

### The Weekly Log, 2/13/09

by Joe Mulder

Oh, Michael Phelps and Alex Rodriguez.

The Phelps story has died down a bit, and I was remiss in not addressing it in the previous Weekly Log, so I'll be brief.

First of all, if you're shocked or dismayed to find that Phelps smokes pot, then you're incredibly naive and that's all there is too it. Pretty much everybody smokes pot.

Second of all, the only ammunition anybody has to get self-righteous about pot is that it's illegal. Well, the fact that it's illegal is stupid, so I applaud those who ignore ridiculous laws against it and smoke away (I've never done it, just so you know where I'm coming from personally; the way I handle alcohol and gambling, while not having a deleterious effect on my life, has led me to believe that I need not add marijuana to the mix).

Third of all, let's please not do the "think of the children" routine here. Is it so hard to tell kids that if you can achieve your dreams and do your job at world class level, and you're an adult, then and only then can you take the occasional bong hit? "He's an adult, he can do what he wants," I'd tell my kid if she were disillusioned and devastated by the Phelps story. "You are not an adult, and I don't want to hear about you smoking or drinking until you are."

(notice I said "I don't want to hear about you smoking or drinking," not "I don't want you smoking or drinking." I'm a realist, after all)

Fourth, it's blatantly racist to make a big deal about Phelps. He's a relatively stupid (have you ever seen him interviewed?) rich 23-year-old athlete whose parents aren't together, and yeah, he likes pot. Would anybody even bat an eyelash if he were black? No, because pretty much everybody in the NBA is a pothead, and no one cares. Do we expect young black athletes not to know any better, but require more of Phelps? As a brilliant man once said, that's just the soft bigotry of low expectations.

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Alex Rodriguez took steroids.

At this point, who really cares? Does this change anything?

There's nobody left who could surprise us, other than maybe Tony Gwynn and Greg Maddux, is there?

And already people are wondering how this affects his Hall of Fame chances. It seems like the Hall of Fame – and, in a related matter, baseball's hallowed statistics – is really the main reason anybody cares about steroids in baseball at this point (nobody seems to care about steroids in football, after

all. If I remember correctly, Chargers linebacker Shawne Merriman recently tested positive for performance enhancing drugs, got suspended four games, and made the Pro Bowl *that same season*). I heard somebody say this week that in a decade or so, we may have years go by during which nobody is elected into the Hall of Fame, because everyone who's eligible will have the stink of steroids about him (although if that's what it takes to finally get Bert Blyleven in, I'd be okay with that). Now, am I crazy, or did Rickey Henderson just get voted in? I could have sworn I saw that on the news. He played until his mid-40s, got better in his late-30s and, towards the end of his career, essentially had a body like that of Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson... nobody's worried about him and steroids? Really?

Honestly, it takes a lot of balls to celebrate the huge home run totals of the late '90s and early '00s while they were happening, not to say anything about how it was weird that a skinny career .260 hitter like Sammy Sosa suddenly put on 30 pounds of muscle and went for 66, 63, 50 and 64 homers from 1998 to 2001, then get all indignant about guys who never got caught breaking any rules. Get mad at baseball for not having any rules whatsoever, if you're going to get mad. Or, better yet, get mad at the Players Union for doggedly protecting the guys who were in the process of ruining the integrity of an entire generation's worth of records and statistics.

I don't have a Hall of Fame vote (evidently my credentials are not impressive enough for those snobs, but let me ask you this: in the summer of 1999, did Terry Steinbach, Ron Coomer and Joe Mays of the Minnesota Twins interview *themselves* for my article in the *Marshall Independent*, the highest-circulating daily newspaper in southwestern Minnesota?), but if I did I wouldn't use it to try to make up for the fact that I stupidly got suckered into the turn-of-the-century home run hype, and now I feel like a chump.

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A small blurb near the beginning of this week's *Sports Illustrated* tells us of Bonnie Lincoln, a 23-year-old New Jersey Nets dancer. The magazine tells us that Bonnie is "a direct descendant of Honest Abe, 13 generations removed, and her family has a piece of his famed log cabin to prove it." Now, I'm not sure who fact-checked that puppy, but there are a couple of issues we've got to deal with. Having a piece of Abraham Lincoln's famed log cabin proves nothing, obviously, but since the front of *SI* turned into *Us Weekly* a few years ago and the write-up in question is just a stupid fluff piece, I'll allow it.

But let's delve deeper. It's not exactly a state secret that Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809; you can look that up pretty much anywhere. I will now do far, far more research than *Sports Illustrated's* Sarah Kwak, who wrote the piece, bothered to do, and I'll tell you that, using

## POOP READING

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the magazine's claim that Bonnie Lincoln is 23 and the Nets website's claim that her birthday is June 22, Bonnie was born in 1985. So, 1809 to 1985, give or take a few months. Remember, we're to believe that she's a direct descendant of Abraham Lincoln, "13 generations removed." She was born roughly 176 years after he was, so that would mean a new generation of Lincolns was apparently produced every 13-and-a-half years. That's some nice work, Lincoln family.

The real trouble, though, is that five minutes on Google will lead you to multiple sources that all tell you the same thing: Abraham Lincoln has no living descendants. He had four children, only one of whom, Robert, ever had children. Robert had three grandchildren, all of whom died childless. So, there you have it.

I won't go so far as to accuse Bonnie Lincoln of lying, by the way; I think it's easier to assume that somebody told her a direct descendant of Lincoln's, 13 generations removed, and she never bothered to stop and do the math. Also, I'm sure she comes from the same family line, and shares relatives a little further back up the Lincoln family tree. But still. The claims that the fluff piece makes are demonstrably false and easily proven so.

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Also in this week's *SI*, the Pop Culture Grid. The Pop Culture Grid is something they do every week, in keeping with the magazine's *Us* Weeklification; they take four athletes from major sports that people care about (or, sometimes, somebody from soccer or women's basketball) and have them each give short answers to five questions. Until this week, the greatest performance in Pop Culture Grid history came from Atlanta Braves catcher Brian McCann, who, in response to "If I were a Transformer, I would...", answered, "...transform into not being so fat."

McCann was topped this week, however, by Atlanta Thrashers center Bryan Little. He started off strong:

Time seems to stand still when... "I'm waiting in line at the airport"

Certainly true.

Then he really raised his game:

I'd like to come back as \_\_\_\_\_ in another life... "A falcon or an eagle"

Hard to imagine an answer more manly, or badass. He wasn't done:

Don't talk to me if you're a fan of... "Portuguese soccer teams"

I will always support hatred of soccer. It occurs to me that

the specificity of Little's answer might mean he actually follows soccer closely enough to have an opinion about Portuguese teams specifically, but I'll assume for the sake of argument – and for the sake of my burgeoning man-crush on Bryan Little – that he just picked Portugal to be funny, and that he thinks soccer is as lame as I do.

Those answers were merely prelude to what came next, however:

Favorite super model... "I don't really like tall skinny girls"

Yes, Bryan! Yes! We straight men – and I include myself in that group despite the fact that my romantic feelings for you are deepening even as I type these words – need to adopt a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to waifishness and anorexia-chic; if one more Jessica Alba or Kate Bosworth shows up on a red carpet looking like a concentration camp victim, I don't know what I'll do. Real manly men – men like Bryan Little and, to a much lesser extent, myself – like curves. We like boobs. We'd trample over 100 Mary-Kate Olsens to get to *half* of a Salma Hayek. We like women who look like Karen Mulder, my wife; not women who look like Karen Mulder, former Victoria's Secret model. We like women who look healthy and sexy, not like newborn colts. Thank you, Bryan Little. We need to keep fighting the good fight.

But he wasn't done yet:

\_\_\_\_\_ is completely underrated... "TV"

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Atlanta Thrashers center Bryan Little: The Greatest Man in the World.

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