

The Curious Incident of the Tribe in the Night-Time

Written by {ga=jonathanknight}

Sunday, April 17 2011 1:00 PM - Last Updated Sunday, April 17 2011 7:26 AM

For me, just as with the Dolans, the Indians started out as a hobby.



I'd followed them casually through my pre-teen years the late '80s, which was the only way an out-of-town fan could follow his baseball team in those pre-internet, pre-cable-package days. I'd read box scores, watch the two or three games a year that were broadcast on ESPN or WGN, and usually make it up to the old tackle box on the lake once a season.

They weren't a cause for excitement like the Browns were, but neither were they a source of frustration for me in those formidable years. They were a nice little crossword puzzle to pass the time in the muggy summer months between the time the Cavs flamed out and the Browns started up again.

But something happened the first weekend of May, 1991 to change that.

The Indians rolled their not-quite-.500 show into Oakland to face the mighty Athletics, who had utterly dominated the Tribe since they'd established themselves as the reigning, 'roided-up street toughs of the American League three years earlier with the emergence of Mark McGwire and Jose Canseco. There was no reason to expect this series to go any differently, what with Oakland once gain boasting baseball's finest record.

Having lost 36 of their last 50 games to the A's, including the series opener in extra innings on Friday night, the Indians inexplicably went ballistic, scoring 35 runs in the next two days – 20 runs on Saturday and 15 more on Sunday off reigning Cy Young winner Bob Welch. And even

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better, the second of the two massacres was CBS's Game of the Week, so I got to experience the bizarre wonder of the Indians taking the team that had won three straight pennants to the woodshed.

I was convinced something had happened that weekend. The Indians, after four straight losing seasons (and about 30 others previous to that I just sort of ignored, the way I'd later react to a high cholesterol reading), had turned a corner.

And to me, it only seemed fair.

In the past eight months, both the usually consistent Browns and Cavaliers had crashed and burned, falling from perennial playoff teams and title contenders to among the worst in their respective leagues. Both drop-offs were startling to me, since I'd never experienced losing seasons following either team, was not accustomed to them, and expected much more.

(With this statement, and with several to follow, you must repeat to yourself the mantra: Well, he was only fourteen.)

So it only seemed natural that it was the Indians' turn to rise to prominence and fill the void. In my experience of following sports, which dated back to before I'd learned cursive, I'd come to understand that Cleveland was a winning town and couldn't possibly have all three of its teams suffer at once.

(See above mantra.)

I knew that first weekend in May had symbolized a tectonic shift in Indians' history. Their carnage in Oakland had pulled them to within a game of .500 and just 3.5 games back of first in the AL East. They were poised to make their move.

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[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] I could tell from [REDACTED]

