

## Vin Scully

### No Words, Yet

July 8, 2005

I keep waiting for the perfect words to come to me to describe Vin Scully, but the problem is just that - I feel they need to live up to who he is, and I don't know if I have them yet.

There's one thing I would say, and I hesitate because it's so morbid, but it just is what it is. If I can imagine one person that I've never met, whose funeral I would need to go to, even if I couldn't be inside the church or burial ground, just to be in the vicinity, to pay my respects, to be with him and to say goodbye, it is Vin Scully.

### Let Vin Make the Call

February 3, 2004

Over the years, we've probably heard Vin Scully talk about everything there is to talk about - except one thing.

The next Vin Scully.

In my mind, of course, there will be no replacing Vin. I'm well aware Vin has his detractors - people who tire of flubs he makes at the microphone, or who aren't drawn to his style. I accept that some feel that way.

For me, there has never been, nor will there ever be, anyone who gives me more joy in listening to the broadcast of a sporting event than Vin.

Vin has been on my mind this weekend, ever since the announcement that all 162 Dodger games will be televised this season. Because there is no indication that Vinny's travel schedule will expand, this year we'll receive even more of our ongoing preview of life without Vinny.

I think we've all wondered about Vin's successor from time to time. I've been in the Al Michaels camp for years; I also still enjoy Jon Miller and Bob Costas. Not everyone in the Dodger audience would agree, but it doesn't really matter; none of those three seem likely to come.

Anyway, this weekend - for the first time, oddly - I started wondering whom Vin would recommend as his successor.

It's a question, because of his nature, that Vin would probably never answer on the record, but I still wonder.

I wonder if, among his unparalleled talents, if Vin has the ability to spot greatness in other broadcasters.

It seems like he would, wouldn't he? Think of

Roger Angell, the consummate (albeit East Coast myopicized) baseball writer for *The New Yorker*. Fiction Editor at the magazine for years, Angell is certainly capable of spotting writing talent. But could he find the Next to be the most literary of baseball scribes?

I don't know (although I have a hunch about Ben McGrath over there). My gut tells me that one artist can pick out another artist. But I don't know. Is it possible that Vinny might not know exactly what makes him so great, or perhaps perceive greatness in another that isn't really there? That he would do as poorly picking a replacement for Dodger broadcasts as Magic Johnson coaching basketball?

Is it possible that one foggy day, way back when, Vin recommended Rick Monday? Seems like heresy to think it.

Certainly, I don't think any of Vin's remarkable poetry has been passed to Monday, tenured as a Dodger broadcaster without any spark of brilliance because he twice rescued flags, one American, one a 1981 National League pennant. Nor do I even think Vin has profoundly molded Ross Porter, likeable in his literal, earnest, Barney Fife kind of way, any more than Andy Taylor trained Barney to be his equal in Mayberry.

When the season finally comes that Vin doesn't ask us to "pull up a chair," I don't expect a new No. 1 from outside the organization. More likely, Porter would become the No. 1 announcer, Monday the No. 2, and the Dodgers would search for a new No. 3. Or, perhaps Porter and Monday would take over the TV coverage, and the

Dodgers would hire a 3-4 duo for radio.

Here's what I think. Assuming Vin's fingerprints are not on Monday's hire, the Dodgers should let Vin choose his own successor. Have Vin listen to the tapes, have Vin meet the men or women applying for the job.

It's simple, really. Let Monet pass on his own brush. Who knows, maybe Vin will spot some 22-year-old, fresh out of college, with crackling talent and an ethereal magic with words, who will bring true joy to Dodger fans for another 50 years.

## You Know You Screwed Up When ...

March 29, 2003

Vin Scully, usually the definition of cheerfulness, has hardly ever sounded more disgusted on the air than he did during Friday's Dodger-Angel broadcast.

Scully talked about how the Dodgers, under the Kevin Malone regime, told Mike Scioscia that he had no future with the organization.

"Unbelievable," said Scully, the distaste in his voice unmistakable.

Scully went on to press the point - making it seemingly apparent where he thought the blame lay - noting that Scioscia is now a World Champion, and Malone is "gone."

## Ah, Three Rivers

April 27, 2003

My favorite thing about the Dodgers' trips to Pittsburgh over the years has been to hear Vin say, "Three Rivers Stadium, at the confluence of the Ohio, the Allegheny and the *Monongahela*." I'm telling you, you haven't lived unless you've heard the word "Monongahela" roll off Vinny's lips.

The Pirates don't play at Three Rivers any more, but that doesn't mean the rivers are gone. Vin still mentioned them Saturday ...

## The Elephant Men

August 11, 2003

I'm not going to do this story justice, but here goes...

Saturday, Vin Scully was talking about bad jobs baseball players had before becoming baseball players. He mentioned that Eric Karros said his worst was cleaning up after races at the Cajon Speedway.

Vin then said that that sounded pretty bad, but not as bad as "cleaning up after the elephant parade."

The randomness of this comparison, I thought, was pretty funny in and of itself. But then, my wife said, "That's what I was thinking."

Where are these elephant parades, and how does one get tickets?

## Rousing!

June 18, 2004

Are the NBA Finals too fresh in my mind, or did the Dodgers look like the Detroit Pistons against the Laker-Yankees this evening? Faster, crisper, more energized - it was a pick-and-roll/rebound/fast-break 6-3 Dodger victory in the first regular season game ever between the two teams.

As you know, Vin Scully has no trouble praising the game's heroes, no matter what team they toil for. But the Dodgers earned Vinny's most earnest and passionate rhapsodies tonight.

Jeff Weaver overcame a Saget's worth of bloopers in the top of the third to pitch six solid innings, and recent *Dodger Thoughts* bashee Darren Dreifort retired the side in order in the seventh. But it was Cesar Izturis (defense), Adrian Beltre (offense) and Guillermo Mota (strikeouts) who sent Scully full square into a reverie of admiration.

And then, Eric Gagne. Imagine a seven-year-old spying Superman on a fly-by. That's how you have to hear Vinny's call on the final pitch of the game - a called strike three, of course.

*"Oh, yes! Oh my gosh, what a pitch! That's*

## The Man Pays Attention

June 7, 2004

Vin Scully does more than tell good stories about World War II and point out kids in the stands, in case you hadn't noticed.

As Adrian Beltre came to the plate for the first time Sunday, Scully spotted on our behalf that Beltre was not wearing a left ankle guard and commented that Beltre's ailing ankle must be improving.

Sure enough, Beltre homered to left in that at-bat, homered to right-center in his final at-bat, and in between hit a blistering shot at third base that should have been an RBI double, but instead turned into a line-drive double play.

*amazing! That's not fair. After a 97-mile-per-hour fastball, you can't tell, but that pitch was in the 60s ... a rainbow curve."*