

Bosox fan's punch on Sheffield shows Fenway bias

By Lloyd Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice

For some reason, none of the coverage of the ugly incident which marred the recent Yankee-Red Sox series finale in Boston raised the question of whether the fans who sucker-punched and dumped beer on Gary Sheffield might have been racially-motivated bigots. Instead, the debate focused on the question of whether the assailants were drunk or simply overzealous in their quest for a free baseball, as if that would excuse the boorish behavior.

Faithful readers of this column know that I have been to Fenway Park, once, by accident, being utterly unaware of how inhospitable

the place is to both African-Americans and New York Yankees. I would no sooner re-enter its hateful and hostile environs again than I would a Ku Klux Klan rally.

The most tell-tale sign that the stadium still retains its unspoken "Whites Only" policy, even today, is the new film "Fever Pitch" that features news footage of lily-white legions of Red Sox fans in scene after scene after scene.

The day I was there, the entire crowd was gleefully chanting "F—k the Yankees! F—k niggers!" while pelting any Blacks in attendance with beverages, peanuts and Crackerjack. Oh, and they weren't even playing the Yankees.

So, I strongly suspect that by the time that Gary was chasing the ball rolling around the right field corner late in the contest that fateful Thursday night, the bums sitting in the bleachers probably had been giving him a good going over for quite some time.

When you replay the videotape in slow-motion, you can clearly see a creep named Kevin House blind-side Sheffield, swinging his fist and connecting flush with the side of the player's head.

At almost the same instant, Matthew Donovan, another jerk who was not even sitting in the front row, leaned forward to chuck a mug of beer square in Sheffield's face.

To his credit, the shocked Yankee slugger started to grab House, but didn't retaliate, explaining in interviews immediately afterwards that his impulse was to defend himself, believing that his lip had been busted open.

Still, some have called for Sheffield's suspension, most notably, annoying Yankee radio announcer Suzyn Waldman, a turncoat from Beantown with a Boston accent who finally showed her true colors.

Meanwhile, Gary has been summoned to the Major League Baseball office where at least a stiff fine is likely to be meted out. I only hope that the League looks at more than the videotape before making a decision.

How about factoring in some eyewitness accounts of events from the night in question, such as that of Keith Whamond, who confessed that, "People in our section were screaming and busting on Gary," not just when play was disrupted in the 8th inning but "the whole game."

He added, "There were hundreds of people around me screaming '[Expletive] you!' and 'You're an [expletive]-hole!'"

And I wouldn't be surprised if they used the N-word just as freely.

While most people probably associate the Red Sox with the recently-broken curse of the Bambino, Blacks still think of them as the very last pro baseball team to in-

tegrate, in 1959, a dozen years after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers. What's up with that?

By then, even the Bruins, Boston's hockey team, had managed to sign a worthy Black hockey player, who must have been far more of a challenge to find than any of the 100+ baseball stars the Sox passed on, including such eventual immortals as Willie Mays, Roy Campanella, Hank Aaron, Frank Robinson, Ernie Banks and Roberto Clemente, to name a few.

Boston's loss.
Attorney Lloyd Williams is a member of the NJ, NY, CT, PA, MA & US Supreme Court bars.

Catholics

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gressive evangelization," says Latif Adegbite, secretary-general of Nigeria's National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs.

But Islam is also on the march, and today the religious faultline on the continent is shifting south.

"The Catholic Church has become aware that Islam has become a serious alternative" in Central and well as West Africa, said Voll. To face competition from Islam, he says, the church will need to "re-construct itself as a refuge for people in times of social crisis."

The Catholic Church failed that test recently during the genocide in Rwanda, where some churches that offered sanctuary were turned into slaughterhouses and some Catholic priests actively participated in the killings.

John Paul II refused to apologize, saying the church could not be blamed for the actions of individual priests.

Islam offers a route more compatible with African tradition, especially by allowing polygamy. Some Catholic Africans marry their first wife in the church, then take second wives in traditional ceremonies.

Lawsuit

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artistic freedom," he said from Los Angeles.

Parks, 92, refused to give up her seat to a White man on a city bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955. Her arrest triggered one of the modern civil rights movement's earliest landmark events, a 381-day boycott of the bus system organized by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

She has suffered from dementia since at least 2002, and has rarely been seen in public since 2001.

The settlement ends a legal dispute that some of Parks' own relatives had criticized, saying she wouldn't have minded the use of her name in the song "Rosa Parks" had she not been mentally impaired.

Parks filed a lawsuit in 1999 alleging defamation and trademark infringement because OutKast used her name without permission in the song, which is about the entertainment industry. It includes the chorus: "Ah-ha, hush that fuss. Everybody move to the back of the bus."

OutKast from the suit and Parks' lawyers filed a second suit in August 2004, naming BMG, Arista Records LLC and LaFace Records. They sought more than \$5 billion.

After that lawsuit was filed, some of Parks' relatives began questioning Parks' well-being and the actions of her caretaker and the lawyers who filed the suit, and alleged she is probably unaware of the lawsuits.

Archer, a former Detroit mayor and Michigan Supreme Court justice, was named Parks' guardian in October.

"The sacrifices and work that Mrs. Parks has made during her life to ensure that all people are treated fairly under the law is acknowledged

and appreciated by both sides," Archer said.

Under the settlement, OutKast and the other defendants agreed to work with the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development to develop educational programs.

OutKast and other contemporary artists also will perform on a tribute CD to be produced by Sony BMG, and the parties will collaborate on an educational television program about Parks' life and legacy that will be distributed on DVDs to thousands of public schools nationwide.

Details of the CD and television program "will be worked out in the months ahead," Beck said.

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Brazil

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rian oil have led to a total trade deficit of \$2.99 billion, which it is hoping to reduce through trade deals in agriculture, construction and defense. There are also plans for the transfer of Brazilian technology to produce AIDS drugs in Nigeria.

Guinea-Bissau is the only Portuguese-speaking African country that Lula has not yet visited. In addition to this motive for his visit, Brazil will be providing assistance for the presidential elections scheduled to take place in the African nation on Jun. 19, which are aimed at consolidating a democracy threatened by recent coups.

Ghana is also viewed as a potentially important trade partner by the Brazilian foreign ministry. Although bilateral trade grew by 600 percent between 2002 and 2004, it is still limited to \$170 million annually. Lula will be the first Brazilian president ever to visit

Ghana.

With regard to Cameroon and Senegal, education and technical cooperation in agriculture will be at the top of the agenda. Brazil is contributing to the fight against a plague of locusts afflicting the region through the donation of a fumigation plane and training assistance.

Exchanges of students and professors have become more frequent, especially since Brazil incorporated African history and culture into its primary school curriculum. At present, some 700 African students go to Brazil every year, but many are forced to return home before completing their courses of study because of financial difficulties, said Motta.

To remedy this situation, Lula will be announcing a program of grants for African students to attend Brazilian universities, as well as agreements to bring African professors to the South American nation.

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