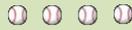


NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE



SEASON XXXVII



2020 HSL Champion
West Des Moines Cubs
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FROM THE BULLPEN

2021 Campaign

Edition No. 5

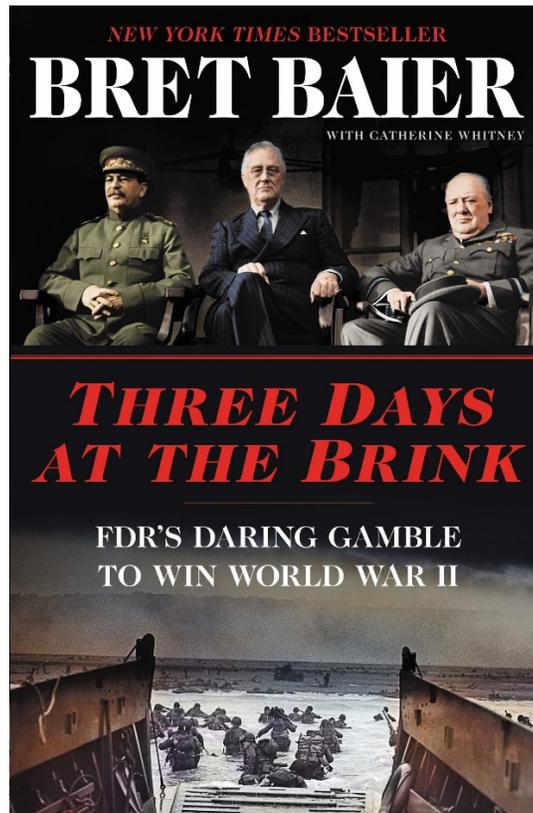
March 18, 2021

Brethren:

As we move one week closer to the start of the 2021 baseball season, allow me to share a good story from the rich tapestry of our national pastime. I heard this ripping good yarn last weekend while watching a clip about iconic *Sports Illustrated* photographer, Walter Iooss, Jr.

Anyway, it seems that Walter was trying to snap a few pictures of one of his personal sports heroes from his youth, the great Sandy Koufax, who retired at the age of 30 after the 1966 season. Walter reportedly was at Dodger Stadium in 1981 as Tommy Lasorda's NL-pennant leading Dodgers prepared to take on the AL-pennant winning New York Yankees in the 1981 World Series, where Koufax had been enlisted to throw batting practice to the Dodgers hitters. However, as the story goes, even at 45 years of age and 15 years after retirement from the game, Koufax was proving to be such an overmatch for the Dodgers hitters that Lasorda reportedly chose to end his session prematurely, fearing that Koufax would destroy the confidence of the Dodgers' lineup that included Dusty Baker, Ron Cey (aka "The Penguin"), Steve Garvey, Pedro Guerrero, Jay Johnstone, Ken Landreau, Davey Lopes, Rick Monday, Steve Sax and Mike Scioscia, slouches none. Love that story, apocryphal or not.

**BOOK REPORT:
THREE DAYS AT THE BRINK**
By Bret Baier



I just finished *Three Days at the Brink* by Bret Baier, my favorite Fox newscaster. This is a truly excellent book on the Tehran conference in November of 1943 between FDR, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin, at which time they strategized about Operation Overlord. Some really compelling stuff. Stalin was pushing hard for a second European front, having suffered some million-plus casualties at Stalingrad at the hands of the war-mongering Germanic forces. Churchill was not in favor of a cross-channel assault so soon, fearful that there would be massive losses of British soldiers in such an operation. FDR thought it was important to agree to such an operation to keep Stalin as a member of the Allies, being somewhat fearful that Papa Joe might cut his own deal with Hitler and then swap sides to the Axis.

As chronicled in the book, as Churchill was trying to cajole Roosevelt and the United States into the European theater of war, he made three different cross-Atlantic treks to the United States, staying for weeks at a time at the White House and meeting daily and nightly with FDR. My favorite passage from the book is about when Roosevelt went looking for Churchill in his quarters at the White House in the early hours of the morning to tell him that he had thought of the perfect name for the post-war policing organization that the two of them had been talking about, the eventual *United Nations*. As Roosevelt entered his guest chambers,

he encountered Churchill after he had just completed a bath--standing buck naked before him--engendering a moment of awkward silence between them. Churchill broke the tension with a harrumph and said magnanimously, "The Prime Minister of Great Britain has absolutely nothing to hide from the President of the United States." Beautiful.

* * * * *

That's all for this week, amigos. Have a grand weekend and see y'all soon.

Skipper