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Sometimes writers just lock up when looking to put an event into proper perspective. Thankfully I'm an insurance claims professional and have no such issues after watching Friday night's Game 3 between the Cavaliers and the Pistons.

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Okay, they're not actually dead yet. Not officially anyway. But the Dead Collector is coming. I can't put it any better than it was put in 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail':

(Courtesy of <http://www.imdb.com/> )

**The Dead Collector** : Bring out your dead.

[*A man puts a body on the cart*]

**Large Man with Dead Body** : Here's one.

**The Dead Collector** : That'll be nine-pence.

**The Dead Body That Claims It Isn't** : I'm not dead.

**The Dead Collector** : What?

**Large Man with Dead Body** : Nothing. There's your nine-pence.

**The Dead Body That Claims It Isn't** : I'm not dead.

**The Dead Collector** : 'Ere, he says he's not dead.

**Large Man with Dead Body** : Yes he is.

**The Dead Body That Claims It Isn't** : I'm not.

**The Dead Collector** : He isn't.

**Large Man with Dead Body** : Well, he will be soon, he's very ill.

**The Dead Body That Claims It Isn't** : I'm getting better.

**Large Man with Dead Body** : No you're not; you'll be stone dead in a moment.

The Pistons can talk all they want about answering the bell Sunday and playing with pride and determination. They can talk about taking it one game at a time and getting healthy with a win on Sunday.

They can say all of that and more, but the Dead Collector is tapping his feet and waiting.

LeBron James led the Cavaliers Friday night with 25 points, 11 rebounds and 9 assists. He easily could have had a dozen assists had Williams and West not thrown knuckleballs toward the rim for most of the night. James' help came from two big men Friday on a night where the guard play was, well, lacking. Zydrunas Ilgauskas started out and stayed on track for his 31 minutes on the night. 'Z' scored 13 points (including a 3-pointer) and gathered in 6 boards.

But the man of the night had to be Joe Smith.

Smith played just 19 minutes on the night. All he did in that time was shoot 6-8 from the floor, knock down 6-7 from the free throw line and haul down 10 rebounds. One of those six makes from the floor was a big 3-point shot that created separation for the Cavs while they were regrouping from that 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter debacle.

Then, after coming to his struggling mates' rescue and digging the Pistons a hole that will serve as their final resting place he sat down and rested his own 33-year old bones.

## Takeaways

- I really have no idea what that 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter was all about but I do think it set the NBA back to the George Mikan days. There were more bodies on the floor during the 3<sup>rd</sup>

quarter than are usually left scattered on WWE wrestling mat after a cage match. The Cavs hit just three shots from the field as they watched a seven point halftime lead turn into a deficit at one point in the quarter.

The Pistons were not much better. They scored just 16 points. The fact they couldn't fully take advantage of the Cavs ineptitude likely cost them the ball game. Hell, they didn't even end the quarter with a lead.

- Richard Hamilton led all Detroit players with 15 points. And while Delonte West struggled epically with his own shot Friday, he again did a nice job chasing and harassing Hamilton into another poor shooting night. Hamilton needed 17 shots (six of which he made) to get his 15 points.

Hamilton is just 19-47 for the series (40%). That's just not enough production from Rip when his offense is needed more than ever for the Pistons to be competitive.

The only other Piston in double figures was Rodney Stuckey with 12.

- It's probably just the intense dislike of the man talking here, but isn't it still enjoyable to watch Rasheed Wallace melt down while performing poorly and ultimately getting T'd up? You just get the feeling with 'Sheed that if he wasn't contractually obligated to show up Sunday he'd be perfectly content to be back in his crib right now, sampling some fresh herb(s) (and spices too, sure) and then heading out to the clubs after a stop at In-N-OUT Burger. Soon enough 'Sheed. Soon enough.

**They Got Next**

The memorial service for the Pistons as you currently know them is scheduled for Sunday at 330pm on ABC. They had their reign and won their ring. No taking that away. But on Sunday the Cavaliers come to bury them, not praise them.