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HOW BASEBALL PLAYERS BECAME CELEBRITIES

*Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth transformed America's pastime
by becoming a new kind of star.*

By Louis Menand

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Gehrig's name will forever be linked with Ruth's. They were the best hitters in baseball, but they were polar opposites. Photograph of Lou Gehrig from Everett

background in advertising and publicity for automobile companies that prepared him to become the first sports agent in the modern mold. He wasn't just a promoter or a handler but someone who took charge of an athlete's complete on-field and off-field package, who controlled the publicity as well as the contracts. He signed his first client in 1921. And that client turned out to be the greatest sports figure of his day, or possibly, with the exception of Muhammad Ali, of any day: Babe Ruth. Ruth didn't just do what every ballplayer did but better. On the field and off, he was in a class by himself.

Walsh began working for Ruth just as advertising was joining forces with the new "science" of public relations, a union that produced the entertainment-media-merchandising combine that supplies much of the content for contemporary American culture. Walsh understood how that synergy worked, how the entertainment feeds the media and the media feeds the sales. Stories in the papers about Babe Ruth visiting an orphanage, say, are good for the Babe Ruth brand. They raise the value of Ruth's next endorsement deal. But stories about Babe Ruth also sell newspapers, which then can sell more advertising space. It's in everyone's interest (including the orphanages') to make Ruth a magnet for public eyeballs. All Ruth has to do is to keep hitting home runs and winning championships. The agent takes care of the rest.

This multiplier effect is why the stars' incomes keep rising exponentially—why Tiger Woods, who has made about a hundred and twenty million dollars in prize money, is said to be worth close to a billion. Everyone in the combine wants Tiger to continue to make money so they can continue to make money off Tiger.

As several writers, including Jane Leavy, in "The Big Fella: Babe Ruth and the World He Created" (2018), and Thomas Barthel, in "Babe Ruth and the Creation of the Celebrity Athlete" (2018), have explained, Ruth seems to have been the first athlete to leverage his success in this way, to make more money off the field than on it. By 1926, his twelfth year in the major leagues, Ruth's salary was fifty-two thousand dollars, far more than any other ballplayer's, but he made at least twice that much in outside income. Shortly after ending the World Series that year by being tagged out trying to steal second base, he went on a twelve-week vaudeville tour for which he was paid a hundred thousand dollars.

It's no coincidence that the decade in which this entertainment-media-merchandising combine developed is known as the Golden Age of American sports. When writers use that term, they are not

talking only about the games. They are talking about the stars, people like Ruth, Red Grange, Bobby Jones, Johnny Weissmuller, Jack Dempsey, Bill Tilden, Helen Wills, Gertrude Ederle. They dominated their sports. They set records. And the combine loves records.

Christy Walsh did not invent celebrity product endorsements and appearance fees. Before Ruth met Walsh, he had already endorsed a brand of baseball bat and of cigars, and a children's book, "The 'Home-Run King'; or, How Pep Pindar Won His Title," had been published under his name. Walsh simply widened the stream. He arranged for Ruth to act in vaudeville and movies. He put Ruth and some of his teammates on barnstorming tours, playing exhibition games around the country. (Each year, Ruth was paid to play from fifty to a hundred off-season games.) Ruth's endorsement appeared on more than a hundred products, including Quaker Oats and All-America underwear. (The Baby Ruth candy bar was marketed without Ruth's consent. Ruth sued, but the courts backed the candy-maker.) His face was on the cover of magazines from *Time* and *Vanity Fair* to *Hardware Age* and *Popular Science*. In 1934, when the Associated Press ranked the most photographed people in the world, Ruth was No. 1, ahead of F.D.R., the Prince of Wales, and Adolf Hitler.

Walsh's first deal for Ruth was a newspaper column, though the star never wrote—or likely even read—a word of it. Ruth's ghostwriters were usually reporters who travelled with the team, hung out with Ruth, and picked up enough odds and ends—Ruth telling the story of his most recent home run, for instance—to turn out a weekly column. And the money was good. In the first year, after Walsh and the writers had taken their cuts, Ruth made fifteen thousand dollars. Walsh went on to create a stable of more than thirty ghostwriters who produced columns under the bylines of athletes such as Ty Cobb, Dizzy Dean, Walter Johnson, and Rogers Hornsby. Among them was a twenty-four-year-old first baseman named Lou Gehrig.

Gehrig's name will forever be linked with Ruth's. They were the best hitters on the best team in baseball, the New York Yankees. Between 1920, the year Ruth started playing for the Yankees after being sold to the team by the owner of the Boston Red Sox, and 1938, Gehrig's last full season, the Yankees won ten American League pennants and seven World Series. (Ruth also won two championships as a pitcher for the Red Sox, setting a Series record of twenty-nine and two-thirds consecutive scoreless innings, which would not be broken until 1961.)

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Professional sports right now is a COVID-19 ghost town. The games have vanished. There are few events to cover and almost nothing to broadcast. Yet, eerily, the industry lives on. Reporters file stories and analysts hold forth even though the stadiums are empty. Athletes are paid even though they are sitting around the house. A chunk of your cable bill is going to Major League Baseball even though there are no major-league baseball games to watch. M.L.B. is selling Mookie Betts Dodgers jerseys and the N.F.L. is selling Tom Brady Buccaneers jerseys even though no one knows when they will ever play for those teams. In Las Vegas, you can get 3–1 odds on the Yankees to win the World Series.

It's a reminder that the industry is much bigger than the games and, in a sense, only minimally needs them. Sports sells newspapers, television shows, Web sites, as-told-to books, and exercise regimens. Professional athletes make endorsements, get paid for appearances, take parts in movies, license their names to video games, and have their own product lines. The stars at the very top of their sports make more money from these things than they do from competing. And, of course, there's the gambling. The idea of games in empty arenas is not as far-fetched as it sounds. As long as you have stars and scores, you have an industry. Hot-dog vendors and parking-lot attendants will be out of work, but most of the business can go on.

The rise of sports as big business and the handling of athletes as human capital are often dated to 1960, the year Mark McCormack founded the International Management Group, with Arnold Palmer as his first client. McCormack saw that in sports, as in Hollywood, it's the stars that sell the product, and he turned athletic success and good publicity into dollars. Thanks to television, the number of available dollars for the clients of sports agents mushroomed.

But the possibilities had been glimpsed and the opportunities realized almost forty years earlier, by a man named Christy Walsh. Walsh was born in St. Louis in 1891, and went to college in Los Angeles. He bounced around a little—worked as a sports cartoonist and a ghostwriter—but it was his

The 1927 Yankees have been called the greatest team in baseball history. With Ruth hitting third and Gehrig cleanup, the Yankees won a hundred and ten games, and lost only forty-four. Ruth batted .356 and hit sixty home runs, a single-season record that lasted for thirty-four years and has been surpassed by only four men, three of whom are widely believed to have been jacked up on steroids. Gehrig hit .373, with forty-seven homers and a hundred and seventy-three runs batted in—a record for R.B.I.s at the time and not an easy thing to do when the man ahead of you hits sixty home runs. In the World Series, the Yankees beat the Pirates in four straight.

Gehrig idolized Ruth as a ballplayer, and Ruth was easy to get along with. They travelled together, played bridge together, and barnstormed together. They had both started out as pitchers—Gehrig pitched in college, but Ruth won ninety-four games in his big-league career and had a lifetime E.R.A. of 2.28, seventeenth on the all-time list—and they sometimes pitched to each other in exhibition games. Ruth was often a guest for dinner at Gehrig's house.

But they were polar opposites. Ruth was all flamboyance and swagger. He bought expensive cars and wrecked them. He wore raccoon coats and smoked big cigars. He gambled and caroused. His annual contract negotiations were big news. He was famous to the public for his appetite for food and drink; he was famous to his teammates for his appetite for sex. He made no secret of it. Fred Lieb, who covered the Yankees, wrote, "His phallus and home-run bat were his prize possessions, in that order."

On road trips, Ruth would be out all night partying, getting back to the hotel at dawn. "I don't room with Babe Ruth," his assigned roommate on one trip, Ping Bodie, is supposed to have said. "I room with his suitcase." The team, in exasperation, once hired a detective to follow him around one night when the Yankees were in Chicago. The detective reported back that Ruth had been with six women.

It had no effect on his play. "The Babe was always doing something," Marshall Hunt, a reporter who covered Ruth year-round for the *Daily News*, recalled. "Perpetual motion. . . . I don't think I ever saw him sitting around." The key to Babe Ruth, though, was this: everybody loved him. "God, we liked that big son of a bitch," Waite Hoyt, the ace of the 1927 Yankees team, said. "He was a constant source of joy."

Everybody respected Lou Gehrig. They did not love him. He was good-natured but distant. He had a distinctly un-Jazz Age persona. "This sturdy and serious lad takes copybook maxims as his guides in

life and lives up to them,” a *Times* columnist wrote after the Yankees won the Series in 1927. “‘Strive and succeed.’ ‘Early to bed, and early to rise.’ ‘If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.’ ‘Labor conquers everything.’ And all the rest of them.”

Ruth had a gift for baseball. He was not only the best power hitter on the Yankees; he was also the best bunter. When he played the outfield, he never threw to the wrong base. Those were things Gehrig had to work at. Fielding was a challenge. Just figuring out which foot to put on the bag (he played first base, the traditional position for oversized sluggers with limited defensive skills) was a challenge. “He was one of the dumbest players I’ve ever seen,” Miller Huggins, Gehrig’s first Yankee manager, said. “But he’s got one great virtue that will make him: he never makes the same mistake twice.”

“Ruth has the mind of a fifteen-year-old,” the president of the American League once said in frustration during some Ruthian commotion. Gehrig was a case of arrested development, too, but in a different way. Until 1933, when he turned thirty, he lived with his parents. He brought his mother to spring training. When the team was on the road, he would leave the hotel after dark and walk the streets by himself so his teammates would think he had plans. He usually signed whatever contract the Yankees sent him. In 1927, the year he was the American League M.V.P., his salary was eight thousand dollars. The following year, it was raised to twenty-five thousand. Ruth was making seventy.

In short, Gehrig was a Golden Age anomaly. In 1929, *The New Yorker* ran a profile of him, with the interesting title “The Little Heinie.” “Lou Gehrig,” it began, “has accidentally got himself into a class with Babe Ruth and Dempsey and other beetle-browed, self-conscious sluggers who are the heroes of our nation. This is ridiculous—he is not fitted in any way to have a public.” The reporter asked Gehrig if he planned to get married. “My mother makes a home comfortable enough for me,” he said. Unlike Ruth and Dempsey and the rest of the Golden Age stars, Gehrig did not want attention, and this was because, unlike the others, he did not need attention. He stayed in his lane. He liked being boring.

Part of the mythology of American sports in that era was that it was a means of social mobility, a way for the children of farmhands and factory workers to make their way into the middle class, and even, for special talents, to acquire wealth and celebrity. In the case of baseball, at least, the myth

was mostly a myth. Ballplayers in Gehrig and Ruth's time came from families that were relatively well off. Steven Riess, in "Touching Base," a study of the sport in the early years of the twentieth century, reported that, of players active between 1900 and 1919, only eleven per cent had fathers who were unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, even though forty-five per cent of workers nationwide were semi-skilled or unskilled. Ten per cent had fathers who were professionals, against three per cent in the population as a whole.

But the myth *was* true for some of the Golden Age stars, Ruth and Gehrig among them. When Ruth was seven years old, his parents sent him to St. Mary's Industrial School for Orphans, Delinquent, Incurable, and Wayward Boys, in Baltimore, basically a reform school run by brothers of the Order of St. Francis Xavier, and he spent most of the next dozen years there. It's where he learned to play baseball. "I didn't have a thing till I was eighteen years old, not a bite," he said years later, when he was living the high life. "Now it's bustin' out all over."

Gehrig's parents were German immigrants. His father was a metalworker who was often unemployed. The family was held together by Gehrig's mother, Christina, a dynamo who cooked, cleaned, and did laundry to support the family, and who took over the life of Lou, her only surviving child. They lived in Yorkville, in upper Manhattan, and were poor even by the standards of the neighborhood. They later moved to Washington Heights. Lou's nickname at school was Fat.

The Gehrigs spoke German at home; Lou did not learn English until he was five. (German was also the language in Ruth's house, and he spoke some German when he came over for dinner.) Gehrig got the attention of the sports world when he was in high school, after hitting a tape-measure home run at Cubs Park, in Chicago, where Gehrig's team, New York City's best, had gone to play Chicago's best. That was in 1920, the year Ruth came to the Yankees.

Gehrig enrolled at Columbia (his mother had worked in a Columbia frat house), starting, painfully, in the extension school. He found schoolwork a struggle, but he was essentially a recruited athlete, playing football and baseball and clouting mammoth home runs.

Before Ruth came along, most major-league baseball was "small ball." Hitters choked up on the bat and tried to advance the runner. It was a game of bunts and stolen bases. Ruth was a free swinger. He struck out a lot, as home-run hitters do, but when he connected he hit circus shots that flew over the

fences and often landed on a street outside the park. It turned out that people found the monster homer more exciting than the hit-and-run. Ruth transformed the sport.

Scouts now found themselves tasked with discovering “the next Babe Ruth,” and Gehrig qualified. He signed with the Yankees in 1923, and on June 1, 1925, he took over at first base. He would play there for 2,130 consecutive games, a month shy of fourteen years. This was an era in which ballplayers had nicknames: Pepper Martin, Mule Watson, Muddy Ruel, Rabbit Maranville, Dazzy Vance, Pie Traynor. For years, sportswriters tried to come up with a nickname for Gehrig, but nothing seemed to stick. Then, in 1931, midway through the consecutive-game streak, a reporter for the New York *Sun* named Will Wedge called him the Iron Horse. It stuck.

A minor irony of the Ruth-Gehrig dichotomy is that Ruth didn’t look like an athlete. He had a big upper body but slender wrists and ankles and skinny legs—“toothpicks attached to a piano,” as someone described them. Gehrig was built like a power hitter. He was muscles from top to bottom—his heinie was not little—and, while Ruth’s homers were usually towering fly balls, Gehrig’s were line drives. Also unlike Ruth, Gehrig was extremely good-looking. He was designed for the combine.

That is what Christy Walsh must have felt when he signed Gehrig up, in the summer of 1927, the Yankees’ annus mirabilis. It was not the pennant race that was attracting the fans then. It was the so-called Home Run Derby between Gehrig and Ruth. (The press would reprise the derby in 1998 as a race between a pumped-up Mark McGwire and a pumped-up Sammy Sosa. The second time as farce.)

Ruth had set the single-season home-run record, fifty-nine, in 1921, and he boasted of his determination to break it. Gehrig was keeping pace, and the home-run lead seesawed between them through the summer. Walsh realized this was a good time to syndicate a column for Gehrig. “There was a ready market at boom prices, for the autobiography of this clean-living, level-headed son of a poor New York family,” as he put it in his memoir, “Adios to Ghosts” (1937).

There were twenty-nine first-person Lou Gehrig columns, run under the headline “Following the Babe.” “Gehrig tells his story of dreams come true—high school victories, college glory, and big league fame—in a manner that will inspire every boy and parent in the land,” an accompanying description proclaimed. The columns appeared in the Oakland *Tribune*, the Pittsburgh

Press, and the *Ottawa Daily Citizen*—three outlets obscure enough that they remained undiscovered for decades.

They were finally exhumed by Alan Gaff, who has brought them out as “Lou Gehrig: The Lost Memoir” (Simon & Schuster). “No matter who wrote down the words, there is no doubt that Lou’s memoir came directly from the heart,” he writes. Well, some doubt is possible. Like most sports autobiographies before Jim Bouton’s “Ball Four,” in 1970, Gehrig’s “memoir” adheres to the code of the professional athlete, which is never to speak ill of another professional athlete or of one’s sport. So Gehrig (or his ghost) writes of Ty Cobb, “Ty has been panned a lot. But he’s a great fellow. . . . I consider Ty Cobb one of my best friends in baseball.” A recent biography, “Ty Cobb: A Terrible Beauty,” by Charles Leerhsen, suggests that Cobb’s reputation as an especially vicious racist is undeserved. (Gehrig, for his part, was in favor of integrating the sport, and said so.) But it is undisputed that Cobb was a mean competitor who got into fights with opposing players and fans. Gehrig supposedly once tried to get into the Tigers’ locker room after a game to beat him up. The incident is explained away in one column as a performance for the fans.

And it’s like that in all the columns. Everyone is a great fellow; baseball is a noble sport—“I don’t believe I would have met a finer group of men anywhere than I have met in baseball. Nor a squarer, fairer lot of men, either.” Are these Gehrig’s own words and voice? The information about his life clearly came from him, and one imagines the ghostwriter also asked him for his opinions of other famous players, like Cobb and Ruth, and then transformed whatever he said into anodyne language.

But reproducing the ghosted subject’s actual voice was never the ghostwriter’s job. Walsh would have stopped him if he tried. A ghostwriter was not supposed to write the way his celebrity talked, Walsh thought. He was supposed to write the way the public thought his celebrity talked. It’s not about expression. It’s about promotion. Still, Gehrig was a good guy, and he thought in clichés. If he had written the columns himself, they probably would not have sounded much different.

Unless you lived in or near a major-league city and could get to the stadium, newspaper accounts and box scores were almost the only way you could follow a team. That’s why Walsh could make good money with his ghostwriting syndicate—the national appetite for baseball news and gossip was much greater than the supply. And one reason for this had to do with the way the league did business when Gehrig and Ruth played.

The owners of the Yankees, gentlemen known as “the two Colonels,” Jacob Ruppert, Jr., and Tillinghast Huston, knew what they were doing when they paid a hundred and ten thousand dollars, plus a loan of three hundred thousand, to get Ruth from the Red Sox. Ticket sales were the main source of revenue, and Ruth started paying dividends right away. In his first year, 1920, he hit fifty-four home runs, and home attendance was more than a million, the first time any club had attracted that many fans. The Yankees were then sharing the Polo Grounds with the Giants, but in 1923 they moved into a new stadium in the Bronx, with seating for fifty-eight thousand fans. They made a lot of money.

They could have made more. In “Creating the National Pastime,” the historian G. Edward White points out that, even as it was becoming *the* American sport, baseball was a business run in a strangely backward way. Basically, it seems not to have understood who its consumers were, or, even stranger, how many of them there were.

Team owners and league officials resisted several changes that would have helped the product and enhanced revenue. A glaring failure was the refusal to integrate the sport. Everyone knew there were great ballplayers in the Negro Leagues; Gehrig and Ruth sometimes played exhibition games against them. But baseball remained a Jim Crow sport until 1947.

There was also fierce resistance to night games. The technology needed to play night baseball was in place by 1909, when a minor-league game was held under the lights in Cincinnati. Everyone agreed that the conditions were fine. But the first night game in the majors, between the Cincinnati Reds and the Philadelphia Phillies, was not played until 1935. The first night game at Yankee Stadium was not played until 1946.

The Reds played seven night games in 1935; attendance was 130,337. Attendance for the team’s sixty-nine home day games was 324,256. The lesson was obvious. But it should have been obvious all along, or at least since the introduction of Sunday games, sixteen years earlier, which had had a similar effect. Many sports fans are working-class people. They can’t go to a weekday game during work hours. Whether it was baseball traditionalism or some hope to cast the sport as a professional-class diversion, or some combination, Major League Baseball was slow to adapt its product to the lives of its fan base. Teams in the Negro Leagues were playing at night long before, because that was the only time their fans could see them.

From the perspective of today's sports business model, nothing is more peculiar than prewar baseball's inability to grasp the financial potential of broadcasting. Some teams broadcast home games on local radio stations, but the stations did not pay a fee. In most cases, anyone with a radio license could sit in the stands and broadcast a game. It was not until 1936, a year after Ruth retired, that there was an American League policy of charging for broadcasting rights.

Radio turned out to increase attendance, too, especially in places where fans living in rural areas followed the games on the radio, and were sometimes motivated to drive two hundred miles to a city to watch a game. Still, none of the New York teams, the Yankees, the Giants, or the Dodgers, broadcast home games until 1939. That was the year Gehrig retired. In a way, it was his retirement, not his play and not even his streak, that made him an icon.

"I have one true friend," Gehrig says in one of the ghostwritten columns, "my mother. . . . She is now, and will always be, the greatest pal I ever had." She certainly made every effort. Jonathan Eig, in his biography of Gehrig, *"Luckiest Man"* (2005), says that Christina Gehrig systematically wrecked all of Gehrig's nascent romances, once going to a woman's home town to dig up dirt on her. In 1932, when the Yankees were playing World Series games in Chicago, Lou became interested in Eleanor Twitchell, a socially active twenty-eight-year-old with a sense of fashion, not Mrs. Gehrig's type. They began dating the following spring and were married in September.

Eleanor Gehrig changed her husband's life. She freed him from his mother's house; she took him to the ballet and the opera. (A favorite was "Tristan und Isolde," at which, she says, he wept, because, of course, he understood the words.) And she called on Christy Walsh to do promotional work. Walsh got Gehrig to do ads for Camel cigarettes and Aqua Velva. Gehrig was the first athlete to have his face on a Wheaties box.

A frank woman, Eleanor Gehrig left a memoir, *"My Luke and I,"* which includes, along with other uncensored remembrances, a portrait of Christina Gehrig and what it was like to live in her house. It tells us a lot more about Lou Gehrig than his own memoir does:

Built something like a lady wrestler, with yellowish gray hair snatched back in a bun. No hairdresser for her, certainly no makeup. Not that it would have mattered anyway, since she was in a state of steaming perpetual motion, no idle hands, chores around the clock. A huge breakfast prepared for her

husband and son, then an attack on the sinkful of dishes, then an almost compulsive session with the vegetables and meat for the night's dinner.

Finally, she would jam a hat on her head and leave for Yankee Stadium *with* Lou, in time for batting practice. Afterwards, back in the kitchen while Pop walked the dogs again and the parrot kept shouting baseball lingo until he was covered for the night. And at last the evening meal, starting with caviar on toast, thick soup, a Caesar salad, meat, potatoes, the vegetables, oversized dessert, the whole works. In the backwash of this way of life, several maids came and went as members of the cast; they simply got in the way of the steamroller.

After dinner and the dishes, we would settle in the living room. Mom would grab either the crochet or knitting bag and get her fingers flying, uttering sage little philosophies like “what goes up must come down,” and Pop would invariably nod in agreement.

Eleanor saw Ruth with unsentimental eyes, too. “As for the mighty Bambino,” she tells us, “he seemed to me to be a pot-bellied, spindly-legged, good-natured buffoon. But he was clearly the big man when it came to baseball, or to anything else, for that matter. . . . You had to look at him and feel that you were watching one of the wonders of the world.”

The marriage was happy but short. Gehrig's body began to fail him in 1938. He played in all one hundred and fifty-seven games that season, keeping his consecutive-game streak alive, and the Yankees won the World Series. But his hitting dropped off. By the following spring, it was clear that he could no longer play, and on May 2, 1939, the streak ended. He flew to Minnesota and entered the Mayo Clinic, where he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—soon known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

It seems, in Eig's account, that the doctors never told Gehrig outright that A.L.S. is incurable. But athletes know their bodies, and he must have understood fairly soon that this was the end. He died, “like a great clock winding down,” Eleanor said, in 1941. He was thirty-seven. When his body was displayed at the Church of the Divine Paternity, on Central Park West and Seventy-sixth Street, thousands of people stood in line to view it. Babe Ruth cut ahead of everyone. As he stood in front of the casket, he wept. Seven years later, Ruth would be dead, of throat cancer. In 1995, Gehrig's consecutive-game record was broken by Cal Ripken, Jr. The combine was all over it.

But before he died Gehrig had, at last, his Ruthian moment. This was the speech he gave at Yankee Stadium on July 4, 1939, Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day, his farewell to baseball. By then, everyone had heard the news. Tributes were spoken; gifts were presented. Ruth was there, said some words, put his arm around Gehrig for the cameras. Gehrig desperately wanted not to have to speak. This was exactly the kind of attention he had spent his life trying to avoid.

The announcer told the crowd that Gehrig was too moved to say anything, but a chant went up, and so he walked to the microphone. Eleanor later said that he had written an outline just in case; he clearly had some sentences memorized. Amazingly, only four of those sentences have been recorded and survive. Versions of the whole speech that you read have been pieced together from newspaper stories.

But we do have Gehrig's voice at the start. "For the past two weeks, you've been reading about a bad break," he says. "Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." And at the end: "I might have been given a bad break, but I've got an awful lot to live for." There is nothing self-pitying in the speech, no self-denial, no defiance. He is helping other people get through his pain. This was not colorless or boring. This was a man looking at death. In an age of showmen, in the very House That Ruth Built, it was a transcendent moment of selflessness. ♦

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*Louis Menand has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2001. He teaches at Harvard University.*

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