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GRANTLAND RICE

Even if Grantland Rice's name means nothing to you, it's entirely possible you have heard someone utter something about the four horsemen of a football apocalypse "outlined against a blue-gray October sky." They are arguably the most famous and certainly the most quoted words in sportswriting history. Rice (1880–1954) wrote them as he piled on adjectives and imagery to describe Notre Dame's backfield running amok against poor Army in 1924. The unofficial leader of the press box's Gee-Whiz contingent, he seemed to see every event he covered as the equivalent of the Trojan War. Some contemporaries mocked him and subsequent generations of sportswriters were even harsher. But Rice, the star of the *New York Herald Tribune's* sports page and a nationally syndicated columnist during the Roaring Twenties and the Depression, never stopped striving to paint word pictures for audiences in the age before TV. He was best when he took some of the purple out of his prose the way he did in the following story about a once-dominant pitcher recapturing greatness in the '24 World Series. Rice remained true to his vision of sports until the end. When he died, he did it the only place he could—at his typewriter.



Senators Win Title, 4–3

DESTINY, WAITING for the final curtain, stepped from the wings today and handed the king his crown.

In the most dramatic moment of baseball's sixty years of history the wall-eyed goddess known as Fate, after waiting eighteen years, led

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Walter Johnson to the pot of shining gold that waits at the rainbow's end.

For it was Johnson, the old Johnson, brought back from other years with his blazing fast ball singing across the plate for the last four rounds, that stopped the Giant attack, from the ninth inning through the twelfth, and gave Washington's fighting ball club its world series victory by the score of 4 to 3, in the seventh game of a memorable struggle.

Washington won just at the edge of darkness, and it was Johnson's great right arm that turned the trick. As Earl McNeely singled and Muddy Ruehl galloped over the plate with the winning run in the last of the twelfth, 38,000 people rushed on to the field with a roar of triumph never known before, and for more than thirty minutes, packed in one vast, serried mass around the bench, they paid Johnson and his mates a tribute that no one present will ever forget. It was something beyond all belief, beyond all imagining. Its crashing echoes arc still singing out across the stands, across the city, on into the gathering twilight of early autumn shadows. There was never a ball game like this before, never a game with as many thrills and heart throbs strung together in the making of drama that came near tearing away the soul to leave it limp and sagging, drawn and twisted out of shape.

Washington, facing the last of the eighth inning, was a beaten team, with the dream about dosed out. And then like a heavy blast from hidden explosives a rally started that tied the score, the two most important tallies of baseball lore sweeping over the plate as Bucky Harris's infield blow skirted the ground and suddenly leaped upward over Lindstrom's glove.

It was this single from the great young leader that gave Johnson his third and final chance. For, as the Giants came to bat in the ninth, with the score knotted at 3 and 3, there came once more the old familiar figure slouching across the infield sod to his ancient home in the box. Here once more was the mighty moment, and as 38,000 stood and cheered, roared and raved, Johnson began to set the old-time fast one singing on its way. With only one out in the ninth inning, Frank Frisch

struck a triple to deep center, but in the face of this emergency “Old Barney” turned back to something lost from his vanished youth, and as Kelly tried in vain to bring Frisch home, the tall Giant suddenly found himself facing the Johnson of a decade ago—blinding, baffling speed that struck him out and closed down on the rally with the snap of death.

Johnson was on his way, and neither Destiny nor the Giants could head him off. He had suffered two annihilations, but his mighty moment had come and he was calling back stuff from a dozen years ago. To show that he was headed for another triumph and that young blood was coursing through his veins again, he came to the eleventh and struck out Frisch and Kelly. It was the first time in four years of world series play that any pitcher had struck out the keen-eyed Frisch. But the Fordham Flash today was facing the Johnson that used to be, the Johnson that nailed them all, the high and low alike, with a fast ball that few could see and fewer still could hit.

All this while the drama of the day was gathering intensity from round to round. Washington missed a great chance in the eleventh after Goslin had doubled, but the end was now near at hand. The human heart couldn't hold out many moments longer. The strain was too great for any team or any crowd to stand. Thirty-eight thousand pulses were jumping in a dozen different directions at the same moment as nervous systems were going to certain destruction.

For four innings now Johnson had faced Nehf, Bentley and McQuillan and two of these had been his conquerors. He was on the verge of getting his complete revenge in one sudden swirl of action. Still cool, serene and steady with the old right arm coming through with its easy and endless rhythm, Johnson again rolled back the Giant charge in the twelfth. In these four innings he had fanned five men, and most of them were struck down when a hit meant sudden death.

The long, gray afternoon shadows had now crept almost across the field. There was grave doubt that even another inning could have been played when fate in the shape of a catcher's mask intervened. With one man out and Bentley pitching, Ruehl lifted a high foul back of the

plate. Hank Gowdy, one of the most reliable of all who play, started for the ball, but in dancing beneath it his feet became entangled in the mask and before he could regain his balance the ball dropped safely to earth through his hands.

This was the spot which destiny picked as the place to hand "Old Barney" the long delayed crown, for Ruehl on the next swing doubled to left. Johnson was safe on Jackson's error at short, and with only one out McNeely decided to follow the Harris attack. He slashed one along the ground to third, and as Lindstrom came in for the ball, for the second time in the game the ball suddenly bounded high over his head as Ruehl crossed with the run that brought world series glory to Washington's game and crippled club.

The hit that tied it up and the hit that won were almost identical, perfect duplicates, as each reared itself from the lowly sod as if lifted by a watchful and guiding fate that had decided in advance that Washington must win. In the wake of this hit the ravings and the roarings again came near dislodging the rafters of the big stands. For this was the hit that meant Johnson's triumph, the hit that meant Washington's victory.

No club from the sixty years of play ever came from behind as often to break down the ramparts and get to the top. But Washington had the habit, and even when crippled and almost beaten Harris and his mates refused to waver for a moment as they formed again with what remnants were left to lead another counter charge. It was a home run by Harris that gave Washington its first score, and it was the manager's single that gave Johnson his closing chance to follow the old dream to the end of the route.

While Barnes held the winners to one hit for six innings, he weakened at last, and McGraw threw in Nehf, McQuillan and Bentley in a vain effort to save a waning cause. Washington, needing two games to win on Wednesday night, had won them both by one of the gamest exhibitions in the long span of all competitive sport.

Another perfect day with another spread of blue sky and yellow sun, the seventh in succession, helped to bring about the second

\$1,000,000 world series, the first being last year. This made the fourth \$1,000,000 program in American sport: Dempsey–Carpentier, Dempsey–Firpo and two world series, with the former fight on top by nearly a million iron men.

The gathering around the Presidential box just before the first salvo was fired indicated the day's first excitement. When the cameramen reached the scene in the scurrying groups they discovered the President and Mrs. Coolidge, Secretary Slemo, Judge Landis, John J. McGraw, Bucky Harris and Clark Griffith all set for the last official pose of the long war's final day. With the ball park packed to the ultimate elbow, the crowd outside was even larger, as endless lines extended back around corners and alongside streets, almost blocking traffic. Inside it was a quieter and more tense gathering than the day before, with a part of the pre-game chatter stilled.

It was not until Warren Harvey Ogden, "The Sheik of Swarthmore," struck out Fred Lindstrom to start the game that rolling waves of sound indicated the amount of suppressed excitement.

After Ogden had walked Frisch he gave way to Mogridge with a string of lefty-handed hitters up, including Terry. The idea was to have Terry announced with a right-hander pitching so that if once removed with a left-hander in he was out of the series.

Great plays began to sparkle early like diamonds shining in the sun. In the second inning Hack Wilson slapped one along the ground at a whistling clip almost over second base. Here was a budding hit, if we ever saw one. But Bluege, who is remarkably fast, cut over and by an almost impossible effort knocked the ball down with his glove, scooped it up with the right and nailed his man at first from short center by a cannonball throw.

In the third inning Joe Judge started one toward right center with a rising inflection. It was on its way to gold and glory when Frank Frisch broke the high jump record and cut off a budding triple. After three innings and a half of brilliant pitching the first big crash came in the fourth. Here, with one out, came Bucky Harris reaching for another laurel sprig. His line drive over Hack Wilson carried into the stands,

although Hack almost broke his massive spine in trying to pull down the drive. His impact with the low, green barricade sounded like a barrel of crockery being pushed down the cellar stairs.

Just a moment later the same Hack, having recovered his breath, came racing in for a low, rakish hit by Rice. He dived for the ball and dug it up six inches from the turf, skating along for many feet upon his broad and powerful system, stomach down. Here was another hit totally ruined by fancy fielding.

The sixth was replete with loud noises and much strategy. It was here that the stout Washington defense cracked wide open. Mogridge started the trouble by passing PepYoungs. Kelly laced a long single to center, sendingYoungs scurrying around to third. Here McGraw sent in Meusel to hit for Terry and Harris countered by removing Mogridge, the southpaw, and sending Marberry to the rifle pit. Meusel lifted a long sacrifice fly to Sam Rice, scoringYoungs. Wilson followed with a lusty hit, sending Kelly to third. Here the run getting should have ended.

Jackson tapped one sharply to Judge at first, and Judge, attempting to hurry the play for the plate, fumbled the ball and lost his bearings completely as Kelly scored, Jackson reached first and Wilson moved to second on a simple chance. Gowdy tapped one along the ground toward Bluege, and this brilliant infielder let the ball trickle between his feet to left field as Wilson came over with the third run. It was a pitiful infield collapse after a day of superb support up to this moth-eaten spot. The infield cave-in gave the Giants two extra runs and a tidy lead.

The eighth was the most dramatic spot of the entire series. It was full of throbs, thrills and noises. With one out, Nemo Leibold, batting for Taylor, doubled down the left field line. This started the racket with a howl and a roar. Ruehl then drew his first hit of the series, an infield blow that Kelly knocked down but couldn't field. With the clamor increasing at every moment, Tate, batting for Marberry, walked, filling the bases, with only one out. There was a brief lull as McNeely flied out. The vocal spasm broke loose with renewed fury when Harris

rapped one sharply toward Lindstrom, and the ball, after skirting the ground, suddenly bounded high over Lindstrom's head for the single that scored Leibold and Ruehl and tied it up. Harris had driven in all three runs and the gathering paid its noisiest acclaim.

It was Art Nehf who checked Washington's assault and it was Walter Johnson who hurried in to face the Giants in the ninth with his third shot at destiny.

For a moment in the ninth he rocked and reeled on the edge of the precipice. With one out Frisch tripled to deep center. But after Johnson had purposely passed Pep Youngs he struck out Kelly and then led Meusel to an infield out that left Frisch stranded far from home.

Washington came within a span of winning in the ninth. With one gone Joe Judge laced a single to center. Bluege tapped to Kelly at first and Kelly whipped the ball at high speed to Jackson, the ball bounding away from Jackson's glove as Judge raced to third. A man on third and first and only one out—what a chance. But Miller rammed one sharply to Jackson at short and a crushing double play wiped out Washington's chance with Judge almost home.

Groh, batting for McQuillan, opened the ninth with a clean hit. He limped to first and gave way to Southworth. Lindstrom sacrificed, but Johnson, calling on all he had, struck out Frisch and Kelly in a row, Frisch fanning for the first time in four years of world series play.

It was Johnson's day at last.