

The

By CHARLES EINSTEIN

The Badgers were good but they were young, too young to be champs. That

Long Out

**H**E WAS a nice guy, Ray Lane was, and if you had told him in mid-July that he was going to play in the World Series, he would gladly have made allowances for your being tired, drunk or maybe brainsick. Like most first basemen, he distrusted anything that came his way unexpectedly, and besides, he was happily plying his trade for a team that represented York, Pennsylvania, where the only thing he could not anticipate was the throw from third.

So if he was startled to receive a call to return to the major leagues, Ray Lane was *astounded* to find himself, when he reported to the Badgers, in the violent throes of a pennant fight. He had played in the majors before—sixteen years, to be exact—but it was always with Washington, and that, in terms of a pennant, was enough said.

"This is a tense ball club," Nulty, the manager, said to Ray the day he arrived from York to join

Collier's for October 2, 1953





y Ray Lane was brought back

and it was too big a job for an old man

the Badgers. "They're young and they've got almost ten weeks to go and they're already tight."

"Why shouldn't they be?" Ray Lane inquired. "They're in first place by four games, and they've got New York and Cleveland running at them. I'm surprised you're not tighter than they are."

"Who said I'm not?" Nulty said unhappily. "How old are you, Ray?"

"Sixteen," Ray Lane said.

"I could have sworn you were older," Nulty said. "You got kids, isn't it?"

"Two," Lane said. "A boy fifteen, and Judy's twelve."

"And how old did you say you were?"

"Mine was a child marriage," Ray said. "What is more, I have a very nice house back in York, Pennsylvania, and a wife who was still talking to me when I left. So what are we going to do?"

"I'm going to want you to play first base," Nulty

said. "Not every day. Just enough. I understand you can still hit a ball."

Lane nodded. "Hard."

"Okay," Nulty said.

It was twelve games—seven of them as a pinch hitter, two as starting first baseman, another three when he went in during the late innings when the other side switched pitching arms—before Ray Lane got a hit. He was slow afoot, especially so in contrast to the terrible youth of his teammates, but Nulty knew what he was doing. Stokes, the twenty-year-old second baseman, playing his first year in the big league, found himself complaining in high, obscene tones when he found he had to range far to his left to field the balls that swept past Ray Lane's thwarted grasp. But it was a new responsibility and it took Stokes's mind off the terrors of playing his own position—and his fielding, suddenly, was the talk of the league.

On the other hand, Wadsworth, twenty-two years old, third base, found that this old man at the other end of his throws could catch anything he sent over there. That was also true, and maybe more so, of Limner, the regular first baseman for the Badgers, but Limner, like the others, was young, and had mastered his hands but not his feet. He still crossed his legs when he stretched to his right, and he could not come up the line to make the out with a back-tag when the throw was to his left. Nor did he know how to judge the speed of a man on first when the batter hit a double to right field, so he was not dependable on the cut-off; and he still was not sure of himself while serving as the human mid-sight for an outfielder's throw to the plate.

The little things, Ray Lane did automatically. He taught Aaronow, the right fielder, how to field a single and then, with the idle, customary motion

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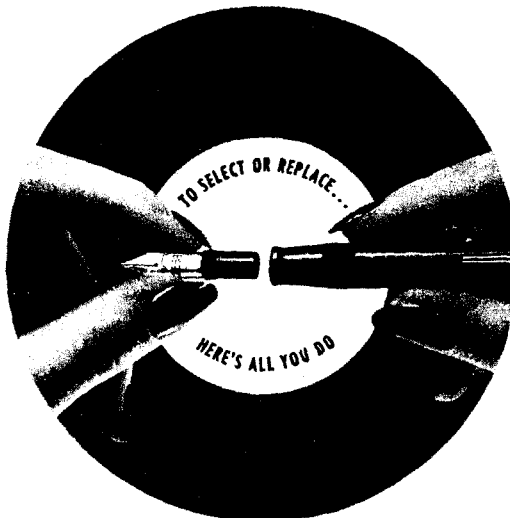
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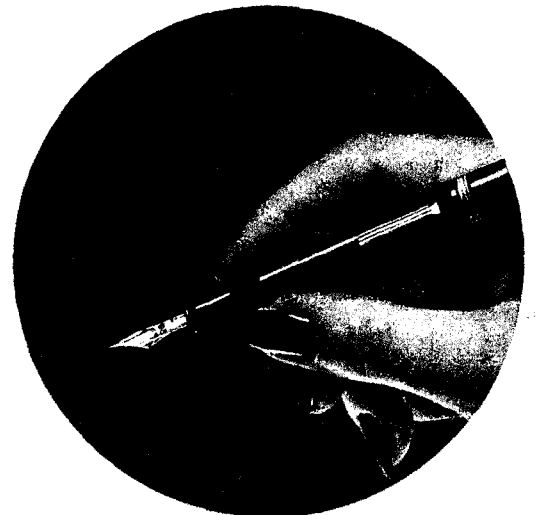
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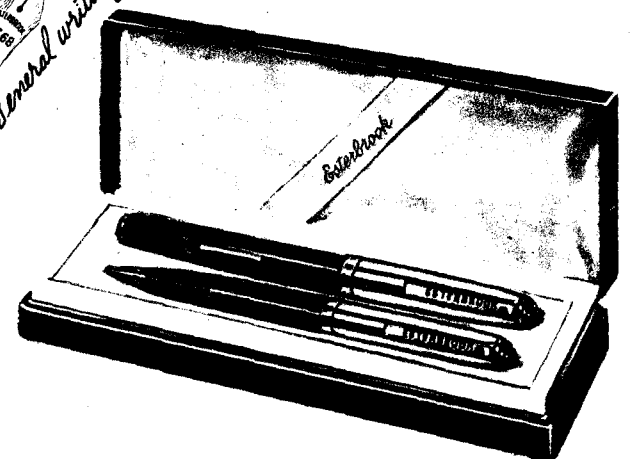
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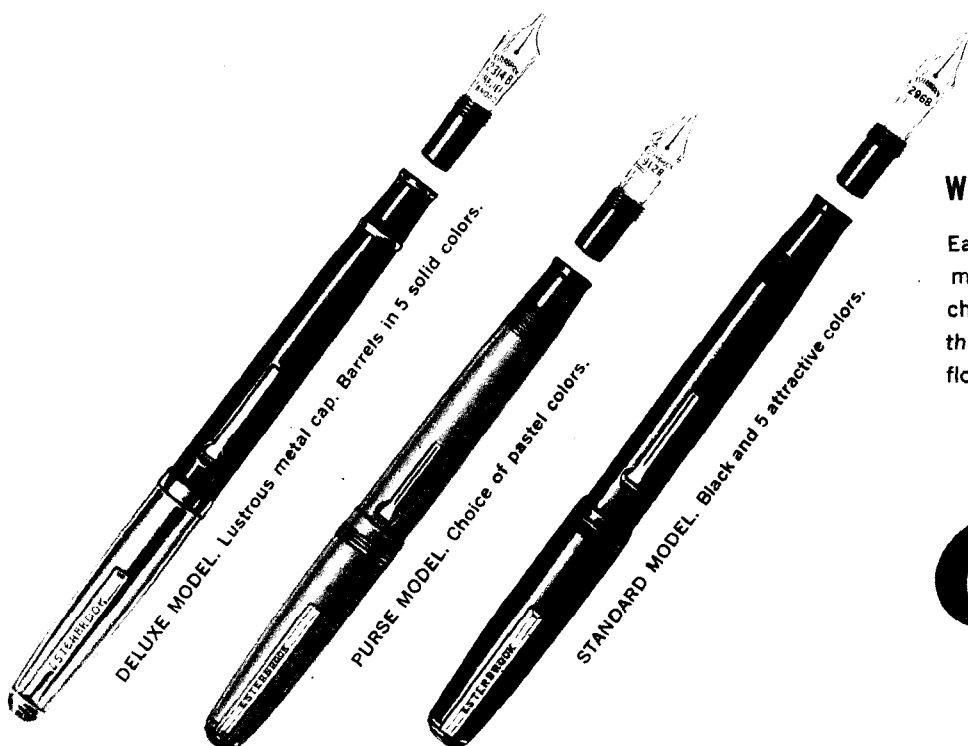
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of throwing the ball in to second base, fire it back to first instead, to get the runner as he made his turn. He knew just when to go to the dugout for a new shoelace, and how long to stay there to give a bull-pen pitcher more time to heat up, and his throw to the pitcher covering first was always led perfectly, always at shoulder height.

But nobody noticed these things—nobody except Nulty—and that was the way the manager wanted it. In a week's time, the youngsters on the ball club were feeling universal concern for the old man who occasionally played first base and pinch-hit. It was a peculiar feeling of concern: they did not feel that Nulty was letting them down by using Ray Lane—they could not feel that way, because the Badgers were winning—so it was more a spirit of helpfulness.

Then, in the twelfth game in which he appeared, Ray Lane hit a home run with the bases loaded in the last of the eighth. The ball had to travel 355 feet to clear the right-field barrier, but it exceeded that minimum. It soared into the upper right-field deck, and the Badgers, who had been behind 4 to 2, now led Cleveland 6 to 4, and won it that way. They led the league by seven and a half games now, and though six full weeks still remained to be played, Nulty knew he had it. It was nothing like the Dodgers' big lead over the Giants in 1951, when the Giants caught them. Then, the Dodgers had one hot club running at them, and the hot club won it. Back of the Badgers now were Cleveland, New York and—late-season strong as always—Philadelphia. They would knock one another off.

**THEY** would and they did. The Badgers won the pennant by three and a half games, though they were an easy five ahead when they clinched.

That was how Ray Lane, who in November would observe his thirtieth birthday, found himself in the World Series along with the Badgers. And, though few of his teammates, fewer of the fans and none of the sports writers acknowledged the fact, they could not have done it without Ray Lane.

"I'm not going to start you in the Series," Nulty told him.

"You only started me once all September," Ray said. "So why change now?"

"That's just it," Nulty said. "Limner hit three fifteen on the year. I got to go with him."

"Okay," Ray said.

"Only don't go anywhere," Nulty said. "I would like to see you around."

"I'll be around," Ray said.

The Series was to open in Brooklyn, and the Badgers, spick in their freshly cleaned gray traveling uniforms, took their practice before the first game with a gusto that fooled nobody. Brooklyn was the favorite; many experts picked them in four straight, figuring that even Welsh, the Badgers' best thrower with twenty-one victories on the season, could not get by the Brooklyn bats. The Badgers were lucky; their pennant was something of a freak, most readily comparable to the Phillies in 1950—and everybody remembered what had happened to the Phillies in the World Series. And the Badgers were inexperienced. The most experienced man they had, Ray Lane, was a fugitive from the minor leagues who had never played in a World Series in nearly two decades in the majors.

"I'm cold all over," Aaronow, the right fielder, said. He was sitting next

to Ray Lane on the bench, watching Brooklyn go through fielding practice. Aaronow was the Badgers' lead-off man. He would be the first batter in the World Series.

"It's just another ball game," Ray Lane said.

Aaronow leaned forward and swept his arms in an arc, indicating the jam-packed stands, the batteries of television cameras with their winking red eyes, the hordes of photographers, the brass band, the pennants and bunting that made the old Brooklyn ball yard a feast of color.

"Just another ball game, huh?" said Aaronow.

"That's all," Ray said.

"But you never been in a Series,"

the thousands in the ball park and the millions watching television.

So this, he said to himself, is what it feels like—the World Series.

Atop his head, there was a place, devoid of symmetry, where the hair had thinned away. He was tall and tired-looking as he stood there, holding his cap over his heart and listening to the music. His shoulders did not sag, but they had lost the alert presence that they had once had; his weight rested flatly on his heels as he stood there; his face was lined and weary.

When he got back to the dugout, he saw Nulty talking to Aaronow, the lead-off man. Aaronow had two bats, and he swallowed repeatedly, nodding quickly, as Nulty talked to him.



Aaronow said—he said it as fact, not accusation. "How do you know?"

"I'm just assuming," Ray said. He grinned. "No, it's not just another ball game. You get yourself a base hit your first time up, and you'll feel greater than you ever felt before."

"What if I strike out?"

Ray Lane shrugged. "What the hell! You've struck out before."

"Not against the Dodgers."

Ray shrugged again. "You've struck out against the Browns."

"Yeah," Aaronow said, "but nobody was looking."

**THEN** the players of both teams were going out, standing along the foul lines with caps doffed. The band was playing The Star-Spangled Banner. In the center of that dark-bright canyon of silent humanity, Ray Lane felt within him a new surge of feeling that ascended bursting from his chest to his throat. It was a feeling of great joy and splendor—that he was part of this magnitude and multitude, and at once he wished he could be playing in today's game, and yet was safely content to know he would not have to have himself exposed so mercilessly to

The Brooklyn team was running onto the field now, and the stands had erupted in mighty sound at the sight of the fresh white uniforms and blue caps as they spilled energetically from the home dugout.

Aaronow was going out toward home plate now, and Nulty came and sat next to Ray Lane.

Ray Lane unwrapped a stick of gum and put it in his mouth. "What'd you tell him?"

"I told him to take the first pitch."

"He's nervous as a cat," Ray said. "I bet he wishes you'd told him to swing."

"I know he's nervous," Nulty said. He pointed toward the mound where the Brooklyn pitcher was sweeping in the last of his warm-up throws. "He knows he's nervous too. They got a book on my hitters. Aaronow don't like them high. So you watch the first pitch. Up here." He drew his fingers across his throat. "They figure he'll swing at anything."

Now there was that last tense moment, with the crowd beginning to yell as the pitcher looked over his shoulder at his infielders, kicked the rubber, squared, rocked and threw. The ball

scorched in, high and inside. Aaronow let it go by. The umpire was a veteran National League man, one who disdained arm motions except where they were absolutely necessary. Now he twisted his face to the left, dipping his shoulders and torso rhythmically in the same direction.

"Bawun!"

Nulty crossed his legs. "Give me a piece of gum, Ray."

Ray Lane reached for his package of gum. "It's going to be a long Series."

"You're telling me?"

"Watch this," Ray said, and they saw the next pitch riding in, an out-curve, belt high. Aaronow went for it, and the ball, curving out as it was thrown, sliced by right-handed batsman against right-handed pitcher, lined into the ground halfway between the mound and the first-base line, skittered vigorously to the right, and tore on out through the hole and into right field for a single.

**I**N THE dugout, the Badgers were on their feet, yelling and calling with palms cupped to mouths. Stokes, the second baseman, went up, and Ray Lane saw the Brooklyn shortstop twist his body and yell something at the second baseman. Nulty, sitting next to him, was watching the Brooklyn catcher.

"Watch the pick," Ray said.

"I know it," Nulty said. "I'm sending him down." He flashed the steal sign to his third-base coach, who relayed it across the infield to Aaronow at first. The Badgers had four sets of signals; in addition, the signal to a runner on first could be given either by the first or third-base coach, according to prearrangement. Young and alert, the Badgers rarely missed a sign.

Brooklyn did try the pick. The first was high and outside, a pitchout, and the Brooklyn catcher sent it smoking down to second. They had Aaronow stealing by five feet.

"You see?" Nulty said.

"He'll learn," Ray Lane said. "Next year he'll run bases better than this year. If he'd broken one step later, that catcher would have thrown the ball to first base on the pick, and he could have had second clean."

"I know," Nulty said. "Well, it was worth it."

The Badgers got another hit in the first inning, and made only one error afield in the first three. They were nothing-nothing going into the sixth, but Brooklyn worked Welsh for a run and led it 1 to 0 going into the top of the eighth.

Wadsworth got on with a hit to left field for the Badgers and got forced at second on a sacrifice attempt, but the Brooklyn shortstop thought he had a play at first and threw the ball away, and the batter reached second on the sequence. Now, with one out and his pitcher due to bat, Nulty said, "Ray."

Ray Lane got up.

"Put it over that wall," Nulty said.

Ray Lane said nothing. He went to the bat rack and took out three bats, two of them thirty-eight-ounce bats and the third one thirty-six. He heard the public-address system announcing his name as he walked toward the batter's box. There was a dryness in his mouth, and he licked his lips, swung the bats tentatively, and kept one of the thirty-eights. He stepped into the box, working his spikes into the dirt until the feeling came up through his legs to tell him he was planted, anchored the way he wished to be. Then he took his stance, and looked out at

the mound, where the pitcher and the catcher were talking about him.

They had never faced him before, but they knew all about him. They knew he was an old man who could still hit a ball a mile, and their outfielders did not have to be told to move back. The infield moved back too, all except the third baseman, who was pulled in a little closer than midway against the left-handed batter and against the possibility of a play at third on the runner now at second.

They would pitch him inside and tight, under the wrists. He would pull an outside pitch just as easily as he would pull an inside pitch, but if the ball was breaking in and under, he would have trouble putting the fat of the bat on it while still keeping it fair. It was not a new science of pitching to left-handed power hitters, but it had entered a postwar vogue, ever since the Cardinals did it to Williams when they took the 1946 Series from the Red Sox. It worked well, too, if it was done right. The danger was that the pitcher would be off the mark and get so far behind he either must walk the man or pitch to his strength. But with a good pitcher, it worked. It worked against everybody but Musial—against Musial, nothing worked.

He saw it coming at him now, but even with the speed that was on the pitch he had it gauged, and knew it would not come in as far as the pitcher wanted it to. His wrists horsewhipped the bat around and he caught the pitch and sent it screaming, high and long, toward deepest right-center field.

The center fielder was in line with it, but he had his back turned, racing toward the flagpole. He got there an instant before the ball. With his back still turned he went up against the wall. The force of the ball as it tore into his high-flung glove smashed his wrist against the barrier.

But he held onto the ball. Ray Lane, slow as he was, had already rounded first base when the catch came. The stands were a roaring tumult of adulation for the center fielder.

Ray Lane went back into the dugout. He saw Nulty sitting there. "I should have pulled it more," Ray said.

The Badgers lost it 1 to 0.

**T**HEY should have lost the second game too, but they got a passed ball when they had to have a run, and after that they slapped the Brooklyn pitcher, a left-hander, out of there, and took the game 7 to 4.

That took the Series to the Badgers' ball park, and now it was a larger crowd, an eminently friendly, roughly adoring crowd that worshiped Nulty's embattled youngsters. In the fifth inning of the third game, Nulty sent Ray Lane in to pinch-hit with Brooklyn ahead 3 to 1, and Ray Lane drove a tremendous shot toward the lower stand in right field only to have the Brooklyn outfielder pluck it out of a spectator's grasp with an unlikely, plunging sweep of his glove.

Nulty kept him in the game, and Ray Lane went hitless. This was by far a bigger ball yard than Brooklyn's, and in the last inning Ray sent another distant shot to center, only to have the fielder get to it, going back and to his left.

Brooklyn won the third game 6 to 2. The Badgers took the fourth 9 to 0 behind Welsh, and then in the fifth game Nulty pulled in Rogers from his bull pen as a surprise starter, and Rogers stood Brooklyn stiff and won it 5 to 1.

They went back to Brooklyn leading

the Series three games to two, and they might have won it in the sixth game. They trailed by one run in the ninth; they had men on first and third and nobody out, and Ray Lane went in to hit and again he rode one long and far. The right fielder bounced up against the wall for it, but it spun out of his glove. The tying run came in, but the relay caught the next man as he tried to score. Ray Lane was on second base, breathing heavily, with a double. He stayed there. Brooklyn got a run in the tenth to win it, and the Series was tied again, going into the final game.

**T**HE morning papers, Ray discovered, were extravagant in their praise of him.

*The Long Out*, one of them said, nearly buried Brooklyn today. Forty-year-old Ray Lane (Ray winced), who's been smacking them so far only a Brooklyn outfielder could catch them, smacked one in the ninth that a Brooklyn outfielder didn't catch. Only luck and a run in the tenth saved our side from World Series extinction.

So, Ray Lane said to himself, you're *The Long Out*. And he had to admit it was true. He had to admit two other things—two things which he would have confessed to no one, not even Nulty. One was that his double in the ninth inning should have been caught. The right fielder had misplayed it, leaving a foot between himself and the wall behind him, so that when he went up he was off balance. The other thing was that he, Ray Lane, wanted one thing out of this World Series—the only World Series in which he had ever played, would ever play.

He wanted a home run.

It was almost juvenile, he knew, thinking it over. But the reasons were there, and he could not gainsay them. He had the power. They were not pitching to him accurately, and he could hit them. He had been robbed blind twice—three times, if you wanted to count that fast running nab by the center fielder in the second game. If the right fielder had caught the ball in the sixth game—even though, as a professional, he should have caught it—it would have been another robbery.

There was one way to show them.

Hit it where they couldn't get it.

"You're silly," Ray Lane said to himself, aloud. But saying it did not change anything.

He went up to Nulty before the final game. "Let me start," he said.

"You're nuts," Nulty said. "You think I'm going to commit myself with you before the game begins? I need somebody to hit a ball in the sixth inning and it's not your turn to bat, what am I supposed to do? What am I, a magician? Can I change my batting order in the middle of the game? You sit right here next to me, buddy boy. When I need you, I want you available."

A feeling grew in Ray Lane as the game unfolded. He was youthful again, and strong, and purposeful. He wanted one whack at this Brooklyn right-hander. One whack was all he needed.

It grew in him as Brooklyn got a run in the first, and another in the fourth. The Badgers got a run in the sixth, and then it was the top of the seventh and the Badgers had men on first and second with one out and the pitcher due to bat and Nulty, chew-

ing three pieces of gum at once, said, "Ray. Now."

Ray Lane bounced to his feet. As he strode out of the dugout, a strange and tremendous clamor rocked out at him from the stands. It came upon him suddenly that, without having helped his team to win a single game, he had become a feared specter, a legend who would go down in Series annals as the man who drove the outfielders back, made them climb the walls like human flies.

Such a story might have an added touch at the end. Ray Lane grinned to himself, dug in at the plate, and swung at the first pitch. It had come in high and outside, but not far outside, and he came around in time to pull it in a soaring arc that sent the ball whistling upward and onward, over the right-field screen—and fouled by about ten feet.

The roar of the crowd was an incessant pounding in his ears now. He hitched at his belt, watched the pitcher wiping the sweat from his face with the heel of his glove. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the fevered activity in the Brooklyn bull pen, saw the outfield pulled toward right and deep, the right fielder with his back against the barrier. He saw the right side of the infield back, the shortstop pulled over behind second base, the third baseman within reaching distance of the third—just in case—and his own teammates leading nervously off first base and second base.

**WORKING** without windup, the Brooklyn pitcher checked the runners, looked at the plate and let fly, and in the moment of time as the pitch rode in, Ray Lane knew that it was too good to be true.

The pitcher was going for the waste ball and had blown it. Instead, he had thrown the exact pitch that Ray Lane had just fouled out of the park. And Ray Lane, the old man, knew now how the story of *The Long Out* would end.

He almost laughed as he brought his bat around. This time there was no question of fair or foul. This time he had placed the ball exactly where he wanted it to go—on a slapping line over the head of the third baseman and out into the green vastness of left field, where it struck and bounced swiftly, rolling to the wall before the suckered outfielder could get to it from his starting place in left-center.

Both runners came around, and the Badgers led by a run. Ray Lane stopped at second base. Then the maddened Brooklyn pitcher grooved one for Aaronow, and the lead-off man hit it farther than he had ever hit anything in his life, upstairs in left field for a home run that put the Badgers ahead 5 to 2.

Nulty's eyes were red when Ray Lane got to the bench. "You want to stay in?" he asked. "You're aching to hit one out of the place. I can tell it. You want to stay in?"

Ray Lane shook his head. "Leave Limner in. He'll do you more good at first base."

"Nuts," Nulty said. "If you stay in you'll get to hit one more time. You want to, Ray?"

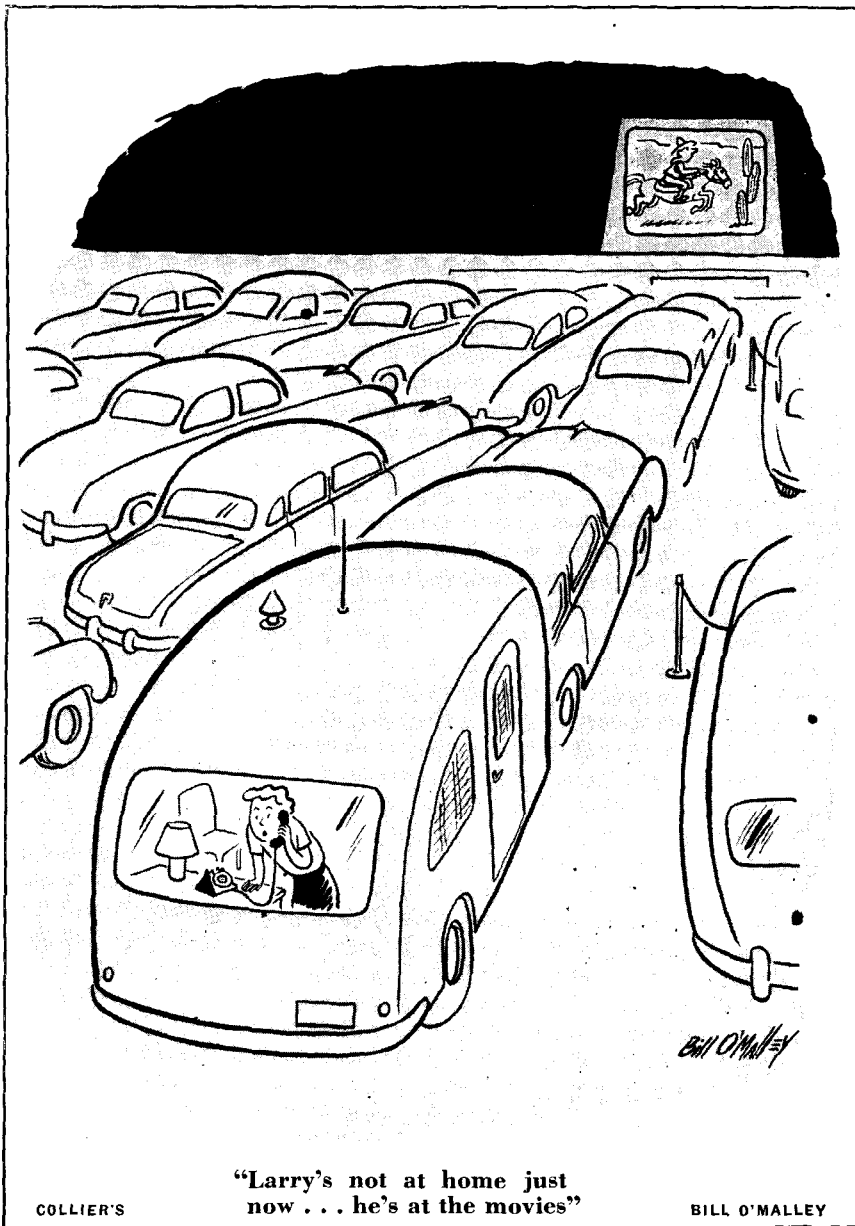
Ray Lane shook his head. He felt warmer, more satisfied, than he had ever felt before in his baseball lifetime.

"Well, all right," Nulty said. "But just say the word. I'd like to see you hit one."

"I already did," Ray Lane said.

—CHARLES EINSTEIN

Collier's for October 2, 1953



"Larry's not at home just now... he's at the movies"

COLLIER'S

BILL O'MALLEY





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## Inco Nickel... Your Unseen Friend



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# WHAT DO WE DO NOW

## RED



Russia's Andrei Vishinsky (left) welcomes General Wu Hsiu-chuan, head of Chinese Red delegation, to 1950 meeting of UN Security Council. Wu harangued the members on U.S. "aggression" in Korea

UNITED PRESS

With the Chinese Communists  
no longer shooting at us in Korea,  
should the U.S. recognize Peiping and  
vote to seat the Reds in the United  
Nations? Our former ambassador  
in the UN says no—and tells why

**O**UR future relations with Red China involve one of the great issues of American security—perhaps war or peace itself. From the day the Peiping government was formed in 1949, most of us—Republicans and Democrats alike—have opposed recognition of the Chinese Communist regime and its demand to be seated in the United Nations. So has our government, regardless of the party in power.

But a new situation has arisen. Red China has joined Communist North Korea in signing a truce with the UN to end the Korean war. Now that the Chinese have stopped shooting at UN soldiers, there is growing agitation in Britain and other non-Communist countries to give Peiping the seat it long has been demanding and to urge the U.S. to extend diplomatic recognition.

Should the U.S. follow Britain's example and recognize the Communist government in China, as Washington already recognizes Poland, Czechoslovakia and most other Soviet satellites? Should the U.S. agree to let Red China sit in the UN while continuing to withhold formal diplomatic recognition from her government? Or should the U.S. continue her present policy of both nonrecognition and opposition to seating Red China in the UN?

Before we try to answer these questions, let us consider the present policy of the United States and how it was arrived at. Our government's position toward Red China was not born on the spur of the moment. We adopted it when Mao Tse-tung's Communist armies drove Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists from the Chinese mainland to Formosa in 1949. We have maintained it successfully ever since.

Actually American policy toward China has been honest and consistent since eighteenth-century sailing ships first opened up the Asian continent

to trade with North America. From the beginning, it has been based on a desire that the Chinese people be free, independent—and friendly toward the U.S.

I will not attempt to allocate praise or blame for the successes or failures that have followed our latter-day attempts to achieve that goal. Enough to say that in its main essentials our policy has been supported by both Republicans and Democrats throughout: in the brighter days, when the Chinese Nationalists were winning the civil war; in the twilight (1944-'47), when U.S. Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley and Presidential representative General George C. Marshall tried in turn to persuade Chiang to take the Communists into his government, and in the black night of 1949, when the Reds conquered all mainland China.

The loss of China to the Communists was undoubtedly one of the worst defeats American foreign policy has ever suffered. Yet it took our people a surprisingly long time to appreciate the magnitude of this disaster. We were preoccupied with the problems of liquidating the war, reviving the vast and essential workshop of Europe, demobilizing our forces and dismantling the mightiest military establishment in history. Here, again, the policies and priorities were national in scope and bipartisan in accomplishment.

We were to have a sudden and shattering awakening, however. On June 25, 1950, the North Korean Communist army, armed and supplied by Red China and Russia, struck south across the 38th parallel into the United Nations-protected Republic of Korea. Five months later, Red China herself invaded Korea in force to rescue the defeated North Korean army.

These catastrophic events brought home to the American people for the first time the frightening knowledge that Communist conquest of China had exposed our entire Pacific flank to possible attack from the Asian