

Chapter 15 – Shenanigans

Donnie Craggs

Larry: Now I've got one more I'm going to bring up. It was in the Mann Cup.

Don: And I got thrown out.

Larry: And you punched the referee.

Don: Missed him.

Larry: What year was that?

Don: I think it was '65.

Larry: 'Cause the Redmen went on to the Mann Cup but didn't win it in '64, '65 and the year you got suspended for the year they missed the Mann Cup. They lost to Brampton. I didn't bring those things with me. You were suspended for a whole year (1966). You missed the referee? Mike said you got him?

Don: No, no. The last game of the series against Brampton. I came home and had an itch in my arse.

Larry: I know, you had hemorrhoids.

Don: I had a hemorrhoid, one and it was like that (gesturing with his hands the size of it) and I went to the doctor and he said just shove it in and I said "what do you mean, just shove it in." I told him I'm playing lacrosse. We've got a championship to play. He said, "I don't think so." So that's when we played in Whitby, two games here and then went to Peterborough and then back here. No, no, that wasn't it either.

Larry: It was out West I thought.

Don: Yeah, it was.

Larry: It was Whitey Severson, or did you get kicked out more than once?

Don: No, no, just the one year.

Larry: Mike thought it was Whitey Severnson and that it was played out West.

Don: Probably and it was played out West. I still had hemorrhoids and I was still playing. This must have been the next year.

Larry: You had them for over a year?

Don: Yeah, they wouldn't do nothing and then some guy came down and this guy ran into me and the ref gave me a penalty for interference. I got up and I had the hemorrhoid and it was bothering me. "You bastard!" and I just swung. I didn't hit him but he fell down and so they suspended me for life. So we went to Montreal and they gave me a year but the referee sent a letter and said no I did not hit him, but I swung at him so they gave me a year so was the next year so that was a mark on my career.

Donnie: There's one that won't get anybody in trouble because everybody is retired. That first year we went out West with Ken Ruttan and the guys. They had a beer strike out there and we had paid this guy to bring it in from Alberta by the truck loads, two or three loads a day, to certain places. The guy would phone us and tell us and the team would go out and we were allowed two 12's each. To make a long story short we'd get in the hotel after the game, we'd have a day off between games. Ken Ruttan, an OPP officer on our team had met this guy who was an RCMP officer and got talking to this guy. "Come and have a beer". Beer was scarce so why not, it was free. So the guy stayed for three days. Ken got up one morning and was coming down the hall. He's got the Mountie's hat on and he's got the guy's gun and his boots and his underwear on coming down the hall. Are you nuts? He's got the guys gun! But that's under the bridge, the guy won't get hurt, the guy's probably retired.

Larry: Probably dead.

Donnie: That was when, 1965?

Larry: Mike told us once, but I didn't get it on the interview. They were out west for the Mann Cup him and Elmer. Think it was a piano or a TV that they threw in the swimming pool..

Donnie: I was just going to say that. I didn't want to. The Royal Arms, the Gaels stayed there.

They were with the Redmen but we always stayed at the Russell. They treated us perfectly. Heffernan could play the piano. Well at that time there's no music in bars. So we're all down in the afternoon drinking Brandy Alexander's. So the guy came over and they're 85 cents or something. Well, you get 20 and everybody throws a buck on the table. We're in there one afternoon and there's a piano. We take the cover off it and Grant's really pounding away on it. Customers are coming in. The bar is full of them. So the manager comes in says "you can't do that, you can't do that". So they take the piano and they shove it into another room that's beside it. The manager goes away and we go over and open the friggin' door and Grant starts playing again. The manager says "all right, all right, you're going to get me fined". We'll take the piano downstairs and I've got a room for you and you can take it there and bring anyone you want down there. So he took it downstairs for us and we had our parties downstairs in this room. The guy sent down a case of champagne on ice for the last game we won, for the team.

We spent a lot of money there. Plus they had a little restaurant at the side, just a tiny thing and we had tickets for breakfast, dinner and lunch. Bev Groves, he played with us, when he was out there. His future wife runs it or something. We'd go in there and have breakfast and give her all three tickets. What the hell, we didn't care. The guy was treating us all right. Yeah, small things like that. That was when we played the Luckies.

Yeah the Gaels used to stay at the Royal Alexander something up on the hill. That's when the Gaels came to play with us, some of them. The Russell was all right with us so we got into this Royal Alexander, whatever the hell they called it. Someone had taken this picture off the wall made a post card out of it, something about some sexual act or something so instead of hiding it they threw it under the bed. Well of course the broads come in to clean, there's this card so that's right down to the manager.

Next thing we were playing cards in Mike and Elmer's room and Mike just, starts drinking and goes wingy. The next thing you see the TV flying out the window and going into the pool. So they didn't really say anything about that but the next day in Vesey's room they have these sliding doors that go out onto the balcony so they slid it and they come off. So now the manager is upstairs "One more thing and you guys are out".

Somebody and I had gone someplace, downtown or something and when we return our bags are out on the street.

They've moved you to the Russell. "Good, what happened?" I guess the manager no sooner got downstairs than somebody went and opened the door, and the door fell off the balcony out onto the roof or something. That guy was up there like a blasted shot "You're out, you're all out. Get out! We don't want you around here anymore".

Larry: These are the things I want in the book. I want stories that aren't terribly bad.

J.J. HILL

Larry: My favourite story is about you with the calf. Tell me that story.

J.J.: It had to be half way through August anyway. This night we were playing in Owen Sound and we had a practice. I said to the coach I can't get away till 5:30 and he said can you pick up this guy. We won't mention this other guys name. We'll call him Steve. When you come to Owen Sound there'll be someone there. We're going to take your equipment and stuff up.

So I pick up Steve and there's four pints of beer in his knapsack. Well, we hadn't had no supper. So we crack open a pint of beer and we had the two of them by the time we got to Orangeville. By the time we get not too far out of Orangeville Mother Nature calls us. So we pull down this side road and a little way down this side road we stop. Anyway, he gets out one side and I get out the other side. I spot something out in the orchard. I think it was apples. So I says I'll get a couple of apples.

I go to get back into the car and he's got this calf in the car. Now this calf doesn't weigh too much, 40 or 50 pounds. Now we have to pull through the drivers side of the seat. So I figured I'd let it out on the way back. We get up the road a bit and this calf, something like a dog or wolf, starts howling for it's Mother. No sooner do we get a little further up the street and this cow lets loose, PLOOF, all over the back and stink like there's no tomorrow. Holly shit. He just had a healthy hemorrhage. I was half drunk. You couldn't know the worst. We had no air conditioning or nothing.

We got to Owen Sound and the guy who's waiting to park the car and says what the hell you got in the car. I says reserve a spot and we'll pick it up after the game and I says you shut up about it. So nothing was said and he parked the car.

After the game I go and get the car but the guy had enough of me. He doesn't come back with me. He's on the bus. He's heading back the other way. So I've got to take this calf back. I happen to know a bit about Orangeville. So I got down the right road and let the calf out. I thought about it after I'd ever got nailed with this calf out the back. I would have been charged with cattle rustling. That's exactly what this guy wound up with in Kingston later, cattle rustling.