 2019.
83. Woodruff, “If Your Money Goes on Sox The Odds Are 13-20.”
86. Perhaps the most delicious fact about the 1919 World Series for Cincinnati Reds fans (like the author) is that so many purportedly “square” Reds’ backers bet like “sharps” and the so-called “sharp” White Sox backer, James O’Leary, bet like a “square.” After Cincinnati grabbed the early 2-0 lead in the World Series, the New York Times observed, “Apparently, the majority of Cincin-
ati fans of the cooler type, men who never allow partisanship or prejudice to sway reason in matters where money is concerned, are not really eager to lay two to one that the Reds will prove masters of the situation.” See “Offer 9 To 5 On Reds,” New York Times, October 3, 1919. Alas, not all Cincinnati backers were of the “cooler type” who made a killing. For example, an October 8, 1919 head-
line in the New York Times blared “Seven Redland Fans Lose $60,000 on Game” [$913,574.55 in today’s dollars], and the Times reported “[t]hey wagered $15,000 at odds on the first game. They doubled on the second and third game. Losing on the third game they dropped their betting to $15,000, won, and then bet $30,000 on the fifth game, which they also won. They then bet the $60,000 on the sixth game.”
SPECIAL BLACK SOX ISSUE

This October will mark the 100th anniversary of one event that Major League Baseball will likely not be celebrating: the playing of the infamous 1919 World Series. But the corrupted Chicago White Sox versus Cincinnati Reds championship match represents a landmark that *The Inside Game* cannot ignore – the close of the Deadball Era. This issue of the newsletter is devoted to the scandal that emanated from the era-ending Series, and is our first single-subject issue in more than a decade. The issue also forms a modest part of SABR's effort to set the historical record straight on the Black Sox affair.

Since its founding in 2009, the Black Sox Scandal Research Committee has worked diligently to uncover the true facts of the scandal, promoting original research, releasing a cutting-edge bi-annual newsletter, and publishing the informative chronicle *Scandal on the Southside* (SABR, 2015). In anticipation that many of the hoary canards about the Black Sox might be regurgitated this centenary year unless counteracted, the Committee compiled and

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circulated the authoritative corrective *Eight Myths Out* this past spring. The portrayal of club owner Comiskey as tight-fisted; the apocryphal Cicotte bonus; Harry F., and the “stolen” grand jury confessions are among the Black Sox fables unmasked. Readers who have not yet checked out same are urged to give it a look on the SABR website or by googling eightmythsout.

Committee chairman Jacob Pomrenke, Bruce Allardice, David Fletcher, and others involved in the *Eight Myths Out* project have generously contributed insightful articles and reminiscences to this issue of *The Inside Game*. Three post-Asinof additions to the Black Sox canon are also reviewed herein. We even have a critique of a recently-debuted Black Sox opera: *The Fix*. This September, the newsletter will return to its usual format. But for now, we hope that you enjoy this retrospective look at the scandal that attended the end of the Deadball Era.

Bill Lamb, Editor

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**Culmination of Corruption: The Black Sox Scandal and the Deadball Era**

by Jacob Pomrenke

“I remembered, of course, that the World’s Series had been fixed in 1919, but if I had thought of it at all I would have thought of it as a thing that merely happened, the end of some inevitable chain. It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people — with the single-mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe.”


The Deadball Era is remembered by most baseball fans — when it is remembered at all — for its cast of colorful characters like Ty Cobb and Rube Waddell and John McGraw; for its gritty, small-ball style of play dominated by workhorse pitchers named Matty and Three Finger and the Big Train; and for ushering in a wave of beautiful, modern, concrete-and-steel ballparks such as Fenway Park and Wrigley Field, which have played host to some of the most memorable moments in the game’s history. The faded images and flickering footage we have from this period offer only a glimpse of the monumental changes that baseball underwent in the first two decades at the turn of the twentieth century, when the sport truly became America’s national pastime.

When the Deadball Era began in 1901, the National League was just beginning to emerge from the self-destructive team ownership groups of “syndicate ball,” the upstart American League was about to challenge the NL’s supremacy as the only established major league, and the World Series was not yet a twinkle in Barney Dreyfuss’s eye. By the time the era came to a close in 1919, the two major leagues were joined together at the hip, after successfully fighting off the Federal League and surviving the uncertainty of World War I. A new superstar, Babe Ruth, was about to lead baseball to new heights with his prodigious home runs.
Both on and off the field, there were vast differences that characterized the sport’s evolution from the start to the end of the Deadball Era. Although many of baseball’s power brokers remained the same, how the game was played and how the leagues conducted their business changed drastically between 1901 and 1919. Throughout all the changes, the unsavory stench of corruption remained a constant presence in baseball, bubbling under the surface year after year until it finally boiled over with the fixing of the 1919 World Series. The Black Sox scandal launched a crisis of confidence within the sport that ultimately defined this period and changed the game forever.

One hundred years after the 1919 World Series, we are still asking how the scandal even happened in the first place. Why did eight Chicago White Sox players on a championship team throw away their careers for a short-sighted bribe from gamblers? And why hasn’t a scandal of this magnitude ever happened in baseball before or since?

The answer to those questions will be debated for the next hundred years, but one thing is certain: There is no way the Black Sox scandal could have happened in any other time except the Deadball Era. The confluence of forces that determined how the plot originated, how the World Series played out, how the scandal was exposed, and how baseball officials dealt with it all were unique to this period. This context is crucial to understanding what historians Dr. Harold and Dorothy Seymour called “the darkest hour” in baseball history.

From beginning to end, the Deadball Era was the most corrupt period in baseball history. The scandal that marked its final days also served as a symbol of its greedy impulses and ethical lapses. From top to bottom, the sport’s failure to account for a massive threat to its integrity in exchange for widespread popularity and profits is the common thread that connects the entire era. Game-fixing incidents didn’t originate in the Deadball Era, of course — those go back to the sport’s earliest days as a competitive activity, even before it became openly professional after the Civil War. The first documented fixed baseball game occurred in 1865 and the National League, in just its second year of existence, banned four Louisville Grays players for throwing games in 1877. But those scandals from an earlier generation had been largely forgotten by the turn of the twentieth century.

It’s instructive to understand just how intertwined baseball and betting were during the Deadball Era, and how many opportunities the game’s leaders had to curb that influence before the Black Sox scandal. By 1903, gambling flourished at major-league ballparks and American League president Ban Johnson, baseball’s most powerful authority figure, ordered an end to all betting by fans during games. But this pronouncement was ignored by most team owners and did not have the desired effect. Months later, Boston catcher Lou Criger was approached by gamblers who offered to bribe him and star pitcher Cy Young to fix the first modern World Series between the AL and NL champions. Rumors of fixed games and bribery attempts plagued nearly every fall classic after that, with suspicion surrounding star players such as Rube Waddell of the Philadelphia A’s and Smoky Joe Wood of the Boston Red Sox.

An incident involving Wood in the 1912 World Series prompted syndicated columnist Hugh Fullerton to publicly warn against gamblers’ growing influence in baseball: “The muckerishness of the ‘fan’ is exceeding itself in muck this fall. Boston howled that it was ‘all fixed’ then raved over the team when it won. [So] New York screamed that the Giants were throwing the series. For a comparatively trifling bet Wood risked Boston’s title and the wealth that accrued to the winners. Stamp out gambling and the end of talk of crookedness is at hand.”

But other than Ban Johnson’s occasional announcements to the media that baseball took the threat of game-fixing seriously, officials continued to turn a blind eye to incidents of corruption for the rest of the decade. First baseman Hal Chase — known as the “Black Prince of Baseball” — earned a reputation as the most notorious fixer in the major leagues,
moving from team to team and bribing teammates and opponents alike for years. But he escaped punishment even after his manager, the well-respected Christy Mathewson, turned him in to the National League for these transgressions in 1918.

This was the laissez-faire environment that baseball had cultivated for two decades by the time a group of Chicago White Sox players first discussed the idea of fixing the 1919 World Series. In modern times, we might call this a lack of institutional control. The total lack of enforcement against game-fixing, bribery attempts, or the casual wagering that permeated the sport served to embolden the Black Sox in going through with their ill-conceived plans. There is no way of knowing if the Black Sox players even considered the possibility of punishment, but nothing in baseball’s recent history suggested that anything would happen to them if they were caught fixing the World Series. Baseball officials — including White Sox owner Charles Comiskey — at first tried to cover up the scandal before Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis was hired as commissioner in the fall of 1920 with a mandate to start cleaning up the game. Landis’s decisive actions in banning the Black Sox (and any other players who had any association with game-fixing) finally put an end to the rampant corruption that had plagued the sport throughout the Deadball Era.

There were ample opportunities for baseball’s leaders to take these problems seriously, and perhaps nip the Black Sox scandal in the bud before it ever had a chance to fester, but they failed to do so. There is plenty of blame to go around for how this culture of corruption developed — from the many players who tried to earn a quick buck by betting on (and sometimes throwing) their own games, to the fans and hardcore gamblers who placed wagers on everything that moved on the field, to the executives who encouraged these practices in the hopes of boosting the sport’s attendance and popularity. Dr. Harold and Dorothy Seymour summed up the Deadball Era appropriately in their classic volume, *Baseball: The Golden Age*: “The evidence is abundantly clear … that the groundwork for the crooked 1919 World Series, like most striking events in history, was long prepared. The scandal was not an aberration brought about solely by a handful of villainous players. It was a culmination of corruption and attempts at corruption that reached back nearly twenty years.”

The Black Sox Scandal was not “a thing that merely happened,” as F. Scott Fitzgerald succinctly described it. It was not a fall from grace, a loss of innocence, a banishment from the Garden of Eden, or any other fanciful trope that avoids placing blame on anyone involved. No matter how much baseball would like us to believe in the myth of “the single sin,” in the words of historian David Q. Voigt, that fallacy has always been a fairy tale.
In fact, Fitzgerald had it right all along in the words he wrote just before his most famous passage about the Black Sox scandal in *The Great Gatsby*: it was “the end of some inevitable chain.” That chain of corruption, which connects the entire Deadball Era, could have been cut off at any point down the line if only baseball had taken seriously this existential threat to its integrity. But the chain held strong from the first link to the last, culminating in the fixing of the 1919 World Series, until it was finally broken by a new commissioner who changed the culture and cleaned up the game.

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CINCINNATI, SEPT. 25, 1919
Mr. Coyle Shay,

Dear Sir:

While you are writing all of those verses of poetry why don’t you get busy and wake up some of these here suckers which is putting a lot of good jack on the Cincinnati team because the Braves win from the Athaletics back in 1914 and it would be just as much sense in betting that way as it would be to say Pershing wasn’t a general just because he didn’t paddle a skiff across the Delaware like Washington done and some of these birds that are betting and yelling about the Reds must of got a lung full of that humburger show the Tri-State put on and it’s gone to their skull and how the health authorities ever let that poison gas aloose on the public is a mystery to me.

Why don’t you wise these goofs up that everybody should ought to know by this time that the only reason that Boston bunch win from the Athaletics in 1914 was because of internal dissention on the inside of Connie Mack’s club and every man on the team hated the other one and who couldn’t beat a bunch which was scrapping amongst themselves and if anybody thinks the Reds is going to be the world’s champions they will go home with their pockets just as full of jack as that first dove’s mouth was that Noah sent out to find a landing place. I am here attending a bootleggers’ convention and they tell us the Cincy players is tickled to death because they know they are bound to get the losers share which is about a thousand bucks per man each and that’s more money then some of them ever seen before. And I ain’t knocking the reds which is a good ball team but they stack up with the White Sox just like our old Memphis tax rate stacks up with the one which we got now and if that ain’t rubbing it in on us poor property owners then all as I’ve got to say is that I’m a liar and I’m goin’ to make part of my taxes back by putting all I got on the Sox and if they lose two games I’ll think baseball is crooked.

W. W.
THE BLACK SOX WITNESSES
WHO DIDN’T TESTIFY

by Bruce Allardice

The Black Sox scandal is noted as much for what was NOT brought out, as what WAS. Most of what we know about the scandal derives from the direct in-court testimony of the principals involved — the players, and the gamblers. However, in a conspiracy of this size — involving eight players and at least a dozen gamblers — word was bound to leak out to, among others, the associates of the players. This article traces two of these associates — the White Sox team dentists — what they knew about the scandal, and why they weren’t called to testify.

In September 1920, the Black Sox scandal grand jury called Dr. Raymond Prettyman to testify regarding George “Buck” Weaver, the Sox’s star third baseman. Dr. Prettyman is described in newspaper reports as Buck Weaver’s, and the team’s, dentist, and Weaver’s close friend — so close, in fact, that he helped post Weaver’s $10,000 bond after the indictments were issued.

We don’t know exactly what Dr. Prettyman testified to behind the closed grand jury doors. But contemporary newspaper reports quote Prettyman as telling two unrelated stories concerning the scandal. In the main story, Dr. Prettyman was at the Weaver house, talking to Weaver’s mother-in-law, Rose Cook. Mrs. Cook told Prettyman that Fred McMullin, a White Sox utilityman and known fixer, had delivered a package to Weaver’s home after the Series. Buck wasn’t home, so Mrs. Cook took the package, with McMullin warning her to handle it carefully, as it contained “a large amount of currency.” Cook told Prettyman the package contained Weaver’s share of the World Series fix payoff, presumably passing along what McMullin told her. Prettyman further testified about being told that when Weaver returned home he angrily rejected the package, threatening to toss the package into the street if it wasn’t taken away.¹

Speaking to reporters outside the Cook County courthouse, Prettyman bragged that his testimony would prove his friend Weaver’s innocence. In response to the Prettyman newspaper articles, McMullin admitted visiting Weaver’s home at the alleged time, but claimed that the package contained no money or jewelry. According to McMullin, the package contained neckties worth less than $5. He further claimed

¹

Buck Weaver; Dr. Raymond Prettyman, from the Chicago Tribune, September 29, 1920; Dr. Fred P. Barnhart, courtesy the F. P. Barnhart III family.
that the story was so absurd that he and Weaver treated it as a joke. For his part, Weaver denied ever receiving such a package. The two accounts (Prettyman’s and the two ballplayers’) cannot be reconciled — but it seems implausible that McMullin would make a special trip merely to deliver a few neckties.

Besides implicating McMullin (and by implication the other Black Sox), Prettyman had more to say, mostly hearsay. According to the *Chicago Daily Journal*, Prettyman told Assistant State’s Attorney Ota P. Lightfoot that the World Series had been fixed, and that the plot had been instigated by a Sox player who resided at Chicago’s Warner Hotel — impliedly Eddie Cicotte, who lived at the Warner. Prettyman’s information came from a friend and fellow dentist, Dr. Fred P. Barnhart, who in turn got his information from stockbroker Clark Eastes. Dr. Barnhart, who was Shoeless Joe Jackson’s dentist and a big Sox fan, confirmed Prettyman’s testimony. However, Eastes denied telling Barnhart this, perhaps fearing that he’d be indicted if he admitted knowledge of the fix.

If he had been called to the trial, the erudite, distinguished-looking Dr. Prettyman would probably have made a very credible witness. That said, it must be remembered that the Black Sox prosecution faced severe legal difficulties. There simply was no existing law making it illegal to throw baseball games. The prosecution instead had to invent a charge of “conspiracy” to “defraud the public,” a novel charge that legal experts then and today consider difficult to prove. In a pennant-fix case the year before, the trial judge had dismissed similar charges brought against Pacific Coast League players for failure to allege a criminal offense under the laws of California.

Perhaps more important, Prettyman’s “package” testimony and repetition of what Barnhart had said was hearsay, allowed in a grand jury hearing, but inadmissible in trial. The prosecution proffered the direct testimony of various conspirators to prove its case, and any attempt to introduce Prettyman or Barnhart hearsay might only complicate an already confusing case. The defense lawyers at the trial did not call Mrs. Cook to testify, probably because they assumed the jury would discount the exoneration testimony of a close Weaver relative. Plus, they were confident that Buck wouldn’t be convicted on the evidence that the prosecution presented, so discountable exoneration testimony simply wasn’t needed. And if called, Mrs. Cook might implicate McMullin or the other defendants on cross-examination, which the defense wanted to avoid.

At the trial and thereafter, Buck Weaver claimed he never took part in throwing the 1919 World Series, pointing to his .324 series batting average and his errorless defense at third base. Nevertheless, Judge Landis barred him from Organized Baseball because of proof that Weaver knew about the Series fix but failed in his duty to notify the team. If Dr. Prettyman or Mrs. Cook had testified at the trial to what newspapers claimed Prettyman said to the grand jury, it might have provided valuable evidence as to Weaver’s true state-of-mind regarding the fix. It all adds to the list of Black Sox scandal “we’ll never knows” that bedevil historians.

**Dramatis Personae:**

Rose Haney (Mrs. James H.) Cook (1863-1943), mother of Helen Cook Weaver. In 1920, the Weavers lived at 5326 Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

Dr. Raymond Barrett Prettyman (1876-1955), head of the Kenwood Branch of the Chicago Dental Society. He attended the University of Michigan and Northwestern, and practiced dentistry in Argentina, Rockford, Illinois, Chicago, California, Ohio, and Florida. An avid sports fan, his brother Horace is a legend of Michigan football. Dr. Prettyman lived at 365 E. 51st Street in Chicago, and had offices at 203 E. 39th Street near the ballpark.

Dr. Frederick Palen Barnhart (1870-1945) lived at 4930 Michigan Avenue in 1920. He attended Northwestern Dental College with Emerson Prettyman, Raymond’s brother. According to the Barnhart family, he was Joe Jackson’s dentist.

Jonathon Clark Eastes (1876-1954) was a livestock merchant and sheep buyer with offices
in Chicago and Omaha. He lived at 4336 Michigan Avenue, near Comiskey Park in 1919.

Early baseball and Civil War scholar Bruce Allardice is a professor of history at South Suburban College in South Holland, Illinois. He is a regular contributor to the newsletter of the Black Sox Scandal Research Committee and a 2013 recipient of the McFarland-SABR Baseball Research Award.

ENDNOTES

For an overview of the scandal, see Scandal on the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox, Jacob Pomrenke, ed. (Phoenix: SABR, 2015).

1. For Prettyman’s charges, see William F. Lamb, Black Sox in the Courtroom (McFarland, 2013), 77; Chicago Daily Journal, September 25 and 30, 1920; Chicago Tribune, September 26 and 29, 1920; and Boston Globe, Seattle Times, and New York Tribune, October 2, 1920. The Chicago Tribune, September 26, 1920, reports Weaver’s anger, but says he eventually accepted the money — which would contradict Prettyman’s desire to exonerate Weaver.


3. “Hearsay” is defined as “the report of another person’s words by a witness, which is usually disallowed as evidence in a court of law.”

4. Mistakenly labeled “Estes” and “E. P.” Barnhart in the newspapers.

5. Understandably, the prosecution never called on Eastes to testify at trial.

6. The best book on the Black Sox trial is Lamb, Black Sox in the Courtroom. For one contemporary (and very thorough) account predicting the legal difficulties the prosecution might face, see the Brooklyn Eagle, September 25 and 30, 1920. For the Pacific Coast League scandal, see Larry Gerlach, “The Bad News Bees: Salt Lake City and the 1919 Pacific Coast League Scandal,” Base Ball, A Journal of the Early Game, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2012), 35-74.

7. The whole issue of Weaver’s guilt, or lack thereof, has been rehashed innumerable times. At a minimum, it seems certain that Weaver participated in the fix meetings. There are also strong indications that Weaver threw games in 1920. See Bruce S. Allardice, “‘Playing Rotten, It Ain’t That Hard to Do’: How the Black Sox Threw the 1920 Pennant,” Baseball Research Journal, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring 2016).

8. Death notice in the Chicago Tribune, October 27, 1943.
REMEMBRANCE OF GENE CARNEY, THE B-SOX TRAIL MASTER

by David Fletcher

I first came across Gene Carney in February 2003 after I had just begun to work on my “Clear Buck” project. From February 2003 up until his death in July 2009, Gene and I exchanged more than 1,000 private emails and we were together for two key meetings in 2003 that had major impact in the direction of his research and his seminal book Burying the Black Sox.1

Reading his brilliant essays Notes from the Shadows of Cooperstown (named because he lived in Utica close to Cooperstown in upstate New York) was my first link to Gene and indicated he had a growing interest in the Black Sox story. His book idea on the Black Sox scandal was in its early embryogenesis and he was interested in my idea to shake up MLB by staging a “Clear Buck” protest with the Buck Weaver family at the 2003 All-Star game at the New Comiskey Park in Chicago set for July 15, 2003.

Gene had written a draft chapter about Buck Weaver and he wanted my feedback. He had linked Buck Weaver to the 1992 Al Pacino movie The Scent of a Woman because the character Charlie Simms, like Buck, was conflicted about staying silent to not rat out his classmates. Gene believed that the Black Sox story was a “A Cold Case, Not A Closed Case.” He passionately believed that the case needed to be reopened and investigated. He was ready to go down the rabbit hole to explore every possible lead regarding the Black Sox scandal and was able to harness the power of the internet to facilitate his research along with the help of Black Sox Yahoo group and SABR members.

Like other scandals, such as Watergate, Gene believed the cover-up was the real story, and that one needed to follow the money to uncover the important leads on the what really happened. For most of 2003, we would talk by phone or email every day about what new information or lead we had uncovered. Gene was particularly interested in the friends and business associates of Charles Comiskey, who were members of the Woodland Bards Association. He had me take a picture of the Woodland Bards Association plaque that hung above the fireplace in the Bards Room at Old Comiskey Park that was now on display in the new Comiskey Park. On the plaque were all the names of the Association members. He then researched every person on that list and what possible connection he had to the Black Sox. Again, Gene felt it was essential to follow the money and he believed that Comiskey’s cronies had some connection to what happened.

Gene would do a lot of research at the nearby National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, where he had developed a key relationship with Tim Wiles, the Hall’s Director of Research. Meanwhile, I would go off and do research all
over the Midwest, going to The Sporting News archives in St. Louis, the Chicago History Museum, Hugo Friend’s daughter Cindy Pritzker’s penthouse high above Chicago’s famed Oak Street Beach, and the Hudnall law firm in Milwaukee (lead partner George Hudnall represented Comiskey when he was sued civilly by Joe Jackson in 1924).

It was exciting for us to find some new twist to the story and share it with each other. Gene wrote, “The same David Fletcher who is staging the Buck Weaver protest has become my active ally in my search to nail down more about the fix, cover-up, and uncovering (I’ll keep going until I have a contract and a deadline for final manuscript).”

THE JUNE 2003 MILWAUKEE TRIP: A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN CARNEY’S RESEARCH

After Gene Carney went to Milwaukee in late June 2003, his research on the B-Sox became an obsession that led him to become the preeminent authority on the Black Sox scandal. Gene’s trip to Milwaukee that I shared with him was the epiphany of his work on the B-Sox. He wrote, “My interest in the Black Sox Scandal began at summer’s end in 2002 and by following June, I was sufficiently addicted to the subject in 2002 that I had to visit Milwaukee. Why Milwaukee? Because I had learned that in 1924 that city was the site of a trial that pitted Shoeless Joe Jackson against his old employer, the Chicago White Sox, who were incorporated in Wisconsin. For B-Sox addicts, it was the Trial of the Century.”

In late May 2003, we received an invitation from attorney Tom Cannon to look at the 1924 trial transcripts and other evidentiary material from the Joe Jackson suit against Charles Comiskey. (The Jackson suit was filed in Milwaukee because the White Sox were a Wisconsin corporation). Tom Cannon, the grandson of Ray Cannon, the attorney who represented Jackson, had possession of these materials thanks to the forethought of a court clerk, who called him asking him if he wanted the trial material because it was going to be destroyed in a purge of office files.

I picked up Gene at Milwaukee’s Mitchell Airport on the night of June 26 for what became a transformative experience in his thoughts on the B-Sox scandal and would forever change the content and format of his future book about the Black Sox cover-up. He was wearing a “Baseball is Timeless” T-shirt and a pair of blue shorts that, along with eyeglasses, gave him the look of a classic baseball nerd. All the way to our hotel he could not contain his excitement about what we were going to do tomorrow. Just a mile away from MLB Commissioner Bud Selig’s office was a treasure grove of material that provided new insights to what occurred during the 1919 World Series and its aftermath. For two days, we pored over trial and deposition transcripts, trial exhibits, affidavits, correspondence, photographs, and press clippings.

Gene was very excited about the experience because this was the mother lode of research material for him to write about. “David, you are wrong – I need to rewrite not just Chapter 4 but almost EVERY chapter! I plan to rework the whole book outline!,” Gene wrote in a June 28 email to me after he got home from Milwaukee. So I was with Gene when he completely revamped his book Burying the Black Sox, How Baseball’s Cover-Up of the 1919 World Series Fix Almost Succeeded. He finished the manuscript in the summer of 2005, and it was published by Potomac Books in March 2006.

THE ELIOT ASINOF HOOK-UP IN AUGUST 2003

Early on in our relationship, Gene was very critical of Jerome Holtzman and Eliot Asinof regarding their research and works about the Black Sox. Published in 1963, Asinof’s Eight Men Out had been called the definitive history of the scandal. Gene was particularly critical of 8MO which he called historical fiction, totally devoid of footnotes or endnotes (which Gene repeatedly told me he enjoyed the most when reading a book. His own Burying the Black Sox is filled with them).

I began a relationship with Eliot because of the Buck Weaver protest in July 2003, and he wanted to meet me. I set up a late August 2003 visit to his home in upstate New York not far
from Cooperstown, and I asked if I could bring along a fellow B-Sox addict. Prior to our trip, Gene and I composed multiple questions we wanted to ask Eliot, and solicited the Black Sox Yahoo group for more input. We had used *Bleeding Between the Lines*, the 1979 Asinof memoir about the making of *8MO*, as an outline for the interview of the person considered the leading authority on the Black Sox. Asinof had touted that only through painstaking research was he able to delve "into the scandal's causes and morality," and "explode its myths and distortions" to arrive at the "real truth." Prior to the trip I had discovered a November 1938 book length feature story in *True Detective* magazine which appeared to be an outline for *8MO*. As Gene wrote, "It (*True Detective*) was the first attempt to tell the whole story." Asinof denied ever seeing it before he wrote his book.

As Gene recounted in a posting on *Shadows*, we spent six hours with Eliot at his home. Asinof told us that relied heavily on major newspaper accounts of the scandal and interviews with a few survivors. His four main sources were White Sox center fielder Happy Felsch, White Sox pitcher Red Faber, former featherweight boxing champion and fix intermediary Abe Attell, and Hugo Friend, the Black Sox criminal trial judge. Asinof also said that he had 50 hours of taped interviews with Attell. I politely asked if I could go up in his attic and retrieve the tapes, but Eliot demurred.

Unlike Asinof, Gene and I had read the Milwaukee trial transcripts and other evidence that was available to Asinof in 1962 if he had looked for it. It was clear that Gene knew more about the B-Sox story that the "master" did. Asinof revealed that one of two fictional characters whom he had inserted in the *8MO* narrative was created on the advice of counsel. This make-believe character was intended to prevent screenwriters from purloining Asinof's work with a claim that his story was in the public domain. Asinof further revealed to us that "Harry F.," the thug who threatens Lefty Williams prior to Game Eight, was one of *8MO*’s fictional characters. As most readers now know, the "Harry F." tale, repeated through many subsequent accounts of the B-Sox story, never occurred. But Asinof would not tell us who the second fictional character in *8MO* was.

I left our meeting believing that we knew more than the teacher, and sensed that Eliot knew that he was no longer the preeminent authority on the Black Sox. A month later, Asinof praised the draft of Carney's first chapter "The Trial That Nobody Noticed."

**WANTED**

After our two landmark research trips in 2003, Gene drew up a Top 10 “Most Wanted List” of research material. Same included:

1. *Harry (Grabiner)'s Diary*.
2. *Collyer's Eye*.
3. Huge Fullerton articles with Christy Mathewson's diagrams.
4. 1921 criminal trial material. Hard to believe it ALL vanished.
5. Comiskey’s papers October 1919-October 1920. These would like finding the Watergate tapes.
6. Kid Gleason’s memoirs.\textsuperscript{14}
7. The (National) Police Gazette’s coverage of the B-Sox scandal.\textsuperscript{15}

Some items on the list we found, but others, such as Harry’s Diary and the Gleason interviews, proved elusive and remain undiscovered.

**THE SEARCH AND DISCOVERY OF COLLYER’S EYE**

Collyer’s Eye was a Chicago gambling and financial news periodical that began publishing in 1915. On October 18, 1919, Frank O. Klein, the Eye’s investigative reporter, broke the story that after the World Series ended on October 9, 1919, seven Sox players were suspected of throwing the Series and that club owner Comiskey was offering a $10,000 reward for information. Publisher Bert Collyer became a footnote to the history of the Black Sox even though his trade paper had provided the information that Comiskey needed. Though there were scattered mentions of the role of Collyer’s Eye as the publication that broke the scandal in the years that followed,\textsuperscript{16} the Eye was ignored by the mainstream media. But in reviewing the Ban Johnson papers it was clear that the AL President (who wanted to sink his arch-rival Charles Comiskey) had not ignored the stories published by Collyer’s Eye.

Only once the grand jury had been convened and Cicotte confessed in late September 1920 did Bert Collyer get some limited recognition on the basis that he was “the man who uncovered the selling out by seven members of the White Sox to a gamblers’ syndicate last fall, whereby the Sox tossed off the world’s series to the Reds. The fixing charges made in Mr. Collyer’s newspaper created a sensation a year ago, but their accuracy was widely questioned, and even President Comiskey offered a reward of $10,000 to anyone who could prove them. Mr. Collyer proved them, even to the extent of printing affidavits and positively declaring that seven members of the Chicago team were guilty. Almost a year later a Cook County grand jury took up the investigation of these charges, and not only indicted the seven accused players, but wrung confessions from them implicating prominent eastern gamblers in the plot, some of whom have been indicted, and others, it is believed, soon will be.”\textsuperscript{17}

Gene had asked the question in late 2003: Why has any trace of Collyer’s Eye been erased? Who had copies in their scrapbooks? Bert E. Collyer? Frank O. Klein? Can their families be found? All copies of Collyer’s Eye had seemingly disappeared, even though it was clear that it was a missing link that contained important clues regarding the Black Sox story. Gene and I, along with other members of the Black Sox Yahoo group, had scoured the country (and the internet) trying to find this publication. After several months of searching in vain, I tried one more possible place that might have this publication: The university library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which is located less than 3 miles from my medical office building. I reached out to the library and on January 4, 2004, I was sent an email from researcher K. Kern that the library had copies of Collyer’s Eye from 1920 through 1942, but that same were actual paper versions,
not microfilm.\textsuperscript{18} Within 15 minutes of learning that what I was searching for the past several months was located within walking distance of my office, I had in my hands the last surviving copies of \textit{Collyer's Eye}. I immediately called Gene about the discovery.

The front page of the October 2, 1920 issue of \textit{The Collyer's Eye} contained a graphic depicting the paper's headlines published a year prior which said it all. The publication had been hidden in the stacks of the university library and provided first-hand accounts of the Black Sox scandal that not been seen in more than 85 years. In October 2005, around the time that the White Sox were in the World Series, the library found \textit{Collyer's Eye} for the years 1918-1919, and converted these crumbling newspapers into microfilm that allowed researchers to access these important documents. Collyer and Klein had gotten the big scoop but as Gene said, they never got the credit that they deserved for their trailblazing role in the uncovering the 1919 World Series fix. As Gene later wrote in the January 17, 2004 issue of \textit{Shadows},

I began my research by trying to do one of the hardest possible things that is humanly possible — or so it seems at times — giving credit where credit is due — in this case, to whomever brought the “Black Sox scandal” to light. ... (Lee) Allen, a very reputable historian, described (\textit{Collyer's Eye}) as “a rather disreputable sporting publication.” Allen said that the Eye “printed an article that not only alleged skullduggery but actually named the eight players who would eventually be indicted.” I can now correct Lee Allen. The Eye named only seven; Buck Weaver was not on their list. And I can do this thanks to one of my main partners in this adventure, David Fletcher, who found copies of \textit{Collyer's Eye} seven miles from his home, in a dusty college library basement. (Author’s note: Actually three floors up on the stacks.) Not all of them, just 1920-1925. But one of the issues, that of October 2, 1920, summarizes the Eye’s coverage of the Fix starting with their issue of October 18, 1919, which not only noted the rumors of the Fix, but named Abe Attell as the fixer.

Writing after the scandal was made public, the Eye’s business manager Hugo L. Eberhardt wrote in “The Editor’s Horn” that the Eye had actually been very cautious, holding off releasing their stories until their inquiry “found actual fire behind the elusive smoke.” Eberhardt: “We were for clean sport and advocates of it at no matter what cost.” Crediting Bert Collyer for his “persistency and vigor,” Eberhardt added, “Devoid of animosity, with no axe to grind, with nothing but the slogan ‘Clean Sport,’ in mind, Bert refused to let his paper be swerved from a relentless investigation.” The Eye was proud that it had used “caution and good judgment,” with Cicotte’s confession confirming that the fix indeed was in.

\textit{Collyer's Eye} recalled its efforts to achieve what finally had been accomplished by Chicago’s grand jury, nearly a year after the Series ended. The indictments handed up were “the vindication of a remarkable series of stories printed in this paper ... the first in time and value of possibility of the baseball scandal.” Not only were they the first to expose the scandal of the 1919 World Series a
Involve 7 Sox in World's Series Scandal

Dollar corn certainty on delivery of new crop—Aurelius

November 8 Red Letter Day of the Season on the Gridiron

“Hardboots” Up in Arms Over Success of Eastern Owners

Crack Jumpers Will Start in Famous Chevy Chase

Interior Banks Balk at Wild Stock Speculations—Bourse

The Editor’s Horn

Collyer’s Eye Cracks the Story on October 18, 1919
week before the scandal broke wide open, the *Los Angeles Times* (and no other paper I've seen) printed the list of those who were going to be subpoenaed to come before the grand jury. The list included Bert E. Collyer and Frank O. Cline (Klein). There is no evidence in the coverage of the grand jury hearings that Bert Collyer or Frank Klein were ever given the chance to testify.19

THE SEARCH FOR HARRY’S DIARY: THE B-SOX HOLY GRAIL

The search for Harry’s Diary, the document that Gene Carney called the Rosetta Stone of the Black Sox scandal, proved elusive in Gene’s lifetime and still remains undiscovered in 2019. Harry Grabiner, according to 1959 White Sox owner Bill Veeck, evidently sat down after the 1919 Series to create a written record of events, possibly at Comiskey’s suggestion. If there was a full-scale investigation (this never happened), both men would be asked hard questions. “What did you know and when did you know it? The Watergate questions, now familiar to Americans,” wrote Gene.

It was not until 43 years after Grabiner had created this legal defense file for his boss — referred to as CAC in the journal entries — that a 23-year-old White Sox office boy named Fred Krehbiel, who was Bill Veeck’s nephew, briefly unearthed this key mystery document, one that contained information on how the Black Sox scandal unfolded from the viewpoint of White Sox management. In August 1963, right after graduating from Lake Forest College, Fred stumbled upon a long-lost ledger book and legal pad with two dozen pages of handwritten notes hidden behind a table in the bowels of Comiskey Park when he was asked to clean a storeroom. The documents were remnants of journal entries written by Harry Grabiner.

This vital missing link to baseball history vanished after it been discovered. Except for a few snippets published in the 1965 Bill Veeck book *The Hustler’s Handbook* and two pages of the actual diary posted on the Internet at blackbesty.com, it is still missing. The other 26-plus pages of Harry’s Diary are still lost and remain the unexamined Dead Sea Scrolls for Black Sox researchers.

In 2003, Eliot told Gene and me that Ed Linn (who co-wrote *The Hustler’s Handbook* with Veeck) had typed up Harry’s Diary and given him a copy. But this copy was not returned after Asinof loaned it to someone for the ESPN Classic documentary on the Black Sox aired in 2000. Even Harry Grabiner’s last private secretary with the White Sox, Grace Patricia Ryan Samfillippo, did not know where the diary was located. Or even that such a diary existed. Recalled Samfillippo in a 2007 interview that I conducted: “Harry talked about the Black Sox and the investigation a lot. He offered to share the players’ contracts to show their wages were similar to other players of that era. But my (great) uncle Charlie (Comiskey) refused to show them. He felt it was unnecessary to prove his character to anyone.”

When I first interviewed Fred Krehbiel in 2011, he said that he read the diary after he found it but did not appreciate its significance, and gave it to his Uncle Bill. Fred does not have a copy. Nor does he know whether a copy still exists. He even hooked me up with Ed Linn’s daughter in May 2012, but she, too, did not know where Harry’s Diary is. As of February 2019, Fred still had no idea where what he found in 1963 can be located.

ALFRED AUSTRIAN LEGAL FILE ACQUIRED BY CHM IN LATE 2007

It was unclear how Black Sox documents, whose existence was previously unknown, ended up together or where they had been for more than eight decades. Mastro Auctions in Burr Ridge, Illinois, declined to reveal the identity of the two sellers but said that they probably purchased the box without knowing exactly what was inside. Later, I found out that this was not true and that the materials were allegedly taken from the garage of the Hinsdale, Illinois, home of Charles Comiskey II shortly after his death in August 2007.

In November 2007, Gene was heartened when additional rare Black Sox court documents surfaced. These papers would be auctioned off.
The two boxes of material containing documents from the 1921 criminal trial against eight White Sox players accused of throwing the 1919 World Series include a partial court transcript that was on Gene’s Most Wanted list. The collection also included documents from the 1924 Joe Jackson lawsuit as well as key documents on the formation of the Commissioner’s Office.

I immediately contacted Gene in April 2009 when the late Paul Duffy and I had the privilege of getting a sneak preview of the Asinof papers at the Chicago History Museum. Gene fired off a series of emails and questions regarding my time reviewing the documents which he had hoped had provided documentation to the previously un-footnoted 8MO book. I told Gene how disappointed I was to find out that 8MO was really a clip job book and had remarkably little research or new information actually uncovered by Asinof even though he was able to firsthand interview Happy Felsch, Judge Hugo Friend, Red Faber, Abe Attell, and a few minor actors in the scandal. Gene shared my belief that 8MO was really James T. Farrell’s non-fiction account of the Black Sox scandal. Farrell had attended the 1919 Series games played at Comiskey Park, and his teen-age heart had been broken by his Southside heroes. Gene particularly enjoyed my recounting of two lengthy Farrell letters on whom to interview and what they possibly knew.

It was clear to Gene and me after meeting with Eliot in 2003 and after reviewing the Asinof papers in 2009 that without James Farrell 8MO would have never happened. Gene immediately went out and got a biography of Farrell, which has an account of how he had met with Asinof and encouraged him down the B-Sox Trail.

**DEATH AT AGE 63 AND HIS ENDURING LEGACY**

Gene Carney last wrote about the B-Sox in “Shadows” on June 15, 2009, following his trip to the Chicago History Museum. “I suspect that once these transcripts ‘get around’ – maybe on the internet – we will see a lot of folks sympathizing with the players, whose side, I think, most fans instinctively take. As I’ve written before, Judge McDonald, (White Sox attorney Alfred S.) Austrian, and (Cook County Assistant State’s Attorney Hartley) Replogle all had agendas. But so did the players, and the fact that their stories about being promised much, then being indicted, may only be as believable as the possibility that they were very well coached for their court appearance. So in the end, we are all put in the jury box. We listen (read), then talk amongst ourselves, and only much later make up our minds.”

Gene died on vacation in Alaska at age 63 after retiring from his job at the American Red Cross. It is hard to believe that he has been gone for 10 years. He was a generous researcher who loved to share the various new secrets or insights he sleuthed out. One of Gene’s last private exchanges with me in May 2009 was his one of his greatest laments: “I only wish James Farrell had been a little older at the time of 1919 Series because he would have written the definitive account of B-Sox.” I shared Gene’s lament because James T. Farrell was the classic diehard Southside Sox fan who I identified with since the Sox were my team, and Farrell would have shed more light on this murky story that is more than exacting revenge on a skinflint owner.

It was Gene Carney’s efforts that really shined light on this story. Gene looked at clues available or ignored by Eliot Asinof and others who have
gone down the B- Sox trail. His diligence to find the answers to longstanding questions about baseball’s darkest days is sadly missed. Gene’s mission endures with SABR and 1919 Black Sox Yahoo group members still chasing down leads for a case that still is not closed.

Dr. David Fletcher is an Illinois physician and a nationally-recognized expert on workplace safety. He is also the founder of the Chicago Baseball Museum and a longstanding member of SABR’s Black Sox Scandal Research Committee.

ENDNOTES

1. I really liked Gene’s original title: Never on a Friday. White Sox club owner Charles Comiskey (1859-1931) believed that he had cursed Comiskey Park and his franchise forever by violating the Irish Catholic-based superstition about “never on a Friday” when the ballpark opened on Friday, July 1, 1910. The Friday superstition also played a prominent role in the Black Sox scandal according to J.L. Brown. In “The Big Baseball Scandal,” an article that appeared in the May 1939 issue of The American Mercury, Brown reported that the White Sox players who conspired to toss the 1919 World Series all agreed early on about one thing: no money should be passed on a Friday.


4. In November 2007, the Chicago History Museum acquired the private papers and books of Chicago sportswriter Jerome Holtzman, the first official historian of Major League Baseball. The Holtzman papers included his Black Sox research file – except for a report to Commissioner Bud Selig that recommended that the MLB reinstate Buck Weaver. Gene Carney was critical of Holtzman, viewing his Black Sox research as sloppy and his scandal writings error-filled. Before his death in July 2008, I spent more than 50 hours spread over the course of a year with Holtzman, who still considered himself the preeminent Black Sox scholar and authority, even though Gene and others had discovered so much more of the scandal story. Gene’s seminal book Burying the Black Sox was not in the Holtzman collection.

5. Gene and I did a side trip to the Hall of Fame library before we visited Asinof and had to sign a confidentiality agreement that permitted MLB to review anything that we wrote about research taken from the Ban Johnson Collection.


7. Email of Noel Hynd (son of True Detective article writer Alan Hynd) to Gene Carney, June 18, 2003.


9. After Asinof died in 2008, his research and papers was acquired by the Chicago History Museum. My assessment of Asinof’s research for 8MO was that it was even more limited than he purported. For example, the 50 hours of taped interviews with Abe Attell were not there. I was convinced that 8MO was mostly a news clip job and that he had just followed the outline of Alan Hynd’s 1938 True Detective article. In keeping with his background as a TV scriptwriter, Asinof added the dramatic story angle that Comiskey was a skinflint. In time, analysis of the Asinof source material led to publication of “It Ain’t So, Kid. It Just Ain’t So: History’s Apology to Shoeless Joe Jackson, Charles Comiskey, and the Chicago Black Sox,” by Daniel Voelker and Paul Duffy, Chicago Lawyer, September 2009, a further puncturing of the myths of 8MO.

10. For Eight Men Out, Asinof admitted to us that he had relied on newspaper accounts of the September 1920 grand jury proceedings, not the grand jury transcripts. Although the customary rule of grand jury secrecy was not observed, the reliability of much Black Sox reportage on the proceedings was questionable. Thereafter in Bleeding Between the Lines, Asinof revealed that while criminal trial judge Hugo Friend had suggested that he review the record of the 1924 trial of the Jackson civil suit in Milwaukee, Asinof had not done so and thus failed to incorporate the Black Sox revelations of that trial into 8MO. He also neglected to consult the numerous interviews of scandal participants and observers published between 1919 and 1962. See Jacob Pomrenke, “No Solid Front of Silence: The Forgotten Black Sox Scandal Interviews,” Baseball Research Journal, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Spring 2016).

11. After we met with Eliot, I sent him a videotape of Witness, the controversial TV drama that Asinof wrote about the Black Sox scandal. Famed Chicago novelist James T. Farrell had helped Asinof with his teleplay, but MLB was unhappy with it and tried to prevent the January 28, 1961 airing of the show. On December 19, 2003, Eliot wrote me a letter which stated: “Thanks for WITNESS. I disliked it so much when it was made
that I was surprised when I saw it again. ... As for your idea of a new version of EMO (he used the letter E rather than the number 8), forget it. Nor do I have any desire to talk further about the book, or my research on it. ... I have little interest in pursuing such matters.” Yet when Elliot was the featured speaker at the March 2004 NINE conference in Arizona, he spoke at length on Eight Men Out. Asinof even ended up writing the forward to mentor Farrell’s late-career novel Dreaming Baseball (Kent State University Press, 2007). To me, 8MO was Elliot Asinof’s epitaph.

12. Carney’s original Most Wanted list had only seven items, but he subsequently expanded it to ten in Shadows, January 12, 2004.

13. Sadly, no such Comiskey papers from the Black Sox time span have been found, and his descendants tell me that none exist. The files of White Sox corporation counsel Alfred S. Austrian were acquired by the Chicago History Museum in 2007.

14. We never unearthed any remembrances by Gleason.

15. Our research of The Police Gazette yielded nothing of significance.

16. Col. John R. Stingo’s “Yea Verily” column as published in The Sporting News, January 12, 1946: The longstanding controversy over who first broke the sensational Black Sox scandal of 1919 resumed after the death of Hugh Fullerton. ... The consensus of opinion in late years is that Bert E. Collyer, founder of Collyer’s Eye really unearthed the scoop of the century.


18. Email of Kathleen Kern, UIUC Reference Librarian to the author, January 5, 2004. The university library holds Collyer’s Eye, Vols. 6-28, 1920-1942. Located in the main stacks, the volumes bear call number Q796.05 CO, and are on paper, not microfilm. I was unable to find the earlier years of Collyer’s Eye anywhere, despite a World CAT and RUN which combined provide a list of the holdings of over 37,000 libraries.

19. Frank O. Klein was likely a pseudonym used by various Eye staffers, including Bert Collyer himself. For more, see Bruce Allardice, “Collyer’s Eye’s Ace Reporter: Who Was He?” Black Sox Scandal Research Committee newsletter, December 2016, 3.

GRAND JURY PROSECUTOR
HARTLEY REPLOGLE AND
PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF THE
BLACK SOX SCANDAL

by Bill Lamb

In early September 1920, Judge Charles A. McDonald, the presiding judge of the Chicago criminal court system, announced that a grand jury would be impaneled to investigate reports that a recent game between the Chicago Cubs and Philadelphia Phillies had been fixed. The grand jury would also probe Chicago's lucrative, popular, but technically illegal, baseball pool selling operations. The McDonald announcement was greeted with a yawn by Cook County State’s Attorney Maclay Hoyne, the Windy City's chief law enforcement official. With Chicago awash in violent crime, racial tensions that had not long ago erupted into a deadly riot re-boiling, and with a looming Democratic primary election threat to keeping his job to contend with, Hoyne had no intention of expending much in the way of attention or office resources on sports-related kerfuffles. Attendance at the baseball grand jury proceedings would therefore be assigned to a staff nonentity, a inexperienced junior prosecutor named Hartley Replogle.

The publicity-fond Hoyne soon came to regret his offhand treatment of the matter – for within weeks the grand jury probe had morphed into a sensational investigation of the 1919 World Series. As the proceedings progressed, high-profile witnesses like pillars of the game John McGraw and Charles Comiskey, White Sox stars Eddie Cicotte and Shoeless Joe Jackson, and underworld financier Arnold Rothstein trooped to the courthouse to testify, all of which received extensive press coverage nationwide. Courtesy of an astonishing and unremediated breach in grand jury secrecy, near-verbatim excerpts of witness testimony appeared in newsprint almost daily. And, much to Hoyne's chagrin, nary a day went by without publication of comment on the probe by ASA Replogle.

Hoyne's efforts to wrest control of the investigation away from his previously-unknown subordinate and/or to re-direct its focus were met with vigorous opposition by Judge McDonald, grand jury foreman Henry Brigham, and hostile public opinion. In the end, Hoyne could do no more than look on with irritation and envy as Replogle enjoyed two months of unexpected celebrity. And then it was over, as a new complement of prosecutors assumed responsibility for the Black Sox case, their arrival a by-product of landslide Republican Party victories in the elections of November 1920. With that, Hartley Replogle quickly receded into the obscurity whence he came. What follows is the life story of this briefly important Black Sox scandal figure and exposition of the role he played in public exposure of Series corruption.

Hartley Leonard Replogle took a roundabout route to his passing brush with public notoriety. He was born on May 30, 1880 in Loysburg, a small south-central Pennsylvania farming community about 30 miles south of Altoona. Hartley was the fourth of five children born to farmer Daniel Zook Replogle (1844-1901), and his wife, the former Mary Elizabeth Border (1842-1931), both of whom descended from families that had worked local land for generations. Hartley attended school through high school graduation, and then began his working life as a school teacher in nearby Morris Grove.

Around 1906, Replogle returned to being a student himself, enrolling in Dickinson College School of Law in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He obtained his law degree in 1909, but only briefly entered into practice. Within months, Replogle took a position with a fraternal organization, the Masonic Temple’s Loyal Order of Moose, which promptly dispatched him to the Pacific Northwest to organize a lodge in Spokane. About a year later, he relocated to Chicago where he was admitted to the Illinois bar on October 4, 1911. But rather than practice law, Replogle remained in Moose employ, assuming the post of national director at organization headquarters. In 1914, LOM National Director Replogle
oversaw a two-day celebration in Chicago attended by 50,000 lodge members, and then took charge of the order’s annual convention in Milwaukee.6 Thereafter, the advent of American entry into World War I saw Replogle expand his horizons, attempting to supplement his Moose salary by working as a self-employed motion picture maker and solo law practitioner.7

The circumstances that landed Replogle a post in the Cook County State Attorney’s are unknown. But it seems likely that he, or a patron, must have had some form of political connection to the hyper-partisan Democrat Maclay Hoyne. Whatever the case, Replogle was sworn in as a Hoyne assistant in or about November 1919. Despite his age (now 39) and having been a lawyer for ten years, Replogle had virtually no courtroom experience. Consequently, he spent his first nine months on the job quietly, his activities drawing little public notice. The only Replogle court appearance to garner press attention was a bail hearing on a small-change theft case wherein his opposition to pretrial release drew a threat to “get” Replogle from an angered accused.8

Detailed exposition of the event that changed all that – the eruption of the Black Sox scandal – is beyond the scope of this profile. Suffice it to say that the original stated purpose of the grand jury probe had nothing to do with the 1919 World Series. But that quickly changed once the body was impaneled. Prominent Chicago citizen/baseball fan Fred Loomis9 and influential New York Sun sportswriter Joe Vila championed use of the grand jury to explore disquieting rumors about the integrity of the previous season’s Fall Classic. More important, a similar course was privately being urged upon Judge McDonald by a long-time acquaintance: American League President Ban Johnson. McDonald was agreeable, and by the time the grand jury conducted its first substantive session on September 22, 1920, its primary task had become investigation of the 1919 Series.

The immediate problem confronting the proceedings was the lack of visible investigation of Series fix rumors. The SAO had invested no time or effort into the matter, and while White Sox club owner Charles Comiskey had, he was content to keep the findings of his privately-retained investigators confidential, and see if the gathering storm could be ridden out. Not so Ban Johnson, bent on using the proceedings as a vehicle for destroying former friend Comiskey, now a bulwark of opposition to Johnson’s domination of American League affairs. Like Comiskey, Johnson had conducted his own discreet investigation into rumors about the 1919 Series, the results of which he would now spoon-feed to ASA Replogle via quiet back channels.10

Unhappily for Replogle and ASA Ota P. Lightfoot, another junior prosecutor assigned to the proceedings,11 the Johnson investigation had not uncovered much in the way of hard proof of Series corruption. It mostly memorialized what St. Louis-area gamblers had alleged about the reputed fix.

ASA Hartley Replogle
Replogle made his scandal speaking debut on September 20, informing the press that “the state’s attorney’s office is not yet ready to inquire into the activities of promoters of baseball pools, but is interested at this time only in uncovering any evidence of any player deliberately ‘throwing’ a ball game for money.”

This scatter-shot approach led to much of the early proceedings being devoted to the alleged bribe offered New York Giants pitcher Rube Benton by teammates to dump a 1919 game against the Cubs. Rumors about the fixing of the White Sox-Reds World Series were only explored superficially via tales or trivia extracted from former Cubs owner Charles Weeghman, ardent Chisox fan/Series betting loser Sam Pass, a Chicago landlady Henrietta Kelley, the Buck Weaver family dentist, and the like.

Days into the probe, however, proof of Series corruption came in an unexpected form: a Philadelphia newspaper interview of self-admitted Series fix insider Billy Maharg. According to Maharg, eight White Sox players had dumped Game One, Game Two, and Game Eight of the 1919 Series at gamblers behest in return for a $100,000 payoff.

Although Philadelphia resident Maharg, far beyond the subpoena power of the Cook County grand jury, would never appear before the panel, his quickly-syndicated account of Series wrongdoing produced dramatic consequences in Chicago. Alfred Austrian, the White Sox astute corporation counsel, immediately recognized that previous efforts to cover up World Series dirt were no longer viable, and that Sox owner Comiskey needed to be placed ahead of fast-breaking scandal developments. Accordingly, Austrian would take the steps required to ensure that Comiskey was portrayed as selfless, willing to sacrifice his own ball club for the greater good of the game. Thus on the morning of September 28, Game One losing pitcher Eddie Cicotte, already publicly named as a likely grand jury target, was summoned to the Austrian law office. There, he quickly broke down under interrogation by Austrian about the Series fix. Cicotte was then whisked to the Cook County Courthouse to repeat his fix revelations to the grand jury under questioning by Replogle.

Identified by Cicotte as fellow Series fix participants were Chick Gandil, Fred McMullin, Buck Weaver, Lefty Williams, Swede Risberg, Happy Felsch, and Joe Jackson – the players soon to be branded the Black Sox.

At the conclusion of the Cicotte testimony, the grand jury immediately voted to indict the eight players for the generic crime of conspiracy to commit an illegal act. More specific charges would be drafted and formally returned in court later. Further grand jury objectives were then revealed in a grandiose Replogle statement to the press: “This is just the beginning. We will have indictments within a few days and before we get through we will have purged baseball of everything crooked and dishonest. We are going after the gamblers now. There will be indictments within a few days against men in Philadelphia, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Des Moines, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and other cities. We’ve got the goods on these men and we are going to the limit.”

But first Replogle had to handle another evidential gift supplied to him by Alfred Austrian: a ready-to-confess Joe Jackson, freshly delivered from a Cicotte-like encounter at the Austrian law office. And it is with Jackson that Replogle’s lack of investigative and courtroom experience becomes most evident. Replogle managed to elicit Jackson admissions that he had been propositioned privately by fix ringleader Chick Gandil; that Jackson had agreed to enter the conspiracy in return for a $20,000 payoff, and that he had received a $5,000 payoff installment from co-conspirator Lefty Williams the evening before the Sox departed for Cincinnati to play Game Five. But rather than have Jackson narrate fix-related events in chronological fashion, Replogle’s questions jumped around from event to event and then doubled back, muddling in the process clear statement of Jackson’s understanding/knowledge of player-gambler meetings and/or his role in other key fix activities. Worse yet, Replogle failed to confront Jackson with the contradiction that lay at the heart of his
testimony: Jackson’s admission of agreement to participate in the Series fix and his acceptance of payment therefor versus Jackson’s insistence that he had given his best and played to win at all times during the 1919 Series. An experienced prosecutor would have immediately confronted Jackson with the irreconcilability of the two and required Jackson to explain, if he could, just how he could have done two mutually exclusive things at the same time. But Replogle did not, and this shortcoming in his examination produced a grand jury record ambiguity that has allowed both modern-day Jackson critics and Shoeless Joe supporters to invoke his grand jury testimony in support of their positions.

The following day, the corroborative testimony of Lefty Williams brought the grand jury appearances of fix participants to a close. From there, the panel spent another month poking around scandal margins, but these sessions shed little further light on the corruption of the Series. Meanwhile, outside the grand jury room, State’s Attorney Hoyne did his best to intrude upon the proceedings. Now a sullen lame duck vacationing in New York City – Hoyne had lost his primary bid for re-nomination – he publicly questioned the legality of the indictable charges reportedly returned by the grand jury.

Hoyne then directed that grand jury proceedings be held in abeyance until he returned to Chicago. The reaction in Chicago was swift and furious, with Judge McDonald and grand jury foreman Brigham loudly vowing to press on without SAO assistance, while Sox counsel Austrian embarrassed Hoyne with a widely-published tutorial on the statutory soundness of the reported charges. The absence of a specific sports corruption statute in the federal penal code, meanwhile, was decried by Replogle in a nationally-syndicated wire service article. Lawmakers were urged “to make it a felony by anyone to offer a bribe to any baseball player to play our national game other than on the merits, also making it a felony for any player to accept a bribe. Let Congress act,” Replogle declared.

Chastened by the adverse reaction, Hoyne rescinded his directive, publicly endorsing the grand jury’s work to date.

A week later, the game’s establishment was relieved by the Replogle announcement that the grand jury had uncovered no evidence that the 1920 pennant winners (Cleveland and Brooklyn) had been corrupted. Still the probe forged on, with the indignant protestations of innocence uttered by underworld financier and reputed Series fix mastermind Arnold Rothstein before, during, and after his grand jury appearance attracting major press attention.

In a publicly-released interim report, the grand jury praised its legal advisers. “Mr. Replogle is especially commended for his persistent diligence and his competence in his handling of the baseball matter,” the report stated. On the afternoon of October 29, 1920, the previously-voted indictments were formally unveiled in court. The sweeping multi-city charges earlier promised by Replogle were nowhere in evidence. Rather, the accused were confined to the eight Black Sox players and a seemingly random crew of gamblers that included one-time featherweight boxing champ Abe Attell, and ex-players Hal Chase and Bill Burns. Charged in prolix legal language were various forms of conspiracy to commit theft by deception or by
A week later, the panel concluded its work by returning indictments charging various baseball pool operators, and submitting a six-page final report on its findings regarding this form of gambling. The grand jury also recommended that Replogle be retained as special prosecutor for the case by the incoming Republican SAO administration.

On November 20, 1920, Replogle submitted his resignation. He had been an Assistant Cook County State’s Attorney for approximately one year, and would now take a sales management position with Tamms Silica Company, a local manufacturer of paints, cement, and other building trade materials. Once sworn into office, new State’s Attorney Robert E. Crowe declined to comment on the grand jury’s recommendation that Replogle be specially retained to handle the Black Sox case. But clearly prosecution of the high-profile case was not to be entrusted to an attorney with Replogle’s minimal courtroom experience. The case would ultimately be assigned to a three-man team of criminal trial veterans: Second ASA George E. Gorman, and special prosecutors Edward A. Prindiville and John F. Tyrrell.

After delays necessitated by administrative dismissal of the original indictments and representation of the case to a new grand jury for superseding charges, the Black Sox case finally went to trial in June 1921. Toward the end of the proceedings, Hartley Replogle made a courtroom appearance – but not as an attorney. Rather, he was summoned as a prosecution witness during a hearing conducted out of the jury’s presence to determine the admissibility of the grand jury testimony of Eddie Cicotte, Joe Jackson, and Lefty Williams, each of whom claimed that he had been promised non-prosecution by Replogle, Judge McDonald, and/or Alfred Austrian prior to his grand jury appearance. Denials of such promises ever being made by Replogle and McDonald were accepted by the court, and the Cicotte/Jackson/Williams grand jury testimony was subsequently recited to the trial jury at length. All to no avail, as the accused were acquitted days later.

In the aftermath of the Black Sox case, the name Replogle receded from newsprint, appearing only in occasional social page articles recounting attendees at the Chicago Opera and other cultural affairs. In 1929, Replogle relocated to Gary, Indiana, where he opened a real estate office. There, the long-time bachelor also acquired a bride, a local woman named Laura (surname unknown) some 24 years his junior. By 1935, the couple had moved to Houston where Replogle was installed as regional director of the Texas-Louisiana-Oklahoma territory by his old-time employer, the Loyal Order of Moose. The 1940 US Census placed Hartley and Laura Replogle back in Gary where he resumed his real estate practice. But within two years, the child-less Replogle marriage appears to have dissolved, as Hartley identified his sister Rebecca as his nearest relation in his World War II draft registration form. By that time, Replogle had become a major residential developer. He also served as chairman of the Gary Public Housing Authority.

In late-December 1944, Replogle remarried, taking 46-year-old Gary school teacher Marie Volz as his second wife. Sadly, Replogle did not get much time to enjoy a second chance at wedded bliss. On July 13, 1947, he suffered a heart attack. Death ensued six days later at Mercy Hospital in Gary. Hartley Leonard Replogle, seated right, in 1935 Houston Chronicle photo
Replogle was 67. His remains were thereafter transported to Pennsylvania for funeral services followed by interment in the Replogle family plot at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Altoona. Survivors included second wife Marie, and sisters Rebecca Haffly, Theo Martz, and Ariel Replogle.

**Sources**

Sources for the biographical information recited above include US and state census reports and Replogle family posts accessed via Ancestry.com; newspaper reportage of Replogle’s time in Chicago and Gary, Indiana; and obituaries, particularly those published in the *Altoona* (Pennsylvania) *Tribune* and *Bedford* (Pennsylvania) *Gazette*, July 21, 1947.

**Endnotes**

1. Although the grand jury is an arm of the judiciary, grand jury proceedings are conducted by a prosecutor, not a judge.
2. The black letter law principle that grand jury proceedings were to be confidential was soon reaffirmed by Illinois’s highest court. See *People v. Goldberg*, 302 Ill. 559, 135 N.E. 84 (Sup. Ct 1922). When the failure to enforce mandatory grand jury secrecy was noted, the press reported that court officials were “desirous of giving the national game the benefit of publicity in its purging.” See the *Atlanta Constitution* and *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1920.
3. Hartley had four sisters: Ophelia (born 1872), Theodosia (1875), Ariel Sally (1877), and Rebecca (1887).
7. The occupations reported by Replogle to Selective Service officials.
9. Years later, it was revealed that the Loomis letter was actually penned by *Chicago Tribune* sportswriter James Crusinberry. Crusinberry was also a significant grand jury witness in the early sessions of the probe.
10. Among other places, Johnson’s influence upon the grand jury probe is reflected in correspondence contained in the Black Sox file at the Giamatti Research Center, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, New York.
11. Lightfoot had joined the SAO in November 1918, but like Replogle, had virtually no courtroom experience. His previous assignment had been prosecuting tax code violations. See “Hayden Bell Quits Hoyne To Join County Board,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 1919: 7.
15. As reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1920, and elsewhere.
17. The transcript of the Jackson grand jury testimony can be viewed on-line at [www.blackbetsy.com](http://www.blackbetsy.com) and elsewhere.
18. At the conclusion of the Williams testimony, the grand jury added gamblers Joseph “Sport” Sullivan and Rachael Brown to the indictment.
19. As reported in the *Chicago Daily News* and *Chicago Journal*, September 30, 1920. Hoyne intended to have SAO secretary George Kenney oversee the grand jury investigation in his absence. But Replogle and Lightfoot deeply mistrusted Kenney (and perhaps Hoyne, as well), denying Kenney access to probe evidence and keeping him otherwise in the dark. Years later, Kenney was identified as the likely thief of evidence discovered missing from the SAO vault.
23. See International News Service articles such as “Judge McDonald Refuses to Halt Baseball
24. See the Chicago Herald-Examiner, October 2, 1920.


27. As quoted in the Chicago Evening Post and Chicago Journal, October 2, 1920.

28. As reported in the Chicago Herald-Examiner, Chicago Tribune, and elsewhere, October 30, 1920.


32. Gorman, a former US Congressman, had been practicing law since 1895. Now in private law practice, Prindiville had only recently been First Assistant Cook County State’s Attorney, while Tyrrell was an expert on criminal procedure and motion practice.

33. For further exposition of Black Sox trial proceedings related to the grand jury confession evidence, see again Lamb, Black Sox in the Courtroom, 118-124.


37. Whether the first Replogle marriage was ended by death or divorce was undiscovered by the writer.

38. The wedding took place in the bride’s original hometown of Milwaukee. See “Gesu Church for Nuptials,” Milwaukee Sentinel, December 25, 1944: 17.

39. The Replogle death certificate lists the official cause of death as “acute hemorrhagic infarct of the heart.”
BLACK SOX IN THE COURTROOM: THE GRAND JURY, CRIMINAL TRIAL AND CIVIL LITIGATION
By William F. Lamb

Reviewed by Rick Huhn
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One thing quickly comes to mind when reading Bill Lamb’s outstanding book about the legal proceedings surrounding the Black Sox Scandal: Why has no one written such a thorough, in-depth review before? After all it’s been one hundred years since that fateful 1919 World Series we reflect upon today. Certainly, the litigation slugfest leading up to and following the 1920 grand jury indictments has been the subject of many scandal-related books and articles written over the past century. However, there had never been a study like the one undertaken by Lamb. Availing himself of both old and newly discovered sources, he scrutinizes and dissects the legal struggles that played such a large part in the public disclosure of the fix and the eventual banishment of the implicated White Sox players. Since the book’s publication in 2013 it is difficult to imagine any serious student of the scandal speaking or writing about it without referring to Lamb’s work.

Perhaps one of the reasons no one had previously focused on the legal proceedings to such an extent is the challenge it presents to an untrained eye. This was not a problem for Lamb, a retired New Jersey prosecutor who has handled and tried numerous criminal cases over the course of his career. Lamb understands the legal complexities that he analyzes and relates to his readers. He understands it from the standpoint of the Illinois state attorneys who prosecuted the case, and like any prosecutor worth his salt, he understands it from the viewpoint of those defending the accused. The material in lesser hands would have quickly become a maze, difficult to understand and follow. Instead, in simple language Lamb adds clarity and structure to what heretofore was quite fragmented because no single knowledgeable writer had examined the case and told the entire story, beginning to end.

BLACK SOX BOOKS – THREE ENTRIES IN THE CURRENT CANON

For more than 40 years following its publication in 1963, *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series* by Eliot Asinof was considered the definitive account of the Black Sox scandal. But more recently, *8MO* has been subjected to critical analysis and reappraisal. For most scandal aficionados, the post-Asinof canon begins with *Burying the Black Sox* by Gene Carney, published in 2006. This ground-breaking work in scandal scholarship and its late author are remembered in the excellent article by David Fletcher, infra.

Set forth below are assessments and summaries of three other fairly-recent books about the Black Sox. Each of these was reviewed by the newsletter shortly after their publication. The purpose of taking a fresh look at them is not to revise the judgments originally rendered by our reviewers. Rather, the object here is to provide presently-engaged and future Black Sox researchers with an idea of what each of the three has to offer. And if another consideration of these works prompts newsletter readers to give them a try, so much the better.
Lamb accomplishes his task by keeping chapters relatively short, allowing readers to catch their breath after reading several pages of rather dense material. This is particularly important because he does not waste words. He makes each one count, seldom if ever losing focus. The book weighs in at a remarkably succinct 204 pages yet delivers comprehensive coverage of the topic. The text is supplemented with a wonderful glossary of "Black Sox Persons and Places," a bibliography, an index, and a liberal number of footnotes extremely helpful to those utilizing the book as a launching pad for their own work. Where appropriate authors notes appear to explain unusual legal concepts, though they occasionally interrupt the flow of the text. Placement at the start of a chapter or at the bottom of the page might have been a preferable option.

At the outset Lamb makes sure the reader understands the limited scope of his work. It is not intended to be a “definitive” account of the scandal, and he doesn’t deliver judgment as to the guilt or innocence of the players. Instead, he evaluates how the actions or non-actions of the accused played out as their cases proceeded through the court system, a task he deems “modest.” Lamb sets the table for the courtroom action by summarizing the scenarios leading up to it. Chapters one to three, which capsize the regular season, the 1919 World Series, and the rumors of scandal, are seven, eleven, and five pages, respectively. Chapter four serves as an excellent primer on the little-known and oft misunderstood workings of a grand jury. In this instance it acted both unlawfully and unethically in its consideration of the issues related to baseball gambling. In chapters five and six, Lamb takes great pains and is remarkably successful in making sense of the often contradictory statements of the participants which appeared in a variety of forms, including grand jury testimony and interviews with newspaper reporters.

One of the most intriguing portions of the book, chapter ten aptly entitled “Extradition Follies,” discusses a topic which has previously received scant treatment: the handling, or rather mishandling, of the attempted extradition of indicted fixer Hal Chase back from California. As a result of this bungling, Chase became the first defendant in the case to be in the clear as long as he remained out of Illinois. Equally enlightening is Lamb’s treatment of the courtroom hijinks performed by notorious New York City criminal attorney William J. Fallon. His juggling act resulted in a failure to extradite defendant Abe Attell, an alleged henchman of gambling kingpin and fix suspect Arnold Rothstein. In chapter thirteen Lamb deftly explodes the widely-held notion that missing grand jury confessions of White Sox players Joe Jackson, Eddie Cicotte, and Lefty Williams presented the prosecution with an insurmountable obstacle for success.

The Black Sox trial itself is skillfully covered in chapters twelve through sixteen. One of the most important points Lamb makes – almost completely ignored by others who have tackled the trial – is that “theoretically” the law in this case worked to the prosecution’s advantage. Lamb points out it made absolutely no difference legally in defense of the specific charges whether a player did or did not play to win or changed his mind and withdrew from the fix mid-stream. Guilt was still established. On the other hand, the presiding judge, Hugo M. Friend, delivered a defense-oriented charge when he advised the jury that the State of Illinois was required to prove intent to defraud the public and others, not simply that they threw games. Lamb convincingly argues that the verdict resulted from “jury nullification,” a legal term he explains in the book and expanded upon in his subsequent writings.

A fascinating postscript to the Black Sox criminal proceedings took place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin when Joe Jackson, Happy Felsch, and others sued the White Sox ballclub for breach of contract. The ensuing civil litigation which resulted in a jury trial in 1924 is described
in its fullest and most authoritative form to date by Lamb in chapters 17 thru 24.

In his final chapter Lamb discusses the “treatment” of the legal aspects of the scandal over the years, detailing how little of substance or accuracy has been written. He reminds readers his objective was to provide “a thorough, informative, and reliable account of the judicial proceedings” that came out of the events surrounding the 1919 World Series. In this regard he met and exceeded his objective. He once again states he does not aspire to be “definitive,” but despite protestations to the contrary this book is most certainly definitive within its narrow confines. Until Lamb, no one had placed the Black Sox pretrial, trial, and post-trial proceedings under such a powerful microscope or written about them so ably. It is hard to imagine anyone will do so in the future. Bill Lamb’s *Black Sox in the Courtroom* is and shall remain a Black Sox scandal classic.

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**TURNING THE BLACK SOX WHITE:**
THE MISUNDERSTOOD LEGACY OF CHARLES A. COMISKEY

By Tim Hornbaker

2014, Sports Publishing

Reviewed by
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Tim Hornbaker takes on an ambitious task in *Turning the Black Sox White: The Misunderstood Legacy of Charles A. Comiskey*. Going up against the long-held notion that Comiskey’s parsimonious ways were a catalyst for the Black Sox scandal, Hornbaker attempts to reshape the legacy of the longtime White Sox owner as someone who was benevolent and forward-thinking, and, most critically, was an innocent victim of players who sold him out as owner of the Chicago White Sox. “Finally,” writes Hornbaker in the Introduction, “almost 100 years of misrepresentations about Charles Comiskey can be made known.”

Crystallized in Eliot Asinof’s *Eight Men Out* (1963), Comiskey’s supposed refusal to pay his star players, thus inspiring a *de facto* player economic revolt, has been imprinted in the lore of baseball history. Comiskey, the story goes, spent lavishly on everything except player salaries, over which players had no negotiating power under baseball’s firmly-entrenched reserve clause. Permeating the book, including in Bob Hoie’s Foreword, is the notion that contemporary Black Sox scholars have taken their cues about Comiskey primarily from Asinof, resulting in a trope about Comiskey’s underspending on player salaries which has been passed down among the generations.

Rather than being a re-evaluation of Comiskey and the Black Sox from beginning to end, most of the book follows the form of a traditional Comiskey biography. It provides in-depth treatment of everything from Comiskey’s opinions of the Brotherhood of Professional Baseball Players to his time owning a team in Sioux City in the Western League. Because of the granular detail that Hornbaker includes about Comiskey’s
early life, Comiskey’s relationship with the Black Sox is nowhere near as central to the book as the title might suggest. In fact, the first two-thirds of Turning the Black Sox White includes little mention of the 1919 scandal at all. Instead, the crux of Hornbaker’s reassessment is included in roughly the last 100 pages, most consequentially in a chapter titled “Setting the Record Straight.”

Yet all of the surrounding details are hardly dicta. Whether Comiskey is snapping at Captain Pickett in St. Paul in 1895 to be a better leader, to Comiskey buying his players $50 suits during the 1904 pennant race to encourage continued good play, to noting how Comiskey provided Nick Altrock and Fielder Jones with raises following the 1906 World Series championship, Hornbaker’s portrait of Comiskey as a well-intentioned and forward-thinking baseball professional is consistent. Further, Hornbaker employs arrestingly complimentary language. Hornbaker says of Comiskey as a player: “It was nearly impossible to outwit him, and if a player wasn’t on top of their game, thinking at all times, Comiskey would have the upper hand — at bat or in the field.”

Indeed, the author’s plaudits span many spheres. Comiskey, says Hornbaker, was “a revolutionary in the field” at first base. Hornbaker writes that “Comiskey had an innate affection for loyalty and sought that quality in his players.” Referring to Comiskey in 1912, Hornbaker says: “Garnering mainstream attention for his commitment to sportsmanship, his gentlemanly behavior, and civic contributions, Comiskey was acknowledged as a brainy diplomat, regardless of the crowd he entertained.” Hornbaker also asserts that Comiskey, just prior to the Black Sox scandal, had “earned the utmost admiration in the sports world.”

The early incidents allow Hornbaker to paint Comiskey as someone who was intuitive, mindful, noble, sagacious, financially-generous with his players, and who routinely does the right thing. If Comiskey shows occasional fits of anger in the book, it is typically in the context of his high expectations not being met. What is harder to discern in the book is Comiskey’s motivations. Following a 1902 Supreme Court decision, for instance, which tightened clubs’ reserve rights over players, Comiskey is quoted as saying that he had “never heard such an un-American decision” and that he had consulted several attorneys who offered that a contract which bound a player for life is “unconstitutional.”

It can be perilous to rely on one particular individual’s statements to the press alone as being definitive. In the book, Comiskey’s public quotes are often accepted as being accurate and complete on their face. Left unexplored, on several occasions, are what Comiskey’s real intentions were: did he really believe what he said to the press? Did he have reasons to say one thing and do another? Even if Comiskey’s motives were pure, the questions are worth asking. What would bolster the book considerably is more complementary material from primary sources or analysts, putting these Comiskey quotes into context.

Hornbaker relies on a multi-pronged approach to argue that Comiskey’s reputation should be reevaluated in the context of the Black Sox scandal. In citing Hoie’s 2012 salary research, as published in Base Ball: A Journal of the Early Game, Hornbaker contends that Chicago’s roughly $90,000 payroll — which put the White Sox near the top of the league — is evidence that low salaries did not undermine the “overall morale” of the 1919 team, as Asinof had alleged. In addition, Hornbaker proposes that each member of the Black Sox had individual motivation for being in on the fix, beyond any kind of dissatisfaction with Comiskey. Lefty Williams came close to being hit in the head by a batted ball in July 1919, for one, and Hornbaker suggests that Williams then became open to Chick Gandil’s coaxing, after being faced with his own baseball mortality. That Gandil was concerned about his post-career financial security following a stomach ailment in conjunction with appendicitis and that Swede Risberg was expecting a second child with his wife are among examples Hornbaker cites to make the
case that external factors, rather than Comiskey's financial dealings, inspired the players' sellout.

Further, Hornbaker posits that a salary dispute with Buck Weaver “helped mold a larger perception that Comiskey was underpaying his talent,” even while Comiskey was paying top dollar to Eddie Collins. The author also suggests that Comiskey misjudged how much baseball had become a business after the Federal League uprising and that, in spite of Comiskey's longstanding willingness to spend lavishly in order to acquire players and to compromise in salary negotiations, Comiskey was, in Hornbaker's view, “going to wear the same badge his other owners wore: being a penny-pincher and cheap.” In the book, Comiskey's ostensibly selfless motives often collide with forces beyond his anticipation and control.

But paying handsomely to acquire players (as contemporary owners often did) and paying players in accordance with their on-field achievements are two different things. Hornbaker notes that Comiskey spent record amounts to acquire players, including $65,000 for Collins and $100,000 for Willie Kamm. The money used to purchase players, of course, never made it to the players themselves, and high-priced acquisitions were a coin of the realm. Moreover, even if the White Sox did have a top payroll in 1919, the players still could have believed they were underpaid. Salaries, which were set unilaterally, were not necessarily to the players' satisfaction under baseball's restrictive system, even if they came out above their peers. In noting that players on other teams had done so, Hornbaker asks: “If the (1919 White Sox) players were all being paid 'starvation salaries,' why didn't they all hold out for more money prior to the 1919 season?”

Countless personal reasons may factor into those calculations, but a lack of holdouts does not necessarily imply that a broad salary-motivated discontent was not brewing among the players. Then there are two Comiskeys to reconcile: the fair-minded, generous negotiator who Hornbaker predominantly portrays and the one quoted in the book who claimed publicly that he was “through with” Ed Walsh during a tough contract negotiation in 1909, stating that the team would win the pennant without the team's star pitcher. It is certainly plausible that Comiskey's players did not hold out because doing so would have been fruitless and put their jobs in peril.

Hornbaker's book makes an impressive contribution to the Comiskey literature with his probing, nuanced research, especially of Comiskey's formative years. *Turning the Black Sox White* is at once a matter-of-fact biography as well as an effort to rehabilitate Comiskey's professional reputation. Hornbaker's assessment of Comiskey's less-than-expected impact on the Black Sox scandal certainly makes the reader consider Comiskey from a new vantage point. Still, Comiskey often comes across in the book as an unwitting bystander in a drama in which he is centrally involved, which can strain credulity. To endorse Hornbaker's theory wholeheartedly would require almost everything we have accepted about Comiskey to be incorrect and for a remarkable confluence of events to have conspired against the Hall of Fame owner. Regardless, Hornbaker has added several pieces to the puzzle. Further analysis, particularly evaluating Comiskey's motivations with more scrutiny, will be needed before Comiskey's place in baseball history can take a wholesale shift.

John McMurray is chairman of both the Deadball Era and Oral History committees.

Charles A. Comiskey, c. 1920
THE BETRAYAL: THE 1919 WORLD SERIES AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN BASEBALL

By Charles Fountain

2015, Oxford University Press [ISBN: 978-0199795130, 296 pp. $27.95 USD. Hardcover]

Reviewed by Mark Dugo claydad96@aol.com

With the 100-year anniversary upon us, the 1919 Black Sox will be a noteworthy news story this summer. This is great for baseball enthusiasts and allows those who have heard the stories but may not be overly familiar with the facts to follow up on their interests and further explore the scandal.

In The Betrayal, Charles Fountain does a fine job of relaying information that most of us familiar with the situation know in detail. Where I think he came up short is in providing concise and up-to-date information for those who may be looking for more. Fountain also spends considerable time on ancillary events. Is it really necessary, for example, to have a recap of Hal Chase and the earlier gambling shenanigans of the late nineteenth century? To me these chapters seem to be padding more than furthering the story.

To be fair, Fountain does provide updated information from Elliot Asinof’s Eight Men Out which is always the baseline for all future information regarding the Black Sox scandal. It is probably about time that we eliminate for all time the belief that White Sox owner Charles Comiskey was cheap and that led to the players revolting and ultimately throwing the series.

Overall, I found The Betrayal an interesting read, but better suited for those looking for an understanding of the overall general times and era rather than for readers seeking new and eye-opening information on the specific events of the 1919 World Series. It’s worth a read, for those who want to know baseline background information. The book is very well written and informative for those who may pick up a copy as they start hearing more and more from this summer and fall’s sure to be highly-publicized remembrances.

Mark Dugo is a longtime SABR member and serves as an assistant editor for both The Inside Game and the Black Sox Committee newsletter. He is also on the review committee that selects the annual Larry Ritter Award winner and is the current president of SABR’s Charlotte chapter.
For his first opera, celebrated composer Joel Puckett chose to use the Black Sox scandal as his theme. “The story has everything one expects from grand opera,” Puckett explained, “legendary heroes with massive character flaws, villains, love, greed, betrayal. In short, this story was already an opera, it just needed some music!” While the plot only loosely follows the actual history of the fix, Puckett uses it to highlight larger themes, such as the imbalance in power between the bosses and the working class and the dreadful outcomes that can result from competing loyalties under traumatic circumstances.

Whether consciously or not, Puckett takes significant liberties with the story. Rather than identify the numerous areas where the plot differs from the actual history, for this audience a summary of the plot should illuminate many of the discrepancies. The opera opens with White Sox owner Charles Comiskey’s attorney Alfred Austrian in South Carolina negotiating a contract with Joe Jackson. He is clearly lowballing Jackson, and Austrian is trying to take advantage of him. The illiterate Jackson, wishing his wife was home to advise him, decides he doesn’t have any alternatives and signs with an “X”. When Jackson’s wife Katie returns, she bemoans the contract also noting that the team can “fire” him with two weeks’ notice (nearly all contracts had what was dubbed the “ten-day” clause).

The story then moves to late in the 1919 season where Lefty Williams corners Jackson to let him know that a group of players is considering throwing the Series, and they need him. Eddie Cicotte was particularly bitter because Comiskey owed him $25,000 from the previous year for winning 30 games for which he never got paid. At a meeting of the eight players in Chicago, they declare whether they’re in or out. Weaver says he’s out and leaves. As the final player polled, Jackson reluctantly agrees because he doesn’t want to let the others down. There’s no further reference to Weaver,
though he is apparently one of the eight in later courtroom scenes.

On the gambling side, Sleepy Bill Burns tries to approach gangster Arnold Rothstein for backing, but Abe Attell, as his bodyguard, blocks him. Burns eventually gets to see the Big Bankroll, but Rothstein turns him down. Nevertheless, Attell likes what he hears and convinces Burns the two of them can pull it off—they don’t need any money up front; the two will tell the players that they will get their money after the Series because the money is tied up in wagers. Chick Gandil, as the ringleader of the players, accepts this position.

As the Series starts, Cicotte hits the first batter of the first game to signal the fix is on. Hugh Fullerton and Ring Lardner, who are both key characters in the story—Fullerton as the skeptic and Lardner as the true believer—lament that this could mean the rumors of a fix are true. At several points in the opera, the Lardner character refers to Jackson as a “God on earth.” With the Sox down three games to one, Jackson and Williams decide to play to win because they feel they are at risk of not getting any money.

Several games later the players celebrate at a saloon after they have just won two in a row. Gandil realizes Jackson is having second thoughts, at which point Burns and Attell appear. They hand Gandil $20,000, which they tell him is from Rothstein: $10,000 for Jackson and $10,000 for Cicotte. Gandil and his henchman Fred McMullin keep half and give $5,000 to each player. A gangster also confronts Jackson and lets him know that if they don’t lose, his wife will be killed. When Williams hears this, he offers to throw the game.

The second act opens in the White Sox locker room at the end of the 1920 season with the players in a somber mood, despite having again qualified for the World Series. Rumors of a fix of the 1919 Series abound, and Jackson is wracked with guilt. He confesses to his wife, who suggests he make a clean breast of everything at the courthouse. In somewhat of a non-sequitur, the next scene has

Joshua Dennis as Shoeless Joe Jackson, Daniel Walton as Happy Felsch, Christian Thurston as Buck Weaver, and Calvin Griffin as Eddie Cicotte in Minnesota Opera Company world premiere of The Fix
Jackson confessing to Austrian and a stenographer, and under pressure from Austrian he names the other players involved, effectively blowing open the fix. When he confesses, Jackson says he always played to win, that he couldn’t play any other way.

With the players exposed, Austrian, Comiskey, and Commissioner Landis meet. Austrian initially hopes Landis will just fine the players, but Landis makes it clear he has a more dire punishment in mind. Austrian and Comiskey eventually see this as a silver lining as they will be able to get out from under some bloated contracts and find some young power hitters like Babe Ruth. Exactly how Comiskey is a cheapskate but also burdened with overpriced contracts with the Black Sox players remains unclear. The trial is one of the better scenes. Burns is the star witness, and Puckett gives him several funny and clever lines. The players are found not guilty of the various conspiracy charges and celebrate that evening. Landis then gives his ruling that he is banning the eight.

The opera itself was quite enjoyable, particularly the second act. The subject matter, however, left Puckett with two difficult characteristics that were never fully overcome. The main characters of the story are all men, leaving little room for female characters. In fact, only Joe Jackson’s wife Katie had a solo role in the production, played well by Jasmine Habersham. The sheer number of players made it hard to tell them apart, given they were often dressed in uniform.

Not surprisingly, the opera made Joe Jackson the central character, and Joshua Dennis sang the role expertly, highlighting his moral dilemmas, though no 32-year-old major league veteran could be quite as reckless as Jackson was portrayed. Gandil, played by Wei Wu, was another standout. Austrian was the clear villain and afforded many of the best lines.

Puckett did a nice job of matching music to the emotion of the scene and the general plot line. For example, in the first act much of the music was complex in tone, dramatizing the angst of the players, particularly Jackson. This leads to the second limitation of the subject matter. Because of the complexity of the plot, too much of the opera was recitative, resulting in too few arias and ensembles. Testifying to this shortage, there was no clapping during the performance other than at the end of the first act and the end of the opera itself.

The staging was well done, with a backdrop of bleachers so that the action appeared to take place under them. The various locations of the action—the locker room, nightclubs, offices, courtroom—were all nicely set to the era and easily transformable from one to another. The actors did several pantomimes of warming up and playing, and these baseball scenes were quite passable. Jackson also swung his bat from the left side.

The pre-opera talk also requires a little commentary. The discussion and demonstration of the music was enlightening and entertaining. The illustrations of the leitmotif “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles” and the influence of Jelly Roll Morton, an important jazz musician of the era, were likewise interesting and enjoyable. In the discussion of the fix itself, however, some of the facts were incorrect. For example, Comiskey was not a skinflint who blatantly underpaid his players in comparison to other owners; it’s not correct that the players never did get paid; the antitrust challenge that led to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that baseball was not subject to antitrust laws was not brought by the players but by the Baltimore Federal League franchise; the Supreme Court did not rule baseball was too important to be governed by antitrust laws but because it did not fit the definition of interstate commerce; and Arnold Rothstein was not a Chicago gangster—he was a New Yorker.

Baseball was at the heart of American society and culture for nearly all of the twentieth century. Let’s hope other artists follow Puckett’s example and use the national pastime to illustrate their messages and themes.

The Fix was debuted by the Minnesota Opera Company and ran from March 16 to 24. Minnesotan Dan Levitt is the editor of the newsletter’s book review section and the 2015 Bob Davids Award winner, SABR’s highest accolade.
BASED ON A TRUE STORY:
ELIOT ASINOF, JOHN SAYLES,
AND THE FICTIONALIZATION
OF THE BLACK SOX SCANDAL

by Bill Lamb

Since first published in 1963, *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series* by Eliot Asinof has popularly been viewed as the definitive exposition of the Black Sox scandal – an authoritative account of the interaction between gamblers and corrupted Chicago White Sox players; the exposure of the fix conspiracy; the ensuing judicial proceedings; and the expulsion from Organized Baseball of Shoeless Joe Jackson, Buck Weaver, Eddie Cicotte, and the others by Commissioner Landis notwithstanding the not guilty verdicts rendered at their criminal trial. Over the more than half-century since *8MO* was released, however, our understanding of the scandal has not remained static. To the contrary, it has expanded significantly. And while we may not know everything that attended the debasement of the 1919 Series, we now know a lot more about the matter than Asinof did.

The revelations of new Black Sox-related evidence, including the trove of long-lost scandal artifacts acquired by the Chicago History Museum in 2007, have prompted critical reappraisal of *Eight Men Out*. In the writer’s view, *8MO* remains an engaging read to this day. But it can no longer be considered reliable history. Rather, the work belongs in the category of historical fiction, a based-on-a-true-story treatment of the Black Sox affair, complete with the fictional characters, invented dialogue, and made-up events inherent to the genre. But the book’s central flaw may be omniscience, a narrative voice that regularly penetrates the minds of the scandal’s actors, revealing the innermost thoughts of all involved, including many – Arnold Rothstein, Kid Gleason, Sport Sullivan, etc. – who were closed-mouthed about the scandal when it publicly erupted in the early 1920s and long-dead by the time that Asinof commenced his research for the book.

To substantiate the downgrading of *Eight Men Out*’s place in scandal history, the text below examines various Black Sox-related matters – both large and small – that Eliot Asinof got wrong. Or made up. To the extent that the evidence permits, the writer will then attempt to set the historical record straight. More expansive treatment of Asinof errata is provided in the Appendix of the Black Sox Scandal Research Committee’s Eight Myths Out project, accessible on-line via https://sabr.org/eight-myths-out/appendix. Thereafter, this exercise will be repeated for the 1988 John Sayles film version of *Eight Men Out*, a handsomely-costumed historical fraud that has done far greater damage to accurate public perception of the Black Sox scandal than the Asinof book, there being an
incalculable number of viewers of the Sayles film in movie theaters, television reruns, DVD, and via streaming for every reader of Asinof.

In their defense, neither Eliot Asinof nor John Sayles was the original fabulists in the Black Sox case. Nor did they invent the scandal’s central myth, i.e., that the perfidy of the corrupted players was grounded in the miserly wages paid by White Sox club owner Charles Comiskey. The notion that Comiskey was tight-fisted, rather, was invented by Black Sox defense attorneys in 1921, part of an ultimately successful strategy to deflect responsibility for Series corruption onto culprits other than those on trial. Today, we know better. As irrefutably established by bona fide player salary data reviewable at the Giamatti Research Center in Cooperstown, the 1919 Chicago White Sox had one of the highest payrolls in baseball. As noted by Black Sox scholar Bob Hoie in his illuminating article “1919 Baseball Salaries and the Mythically Underpaid Chicago White Sox,”1 defense dissembling about what the players had been paid did not go unaddressed by Black Sox prosecutors. Same was refuted during trial by introduction of actual salary data, with those salary figures contemporaneously reported in the press.2 No matter. The defense allegation that Comiskey was a skin-flint boss who underpaid his players had taken hold in public consciousness.

Although a shock when exposed, the fixing of the 1919 World Series did not stay long in the minds of most baseball fans. Fueled by the astonishing home run production of pitcher-turned-everyday slugger Babe Ruth, the game was entering a golden age, soaring to unprecedented popularity. Deadball Era events like the Black Sox scandal quickly became ancient history to the game’s followers. But whenever the scandal did resurface, most often in random columns by then-sportswriter Westbrook Pegler, the niggardly salaries purportedly paid by Comiskey was a recurring theme.3 By the early 1960s, however, nothing substantial on the scandal had been published for years.

**EIGHT MEN OUT: THE ASINOF BOOK**

A sympathetic reading of his 1979 memoir *Bleeding Between the Lines* permits the view that Eliot Asinof wanted to write an historically credible, non-fiction account of the Black Sox scandal. But 40 years after-the-fact, he lacked the means to do so. Vital documentary evidence, particularly the grand jury and criminal trial transcripts, had gone missing; surviving scandal operatives were few and mostly unwilling to talk to Asinof, and the sheer passage of time had shrouded events. Rather than abandon the project, Asinof adopted an alternative course. He would author a plausible account of how scandal-related events COULD have happened. To do this, he would employ literary license, integrating vintage newspaper reportage, information supplied by two cooperative fix-insider informants,4 and available shards of history with content supplied by artistic
imagination. Regarding the latter, Asinof filled in the blanks where the historical record was lost or silent by using fictional characters, invented dialogue, and author-manufactured events to sustain reader interest and move the action forward. Representative examples of same are discussed below. But for those desirous of even more detail, specific (but non-exhaustive) identification of 73 instances of factual error or misrepresentations, 18 invented colloquies, 32 mind-readings, and the at-least one fictional character extant in the pages of Eight Men Out is provided in the accompanying Appendix.5

Whether it was Asinof’s intention or not, the public took Eight Men Out literally, assuming the narrative was an authentic evidence-based account of the Black Sox scandal — a process facilitated by the book’s lack of bibliography, footnotes to sources, or other indicia of where Asinof had drawn his material from. Seemingly immune to scholarly scrutiny, the 8MO fabrications start early. In the Preface, for example, Asinof states: “[Reputed fix financier Arnold] Rothstein’s partner, Nat Evans, dies in 1959 permitting [Asinof informant] Abe Attell, another ex-Rothstein associate, to reveal his participation in the fix.”6 In fact, Evans [nee Evensky] died in a Manhattan hospital on February 6, 1935.7 Also stated in the Preface: “Three of the eight ball players signed confessions, but they were stolen from the Illinois State’s Attorneys Office before trial.”8 Actual facts: There were no “signed confessions” in the Black Sox case. Stolen from the Cook County (not Illinois) State’s Attorneys Office were the original typed transcriptions of the grand jury testimony of Eddie Cicotte, Joe Jackson, and Lefty Williams. Like all grand jury testimony transcripts, these documents were unsigned. More important, the theft was discovered well in advance of trial, after which the missing transcripts were recreated by means of the preserved handwritten shorthand notes of grand jury stenographers Walter J. Smith and Elbert Allen. During the Black Sox trial, the grand jury testimony of defendants Cicotte, Jackson, and Williams was read to the jury at length.9

The falsity of Asinof’s relentless portrayal of Sox club owner Comiskey as a penny-pincher who grossly underpaid his employees has been exposed by Bob Hoie and other modern Black Sox researchers. As previously stated, the 1919 White Sox payroll was among the highest in baseball, well above that of their Series rival, the Cincinnati Reds. And the putatively victimized Eddie Cicotte was more-than-adequately compensated, being the second-highest paid pitcher in baseball for the 1918-1919 seasons. Only Washington Senators ace Walter Johnson was paid more.10 Equally spurious is the claim that Cicotte was euchred out of a promised bonus for winning 30 games (during the 1917 season according to Asinof. Filmmaker Sayles transfers the bonus to the 1919 season for dramatic purposes). The bonus claim is entirely apocryphal.11 Indeed, during post-scandal civil litigation instituted by several other banished players, Cicotte reportedly said, “I am not suing Comiskey myself. He paid every nickel I was entitled to ... and I have no ill-feelings against him.”12 Finally, Cicotte was not prevented from winning 30 games either season, as he was given the late-campaign starts needed to achieve 30 wins during both campaigns, bonus or not.13

When the narrative in Eight Men Out segues into scandal set-up territory, the author flunks a sports trivia test. Among other things, Asinof misinforms (presumably innocently) readers about informant Abe Attell’s background and the former featherweight champion’s boxing record14; mangles the names of various ballplayers and fix-connected gamblers15; misidentifies other book characters16; and provides erroneous baseball stats.17 In a far more serious vein, Asinof then makes a muddle of Joe Jackson’s grand jury testimony, misstating important aspects of its content and confusing public remarks made by Jackson outside the grand jury room with what Jackson had said previously inside it. Page space limitations preclude exposition herein but the specifics are provided in this article’s Appendix. See Part I, Factual Errors and Misstatements Made by Asinof, notes 37-45. See also, Bill Lamb, “An

No serious issue can be taken with Asinof’s charge that Sox club owner Comiskey acted self-interestedly following the corruption of the 1919 World Series. Despite public posturing about wanting to get to the bottom of Series fix rumors, Comiskey acted to conceal the fix, withholding incriminating information about the Black Sox gathered by his private investigators. He also extended new contracts, with handsome salary increases to boot, to Joe Jackson, Happy Felsch, Swede Risberg, and Lefty Williams, despite the fact that each had been implicated in the Series fix. But Asinof’s insinuation (and an express charge of the Sayles film) that Comiskey funded the Black Sox legal defense fails the proof test – because there is none. In *Bleeding Between the Lines*, Asinof reveals that this contention was the surmise of trial judge Hugo M. Friend. But Friend offered no proof in support of his speculation during his 40-years-after-the-fact conversation with Asinof. And not a scintilla of evidence that Comiskey paid for the Black Sox lawyers has emerged in the near-60 years since Friend voiced the notion.

Doubtless well-intended Judge Friend was not just the source of one literary bum steer. He was also the apparent inspiration of a vivid *Eight Men Out* cover-up vignette that is patently false. A 1931 biography of recently-deceased attorney William J. Fallon, briefly the star of the New York City criminal defense bar, portrayed him as the mastermind of strategy pursued by suspected Series fix financier Arnold Rothstein to avoid indictment by the Cook County grand jury.

When Asinof was doing his book research some four decades later, Friend told him that “I’d heard that Fallon and Rothstein met with Alfred Austrian, Comiskey’s attorney,” when the pair came to Chicago. And seemingly on this basis, Asinof proceeds to place Fallon center-stage for the Rothstein grand jury appearance. “For the first and only time during its lengthy session, a witness was permitted the company and support of counsel during questioning. William J. Fallon accomplished this by holding that condition as the price of his client’s testimony. If they wanted Rothstein, they had to take Fallon with him.”

This is nonsense. As reported at the time in the press, negotiations to get Rothstein, a New York resident beyond the subpoena power of the Cook County grand jury, to appear and testify voluntarily were conducted with Rothstein attorney Meier Steinbrink, not Fallon. Nor did Fallon accompany Rothstein to Chicago; Fallon never left New York. At the same time that Rothstein was testifying before a far-away grand jury, Fallon was on his feet in the Manhattan courtroom of Judge Joseph F. Mulqueen successfully opposing a prosecution motion to delay the imminent trial of the conspiracy/war bond robbery charges lodged against client Nicky Arnstein. Actually accompanying Rothstein to Chicago was another of his regular attorneys, Hyman Turchin. The historical record, however, is utterly devoid of evidence that Turchin, or any other Rothstein lawyer, was present in the grand jury room during Rothstein’s testimony.

The *Eight Men Out* account of Black Sox-related judicial proceedings is marred by factual error but, to Asinof’s credit, it does not pretend (as does the Sayles film and the Ken Burns 1994 PBS documentary *Baseball*) that the Cicotte, Jackson, and Williams grand jury confessions suddenly disappeared on the eve of trial, or that the confessions were not used by prosecutors during their case, as indeed they were, extensively. But one scandal fiction intentionally created by Asinof has permanently embedded itself into retellings of the Black Sox saga. For copyright protection purposes, Asinof was advised to insert something original and distinctive into his manuscript so that it might serve as a tell-tale sign of unauthorized use of his work by later Black Sox authors. To accomplish this, Asinof created fictional characters, the most memorable of whom is *Harry F.*, the thug “with a raspy voice” who threatens Lefty Williams into his dismal pitching effort in Game Eight. Although this make-believe villain became enshrined in
subsequent treatments of the scandal, Asinof never actually instituted copyright infringement litigation against those plagiarizing his work. But he reportedly took private satisfaction whenever *Harry F.* was incorporated into a Black Sox “documentary.”

A detailed accounting of the invented dialogue and other manifestations of literary license infused into *Eight Men Out* by its author is set forth in Asinof Appendix, Part II, and need not be retyped here. The same goes for the instances of narrative omniscience that pervade the book. See Asinof Appendix, Part III. Suffice it to say that the Asinof source for such revelations as Sport Sullivan’s “surprise” at Nat Evans’ delivery of $40,000 in fix payoff money (on page 36); what Arnold Rothstein was thinking after the White Sox won Game Seven (page 112); Lefty Williams’ assessment of his self-worth as he warmed up to pitch Game Eight (page 114); and that Kid Gleason “felt frightened for himself” in the face of swirling Series fix rumors (page 180) is an unsolved mystery. None of these men are known to have unburdened themselves on such matters while living, and all four were dead by the time that Eliot Asinof decided to write about the Black Sox scandal.

**EIGHT MEN OUT: THE SAYLES FILM**

Some 25 years after Eliot Asinof’s *Eight Men Out* was published, Orion Pictures released John Sayles’s film version of the book. Like everyone else in 1988 (including the writer), Sayles considered Asinof’s work to be non-fiction. And a tolerant reading of events would not begrudge Asinof the intention of trying to produce a factual account of the Black Sox scandal, even though it is obvious nowadays that he failed to do so. The Sayles’s film is another matter entirely. Sayles’s objective was not to document history on film. It was to provide movie audiences with entertainment and to make a profit at the box office. To that end, his screenplay – Sayles served as screenwriter and director of the film, acted the role of Chicago sportswriter Ring Lardner, and co-wrote one of the soundtrack’s original songs, as well – exhibits no compunction about departing from the Asinof text where cinematic goals can be better achieved by Sayles’s own collection of fictional characters, invented dialogue, and made-up events. The results, at best, are mixed, with the risible, historically-fraudulent depiction of events in and about the Cook County Courthouse being the film’s lowlight.

In offering this critique, the writer appreciates that creative artists like Eliot Asinof and John Sayles have the right to imbue their depictions of real-life events with a point of view. Although contrary to the weight of the evidence extant when the film was made (and virtually crushed by damning scandal artifacts recovered during the past 30 years), it was Sayles’s prerogative to portray Buck Weaver as a non-fix participant, Eddie Cicotte as a most reluctant conspirator, and Black Sox players as exploited by their
employer. Far less legitimate, in what purported to be a “non-fiction” work, was the buttressing of these viewpoints with contrived renderings of fact. Or Sayles’s resort to undergirding his sympathies with scenes and characters that are either entirely fictional, or real but deliberately portrayed in a false light. John Sayles, of course, did not invent the highly fictionalized non-fiction historical movie. To the contrary, filmdom abounds with other, more egregious, illustrations of the form. See e.g., *The Birth of a Nation*, D.W. Griffith’s 1915 portrayal of heroic Reconstruction Era Ku Klux Klansmen saving Southern virtue from drunken, rapacious former slaves, or *JFK*, Oliver Stone’s near-deranged 1991 take on the Kennedy assassination. Clearly, no rational person would equate the fixing of a sporting event to the national tragedies distorted by Griffith and Stone. But like the Griffith and Stone films, the movie version of *8MO* is of a kind, the pseudo-historical tale proceeding from a discredited central premise – for Sayles that being motivation supplied the corrupted players by the purported miserliness of White Sox owner Charles Comiskey.

Given its less-than-two-hours running time, the *Eight Men Out* film could not possibly incorporate all the mistakes contained in the Asinof book. But recitation of instances where the film faithfully reproduces an already-noted Asinof fact error or invention is both redundant and pointless. The errata lists contained in Sayles Appendix are, therefore, confined to original errors and misrepresentations, invented dialogue, and made-up events that Sayles injected into *Eight Men Out* entirely on his own. Here is but a sample of the mistaken or phony Sayles-created matters presented in the film.

After a languid rolling out of the film’s credits, Sayles wastes little time injecting fantasy into his film, as viewers are immediately introduced to *Scooter* and *Bucky*, the fictional street urchins whom film hero Buck Weaver will use as a sounding board for expression of his love of baseball, professions of fix innocence, etc. Sayles then sets about getting facts wrong. In his very first baseball scene, he depicts lefty-batting Eddie Collins as a right-handed hitter. Seconds later and against a St. Louis Browns right-handed pitcher, switch-hitter Buck Weaver also bats righty. After the White Sox win the game to clinch the 1919 pennant, the film switches to the locker room where the players’ bonus from club owner Comiskey for the winning the championship is a case of flat champagne. Actual facts: The original source of this scene is likely Chick Gandil’s notoriously unreliable 1956 *Sports Illustrated* article which stated: “I recall only one act of generosity on Comiskey’s part. After we won the World Series in 1917, he splurged on a case of champagne.” To fit his movie portrayal of Comiskey as a “cheap bastard,” Sayles makes the champagne flat, and presents it as a substitute for (fictitious) cash bonuses promised the Sox players for winning the 1919 AL pennant.
To economize on exposition, the film condenses events attending the coalescing of the plot to fix the upcoming World Series. In the process, Sayles takes abundant liberty with the historical record. For example, the film portrays Swede Risberg (rather than Gandil collaborator Eddie Cicotte) as co-architect of the fix conspiracy. To that end, the film has Risberg recruit Shoeless Joe Jackson to join the fix. Actual fact: According to his grand jury testimony, Jackson was propositioned solely by Chick Gandil. While an enthusiastic fix participant, Risberg was not involved in the fix recruitment process. The pace of the film’s factual errors picks up as the 1919 World Series begins. Just before Game One starts in Cincinnati, Sayles places fix gamblers Bill Burns and Billy Maharg in seats at Redland Field. Actual fact: Neither Burns nor Maharg attended the Series opener. After control artist Cicotte hits Reds leadoff batter Morrie Rath to signal that the fix is on, Sayles focuses on Buck Weaver. To demonstrate that the innocent Weaver has rejected fix overtures and is playing to win, the game action has Weaver making a diving stop of a hot shot to third and then rifling a strike to scowling first baseman Gandil for the putout. Actual facts: Jake Daubert, the Reds second batter, singled to right-center, sending Rath to third. Rath then scored on a sacrifice fly hit by third batter Heinie Groh.

After the Sox threw Game One, the film shows Fred McMullin delivering a payoff to Joe Jackson in his hotel room. But Jackson, portrayed as depressed by his agreement to participate in the fix, is indifferent to the money. Actual facts: The payoff, $5,000 of the $20,000 promised Jackson, was delivered by Lefty Williams (not McMullin) before the team left Chicago for Game Five in Cincinnati (not after Game One). Nor was Jackson indifferent about his fix money, as he had quizzed Gandil about the non-delivery of expected payoff installments after Game One, Game Two, and Game Three. Indeed, Jackson was still miffed about his fix shortchange after his grand jury appearance a year later. Back in his hotel room that evening, Jackson complained: “I got $5,000 and they promised me $20,000. All I got was the $5,000 that Lefty Williams handed me in a dirty envelope. ... I never got the other $15,000 that was coming to me.” Once Series corruption exposure newspaper headlines hit the screen, Sayles presents an unconcerned Happy Felsch regaling tavern patrons with tales of his connection to the fix. Actual fact: A seemingly contrite Felsch confessed his involvement in the fix to Chicago Evening American reporter Harry Reutlinger in the privacy of the Felsch apartment.

As contrived as these aspects of the film are, screenwriter-director Sayles saves the worst for depiction of Black Sox-related legal proceedings, presenting a cringe-worthy cinematic farce with imaginary events and preposterous courtroom events dominating the final third of the film. For a particularized list of the film’s courthouse fables, see the Sayles Appendix, Part I, Notes 17-20, and Part II, Notes 10-15. For here, two examples of fantasy Sayles injected into the film are: (1) a pretrial conference of the Black Sox and their lawyers presided over by White Sox corporation counsel Alfred Austrian, a completely imaginary event so farfetched yet malign in its depiction of the distinguished Austrian that it would likely have spawned legal action – if the law did not prohibit a defamation lawsuit being instituted on behalf of the decades-deceased barrister, and (2) the film’s placement of baseball commissioner Landis in the courtroom gallery throughout the proceedings. In fact, Landis, still an active sitting federal district court judge in 1921, had a busy court calendar of his own to manage and never set foot inside the Cook County Courthouse. Yet another Sayles invention involves a trial scene wherein Buck Weaver jumps up and loudly announces his displeasure with defense counsel, his frustration with their decision not to have the defendants testify, and his desire to have a separate trial, only to be threatened with contempt for the outburst by Judge Friend. Actual Fact: As extensive contemporaneous reportage of the Black Sox proceedings attests, Weaver never uttered an audible word during the
course of the trial. The film incident is entirely invented.

Although there are other worthy contenders, the nadir of the Sayles film probably resides in depiction of defense cross-examination of fix insider Billy Maharg. When Maharg refers to Black Sox confessions, defense counsel inquires where these confessions are. Gathered press and courtroom spectators are then stunned by prosecutors’ revelation that the players’ incriminating grand jury statements have been stolen – the unstated implication being that as a consequence, the jury will never hear the confession evidence. This, in turn, allows disillusioned newsmen Hugh Fullerton and Ring Lardner to affirm their suspicions that the trial’s outcome has been prearranged and that Not Guilty verdicts are assured the Black Sox. Actual facts: As the historical record establishes, the missing confessions were old news by the time that Maharg took the witness stand on July 27, 1921. Seven months earlier, the theft of the grand jury testimony and other evidence had been publicly revealed and widely reported in the press. Left unmentioned by filmmaker Sayles is the fact that the missing transcripts of the Cicotte, Jackson, and Williams grand jury testimony had been recreated well in advance of trial and deemed admissible in evidence by Judge Friend. And by the time that Maharg testified, the jury had already heard the three players’ grand jury testimony at length. Indeed, even the Asinof version of Eight Men Out acknowledges prosecution use of the confession evidence. In sum, the dramatic missing confessions courtroom scene of the Sayles film is a fraud.

If the missing confessions scene is the film’s most dishonest trial moment, an overwrought pre-verdict scene is its most ludicrous. After the jury has been returned to the courtroom to deliver its verdict but before same is announced, Judge Friend declares that if anyone present wants to make a statement, now is the time. At this, indignant Buck Weaver rises to protest his innocence, complain about not being allowed to testify, and the like. Actual facts: Apparently, Sayles thinks the rendering of a verdict in a criminal case involves a ritual akin to that performed by a justice of the peace before he pronounces the happy couple husband and wife. But it does not. At the moment before verdict is rendered, the courtroom invariably goes deathly silent, with no defendant or spectator remarks sought or tolerated. The only statements elicited are those taken from the jury foreperson or the court clerk. The film’s imaginary pre-verdict Weaver soliloquy is an unmitigated howler, farcical for film viewers with any modicum of real-life criminal trial verdict-taking experience.

In the film’s final scene, a banished-from-Organized Baseball Buck Weaver wistfully watches from the sidelines as fellow exile Joe Jackson swats a triple for a semipro team from Hoboken, New Jersey. In the interview included in the 20th anniversary DVD of Eight Men Out, Sayles admitted the event was a product of artistic imagination, not fact. This, in the writer’s opinion is entirely fitting, as a make-believe scene provides an apt coda for a film so thoroughly suffused with fantasy.

Since the Eight Men Out film was released in 1988, there have been other treatments of the Black Sox scandal, most notably a segment in the Ken Burns PBS documentary Baseball. Because these works have, perhaps understandably, treated the Asinof book and Sayles film as historically accurate, Black Sox myths and misrepresentations have been perpetuated. The purpose of this article is not to advocate suppression of the book or film versions of Eight Men Out, as both retain value as entertainment. But neither work is reliable history. As we near the centennial of the 1919 World Series and others turn their talents to retrospective looks at the Black Sox scandal, it is hoped that the artistic imaginings of Eliot Asinof and John Sayles will not mistaken for fact. The actual story of the fixing of the 1919 Series, to the extent that it is available to us in the historical record, provides material every bit as riveting as the based-on-a-true-story fictionalization of the Black Sox saga that baseball fans have been given for the last half-century.
Bill Lamb spent more than thirty years as a state/county prosecutor in New Jersey. Now retired, he is the editor of The Inside Game, the quarterly newsletter of the Society for American Baseball Research's Deadball Era Committee, and the author of Black Sox in the Courtroom: The Grand Jury, Criminal Trial and Civil Litigation (McFarland, 2013). He can be contacted at wflamb12@yahoo.com.

ENDNOTES

1. Published in Base Ball, A Journal of the Early Game, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 2012, 17-34.
2. See e.g., the Chicago Journal and Chicago Evening Post, July 19, 1921, and Chicago Herald-Examiner, July 20, 1921.
3. Pegler is best remembered today as an anti-New Deal political commentator. For a sampling of his writings on the Black Sox scandal, see Hoie, “1919 Baseball Salaries,” 18-20.
4. Identified in his memoir, Asinof’s two fix insider-type informants were ancient boxing champ turned gambler Abe Attell, an engaging but incorrigible rogue not overly fussy about the truth, and banished White Sox centerfielder Happy Felsch, an amiable dunce who participated in the fix but had little understanding of how it worked or who financed it. Asinof also spoke to Clean Sox hurler Red Faber who imparted virtually no insight into the fix, and Judge Hugo M. Friend, the 82-year-old jurist who had presided over the Black Sox criminal trial some four decades earlier. See Eliot Asinof, Bleeding Between the Lines, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 93-94, 103-117.
7. See Bruce Allardice’s comprehensive profile of Nat Evans for the SABR BioProject, citing the Evans obituary and follow-up story published in the Saratoga Springs (New York) Saratogian, February 6 and 10, 1935.
12. Per letter of private investigator John R. Hunter to White Sox corporation counsel Alfred S. Austrian, dated August 22, 1922, located in the Chicago History Museum Black Sox file, Box 1, Folder 6.
14. For the particulars, see Appendix: Factual Errors and Misstatements Made by Asinof, notes, 13-15.
15. Ibid., notes 16, 17, 21, 23, 27, 33, and 34.
16. Ibid., notes 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 31, 35, and 36.
17. Ibid., notes 20, 28, 30, and 32.
18. Asinof, Bleeding Between the Lines, 111.
20. Asinof, Bleeding Between the Lines, 111.
22. See e.g., the Chicago Tribune and Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 20, 1926.
24. As reported in the Chicago Evening Post, October 26, 1920. Turchin’s identity as Rothstein’s legal counsel during his Chicago trip was subsequently confirmed by Alfred Austrian while testifying in the trial of Joe Jackson’s civil suit against the White Sox, as memorialized in the Jackson case trial transcript, pp. 929-937.
26. As explained in Bleeding Between the Lines, 42-43. More detail is provided in Appendix, Part
II: Asinof Fictional Characters, Invented Dialogue, and Manufactured Events, Section A.

27. As per Chicago Baseball Museum founder David Fletcher, recalling a late-life conversation that Asinof had with him and fellow scandal researcher Gene Carney. See Black Sox panel discussion at the 2013 SABR Convention viewable on YouTube.


29. The purposes of this article do not include laying out the case against Buck Weaver. Suffice it to say that many Black Sox researchers (including the writer) view the evidence implicating Weaver in the fix of the 1919 Series as near-overwhelming, and that a number of his teammates, particularly Eddie Collins and Dickey Kerr, thought Weaver was among the Black Sox players who threw regular 1920 season games, as well.

30. For the way that the two actually batted, see the Baseball-Reference entries for Eddie Collins and Buck Weaver.


32. See grand jury testimony of Joe Jackson, September 28, 1920, at JGJ 5-7 to 13; JGJ 7-13 to 24.


34. According to Asinof in 1919: America’s Loss of Innocence, 300. Before the grand jury, Cicotte had testified that he was supposed to walk the Reds lead-off batter, and hit him by accident, as memorialized in the January 14, 1924 Cicotte deposition for the Jackson civil suit against the White Sox.


36. As per JGJ 5-7 to JGJ 6-14 and JGJ 7-20 to JGJ 8-1, and grand jury testimony of Claude (Lefty) Williams, September 29, 1920, at WGJ 26-30 to WGJ 27-26 and WGJ 30-4 to 17.

37. See JGJ 9-24 to JGJ 10-18.

38. As reported in the Chicago Journal, Chicago Tribune, Cincinnati Post, New Orleans State, and elsewhere, September 29, 1920.


40. Landis’s whereabouts and activities during the trial of the Black Sox case are reported in the news articles cited in Sayles Appendix, Part II, note 11. Landis, however, kept abreast of developments in the Black Sox case by the delivery of daily copy trial transcripts to his chambers in the federal courthouse, as reported in the Chicago Evening Post, July 26, 1921.

41. See e.g., the Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, and Washington Post, December 8, 1920.

42. As reported in the Chicago Herald-Examiner, Chicago Tribune, Savannah Daily News, and elsewhere, July 26, 1921.

43. See Asinof, Eight Men Out, 257-260.

After Tuesday’s game the Cincinnati fans were so disgusted that they started many rumors. Among these was a story that Eddie Collins had been bribed by gamblers to throw his games, that Duncan of the Reds failed to win his second game because he was celebrating the night before. Of course all such reports were pure bunk but they hurt baseball just the same.

Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer, October 11, 1919

Squirrel Food (Isn’t It So?)

By Ahern

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NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*The Inside Game* is pleased to welcome to the committee the following SABR members who have expressed interest in the Deadball Era:

- Brett Bosley
- David Clark
- Tim Fodge
- Peter Lutz
- Mark Morowczynski
- Chad Osborne
- Chris Ropes
- Steven Wyder

We look forward to their active participation in committee endeavors. These new committee members, as well as our newsletter contributors, can be contacted via the SABR directory.

CORRECTION

Our last issue’s profile of 1908 New York Giants team physician Joseph Creamer by Bill Lamb misidentified the Creamer birthplace and capital of Prince Edward Island. Same is Charlottetown, not Charlottesville. Thanks to Canadian SABR colleagues David Matchett and Bill Humber for cluing in the geographically-challenged author.

GAMES/BIOPROJECT

Since our last newsletter, the Games Project and BioProject have posted a number of entries that should be of interest to DEC members. Deadball Era game accounts include the July 1901 contest wherein Harry Davis became the first American Leaguer to hit for the cycle; a June 1912 game in which Chief Myers did the same; and an account of Heinie Groh’s July 1915 cycle game, all by Mike Huber. Also, a May 1902 game featuring two deaf players, Dummy Hoy and Dummy Taylor, by Michael Harrison; and Jacob Pomrenke pieces about the string of 1919 scoreless innings pitched by Eddie Cicotte, and a May 1919 on-field fistfight between Chick Gandil and Tris Speaker. Meanwhile, the BioProject has published profiles of Deadballers Ralph Carroll, Eddie Abbaticchio, Vic Aldridge, Harry Lochhead, Al Huenke, King Cole, and Dr. Joseph Creamer. We suggest that you give these a look if you have not done so already.

For readers who cannot get enough of the Black Sox, be sure to check out the June issue of the Black Sox Scandal Research Committee newsletter for the latest scandal-related news and committee activities from chairman Jacob Pomrenke, and research articles on *Collyer’s Eye* and more evidence of corrupt Sox play in 1920 (Bruce Allardice); White Sox corporation counsel Alfred Austrian (Bill Lamb); Swede Risberg’s post-expulsion playing days in North Dakota (Thomas E. Merrick), and the actual betting odds on the 1919 World Series (Kevin P. Braig).
THE CHANGING WORLD

The beauty about base ball is that it's always been kept straight and clean!

Politics

High Finance

Pugilista

Horse Racing

Our national sport as it has been regarded.

It now joins the "Black Eye club."

In America, 1775.

The Black and Tans are coming!

In Ireland, 1920.

The squanderlust a few months ago.

At present.

Gimme half a dozen of the up ones.

Too much! Show me something cheaper.

Silk Shirts $5 & up.

Shirts $5 and down.

by John T. McCutcheon

Chicago Tribune, September 24, 1920