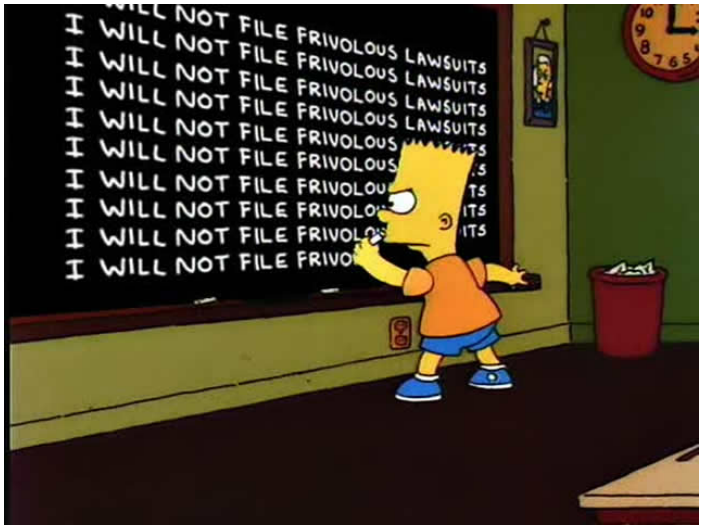

It seems that the rich really are different than the rest of us.

When life gives them lemons instead of roses they don't make lemonade. They sue. Everybody. Such is the case with Ken Lanci, a self-described self-made millionaire with an abiding need to be loved or at least noticed.

Maybe you read the story, certainly Lanci hopes you did. You see Lanci, the holder of 10 personal seat licenses at Cleveland Browns Stadium (which alone is cause to commit him against his will), filed a lawsuit against the Cleveland Browns and the entire NFL because he believes their labor troubles will deprive him of what he bargained for, mainly to have games to watch.

There's a principle in the law called "laches" which means, essentially, that a person has sat on his legal rights so long, it's unfair to sue the supposedly offending party. That seems an appropriate way as any to dismiss Lanci's looney lawsuit. In the entire time Lanci has owned his PSLs the Browns have barely if at all filled their bargain to him and every other fan. If anything, it was a lawsuit he should have filed years ago.

Sure, games have been played at the Stadium, but that's a mere technicality. The Browns haven't given their fans anything more than a few brief moments of competitiveness in over a decade. If Lanci is worried that he won't have NFL football to watch at the Stadium come the fall, I'd argue that he hasn't had NFL football to watch the 10 previous falls, either.

So why now? Why indeed and why do you think?

Lanci's an opportunist with an acute need to be noticed who apparently isn't getting enough love from his family. So he decided to essentially light a few dollars on fire by paying a local lawyer who apparently has no other clients to file a ridiculous lawsuit designed not to advance a valid claim but only to bring attention to Lanci as some sort of champion of the little guy. If Lanci is trying to position himself as the voice and face of the fan, it may be time for the rest of us to switch sports.

Let me be crystal clear, though, about this point: Lanci's lawsuit doesn't have a chance of succeeding on any plausible legal theory whatsoever and it wouldn't surprise me if in the process of it being tossed out the lawyers involved aren't subject to sanctions. They should be.

Lanci bought his PSLs subject to the conditions under which the NFL operates. One of those conditions is that both the players and the owners have certain rights and obligations under the National Labor Relations Act. That the exercise of these rights could result in a strike or a lockout is hardly a novel concept or even unexpected.

But of course that's just stating the obvious which is what the local judge burdened with this dreck will quickly conclude well before Lanci and the inevitable local television station camera crew can get past security at the Justice Center downtown.

If Lanci is just a frustrated fan with a few extra dollars, that's one thing. But his money would have been better spent on the charity of his choice rather than on the hack lawyers he hired to advance his ego. But of course where's the publicity value in quietly donating to charity? By being loud and outrageous, Lanci gets his 15 minutes of fame, proving once again that it doesn't matter what they say about you as long as they spell your name right.

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