

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT YOU...

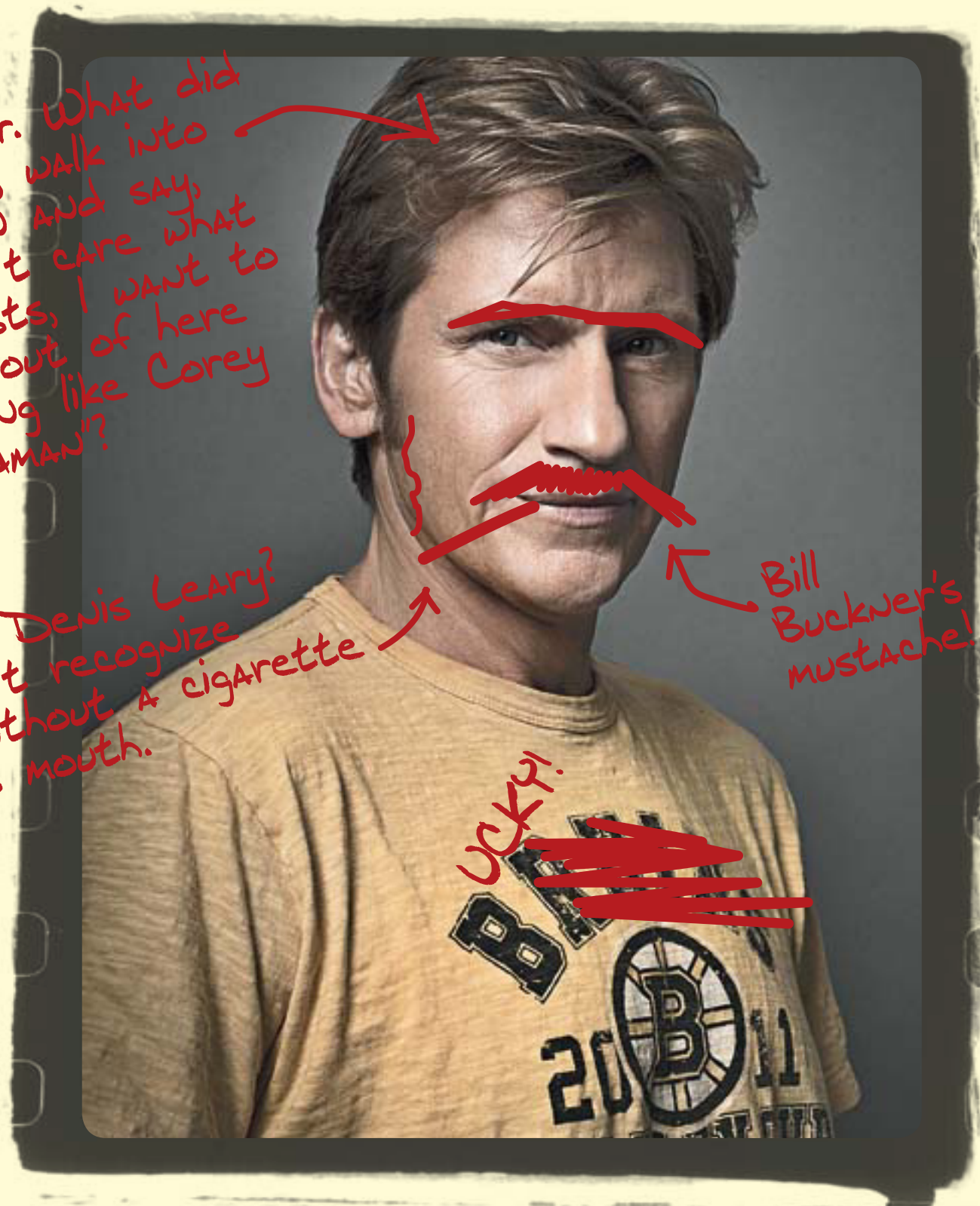
THE MAG ASKED BOSTON NATIVE DENIS LEARY AND NEW YORK NUT ARTIE LANGE TO CRITIQUE EACH OTHER'S HEAD SHOTS ...

Nice hair. What did you do, walk into a salon and say, "I don't care what it costs, I want to walk out of here looking like Corey Feldman"?

That's Denis Leary? I didn't recognize him without a cigarette in his mouth.

UCKY!

Bill Buckner's mustache!



ACTUAL PHOTO OF ARTIE TAKEN JUST AFTER THE BUCKY DENT GAME IN 1978. WHAT WERE YOU, 13 YEARS OLD HERE?

(HOCOLATE MACAROONS. GISELE. PIZZA. GISELE. (HOCOLATE PIZZA.

NICE CHAIN, BRO! BUT YOU COULD'VE USED A FEW MORE ...



I've always thought it was appropriate that a Boston fan would call his TV show **Rescue Me**.

Denis, are you suggesting that Billy Martin drank?

Don't knock a cough-syrup coma until you've tried it.

... AND YOUR TOWN.

... AND THEN WE ASKED THEM TO RIP WHAT REALLY MATTERS: THEIR TEAMS.

SEAGAL: FUNNIEST ACTION HERO EVER!

HERE WE GO: HERE COMES THE ASS-KISSING. N.Y. FANS USUALLY DO THAT RIGHT BEFORE THEY STICK THE KNIFE IN.

JUST WANTED TO SAY THIS: (URT SCHILLING'S BLOODY ANKLE. GOOD NAME FOR A BAND. GREAT MOMENT IN RED SOX HISTORY. I KNOW, IT'S TOTALLY OUT OF CONTEXT HERE AT THE END BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? WHEN ARTIE SEES THIS IN PRINT, IT'S GONNA PISS HIM OFF, AND THAT'S WORTH IT TO ME.

AHA! THE KNIFE!

For a while, I thought the Yankees were a New York City jeweler where the Red Sox could come to get rings.

I will agree. Not because you're right but because the next time I do standup in Boston, I don't want to get beat up by three guys wearing Oil Can Boyd jerseys.

DUSTY OLD ARGUMENT-OLDER THAN JOE PEPITONE'S TOUPEE.

By Denis Leary

Lately, in New York vs. Boston, it's been no contest. All four major Boston sports teams have won at least one championship in the last decade. Ten years. Seven titles. Four different sports. That's a single-city record.

And during that span the Big Apple can boast, sadly, only two champions: the '09 Yankees and '07 Giants. The only noise coming from fans of the Knicks, Mets, Islanders, Rangers and Jets? A whimper over increasing ticket prices for inferior entertainment.

Okay, okay, the Jets have had their moments. When Rex Ryan isn't trolling for toe photos at lickmyfeet.com, he actually puts together interesting football teams. And Plaxico Burress may soon make headlines for something other than almost shooting himself in the nut sack. But up until about a month ago, Minka Kelly stood a better chance of wearing a new diamond ring than anyone else in the Big Apple sports arena. Which is a shame.

Because as any Red Sox-blooded Boston fan can attest, it ain't no fun winning the Big One unless you beat a team from The City So Nice They Named It Twice. In fact, I'll go even further: I don't hate the New York Yankees. I actually love and cannot live without them.

First, I just wrapped my seventh year of playing one of the world's biggest Yankees fans on FX's hit show Rescue Me. My character, New York City firefighter Tommy Gavin, was such a diehard that we named or themed whole episodes after Derek Jeter, Mickey Mantle and Babe Ruth. I mean, just the fact that I still play catch with a 1968 Carl Yastrzemski Triple Crown glove but played a guy who worshipped Mantle and Reggie should have won me an Emmy for best actor. That's like making Michele Bachmann kiss Rosie O'Donnell's ass.

Second, and far more important, without the Yankees in my life, there would've been no 1978, no Bucky F—ing Dent, no Curse Of The Bambino, no Aaron goddamn Boone. No tears, no tragedy. No pain, no gain.

We suffered the slings and arrows, the Billy Martin bloodshot eyes and the 14-game leads after the All-Star break that disappeared almost overnight. We gritted our teeth as the Joe Torre Years unfolded. Year after year of unbeatable teams led by a classy guy whose only drinking problem involved green tea and a hinky prostate. We had to watch Wade Boggs make a horse's ass of himself while sitting on a horse's ass. And Clemens? It was becoming quite clear that God was, in fact, a Yankees fan. Or maybe Satan just ran the world.

I know how it feels to be in Satan's clutches. As a kid I lived through Bill Russell's Celtics winning 11 trophies in 13 years. When your team wins that much, you turn into Elvis. Not thin, handsome, happy Elvis. Bloated, bored and bacon-breathed Elvis. After each expected victory, you nod, down a bottle of Formula 44D, belch and go to bed.

But Red Sox Nation was not in a cough-syrup coma. We were suckin' back Dunkin' Donuts coffee and crossing ringless fingers. Like the kid who comes downstairs every Christmas morning looking forward to finding a BB gun only to unwrap a snot-green Nerf ball, we kept hoping. Hope and Yankees highlight reels were all we had left.

So I will always cherish the Bronx Bombers pounding us 19-8 in Game 3 of the 2004 ALCS. It drained almost all the hope from our baseball-crazed veins. We hit rock bottom. And then our "Phil Eposito vs. the '72 Soviet Union" switch got flipped, and back we came. We were like de-junked junkies: one day, one game, one inning at a time.

And the joy that exploded across New England when Johnny Damon hit his Game 7 grand slam was made all the sweeter by the torture that had preceded it. The Great Pinstripe Collapse of 2004 will forever and always be the greatest comeback in the history of baseball because it was the Cursed Few overcoming the Evil Empire.

It wouldn't have been the same had we trounced the Twins or harpooned the Rays. No. It was worth the wait to do it in the manner we did—going through the big bad Yankees in the House That Harry Frazee Built.

So thanks, Yanks. It was worth enduring Big Apple hell to reach Beantown heaven. Sure, it'd be great to hate the Rangers and knock the Knicks and argue our asses off about which city is better. But there ain't no argument no more. Greatest City On The Face Of The Earth? New York. Greatest SPORTS City On The Entire goddamn Planet? B-O-S-T-O-N.

By Artie Lange

From 1918 to 2004, the Red Sox didn't win a World Series. That's a long time. As a lifelong Yankees fan, a fun little exercise I like to do is to list some of the things that did happen in those 86 years.

For instance: World War I ended, women got the vote, the Great Depression began and ended, Kirstie Alley started to look like Captain Lou Albano, TV was invented, the Hindenburg crashed, World War II started and ended, Steven Seagal's brilliant film career started and ended, rock 'n roll began, we put a man on the moon, Wilt Chamberlain "met" 20,000 women, Abbott met Costello, Bill Buckner was born, O.J. did not kill his ex-wife (although someone clearly did), macaroni became pasta, communism fell, Willie Nelson rolled 38,000 joints and some creep invented Rollerblading. And what else happened? Let me think ... oh yeah! The New York Yankees won the World Series 26 times.

I often think of building a time machine and going back to the late 1980s. I'd walk into Boston bars on the day each year when the Red Sox were eliminated from the playoffs and say, "Cheer up, guys. I come from the future, and I want to assure you that someday, both Wade Boggs and Roger Clemens will have World Series rings." Then I'd leave. Boy, what a cute little surprise they'd be in for years later.

I hate the freaking Red Sox. It may be childish, but I love busting their chops. However, let me make one thing ABUNDANTLY clear: I do not hate the city of Boston. As a matter of fact, I love Boston. I love the layout of the city and the small streets that create their own world. I love the food, especially late-night sausage sandwiches in Faneuil Hall or the Gino Cappelletti linguine at Tecce's. I also love the people, how loyal and local they are—I mean that as a big compliment. The attitude is almost like we're not from Earth. We're from Boston. I also love how even the hot chicks speak in thick Boston accents. There's nothing like making out near Fenway with a chick who sounds like Ted Kennedy. I'm used to making out with chicks who just look like Ted Kennedy.

That being said, I have no choice but to hate the Red Sox. I don't particularly like the Celtics or Bruins. And I've never been crazy about the Patriots either, mostly because of that annoying pretty boy, Tom Brady. Over the years, I've had some fabulous conversations with Gisele Bündchen—I really thought we had a special connection. Of course, I was drunk and it was actually just a poster of her. But it still pisses me off.

Those teams don't bother me like the Red Sox, though. You see, I grew up in North Jersey in the '70s. When the Yanks played the Sox on Oct. 2, 1978, in a one-game playoff to decide the AL East champ, I was 10. Beating Boston in that game meant everything, and I'll never forget that day. My father, in yet another example of stellar parenting, let me stay home from school to watch the game. By the time Bucky Dent came to the plate in the seventh inning with the Yanks down 2-0, most of the neighborhood was at my house watching it with us. Hatred for the Red Sox filled the room. When Dent hit that three-run homer, pandemonium ensued. I actually dropped my Devil Dog. Later, Carl Yastrzemski popped out to end it, and the "Boston sucks" chants rolled off our tongues. That's the day when the Red Sox became what they will always be: the annoying dork in class that everybody laughs at while he's being wedgied in the corner. There was no way not to despise the Red Sox. For life. As I grew up, my father always figured I'd be guilty of two things: a lifelong hatred of the Red Sox and a felony. In his honor, I achieved both. When the Red Sox did finally win, I'll admit, it stung. It felt like going back to the high school reunion and that annoying dork had become a wildly successful millionaire.

I do take solace in the history of the Red Sox franchise, though. It's clear now that they do well in the first 18 years of every century. So every Red Sox fan who is being born right now will endure the same hell their grandparents and great-grandparents did. The best part for me? In 2104, when the Red Sox finally win again, my liver will have failed decades before.

PREVIOUS SPREAD FROM LEFT: HENRY LEUTWILER/CONTOUR/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY ARTIE LANGE