

## Out of Bounds, Episode XXI: Tumbling Dice

Written by {ga=larshancock}

Thursday, May 24 2012 11:00 PM - Last Updated Friday, May 25 2012 9:51 AM

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Wednesday night, I had the pleasure of going to a once-again raucous Jacobs Field (leave me alone, that's what I call it), getting in an emotional time machine back to the late nineties. I watched a developing team with a ton of promise that refused to lose. I was part of a crowd that was excited about baseball. And I saw winning, real actual winning, happening on the shores of Lake Erie. It was a fantastic night to be sure.

And then I headed over to the new casino.

Afterward, since it was in walking distance and by no means because I have a “compulsive gambling addiction”, I decided to visit the North Shore’s newest treasure, the Horseshoe. As casinos go, it is one, which is just fine with me – something Pavlovian happens to my brain when accosted by the blinking lights and beeping of the slots, the clinking of the chips, and the roar of a winning craps table. I taste the zesty bold flavors of risk and reward, and I want to binge like Rosie O’Donnell at the Caesar’s buffet.

Unfortunately, table space was limited, and table stakes were high. While I will neither confirm nor deny that I may know someone from the original *Bringing Down the House* blackjack team (as the alleged person I may or may not know will neither confirm nor deny his involvement in such), I did want to play some blackjack because, well,

*I like the odds*

. Absent seats, however, I decided to introduce my friend that accompanied me to the most deadly and addicting vice in the casino: craps.

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There is nothing in the world more fun and more exciting than a hot craps table. Nothing. You could tell me that the entirety of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue modeling team is having a naked oil wrestling contest, and that they wanted me to join, and I wouldn't walk away from a hot shooter on a craps table. It's *that* fun.

My philosophy on a craps table can best be described as the Nike model. You build "factories" on as many numbers as possible via come bets and odds, and when your number hits, your "factory" produces \$45. We had a hot shooter that painted every number, and my friend was an instant addict when I would turn around and say "that nine means we just won \$45". "There's another \$45". "What happened there? Oh, we won \$45". The whole table is rocking and having fun, and you're making money. And really, that is the meaning of life, isn't it?\*Eventually, we lost all our factories when he rolled a seven, but we made some coin and had fun in the process.

*(Author's note: any winnings were short-lived as the local police decided once again that Lars was driving too quickly on 77 on the way home. Seriously, people, you need to stand up to this crap. 60 MPH on your highways is ridiculously slow, especially when Lars is used to a 75 mph speed limit. I'm trying to bring jobs to Ohio, stop punishing me with your arcane and usurious speed limits and rabid Gestapo-like enforcement of them. I'm sick of it, it is unconstitutional, and morally wrong!)*

Refusing to roll the dice means you refuse to win. Drafting the "safe" and "smart" guys for years has resulted in years of futility for the Browns, so I was glad to see Holmgren grab the bones and throw in picking Weeden. He's older and from a spread system, but he has a ton of upside and is already showing that he may be the guy. Safe? Not at all – Holmgren put his job on the pass line with the kid. I, personally, am glad to see that.

Chris Perez rolled the dice in calling out the Cleveland fans for failing to support the team. The safe play there was to shut your mouth and do your job. But Perez risked the wrath of millions, and being fined by the team, by deciding to put a big pile of green chips on the line calling us out for sucking as a fan base. And you know what? He was dead ass right, and what he did was rejuvenate us as fans, and awake the sleeping giant. He brought the magic of the 90s back by, nontraditionally, telling the fans they suck, instead of the other way around. And now, the atmosphere at the Jake is amazing, and people are rallying behind the team.

So give me a horn high yo, and I'm buying little Joe!

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*\* not the actual meaning of life. But it's sure a heck of a lot of fun*

Anyway, off to the questions.

### **Why do some people say "It just may be..." and others say "It may just be..." and is there really a difference? –That\_Guy™**

One interesting quality of the English language is that there is no central body that is tasked to maintain proper rules around such things as proper grammar and word coinage. As such, there are generally-accepted rules which are in place, yet there is no formal definition of right and wrong. This is complicated by the fact that there are two very large English speaking population centers which are geographically far apart, and therefore culturally distinct, and as such are diverging in their social interpretation of the rules of proper grammar every day.

Case in point: split infinitives. Splitting infinitives used to be taboo, yet today people barely understand the concept of what it means to actually split an infinitive. See, you read that last sentence and didn't blink an eye, even though there was what used to be defined as a grammatical mistake in it. The "may be" construct seems similar to an infinitive, so where most people would colloquially place the adverb "just" in front of the verb "be", others more cautious about splitting their infinitives would likely out of habit treat "may be" as if it were an infinitive clause, and therefore place the adverb "just" outside of the words.

But I think it goes deeper than that, and that there are definitive differences in the two phrases. Naturally, when saying two adverbs together, it is the last one, the one preceding the verb, that will usually carry the most weight. When you speak a double-adverb clause, the more important concept gets stressed, almost always the second. Read the two clauses with this in mind overstressing the second adverb "it just MAY be" vs. "it may JUST be". See? Entirely different context there. When stressing "may" you argue that there is a slim possibility of the existence of said event, and the emphasis definitely makes the possibility remote. When stressing "just" you indicate that the possibility of said event happening (more likely without emphasis on "may") is very exciting. Literally as I write this, there is a dude that may just be Brandon Weeden that's about to get onto my plane, not only providing me something to tweet, but a good case example of the latter construction.

This Memorial Day weekend, it's important to remember that everything I wrote above just may

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be a complete load of crap. French as a language has strict rules about everything, and a bureaucracy to maintain said rules, but it only exists as a language because brave Americans and Britons made the ultimate sacrifice together to ensure it was allowed, in fact, to be a language, and not just a dialect of German. Because the French are a feckless and gutless group of masturbatory ungrateful bastards and would never have liberated themselves.

And yeah, that's definitely Weeden. Cool....

### **If you could go back in time, to any one point in history, knowing everything you know now, to which exact point in time would you go, and what would your goal be? - The ghost of Jim Croce**

Wow so many choices. There are four different ways we could go with this one: 1) you could prevent a disaster, calamity, or other historical event from occurring, 2) you could go for an unparalleled spectacle of entertainment, 3) you could go to make an obscene profit for yourself, or 4) you could go to witness some historical event or meet an historical figure. I will longwindedly investigate the merits of each now.

First disaster prevention. You could do a lot of good for the world by changing history. Say, for example, you went back to Germany in the 1920s and assassinated a young Hitler. There would be no WWII, no holocaust, and countless lives would be spared, and major global suffering could be avoided. You could go back further and spare Archduke Ferdinand his life, thereby potentially avoiding WWI, and thereby potentially avoiding the series of events that led to WWII in the first place. This is a dangerous game. What does the world look like should you avoid those events? Is the world in fact better today with those major global conflicts having occurred, costing tens of millions their lives? Would I change the tide of the world to the point where humanity would have ruined the planet, or democracy itself could have been destroyed worldwide? And would I even have been born had these events not occurred? Best not to mess with the world too much, I think. I wouldn't want the creation of a global autocracy led by, say, Donald Trump to have evolved out of my meddling. Can't roll those dice.

That leaves a major spectacle as a possibility. Do I go to Woodstock? See Jimi in Monterrey? Do I go back further and watch an actual gladiator fight – how cool would that be to see live? See Len Barker's perfect game, or Wilt's 100 point game? As awesome as it would be to take in any one of those events, it seems like kind of a waste to use my one shot to go anywhere in history to be entertained. It would be like drawing a date with Kate Upton and taking her to

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Arby's and then to see Battleship. You've just got to step up more than that.

What about making a ton of money for myself? Giving back-in-time me the winners of every sporting event for the next 20 years, stock picks, and the insight to develop Microsoft, Apple, facebook, twitter, and the thigh master. While being the richest and most powerful man in the world would have its perks, what would that have done to an emerging and growing Lars' soul, to be invincible without really having to work? I kind of like the me that is me, and money by every stretch of the word doesn't buy you happiness. No, I'd be compelled to turn down gaudy wealth and power in favor of my family and my soul.

That leaves watching history happen. Imagine sitting through the Continental Congress as they deliberate and finally decide, "screw it, let's be our own country." How about watching Caesar rise to power, only to die at the hands of the entire Senate? But if I'm going to watch the world change, I'm going to watch the person who drove the change that has had the biggest impact on the world today. Whatever your belief system may be, it is without question that Jesus Christ has reshaped culture, values, geopolitical borders, and still dominates mindshare in a good portion of the world today more than any other historical figure. Even if you don't believe, you'd have to be fascinated by how one person could be so influential even thousands of years later. With only one shot at revisiting history, obtaining an indisputable firsthand account of the actions of Christ would be the most important and interesting thing I could do for myself.

Either that or I'd make sure the Browns' brought more pressure on the final drive of the 86 AFC Championship game. Stupid Elway...

**I have been in business 20 years. I work harder and make less money now. You would probably recommend I work smarter, not harder. Well, I am "smart" by formal standards. Every quarter I make out 14 checks to pay taxes and fees to various government agencies at city, state, fed levels. My office overhead is > 60% of my income. My reimbursements for my work are cut every year. I have had to hire more help to handle the paperwork to meet the criteria in order to get paid. I have had to upgrade technologically way too many times just to keep pace with increasing regulatory demands. My risk does not = reward. It seems to only get worse and neither political party has helped. I am seriously to the point of considering accepting livestock, precious metals, food, weapons, & electronics for payment of services. Cash has always been an option but not seen much these days. Will it ever change.....for the better? -pod**

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If you're anything like me, your home office is an absolute mess. There's a pile of papers that is "to be filed" that goes back to the Carter administration. There's a set of sticky notes here and there that have everything from your high school gym locker combination to an encoded cryptogram that either points the way to a national treasure, or reminds you to give your dog her heartworm medicine. There are boxes of file folders containing mysterious files, one of which contains nothing but the index for the boxes of files so you know what is where, but you have no idea where that box is, so you have no idea what is in any of your boxes. There are also remnants of various events from your life that have long since lost meaning – champagne corks, taco wrappers, garters, a plastic wind up monkey, and about fifteen different uncataloged rocks and shells from various corners of the earth. Is that a pair of underwear? That may be gross, or awesome, or inappropriate – you really have no idea.

What you do know is you kept all that shit for a reason. It's important, and as such you can't throw it all away. Sure, you could, I guess, go through it all and just toss everything and start over, but what if that Mad Magazine from 1975 is something special, and you lose it forever? No, best not to take that chance, you probably should hold onto it for a little while longer.

True story: about six years ago I tried to sell the State of Texas a digital archiving initiative. There are literally warehouses all throughout Austin – huge warehouses – that contain nothing but old paper. There are two laws on the books – one states that a record must be maintained for 12 years, and another that states anything over 15 years old is a "historical record" meaning it can never be destroyed. This leaves a precious little three year window that things could be tossed, and there is no way anyone is going through 12 year old papers to make the decision as to what is useful. As such, every piece of paper the state government of Texas has ever produced is in a warehouse somewhere, along with, likely, the Ark of the Covenant.

Which brings us back to your paperwork. Every form you fill out is in reaction to some artifact of the past long since forgotten. Every regulation that makes your life a living hell is a result of some indiscretion committed somewhere in the past that a reactionary regulatory authority said "hey, if we forced businesses to sign the Form TRS-80 in triplicate, they could never do that bad thing again". Nevermind that your horseless carriage you use for business doesn't poop on the street anymore, you still need to account for the proper cleanup and disposal of its feces.

So what is the answer? The only way it would change would be if the government gambles and decides to scrap everything and start over. Yeah, you risk a business may in its hiring process exclude the necessary search for a candidate with a lazy eye in the 1983 Citizens With Unfocused Vision Equal Rights Protection Act (based on the famed *Buscemi vs. Board of Education* case), but then

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again the certain deadweight loss of the waste associated with the compliance, filing, and audit processes would be avoided. Risking a penny to gain a certain dollar, yeah, in a risk-adverse culture the government embodies, that will never happen.

Your case is hopeless.

My advice? I have always thought the old adage “work smarter not harder” was stupid. Work less, roll the dice. Cut corners on compliance, half-ass your way through the forms and regulations. Chances are, by the time they catch up with you, you’ll be retired and someone else will then be victim to the new paperwork act created from your laziness.

*Please email questions to [lars.hancock@yahoo.com](mailto:lars.hancock@yahoo.com), tweet them @ReasonsImADrunk, or DM them to me in the forae to LarsHancock.*