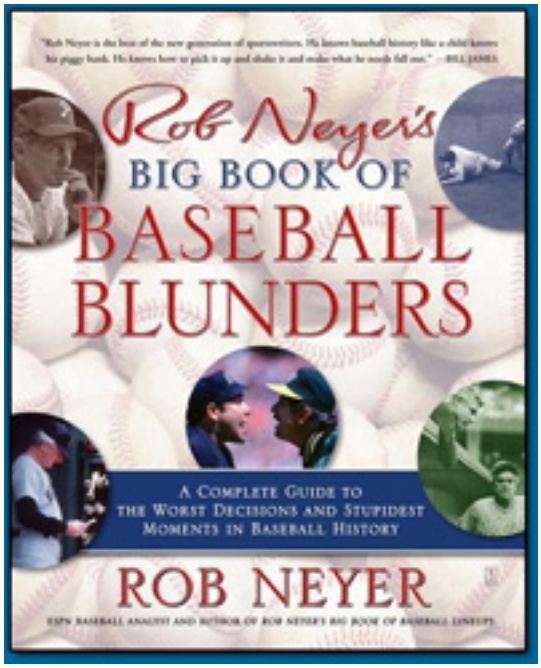

Collusions I, II ... and III (A Hard Lesson Learned) - PDF

By Maury Brown

An essay from ***Rob Neyer's Big Book of Baseball Blunders : A Complete Guide to the Worst Decisions and Stupidest Moments in Baseball History***

Format-Adobe PDF (5 pages)

Blunders can cost a team games. Big games. Blunders have changed the course of franchises. A few blunders have even resulted in *Curses*.

But this blunder is bigger than all of those. This blunder is bigger than perhaps any other blunder in the game's long history; bigger, that is, than any blunder but the one that left so many wonderful ball players in the shadows for far too long (and that one's so big that it wouldn't fit in this big book).

Peter Ueberroth, Major League Baseball's sixth Commissioner, got owners started down their ruinous path on October 22, 1985. After eleven straight years of supposed financial losses for the "industry," Ueberroth addressed the owners at the headquarters of Anheuser Busch (courtesy of Gussie Busch, one of the original hard-line owners).

At one point in what amounted to a stern lecture, Ueberroth said,

If I sat each one of you down in front of a red button and a black button and I said, “Push the red button and you’d win the World Series but lose $10 million. Push the black button and you would have a $4 million profit and you’d finish in the middle.” You are so damned dumb. Most of you would push the red button. Look in the mirror and go out and spend big if you want, don’t go out there whining that someone made you do it.

In closing, Ueberroth told his employers, “I know and you know what’s wrong. You are smart businessmen. You all agree we have a problem. Go solve it.”

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