How do you know the Cleveland Indians are truly relevant again? Well, it's not about being in first place at the quarter mark, or racking up walk-off victories while Tom Hamilton collapses into an oxygen-depleted euphoria. Nope, you can't be sure a Tribe team has truly crossed the threshold until the national media cares enough to notice our good old racist logo again. And ladies and gentlemen, that moment has arrived: the Chief is back on trial!

On the Friday edition of ESPN's "Sweet Spot" blog , guest columnist Stephanie Liscio (a local product, mind you) broke ranks with the recent stream of Indians "feel good" stories on the Worldwide Leader to boldly go where hundreds have already gone before. Her premise: it's "time to retire Chief Wahoo."

"*If I had to select one thing to change about the Cleveland Indians*," Liscio writes, "*the choice would be an easy one for me. Before I ever addressed any roster issues, I'd axe the team's longtime mascot, Chief Wahoo.*
"

And thus, like a bright beacon summoning the internet's vast legions of arrogantly ignorant comment-board respondents, the debate was on once more.

For her part, Liscio favored the Wahoo Haters' traditional, oft-fired bullet-points over anything particularly new or revolutionary.

1. De-legitimize the Louis Sockalexis myth.

2. Present Wahoo as a "racist caricature" on par with the universally deplored "Little Black Sambo"

3. Counter fan nostalgia with recognition of the franchise's history of shittiness: "the curse of the racist mascot"

4. Prop up alternative logos: "the block C is . . . stylish, with a retro feel."

5. Diminish consequences: "There would be no harm in removing Chief Wahoo and retiring him for good."

So that was the prosecution's case. A little hum-drum to be sure, but any good columnist knows that a controversial topic is the gift that keeps on giving; especially decades-old debates like the one over Wahoo—probably the most notorious of the numerous Native American logos in pro sports. Since the topic fuels itself, the only thing easier than writing a paint-by-numbers blog about a racist logo is writing an article about that blog. So here I am.

Anyway, let's see what the Wahoo defense team had to offer via the Rhodes Scholars convention known as the ESPN comment boards.

An esteemed gentleman by the name of JTBrowns politely disagreed with Liscio, suggesting that she is, in fact, "*another over sensitive American liberal woman who isn't getting her needs met so she wants to make everything politically correct.* " He also added, "*Keep your female hands off my mascot!*
"

It should come as no surprise that JTBrowns would find the thought of female hands strange and threatening.

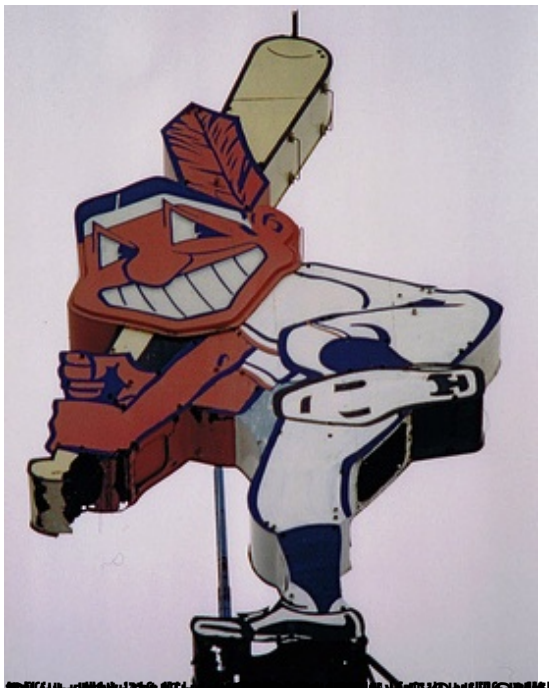
And then we have the right honourable Tribe2225 chiming in with an equally intriguing rebuttal to the lady writer—utilizing the always-irrefutable “slippery slope” argument. “*Who's to say oriole birds are happy with the cartoon version of them that the team in Baltimore sports?*
” he types. “
Now you're talking about changing nearly every team name and logo in sports to be more PC.
”

So true. Who is looking out for the voiceless "oriole birds?" I mean, technically, the Baltimore Orioles did get rid of that offensive, anthropomorphized cartoon bird logo like 20 years ago, didn’t they? But whatever. The point stands.

Not to be outdone, the anti-Wahoo crew threw out some face-palm nuggets of wisdom, too. This includes a very well educated friend of mine (a Cubs fan, no less) who posted Liscio’s blog on his Facebook page with the following amendment:

“Cleveland doesn’t deserve a championship until they get rid of (Wahoo) for good.”

Yes, our torment should continue evermore as a consequence of the cartoon on our hats.



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