

Walter Johnson and the Lawyers

What Might Have Happened Had The Speed King Met The Federal League Attorneys

(President Gilmore, of the Feds, suggests that Walter Johnson should meet three eminent Chicago attorneys, and talk over his case with them.)

GILMORE: Ah, good-morning, Mr. Johnson! So glad you came! Mr. Johnson, permit me to introduce you. This is Mr. Legalle, a very famous lawyer. This is Mr. Counsellor, of the highest courts, and this is Judge Fossil, of the Superior Bench.

MR. JOHNSON: Glad to meet you, gents. Glad to meetcha.

JUDGE FOSSUL: Ah, Mr. Johnson—as we are here together assembled in accordance with agreement mutually understood, shall we not proceed with the undertakings at hand?

MR. JOHNSON: Uh huh. Shoot.

MR. LEGALLE: Orator and plaintiff-at-law in this matter of grave tort and vendue, Mr. Johnson, deposes as follows—

MR. JOHNSON: Who's the guy? New umpire? They're all cheeses.

MR. LEGALLE: No, Mr. Johnson. As you are unquestionably aware, our clients, Mr. Weegheman and Mr. Gilmore, attest and assert serious and irreparable injury—

MR. JOHNSON: Aw, nix. Injury my foot. When did I ever pitch to either of 'em?

MR. JOHNSON: Permit me to elucidate, Mr. Johnson. They claim and affirm, also make sworn affidavit, Mr. Johnson, that on recent and publicly recorded occasion, you were, with malice prepense,—

MR. JOHNSON: I was NOT. My wife always goes with me, and I wouldn't even give a glad look to that sorta girls.

JUDGE FOSSUL: You misinterpret, Mr. Johnson. We wish to explain the bewildering infinitude of the legal entanglements into which you, no doubt uncomprehendingly, have become portentously involved.

MR. JOHNSON: You're an old gent, so I can't tell you what I think. If you was my age you couldn't call me no such names as that.

MR. LEGALLE: What we are endeavoring to expound, Mr. Johnson, is merely that you, when you discovered engagements and associations with our clients, after entering into such engagements and associations our nolens tullius volinquis, you do not re-associate yourself with former fiduciary directors—at least not, as the vernacular defines it, with clean hands.

MR. JOHNSON: That's really not my fault, gents. The train was late, and I had to hustle, to get here, but, on the level, I gave my hands a good rub in the Pullman.

MR. COUNSELLOR: Our clients set forth and make due deposition as per form of law and statutes XXVI, Sec. 234, pp 99 to 117 inclusive, Ill. Reports, that previous to entering into financial and stipulated relations of trust, plus the conveyance of advance considerations, you had definitely withdrawn and eliminated yourself from further allegiance to the corporation known as the Washington Baseball Club.

MR. JOHNSON: Uh huh.

JUDGE FOSSUL: Will you graciously but veraciously state to us, Mr. Johnson, in what language—the exact conversation, if possible—Mr. Clark Griffith, representing the said Washington Baseball Club, denied and rejected your overtures to said Washington Baseball Club?

MR. JOHNSON: He told me to go to hell.

MR. LEGALLE: And did you obey these definite instructions from your employer?

MR. JOHNSON: Uh huh. I went to St. Louis.

MR. COUNSELLOR: Having thus discovered and disassociated yourself from further legal and fiduciary obligations to the Washington Baseball Club, what valid and impeccable arguments were elucidated to you by our clients?

MR. JOHNSON: Why, they eluded \$6,000 in advance.

JUDGE FUSSEL: Which, with the duly formulated and thoroughly comprehensive agreement now certified with your signature, Mr. Johnson, was appropriate and satisfactory?

MR. JOHNSON: Uh huh.

MR. LEGALLE: Then, Mr. Johnson, why and for what causes, to be duly substantiated and unshakably defended, have you repudiated and abruptly nullified this document?

MR. JOHNSON: I never did anything of the kind. I never was pinched in my life.

MR. LEGALLE: You misconstrue the tergiversation, Mr. Johnson. In vulgar syllogism, why did you break your contract with my clients

MR. JOHNSON: My conscience hurt me.

JUDGE FOSSUL: Ah, indeed! And when, might we inquire, did you, Mr. Johnson, first suffer from the keenly poignant arrows of a repentant conscience?

MR. JOHNSON: Right after my dear old boss had talked to me like a Dutch uncle.

MR. COUNSELLOR: Ah ha! His pernicious and endogenous arguments, then, induced and allured you to disregard the legally restricting co-relations into which you had previously entered?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, he says to me, Have a heart. I says, I got one, I'm the softest-hearted guy living. So he tells me there's 40,000 poor mutts in Washington that would die if they couldn't see me pitch next summer.

JUDGE FOSSUL: And what was your answer or your action?

MR. JOHNSON: I saved 40,000 lives.

MR. LEGALLE: Mr. Johnson, do you not realize, comprehended, and gain appreciation of the direful but veritable fact that you have committed torts and corpus delicti?

MR. JOHNSON: You're a liar. I never hit nobody intentionally, even when he was crowding the plate.

JUDGE FOSSUL: You surely are fully aware, Mr. Johnson, of the crass malevolence, the unprecedented desuetude, and the bicarpal attrition of your action? What is your own innate theory? What is your ultimate and finally comprehensive reply to our asseverations?

MR. JOHNSON: What Griffith said to me the first time. Good afternoon, gentlemen!

CURTAIN.

THE JOHNSON FAMILY

THERE were swarms of Johnsons in the game during 1914, and they seemed to prefer pitching to any other occupation. Out of twenty-six Johnsons appearing in the averages—there are twenty-seven listed, but one was in first the American, then the Federal League—twelve are pitchers. Next to pitching, the Johnsons like to play shortstop and the outfield. Only one Johnson played first, one played third, one caught, none cared to cover second, and three were shortstops, leaving eight outfielders. Only one team in the country had a Johnson battery—Owensboro, of the Kitty League. The best-batting Johnson was the one who played the outfield for Walla Walla—he smote .340. The best baserunning Johnson played the garden for Peoria, and swiped forty-four cushions.