

MIKE AND MIKE'S
RULES
for Sports and Life



FOREWORD by George Will

AMERICANS must be the most argumentative people on the planet. Others compete for that title—the Serbs and Bosnians, the Sunnis and Shia, the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland. All of these folks, however, have the unfortunate habit of trying to strengthen their arguments with bombs and bullets, which should be against the rules.

In America, where argument is the national pastime, resort to gunfire is a disqualification. The insistence on disarmament does not matter so much when Americans are arguing only about politics, religion, and other matters of marginal importance. But mutually assured destruction must be avoided when the subject of debate is the stuff that involves Americans' deepest convictions and most molten passions. I refer, of course, to sports.

Which brings us to the Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas of sports debating—the two Mikes, Greenberg and Golic. They both probably want to be understood as the Lincoln in this equivalency. But Greenberg is not tall (neither was Douglas) and Golic is not thin (neither was Douglas).

What they agree about, I am sure, is that they have the best job in America. They are actually paid to do what the rest of us do for the fun of it—talk about sports. The rest of us, just like Mike and Mike, lay down the law, pound the table, and hurl statistics like harmless hand grenades. Like the Mikes, we are often in error but never in doubt. Unlike them, we have to have other jobs. Life really is unfair.

Actually, the Mikes are not quite mere observers of, and commentators on, the sports scene. They have become, in a sense, umpires or referees. There is so much naked nonsense on sports talk radio, and in the blogosphere, so much dumb meanness, that the temptation is to turn it all off and read Proust. (I can't do that now. Golic has borrowed my *Remembrance of Things Past* and refuses to return it.) But the Mikes manage to be an island—perhaps two islands—of informed civility in a sea of bloviation.

This matters, a lot. Every sector of American society should be held to reasonable standards of discourse. It is a sobering fact that the Mikes set standards of informativeness and politeness to which political argument rarely rises.

Mark Twain said that the first thing you should do every morning is swallow a live frog, so you will know that the worst part of your day is over. More than a century later, the first thing you should do every morning is tune in the Mikes: It might be the last moment in the day when you are able to be in the company of two smart and funny people.

Of course, you can only do that on weekdays. What, then, of the barren stretch known as the weekend? Presumably, that is what this book is for, to carry you over until you can exclaim, “TGIM!”—Thank God it’s Monday. I am going to read and reread it until Golic returns my Proust.

PREFACE by Kenny Chesney

WHEN you live on the road, you can count on this: every day, you’re somewhere else, but it almost always looks the same. The parking lots. The locker rooms. The backstage hallways. When you live like that, you look for things you can count on no matter where you are to make you feel alive, to get your day started with a jolt of energy, passion, heart.

That’s why I started listening to—and watching—*Mike and Mike* out on the road. Not because there isn’t enough ESPN in our world, but more because I think most guys are a bit like the both of them. Mike Golic is the professional athlete who knows how the game is played. Mike Greenberg is the journalist who’s not afraid to be a fan who lives and dies for the game even though he’ll never get to suit up and get out there. Both are men who exist for the competition, the love of sports and—honestly—making fun of each other.

In a world where me and the band live to play—often in the same NFL stadiums where these teams thrill us every fall, Mike and Mike get the intensity that is also the rock 'n' roll life, whether you're onstage or in the stands. Golic knows and talks about the way it feels to be right there when the plays go down, what those pressures are, how great it is when everything comes together, the importance of the camaraderie in the locker room. Greenberg speaks the truth of how powerful watching sports can be, how much it means to the fan and why it matters.

'Cause that's the thing: being a fan matters. I still love Aerosmith and Bruce Springsteen, just like I love the passion of Dick Vitale, the history of Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, and the old Yankee Stadium, the tradition of the Tennessee Volunteers and the determination of Sean Payton and just about every team that gets out there and plays hard. It takes a lot of sacrifice and commitment to play sports at the level of the people Mike and Mike are talking about, but there's also a lot of humanity that goes into it, too.

If there's one thing Golic and Greenberg get, it's that these players are the very best of the best, and what they do isn't just something to talk about, but to celebrate. They fight, they cheer, they debate, but mostly, they love sports the same way we all do.

It's the one thing we can count on. And to see people bringing as much heart and passion to what they do as I'd like to think we do, well, that's all you can ask first thing in the morning after a long night somewhere else, bringing people's summer and memories alive.

For me, and for a lotta the people out here on the road with me, Mike and Mike are a couple of buddies who may not agree, but who know how to argue like the best of friends. They're also the kind of people who know all the stats, the players, the history, and the competitive nature of sports. Plus, they have a crazy sense of humor.

As long as there's mornings, I hope Mike and Mike will be on the air. It's a reason to get going when all you wanna do is turn over and sleep off the night before.

REMOTE (AND OUT OF) CONTROL

Here's what happens when you take the show on the road.





RULE 1.05

**Radio? Fun.
Cartoons? Even
more fun.**

We'll be kicking off each hour with a cartoon from the folks at Animax, who won a 2006 Broadband Emmy for *Off Mikes*, the animated series that took snippets from our show and turned them into episodes on ESPN.com. They did all the work. We'll take all the credit.

BY THE NUMBERS

SURVEY QUESTION:

Who has the tougher job,
Greeny or Golic?

GOLIC: 53 percent

GREENY: 47 percent

(Online poll conducted
over a three-day period
and may have no shred
of scientific validity
whatsoever.)

RULE 2.96: ONE DAY, ATHLETES WILL RULE THE WORLD.

. . . But not yet. How do we know? We asked Liam Chapman, our shaggy-haired producer, to quiz his mum, Shirley Chapman, on some of the biggest, richest, most recognizable athletes in the universe. She's drunk, she's funny, and she's British, and she knows her sports as well as anyone. So we gave Liam's Mum a few pictures and a list of several possible answers for each blank, and we asked her to fill them in for us as best she could. Simple, right?



This is Tom Brady, who plays football. He is a catcher for the Nashville Predators. Last year, he famously was elected to the United States Senate from Kentucky. His fans are known to say, "Practice? We're talking about practice?"



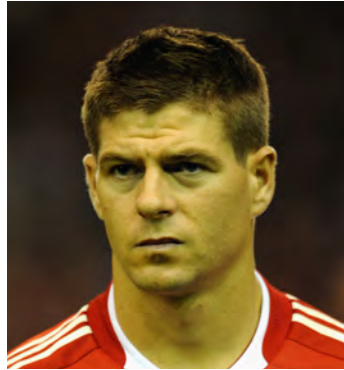
This is Shaquille O'Neal. She is a professional golfer. She won the World Series at the age of 17. Most recently, she won the Stanley Cup. She is rumored to be dating Joe Torre and is known for her catchphrase, "Getcha popcorn ready!"



This is Albert Pujols, a goalie for the Indianapolis Colts. He entered the PGA at the age of 30. He is known for feuding with Donovan McNabb but quieted many critics by winning the Heisman Trophy last year.



This is LeBron James, who plays ice hockey for the Minnesota Vikings. Two years ago, he threw a no-hitter which was unprecedented because no one did it before. Then he signed a multiyear contract with the Minnesota Timberwolves and will be playing center field. He was in the news last year for scandalously dating Kim Kardashian.



This is Steven Gerrard. He plays soccer for Liverpool. His position is center midfield. He is the team captain. He has won two FA Cups, two Football League Cups, one UEFA Cup, and the UEFA Champions League. He is married to fashion journalist Alex Curran and is also a member of the Order of the British Empire.



This is Derek Jeter, who plays baseball for the Tennessee Titans. His nickname is T.O. because people call him that. Last year, he led his team to the U.S. Masters, which was played in Cooperstown. He used to be a motorcar racer but now wants a new challenge. People often compare him to the great Curtis Enis.

Led Marshall to perfect 13–0 record in senior year and first-ever bowl victory ... Rhodes Scholar finalist ... Awarded Playboy's Anson Mount Award, which, as everyone knows, honors nation's top student athlete ... First-round draft pick, 18th player chosen overall ... Brought team playbook on honeymoon ... Led Jets to playoffs in first year as starter ... Kind of a handsome guy ... Yeah, I realize he's with Miami now. Breaking up is hard to do.

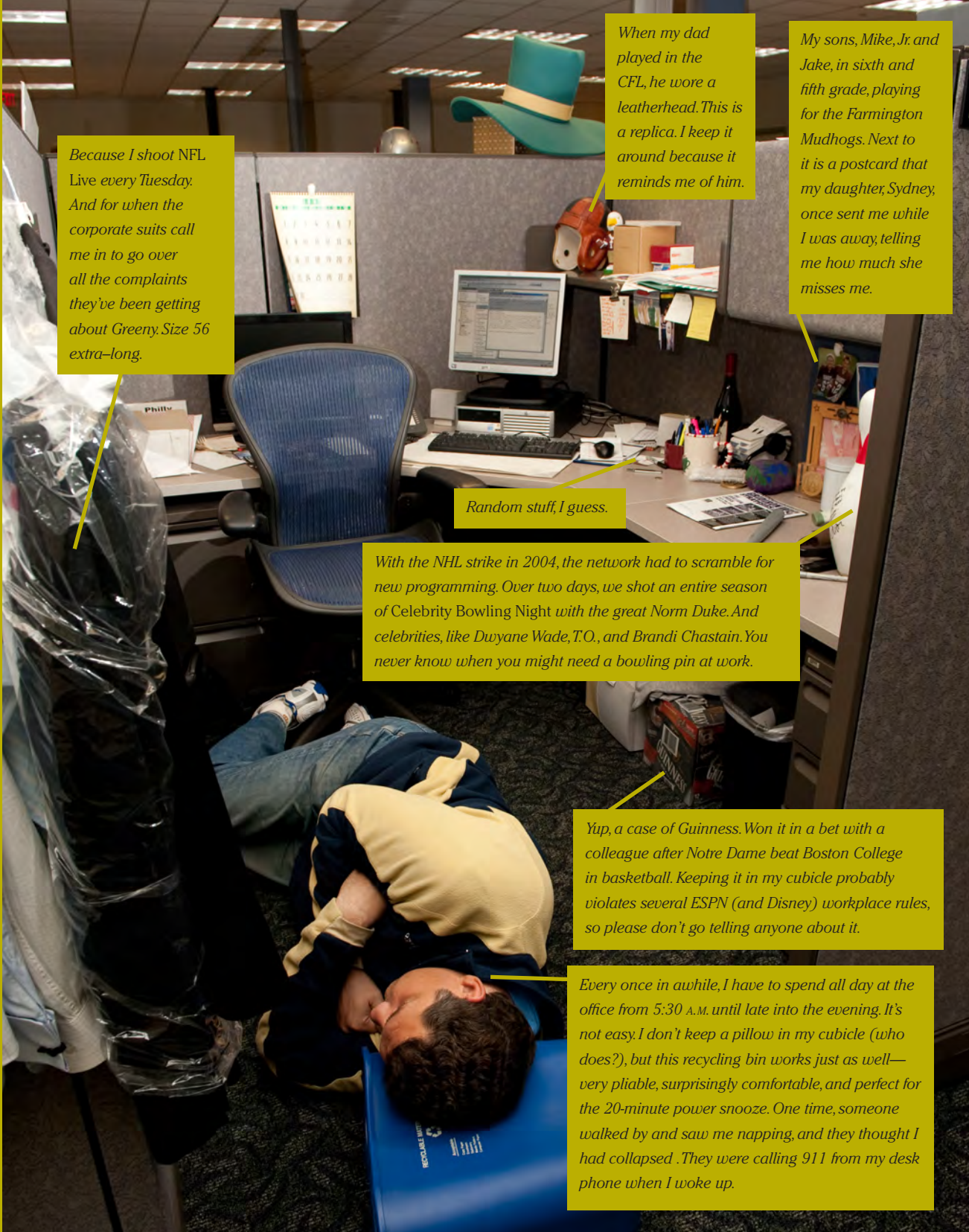
"Duck and Chicken Flying over Four Blue Flowers," crayon on paper placemat, 2005, by Nikki Greenberg, age 5.



Signed by the great Joe Namath. A few years ago, he came to Bristol to shoot an interview for ESPN Classic, and there was no way I was going to pass up the chance to meet Broadway Joe. The most excited (and nervous) I've ever been in the presence of an athlete.

Every morning, I have to put up with Golic for four straight hours. My secret? Tylenol, 1,000 milligrams.

Do you realize that the surface of an average office desk contains 400 times more bacterial microbes than a toilet seat? (Don't believe me? Google it yourself.) Not mine, because I make sure someone disinfects it every day. And I never go anywhere without my bottle of Purell. One can never be too careful.

A photograph of a man napping in a cubicle. He is lying on a blue recycling bin. The cubicle is cluttered with various items, including a computer monitor, a keyboard, a mouse, a blue office chair, a green hat, a brown leatherhead, a postcard, a bottle of Guinness, and a box of tissues. The man is wearing a blue and yellow jacket and jeans. The background shows a typical office environment with cubicles and a ceiling light fixture.

Because I shoot NFL Live every Tuesday. And for when the corporate suits call me in to go over all the complaints they've been getting about Greeny. Size 56 extra-long.

When my dad played in the CFL, he wore a leatherhead. This is a replica. I keep it around because it reminds me of him.

My sons, Mike, Jr and Jake, in sixth and fifth grade, playing for the Farmington Mudhogs. Next to it is a postcard that my daughter, Sydney, once sent me while I was away, telling me how much she misses me.

Random stuff, I guess.

With the NHL strike in 2004, the network had to scramble for new programming. Over two days, we shot an entire season of Celebrity Bowling Night with the great Norm Duke. And celebrities, like Dwyane Wade, T.O., and Brandi Chastain. You never know when you might need a bowling pin at work.

Yup, a case of Guinness. Won it in a bet with a colleague after Notre Dame beat Boston College in basketball. Keeping it in my cubicle probably violates several ESPN (and Disney) workplace rules, so please don't go telling anyone about it.

Every once in awhile, I have to spend all day at the office from 5:30 A.M. until late into the evening. It's not easy. I don't keep a pillow in my cubicle (who does?), but this recycling bin works just as well—very pliable, surprisingly comfortable, and perfect for the 20-minute power snooze. One time, someone walked by and saw me napping, and they thought I had collapsed. They were calling 911 from my desk phone when I woke up.

RULE 4.78

When in doubt, ask your mother.

Does Mike Mussina (270–153, 3.68 ERA, 2,813 Ks) belong in Cooperstown? We asked Peter Gammons, who said yes. We asked Buster Olney, and he said yes, too. Tim Kurkjian said yes. Bob Picozzi, who isn't officially a voter but holds opinions we highly value, said no. We say no, too. But there's another person's opinion we absolutely needed to hear: Liam's Mum. She's the mother of our shaggy-haired producer. She's drunk, she's funny, and she's British, so we asked Liam to get her thoughts on the matter. An actual conversation between one man and his mother:

LIAM: Hi, Mum. How are you?

MUM: Good, Liam. And how are you?

LIAM: Good. I need your help on a straw poll we're doing. Is Mike Mussina a Hall of Famer?

MUM: (pause) . . . Yes.

LIAM: Why is that?

MUM: Because he's good at what he does.

LIAM: What sport does he play?

MUM: Football.

LIAM: Nope.

MUM: Basketball?

LIAM: No.

MUM: Motor racing?

LIAM: No. Not motor racing.

MUM: Ice hockey?

LIAM: No.

MUM: Then it's basketball.

LIAM: No. It's not basketball.

MUM: I give up.

LIAM: Mike Mussina plays baseball.

MUM: Didn't I say that?

LIAM: No.

MUM: Oh.

LIAM: How do you think he compares to Bert Blyleven, John Smoltz, Curt Schilling, and Tom Glavine?

MUM: I think he's a little better.

LIAM: What would you say is Mussina's biggest strength?

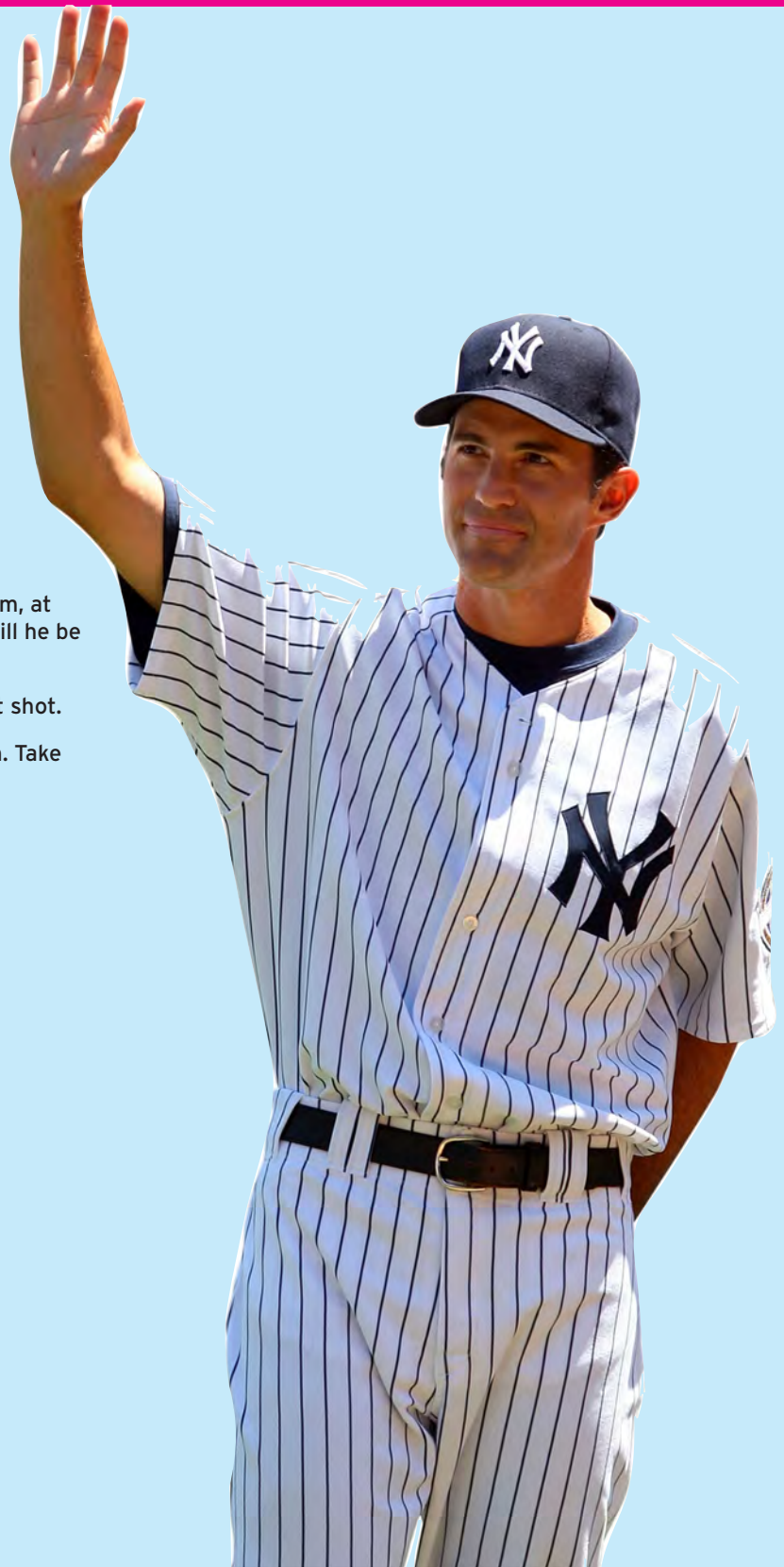
MUM: His persistence to win.

LIAM: Very good. And, Mum, at the end of the day, what will he be remembered for?

MUM: For giving it his best shot.

LIAM: Great. Thanks, Mum. Take care.

MUM: Okay. Love you.



A Tale of Two Staffers

What's it like working on the *Mike and Mike in the Morning* show? Well, it can be the best of times and the worst of times. Here's the way **The Gnome** (producer Scott Shapiro) and **JOAQUIN** (associate producer Curt Kaplan) saw the same period of July 12–16, 2008. Apparently, and for some reason, Joaquin is not allowed to leave the state of Connecticut.

July 12



The Gnome: It's Saturday night and I'm at a concert in Central Park, the heart of New York City, for the start of the 2008 All-Star Game festivities. I arrived in the city earlier in the day to start work for the week's shows, but now it's time for a little fun and relaxation. Just as the concert is about to start, I'm presented with the opportunity to move up from deep within the 60,000+ in attendance to the very first row. No, I didn't score a lucky ticket. I'm here with a group of us from ESPN, including Michael Kay, the Yankees' play-by-play announcer and 1050 ESPN radio host. The security guys recognize him, and before I know what's happening, we're getting waved up until we're right in front of the stage. Luck by association! And what a show it was. Headlining the concert was none other than Jon Bon Jovi, who electrified the crowd nonstop for more than two hours with hits like "Livin' on a Prayer." No complaints here.



JOAQUIN: It's Saturday night, and the Slurpee machine at my local 7-Eleven is down again. When the red light's on, it means that the Slurpee is still "cooking," and if you try to get one, it

comes out too watery. So I wait. Fifteen minutes later, I give up. I get myself a hot dog instead. I hang out in the parking lot until I'm sleepy.

July 13



The Gnome: It's early Sunday afternoon, and I'm at Yankee Stadium for the All-Star Legends and Celebrity Softball Game. Talk about celebs—Billy Crystal, Spike Lee, Whoopi Goldberg, Chris Rock, and George Lopez, to name a few. And a Who's Who of Hall of Famers, too, including Ernie Banks, Ozzie Smith, George Brett, Wade Boggs, Dave Winfield, Paul Molitor, Gary Carter, Tony Perez, Goose Gossage, and Rollie Fingers. Thanks to Mike and Mike's involvement as event announcers, I get to ride their coattails and spend the game in one of the Yankee Stadium dugouts. Simply being in the place where Mickey Mantle, Lou Gehrig, and Joe DiMaggio once roamed provides me with plenty of joy on its own, but to be surrounded by all of the Hall of Famers and celebrities is more than a wide-eyed 28-year-old could ever ask for. Everyone's quite pleasant and polite, and I can sense that many of the celebs are in awe of the surroundings, too.



JOAQUIN: Sunday, late afternoon. Someone knocked on my apartment door. (That's right, I have an apartment. Greeny says I live in a refrigerator box under a bridge in Hartford, but that's a joke. It's not funny.) Anyway, I heard someone knock about an hour ago, but I can't figure out if they're still there or not. I have to be very quiet. It's starting to get dark and I want to turn the lights on, but that would be a bad idea.

July 14



The Gnome: Early Monday morning, and it's time for my day job, the actual *Mike and Mike* shows! And what better place to be than historic Grand Central Station, where we shoot all four hours amid hundreds of thousands of commuters during the morning rush. Talk about a big-city vibe, and great exposure, too. We're fortunate enough to have David Ortiz and Bud Selig as guests, as well.

After the show, I get a couple more hours of work in, take a quick nap, and then meet Golic for a subway ride back up to the Bronx for the Home Run Derby. I've been to derbies in the past, but I was especially looking forward to this one because it would be one of the last signature events at Yankee Stadium. I spend a half-hour on the field, right behind the batting cage, watching the All-Stars take their practice swings.

I should have left after batting practice because of the 3:30 A.M. wake-up call for the next day's show, but I decide to stay for the entire first round. I want to see everyone bat once. And wow, am I glad I stayed! It was a rather ho-hum evening at the ballpark until the final hitter, Josh Hamilton, dug in. Hamilton's story is tremendously inspiring, and tonight he put on an electrifying display of one colossal home run after another. It was like seeing a Hollywood story come to life before my eyes. As he belted 28 home runs in Round One, all I could do was stand in amazement. One more incredible moment for a ballpark that has seen so many.



JOAQUIN: Monday afternoon. Dr. Phil can be a real hardass sometimes, but this guest totally deserves it—he has issues with his daughters' boyfriends. To me, his anger is an outward expression of his hurt, fear, and frustration. But what a jerk. Way to go, Dr. Phil. You tell him. I'd write more, but *Life After People* is about to start on the History Channel. Gotta go.

July 15



The Gnome: Another show from Grand Central, and Greeny's parents, who live in New York City, stop by to say hello. Greeny introduces me to them. "You call him 'The Gnome'?" Mrs. Greenberg asks her son. "That's terrible. You can't call him that." All I can say is that a mother is never wrong. After the show, Greeny's parents take the Mikes and me out for real-deal pastrami sandwiches at Mendy's. What a treat!

JOAQUIN: In the morning, I [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (I've been advised

by counsel not to discuss any actions that occurred or may have occurred on Tuesday, July 15, 2008.)

July 16

The Gnome: It's Wednesday morning, and we've all returned to our usual digs in Bristol, Connecticut. You'd think that being back at the home office after four days of nonstop thrills would be a letdown. Not so fast. Because today Mike and Mike have the honor of launching ESPN Radio's fourth annual Don't Give Up ESPYs V Foundation Auction. There are so many great experiences to auction off throughout the show, including our premier item—a four-hour *Mike and Mike* live broadcast from the highest bidder's home. We're thrilled that two bids were offered at \$57,100 each and, in order to raise the most funds possible, we decide to accept both and broadcast the show twice from the road. By the end of the day, ESPN Radio's V

Foundation Auction raises a cumulative total of more than \$1.13 million. For me to play a part in such a meaningful cause is truly humbling.

JOAQUIN: I love the V Auction. Three times during the show, we play parts of Valvano's speech from the 1993 ESPYs. If I was allowed to work only one day per year—I've had actual dreams about this—today would be that day.

I get back home around 3:00 P.M. Later, I think I hear somebody getting beat up outside my window. Can't say for sure.

Later that same day



The Gnome: Because of the tight schedule, we have no choice but to rush to the airport immediately after the show. Next on the itinerary: a flight to the nation's capital for my first-ever visit to the White House.

The reason for our trip is President George W. Bush's annual T-ball game on the South Lawn, with Mike and Mike serving as honorary public address announcers. Participating in the T-ball games is one lucky child from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In the president's words, the event is an opportunity for "players and fans to come together and celebrate this wonderful game." And what a celebration! Mike and Mike start off the festivities by introducing President Bush, the first lady, Honorary T-Ball Commissioner Frank Robinson, and Kenny Chesney, who sings the national anthem. After the first game, Mike and Mike welcome the president, Robinson, and Chesney back onto the field with U.S. Postmaster General Jack Potter, and together they unveil a new stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." Chesney then leads us all in the singing of the ballpark classic.

One major thrill for me is my seat location. I'm two rows in front of President Bush and the first lady, and one row in front of Kenny Chesney. And somehow I wind up sitting right next to the U.S. ambassador to Japan, J. Thomas Schieffer.

After the T-ball, I'm part of a small group walking with the president, the first lady, Greeny, and Golic from the field to the White House. The president informs us that he loves the show. Could you ask for a higher compliment? The fact that the most powerful man in the world enjoys the product that I pour countless hours into every day is an exceptional feeling.

Later that day, the president hosts a reception in the Rose Garden celebrating the sport of baseball. It was a perfect, picturesque evening with the sight of the Washington Monument emerging from beyond the White House gates and the Rose Garden flowers appearing as a virtual work of art. Kenny Chesney gets up and gives a surprise outdoor performance, delighting the crowd with six songs. I honestly have to pinch myself. Who am I to deserve the opportunity to sit in the Rose Garden of the White House for a private performance from a *Billboard* superstar? Then the president takes the mike and says, "It doesn't get much better than this—country music in the Rose Garden and celebrating baseball." Yes!

Afterward, a small group of us are escorted into the West Wing of the White House for a private tour. And wow, is this tour special! We spend 20 minutes in the Oval Office learning about every nook and cranny—the significance of the rug, the blinds, the portraits. We take notice that the president's desk is remarkably clean.

We leave the White House grounds late, well after 10:00 P.M., and head back to the hotel. I still have to get some work in for the next day's show. Our location will be the Newseum here in D.C., with a view of the Capitol in the background, and the guests will include George Will and Senator and Hall of Famer Jim Bunning. With any luck, I'll be able to squeeze in a few hours of sleep tonight. I'm emotionally spent. The days flew by so fast, and it was worth every second of time that I poured into it. It was certainly a week to remember.

JOAQUIN: I stop by the office, but no one's around. I make some crank calls.

RULE 4.08

Watch your blind side.

He was the most feared defensive lineman named Golic in the history of the game . . . at least after his brother Bob. The complete story of an NFL career, as told in 11 1/2 sacks:



1

Ken Anderson had played for 16 seasons in the NFL when Mike Golic sacked him in November 1986. Later, Anderson retired.



2

In December 1989, Phil Simms was sacked by Mike Golic and fumbled, which set up the game-winning touchdown for the Eagles. Thank you, Mike Golic.



3

On September 23, 1990, Jim Everett of the Los Angeles Rams was the quarterback in a football game. Mike Golic had no choice but to sack him.



4 and 5

Where were you on September 15, 1991? Probably not in Texas Stadium, sacking Troy Aikman twice in one game. That was Mike Golic.



5 1/2

Steve Young was never the same after Mike Golic recorded a half-sack against him in October 1991.



6½

In his playing days, Mike Golic ate quarterbacks like Neil Lomax for breakfast. He also sacked him once.



7½

Tom Tupa was an NFL quarterback, so Mike Golic sacked him.



8½

Mike Golic terrorized Cardinals quarterbacks. On one play, Kent Graham was no exception.



9½

Mike Golic couldn't resist sacking Stan Gelbaugh one time.



10½

Quarterback Babe Laufenberg was no match for Mike Golic.



11½

Marc Wilson was sacked 210 times in his career. Had it not been for Mike Golic, he would have been sacked only 209 times.

RULE 5.40: THE BEST PART OF SPORTS BOOKS? OLD PHOTOS.



GOLIC: Greeny once recommended a book to me about baseball called *The Catcher in the Rye*. It didn't hold my attention—no pictures—and I put it down before it even got to the baseball part. The best part of sports books? Seeing the old players in their leatherheads, hockey goalies playing without protective masks, baseball legends with their lumpy mitts and wool uniforms, and a 12-year-old geek on a moped.



Greeny at his parents' summer house in 1979, revving his Honda Express II scooter.



Michael Greenberg
Just do it. If you stop to think about it, you might change your mind ... MG

Greeny's senior yearbook photo, 1985, Stuyvesant High School, New York City.



Michael L. Golic

Golic's senior-year photo, 1981, St. Joseph High School, Cleveland.



Eight-year-old Mike Golic, with rosary, before his first holy communion in 1971.



Greeny starring as Ali Hakim in a production of *Oklahoma!* His performance was panned by the student newspaper.



Golic (back row, second from right) with his high school wrestling team at the state championships, 1981.



Greeny makes *Sports Illustrated*. That's him doing an exclusive interview with Bills defensive lineman Bruce Smith during Super Bowl week, 1993.



A 1992 Topps trading card of Eagles defensive lineman Mike Golic. Near-mint condition. Current selling price: 83 cents.



Greeny with his wife, Stacy, at one of the most hallowed grounds in sports, Wimbledon, 2005.



Golic with co-host Bruce Jacobs (left) at one of the most prestigious parking lots in Phoenix, for a KGME radio promotion, circa 1995.



Greeny's first PR photo for ESPN, 1996. Suit by Prada. Tie by Hermès. Hair gel by Dep.



A clean and polished Mike Golic (right) on the set of *NFL 2Nite* during the program's rookie season, 1998.