

## A little ride downtown

(Chicago)

People always ask me what I think about Ruth. I like the Big Baboon. Part of it's just him. He's an overgrown 10-year-old. He smiles at you. I don't know whether he means to, but he does. But mostly it's the way people see him. They love the guy, and I don't just mean in New York. He's a national hero, right up there with Pershing. He'd probably out-draw him if the two were in the same town together. The word is Harding's boys are after the Babe to make a trip over to Marion to shake hands and say a good word or two. They say this election's going to swing on the League question, but if I was running I'd rather have the Baboon on my side any day. I couldn't pay him enough to get him to come in.

We were teammates in Boston in 1918 and half of 1919. I never got to know him that well, but Duffy Lewis did, and he said the Babe told him the only question was the cash. "Hell, I'm a Democrat," Duffy says the Babe told him. "But if it's worth ten-grand to the Republicans, I'll take it." The schedule-maker gives the Yanks a couple days off next week to go back East, so we may find out what it's worth to Harding to get the Babe off the train.

The Yanks came into Chicago and we had nearly 40,000 every day at Comiskey. The papers were full of it. They were talking about him

on the way over from Hyde Park and back again. The paper boys, they know what sells. "Evening edition...Kerr stops the Babe, right here!" And you can see people lined up to buy.

Jeez, we can play ball when we want to. The Yanks came to town having roughed up Cleveland and Detroit, and we beat the bejesus out of them. Kerr got them 8-3 on Friday, then Faber beat them 6-4, then we gave Cicotte 15 runs and even he couldn't choke on that much offense. Our problem was that Cleveland beat Washington three times, too, so even though we passed the Yanks we're still a game and a half in back of the Indians. The race will probably come down to the three games next week in Cleveland, and also to what the Grand Jury does.

If we play like we did against the Yanks, we can beat anybody except possibly the jury. We lit up Quinn and Thormahlen the first two games, then tore into Shawkey on Saturday. I suppose Hap was the star. Seven hits in three games, three of them triples and a double on top of that, well, that's pretty good. Buck tossed in another seven and Jackson had five more, two of which were doubles and two others triples. All in all the Yanks' pitching was pretty soft; I got four hits myself.

We figured we could light up Quinn and Thormahlen. But Shawkey's a tough bird, and we got him for 21 hits Saturday. The best part was the crowd. The game wasn't supposed to start until 3, but I

got to the park before noon because I knew they'd be jammed all around, and they were. I saw kids (and a couple of adults, too) climbing the walls trying to get in. The scalpers over on Wentworth wanted 15 bucks for one seat - one seat! - and there were people paying it. The papers said Comiskey sold 43,000 tickets, which at 75 cents each I figure comes to better than 32-grand. He could probably pay for the use of Cicotte and Williams and Faber all season just by that one game.

It was a swell show, but it wasn't the talk on Sunday morning. The professor - he always gets the paper first - showed me the letter in the Tribune from this Fred Loomis fellow. That's who was supposed to have written it, anyway. I asked Cruisenberry about it that afternoon and he admitted he found the guy and basically put him up to it. The thing was Cruisenberry didn't have to go out and scrounge up some banker; if he had asked me, I'd have signed his letter, but I suppose he wanted somebody without ties to the team. I read the letter and then I clipped it out. This was what it said:

"Widespread circulation has been given to reports from various sources that the world series of last fall between the Chicago White Sox and Cincinnati Reds was deliberately and intentionally lost through an alleged conspiracy between certain unnamed members of the Chicago team and certain gamblers.

"I have been startled by these rumors, and was inclined in the first place to give no credence to these reports, but where there is so much smoke there must be some fire.

"Up to this time baseball has been accepted by the public as the one clean sport above reproach in every particular, and engaged in by men, both owners and players, whose honesty and integrity have been beyond suspicion or reproach.

"An investigation might disclose that there is absolutely nothing to these reports. Therefore there is all the more reason why an investigation should be made because rumors of this nature place the game of baseball in a bad light and seriously reflect upon every ball player engaged in the game.

"I believe the great body of fans throughout the United States feel as I do that it makes no difference who it hit in this investigation, from the president of either major league down to the clubhouse boy in the smallest league in the country. The game must be protected. The public is interested in the game more than they are interested in the players.

"I am intensely a lover of the game. I am constrained to write to inquire just what is going to be done to clarify this situation, which at the present time seems so badly confused.

"There is a perfectly good grand jury located in this county. The citizens and taxpayers of the state of Illinois are maintaining such an institution for the purpose of investigating any alleged infraction of the law.

"Those who have in their possession the evidence of gambling last fall in the world series should come forward with it and present it in a manner that may give assurance in the whole country that justice will be done in this case where the confidence of the people seems to have been so flagrantly violated.

--Fred M. Loomis

"I believe some of you will be asked to come down for a visit with Mr. Replogle," the professor says. "As far as politicians are concerned, it's one thing when the insiders get ruffled. "But when the public is stirred up, they won't be able to ignore that downtown."

"I don't know Mr. Fred Loomis," I said, "but he's stirred up," I added.

"I don't know him either," the professor said. "But once the rest of the town reads the letter in the Trib, I'd predict he won't be alone." The Tribune all by itself would make sure of that, he said. "You'll notice they didn't just drop it in with the other letters," the professor pointed out. I had noticed that. "Nope," he says, "they put it right in the middle of the sports page, boxed off, with a nice big headline. Just to make sure it stirred things up."

The professor shook his head in a knowing sort of fashion. "No, Mr. Strunk, "the public will be stirred up. "If I were you, I'd be expecting a call for a little ride downtown."

If we wanted such events to impact on our pennant chances, we first had to finish off Connie Mack's kids, who were coming in for three. That's usually not a problem, but we'd run through Kerr, Faber and Cicotte in the New York Series, and Kid was antsy about throwing Williams out there, what with all the talk. They had a private jaw before the game. They intended it to be private, anyway, but the walls in Kid's office aren't soundproof, so most of us got the full version. "I'm sitting you aside," Lefty," the Kid said. "I don't trust you."

"I got 21 wins, Kid," we can hear Lefty say. "Just what the hell do you want from me?"

"How about trying a bit?" we hear the Kid say. "You were laying 'em in to the Senators last time out. You know it and I do too. I can't have that now. I'm going with Wilkinson."

"You benching the others, too?" Lefty wanted to know.

"Just you."

"And you think that solves it, Kid?"

The funny thing was that did solve it. Wilkinson wasn't much of an option, but other than Shovel Hodge he was the only one the Kid had. He'd barely pitched before this season, barely made 10 starts all year, and hadn't won half of those. He was a good bet to be rocky and he was, so the A's jumped us and led 4-1 into the sixth.

But then we put four hits together for a couple of runs. Murphy's legs saved us when we needed it. When he came up we were down a run but had the bags juiced with one out. He slapped a little roller out to Dykes, who got Schalk at second. But Murph is hustling and he beats the rap at first, letting Hap come across to tie the game. That left Murph at first and the Swede at third.

Danged if Murphy didn't take off for second. They made the throw through to get him, but he beat that too and meanwhile the Swede breezed home to put us on top. We still had to hold them for three innings, but Kerr was up to that task so we won 5-4.

Murph saved the Sunday game, then the Swede stepped up Monday and Tuesday. The Swede and the pitchers. Red shut out the A's until the ninth, and we piled it on Harris pretty good. It was 13-6 and it would have been 13-0 if Red hadn't let up in the ninth. We went out Tuesday and won the third one 9-2. Cicotte was in top form. It was his 20<sup>th</sup>. The Swede must have been reading all the rumors because he piled up four hits Tuesday on top of three Monday. If the Swede was going to be called to explain his performance to the Grand Jury, I guess he wanted to explain hits.

The three wins helped us, but it would have helped more if the Red Sox had taken down Cleveland a time or two. No such luck. That meant the Indians still led us by a game and a half. If the jury didn't say otherwise, we all pretty much felt the issue was going to be settled by the three games Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Cleveland. But what the jury was doing was anybody's guess. The morning papers Tuesday reported that subpoenas had been sent out to Comiskey, Ban Johnson, the Kid, and Rube Benton. We didn't know what Gleason might say, or Comiskey. Johnson was a crusty bastard. Anybody who'd been in front of him could tell you that, and anybody who'd been in the league more than a few years

had been in front of him. Me? I'd been in the league a decade. The word about Benton was he knew all the gamblers and all the hinky players. He was one of them. He could probably tell the jury who fixed the games, who tossed them and how they did it.

If those guys all talked - or if any of them talked - subpoenas for players on the White Sox could be expected quickly. One thing was for certain: there would be plenty of headlines the next few days. We'd be making them in Cleveland, and the jury would be making them right back here.

- - - - -

Didn't take long. The papers say Johnson popped into the Grand Jury room and popped out again a little later and told the world the Sox were guilty as could be. He said we wouldn't win this year, either. We hadn't even taken the field yet - hardly got up - and we could hear the paper boys outside our rooms hawking the Plain Dealer. "Johnson says Sox can't win! ..get it right here, Johnson says gamblers have fixed it for Sox to lose! Right here!''

The papers said that and a lot more. "This was what Johnson told the reporters back in Chi. "I heard several weeks ago a vague statement that the White Sox would not dare win the pennant this season. That statement was several times repeated, and within the

last few weeks it has been hinted at more or less openly that the Sox would not dare win because the gambling syndicate would tell what they knew of the conduct of certain players."

Johnson's a blowhard and a popoff - all the players knew that - but coming from the president of the league it was still powerful stuff. I didn't know what evidence he had, or what he'd told the grand jury. But it impressed the foreman, a guy named Brigham. "We are going to the limit in this inquiry. I am shocked at the rottenness so far revealed." That's what he had to say. Word was the jury was going to hear from Rube Benton yesterday

I could have had a whole morning of reading that stuff and listening to the paper boys, but who needs it? We had a game to play in a few hours. Anyway, if we were really in the tank for the race, we pretty much had to be in the tank for the Indians these next three games. If we beat them, the race would be tough to toss with only Detroit and the Browns left. The funny boys didn't owe me any explanation, but I wanted one anyway. I went to Weaver. Of all of 'em, he was the straightest.

"Yeah, I heard it," he said. "You'd have to be deaf not to."

"All I want to know is are we playing to win today or are we playing to lose?"

He grabbed me by the collar like I'd insulted his character...which, of course, I had. Good. I was glad he could still get mad. Right then I wouldn't have minded if he'd punched me, as long as he didn't break his hand doing it. "I don't know nothing about this fix crap," he said, "do you understand?"

"Are we playing to win?"

"Yes, dammit, I'm playing to win!"

"And the rest of 'em?"

He let me go. "Why don't you ask them?" he said. I got the sense he wondered himself.

You could pretty much plan on 30,000 at the park for the first game, and even though it was a Thursday afternoon the crowd didn't miss it by much. Since they could read the papers as well as we could, we knew they'd be ready for us. They were. I got called more stuff in an afternoon than I hear in a year, and I was just along for the ride. They let the fans on the field in left and center, which meant they were behind The General and Felsch with only ropes separating 'em. If it wasn't against the law, I think they'd have torn the two of them apart. Jackson was "shipyard!" and "slacker!" again, and both were "traitor" and

"cheater." That was just the stuff you can repeat. It wasn't any place to be taking your boy, and for sure not your girl.

The Kid had Kerr ready to go against Bagby. The Sarge was as tough a bird as there was in the league. He'd already won 29, and it looked bad when they scored in the first. Bagby stopped us in the first, second and third, and each time you'd have guessed that between his hurling and the crowd's racket the outcome was only a matter of time. And that didn't even factor in what Johnson told the jury. By the fourth, with Hap stepping in the box, it was about 2:30, and I could see some hotshot witness stepping out onto the courthouse steps back home just right then and spilling his guts about how we was in the tank. If we didn't get something started soon, people would believe it for sure.

Hap singled, and Shano moved him over. But the Swede bounced one down to Gardner, and he caught Felsch too far off second. Two out, Risberg on first. In a normal game, you'd say it was a bonehead play. In this game, you'd say it proved Johnson right. Only Schalk singled and busted Risberg around to third. That left Kerr in the box.

Dickie is a cock-sure pitcher, and there isn't anybody tougher. Let me tell you something about him. In the bottom of the fourth Johnston pounded one right back at him, the ball smacked square in his glove and dislocated his middle finger. This is what he

did. He picked up the ball, threw it to first for the out, called time, ran into the dugout, had the Kid put the finger back into place, then ran back onto the field and kept pitching. You won't find a tougher guy than Kerr. But as a batter he is not the man we want up in that circumstance. I would be better, but I am only on deck and cannot reach the plate unless the unlikely occurs and Bagby passes Kerr. So Cracker flashes the Swede the sign that he's taking off and to be ready. I wouldn't have thought Schalk would trust Risberg with the tying run in such a situation. And if he did, I wouldn't have thought O'Neill would be stupid enough to make the throw, since all he had to do was hold the ball and they could still retire Kerr, and possibly trap Risberg off third.

Which proves that I don't know anything. For Cracker takes off, O'Neill fires it down there, and Risberg walks home with the tying run. Not even a play on him.

It was only one run, and it only tied the game. But the fact that Felsch started it and Risberg finished it told me we were playing to win. At that point, we didn't care who was testifying in Chicago or who was pitching in Cleveland. Felsch was the most stirred up of all; he pounded another single and a double. We put up three runs in the sixth to take the lead, then drummed Bagby right out of the game in the seventh. Caldwell and Uhle finished up, so we worked them over for a few more runs. By the time we

were through we'd won 10-3 and counted 15 hits. We were a half game out of first, and even Ban Johnson would have a hard time explaining that result.

- - - - -

I got to the park a few minutes late for Friday's game because it took a while to go through what the papers were saying about us. Somehow the Herald and Examiner got hold of the names of the guys the grand jury thinks cheated in the Series. Weaver, Felsch, Williams, Risberg, Jackson, Gandil, Cicotte and McMullin. Far as I'm concerned it's damned good it's out in the open now.

By the time I walked in, Schalk and Faber were already having it out with Cicotte and Jackson.

"It's a bunch of crap," Cicotte said, and Schalk said, "the hell it is, you bastard. "You can't fool me; I caught those pitches. This goes on for the better part of 10 minutes at about 220 degrees with Cicotte and Jackson saying they don't know anything about gamblers and fixers, and Schalk and Faber saying they are a couple of lying, cheating cowards. The part that worries me most is that Faber is supposed to make the start, so I don't want him too worked up. But it is too late for that. After a while Risberg came over and told Schalk to leave his pals alone because they said didn't know anything. So Schalk took a shove at Risberg and

Kerr joined the fun and then for a while we had another brawl just like last week in the dugout, only this time the paying customers did not see it. I took the opportunity to beat the crap out of McMullin because I felt like it. Of all the SOB's on the list, he's the lowest because he never even played in that Series. He just saw his pals cashing in and decided to try to cut himself in. I don't think even Weaver and Williams like McMullin; maybe Risberg, but that's it. Shano took a couple of shots at him too, and between the two of us old Freddy came out for the game with a very nice shiner. Jackson had a couple of scraped knuckles, but other than that all the fight did was blow off some steam and get us ready to do to Mails what we did to Bagby on Thursday.

If only we could have. I don't know where they found that Mails, but if the Indians win he'll be the reason. We only got one good shot at him all day. That was in the fifth. They were up 2-0 on Faber and there was one out when Cracker worked the busher for a walk. Red was next. Normally Red can't hit the sidewalk with spit, but he didn't have to because Mails wouldn't throw it over the plate to him. So now we had the tying runs on base and one out. I'm next and I figure as young as the kid is, he might be losing his nerve. So I decide if he wants to blow up, I'll let him. I took the first one. It was a fast shoot low and away, ball one. The next was straight but high. Speaker called time and came dashing in from center. I knew what he wanted. First, he could

see the busher was nervous and he wanted to settle him down. Second, he wanted time to decide what to do if the busher didn't settle. We had Weaver, then Eddie and then Jackson behind me, so if I could get on base it'd push the tying runs into scoring position and I'd be the lead run. I also knew that Speaker knew he needed the Polack against us Saturday. He'd already used Bagby and Caldwell Thursday. Mails was his only other decent pitcher. He didn't want to use any of the guys he was warming up. I decided to lay low and let the busher hang himself if he wanted to. Ball three almost hit me. The next one cut the plate. I took it. At that point, I wouldn't have swung at anything. The 3 and 1 was six inches outside. Ball four.

Bags drunk, Weaver coming up.

Standing at first, I made a point of trying to look Weaver right in the eyes. They looked good to me. They were focused. He looked like a guy who's just been called out in the papers as a crook, and who wanted to hit the ball far enough to let the air out of the accusation. He took the first one high. Mails got the second pitch over for strike one. He sent one foul into the seats, then took the fourth pitch wide. The fifth was a seed, dead down the middle, and Buck took his best hack and missed. Two out, Schalk, Faber and me still out here, still down two.

Well, we had Eddie. I didn't have to look into Eddie's eye. Nobody doubted Eddie's honesty. He stood up there batting .360 and eyeing Mails like he was eyeing a quail through a sight. The first pitch came in and tied him up. It was on his hands, but Eddie couldn't check and the ball glanced off his bat and rolled foul. The next was a carbon. Eddie had been in plenty of tough spots; being oh-two wouldn't bother him. Mails tried for the corner, but Brick wouldn't give it to him. Then the busher served one up at the waist and a bit off the plate. Eddie took his best cut and sent it high toward the overflow on the field in left. The darned thing would have tied the game and sent me to third, but it went foul before landing among the spectators.

Eddie backed out and rubbed dirt onto his hands. The next pitch was high. The two-two came in and Collins took his cut and sent it away on a long arc on the trail of the first one down the left field line. As soon as I saw the contact I cut out from first, thinking that I was carrying the lead run and I wanted to be able to score if I got the chance. But it went foul into the crowd as well.

Two swings, two long rips, two near extra base hits, two foul balls. Eddie shortened up his grip like he almost always did with two strikes on him. The next pitch came in letter high, a straight hard one. I saw the cut, but when I looked for the ball heading out onto the field it wasn't there. Mails had flung it

straight by him for strike three. Mails may be a busher, but I had to give him gameness. In the tightest spot of the day, he'd gotten two of our best sticks, and they never put the ball in play in fair territory. Turned out that was our shot. We couldn't touch him the rest of the day, so those two runs Red gave up early beat us 2-0. We were a game and a half back again.

We hadn't been back in the locker five minutes - most of us weren't out of the shower - when the phone rang in the manager's office. "Somebody get Cicotte," Kid shouted after he picked it up. As you would figure, the Kid was annoyed. First, because we lost. Second, because we were now one and one-half back again. Third, because of the news reports from Chicago. "Chrissakes," he said, "somebody get Cicotte."

Most of us were about naked by then. Nemo finally ran him down, but when Cicotte got to the office Kid didn't say anything except "Dryden" and handed him the phone. Dryden is sports editor of the Herald and Examiner, the birds who ran the story naming the names today. The rest of us all stop what we're doing and listen. We can't hear Dryden, of course, but that doesn't matter. There are a few seconds of chit-chat, probably introductions, then the two of them get down to the essentials.

"I don't know nothing about it," Eddie says. You could tell he was lying straight out.

A pause.

"Never. Never. Anyway, betting on baseball's against the rules."

A pause.

"I don't know. Probably some gambler who took a beating on us and got ticked off." He's talking to Dryden, but he's watching us. He's watching to see how it plays for an audience, half of which is ready to kill him if he fesses up and half of which is ready to kill him if he doesn't. He doesn't.

"Look, Dryden, I don't know what you're hearing, but it's all BS to me."

A pause.

"My check?" Well...yeah, I guess you could say my check was late getting to me. Never thought about it. Bookkeeping, I suppose. Anyway, I got it. And I'll tell you something else. Neither Comiskey nor the Kid nor anybody else has ever accused me of selling out. If you want to ask the Kid you can ask him; he's right here."

Cicotte tried to motion Kid toward the phone, but Kid decided that was a good moment to take a piss.

Dryden spent the next few minutes trying to hit up Cicotte for any other reaction, and Cicotte stood by what he'd already said. You could tell by the responses Dryden was tapped out of questions, or didn't figure he'd get any fresh answers, and was ready to move along. But Cicotte wanted to get in one last word.

"Whatever you write, Dryden" he says, "I don't care. But you got to write this. I'm pitching tomorrow and we're going to beat the hell out of the Indians."

I don't know whether Dryden was glad to hear it, but I sure was. The odd thing about it was Eddie only got it half right. We did whip the Indians; whipped 'em 5-2. But Eddie didn't do it.

Williams had been in the Kid's doghouse for the best part of the past two weeks. But they had another private sit-down - there was no yelling this time, so I can't say what was said - then Kid came out and said Lefty's on the mound. That's all there was.

"The thing is Lefty's had their number all year," Murphy tells me. "Four out of five he's whipped 'em, so I'll bet Kid's playing those odds." The league knows Cleveland's softer against lefties than right-handers. Their first six - Jamieson, Sewell, Speaker, Smith, Gardner and Johnston - all bat left. When Kerr whipped

them Thursday, that may have sealed it for Kid as far as giving Williams another chance was concerned.

Or it may have been Eddie himself. Of the seven, he looked the shakiest to me. Cicotte isn't like most of the others. For starters he's 36, the oldest. He's not a good old boy, either. He's got a wife and family and he keeps to himself. For most of his time up here he was just so-so. He would win 10 one year, then he'd lose 12, then win a dozen and lose 15. But he picked up the shine ball four years ago and since then the league can't touch him. He won 29 last year, 28 two years before that and he's already bagged 20 for us this year.

He sure isn't the type you'd figure would get caught up with gamblers. You don't see him flashing money around, and he sure doesn't live fast. I've never seen him out with the guys on the road; even with his own guys. But I wonder whether the talk in the papers is getting to him. Some of the guys, they don't mind being called crooks. The Swede...he doesn't care. Neither does McMullin; he's just a punk. I don't think Felsch cares, either. The General can't read the papers, so unless somebody says it to his face he doesn't even know. But Cicotte's different. Cicotte's got a wife and kids and a reputation. He knows they're back in Michigan reading this stuff and not knowing what to think. And I'll bet he knows it's all coming out. How'd you feel about

looking like a crook to your family...I mean if you were one? I think maybe that's what's getting' to Cicotte.

The roughest part was listening to the hooting. "There'll be hell to pay today," I said to Faber on the way out, and I was right. They were all over Williams when he took the mound. "Cincinnati! Cincinnati!" That's all we heard all over the park. Apparently the Cleveland fans can read, too. We were even at two going into the fourth when we tapped the Polack for three hits and pushed two over. In the fifth Jackson came up and tied into one that went out onto the street. I don't suppose even Ruth's hit one farther. He circled the bases to the kinds of hisses you'd have heard the villain get in Vaudeville if Vaudeville had a theater that seated 30,000. He flipped them off rounding third, all 30,000 of them, and made them hiss even louder. Since Williams wasn't giving the Indians anything more, we didn't really need the home run, but it was a gesture even so. The final was 5-2. We were back within a half game.

I tried to shower and figure our chances over the final week at the same time. Doing two things at once had never come easy to me, especially if one of them involved math. We stood 93-56 going home to play Detroit Sunday and Monday. We didn't play after that until Friday when we had three in St. Louis. The Indians were 92-54, and they were getting on a train for four in St. Louis through Wednesday, then four more in Detroit. So aside from

keeping the team together another week - could we and did we want to? - the other problem was we only had five games left and they had eight. Since the Tigers were patsies, the issue would probably be decided by how the Indians did in St. Louis. But if they won all four of those, even if we beat the Tigers twice we'd still lose a game to them and only have the last weekend left. On top of that, it looked like the grand jury was going to move by Wednesday, so either in St. Louis or Chicago, our story would pretty well be told by then.

And I had a good idea how it'd come out, because Schalk made a point of coming to me on the overnight back from Cleveland. He went to Faber and Kerr and Nemo and Shano and all the boys, one by one. You could see him moving up and down the car.

"I'm going down there Tuesday and I'm gonna talk," he said.

"That'll be the end of it," I said. "The jury will issue indictments, and Commy will have to suspend them."

"That's OK by me." He paused a minute. "Strunk, you're lucky. You weren't around to see most of it. The cross-ups, the fumbles, the dropped cutoffs. At catcher you see every one of 'em. Maybe Cicotte can fool Johnson and Comiskey, but the bastard can't fool me. I know his fastball. I call for it and he gives me this thing you could read before you whale at it."

"In the Series last year...?"

"And some games this year, too. The same with Williams. Don't let anybody tell you we ain't been crooked this year. The fact is we'd have had it wrapped up already if we was an honest bunch of ballplayers. You remember when we got swept in Boston?"

"Yeah."

"We tossed 'em. Every one of 'em, I'd say, but for sure the ones Williams and Cicotte pitched. That's why the Kid pretty much ain't let Lefty near the mound since then. The last straw was Kerr. The little bastard dislocates his finger pitching out there the other day, walks over, has it put back in, then goes back out and don't give 'em nothing. Risberg, half the time he don't even run out his grounders. I seen Kerr and I made up my mind right there. If he's trying that hard, I ain't letting these other guys get away with shafting him. So I'm going in to talk, and I'm telling 'em everything I know, and as far as I'm concerned they can indict the lot of 'em. I don't care if we finish last."

Gleason gave the ball to Cicotte Sunday and he only gave the Tigers one run. Then Kerr came out on Monday and shut them out 2-0. So we had done what we could. But the Browns weren't helping any. Cleveland brushed them off both days...just like I figured. So

now we waited for Tuesday and Wednesday. There wasn't anything we could do but watch. We could watch in St. Louis, and we could watch in the jury room. Those were two places you didn't figure the pennant would be decided.

- - - - -

I wanted to be around the park Tuesday because if something happened I knew it would happen there. Schalk was downtown talking, but I didn't want to follow him and get called in myself. I wasn't alone in the clubhouse. The Kid was there. He'd already been in to see Commy. "Cicotte's coming down," he said. It was only a couple of minutes when the pitcher showed up. He was in with the Kid and Comiskey maybe 10 minutes. I didn't have much to say to him when he came out, but for once he stopped to talk to me. "I did it, Amos, and I'm sorry."

"You going to confess?"

"Right now. I'm going down there and talk."

"Who was in on it?" I asked.

"Swede...Hap...Jackson...Lefty...you know." He had his hat and coat, and looked like he was anxious to get going. I didn't want to give him time for second thoughts, so I got out of the door and let

him pass. Then it occurred to me that I'd forgotten to ask the one question I cared about the most. "What about this year?" I yelled down the hall. He didn't turn, but I heard him mumble something. Damn it, I couldn't make it out. Then he was on the street and in the cab and gone. I haven't seen the guy since.

I called Shano, he called Faber, he called Nemo and the word spread. You wouldn't think a guy owning up would be a cause for celebration when it ruined everything you've been playing for, but that's what we did. We got together at a downtown joint for dinner, then repaired up to Eddie Collins' apartment, where he had some hooch. We decided it shouldn't go to waste, so we basically spent the night getting plastered. Would it surprise you if I said that I recall very little about that night except that we toasted each other and I never did make it back to my room. Oh and I remember this: Schalk said he never did get in to testify. He said he spent the whole morning sitting out in the hall waiting to be called, and after three or four hours he found out they didn't need him because they had Cicotte. Isn't that a hoot? The darned fool sat out there all morning, and can't even spill his guts because Cicotte shows him up. We drank a few to the Cracker, you bet we did.

By the time we sobered up it was morning and the papers were full of the story. Cicotte had named names all right, seven of them. Jackson, Hap, Lefty, Swede, McMullin, Gandil and Weaver. The

papers say he owned up to getting ten grand, but he said the gamblers stiffed some of the guys. He didn't say anything about this year, and from the looks of things nobody asked. Turns out Jackson came down later in the afternoon and owned up too. The papers say they got a confession from him. Five grand, they say. The papers say he only wanted one thing: protection. "Risberg threatens to bump me off if I squawk," the papers say Joe told 'em. "That's why I had the bailiffs with me...the Swede's a hard guy."

The reporters found Felsch up in Wisconsin. "I don't know nothin' about it," he says. Same with Weaver, McMullin and Risberg. Williams confessed, but said he didn't get any cash. We were still holed up at Collins' place passing the papers around, but I for one wasn't in no mood to sit still. "The courthouse is the place to be today," I said, and we all piled into the two cars we had: Me and Nemo and Schalk and Eddie in one; Shano and Kerr and Murphy in the other. Nemo and Kerr looked the most sober, so they drove. It must have been past noon, but that turned out to be just right because when we pulled up the reporters were coming out of the building. They saw us and came over.

"Indicted...all eight," said Cruisenberry. "Two counts of conspiracy." He was happy, but not nearly as happy to tell us as we were to hear it. Nemo hugged Eddie, Eddie swatted me on the back, and I punched Murph in the ribs. "You guys shouldn't be so

happy," Cruisenberry says. "You don't have a chance at the pennant without 'em."

Good riddance," says Faber.

- - - - -

We boarded the train for St. Louis Thursday. There are usually two cars, but we hardly needed the second one. The whole team was just us eight plus a few scrubs and a couple of kids they called up to fill in. The Browns hadn't done us any favors, losing the last two to the Indians just like I figured they would. So we were a game and a half back and we needed plenty of help from Detroit. I don't remember anybody on the train talking about how we were going to win. But we all slept well. I know Cracker did. They stopped the train down in Litchfield, which is where he lives now, and all his friends had brought a bunch of the town out and they stopped the train. They wouldn't even let it go until we all of us get out on the platform and take a bow. Red told them he'd give it his best go on Friday, and said it's great to know how everybody behind him is square. "I didn't feel that way a few days ago," he said.

I moved over to center so a kid named Falk could play right, and we had another kid named McClellan at short. Murphy was out in left, Shano took third and Nemo was at first. It would have been

great if we could have whipped the Browns and at least made the Indians earn the pennant. Because they got rained out on Thursday, Cleveland was playing two in Detroit, and the scoreboard showed the Tigers winning the first one before ours was much underway. If we won we'd have been back within a half game depending on the second game in Detroit. But the truth is we didn't have our sticks and Red didn't have his stuff. They got five off him in the third, then Kid sat him down and went with Hodge and finally Kiefer, who was another kid we called up to fill in.

We got back to the hotel to find out the Indians had won the second game after all. So we were two out with two to play. Kerr went out Saturday and beat those Browns, which was all we could do. But it didn't matter because the Tigers barely put up a fight against the Indians, so they had it clinched by nightfall. I guess you'd have to say we were beat. Somehow we didn't feel like it.