

Experiment in Identification

by

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In late April, 1962, Columbia Pictures released the classic crime drama *Experiment in Terror*. This taut, fast-paced movie was directed by Blake Edwards, (who is much better known for his comedies, most especially his long-running *Pink Panther* franchise). The movie starred Glen Ford as the Joe Friday-like FBI agent John "Rip" Ripley, the impossibly beautiful Lee Remick as bank teller Kelly Sherwood, Stephanie Powers as her little sister Toby, and Ross Martin as the frighteningly malevolent asthmatic murderer Garland Humphrey "Red" Lynch.

Set in San Francisco and shot in glorious B&W, the film is a throw-back to the classic Film Noirs of the immediate post-war years. We know that Lynch has killed at least twice before, that he is very intelligent, very careful, and totally relentless and remorseless. He has scoped out a plan to steal \$100,000 from the bank where Kelly Sherwood works, and he has obviously spent weeks, if not months, working on this plan. He knows everything about the Sherwood sisters: where Kelly goes to lunch, where Toby goes after school, exactly how long it takes for the sisters to do all of their everyday chores, when their home is empty, where they go swimming & etc. The scenes of him terrorizing the sisters each in turn are truly disturbing, and we know that when the money is in his hands, despite his protestations to the contrary, he will murder the sisters-but not before he does much worse to them.

By now, those of you who have not seen the picture are wondering what this

has to do with baseball. Well, it is this- the final scenes of the movie were shot at Candlestick Park, some of them during an actual Giants-Dodgers game. The game scenes are among the longest (if not the longest) ever shot in a non-baseball movie. In the game, we see that it is a match up between Don Drysdale and Mike McCormick. Among the plays we see are Harvey Kuenn hitting a double, a Giant two-run homer, and a game-ending DP which secures the game for the Giants. Don Drysdale received billing, and in addition to actual game shots is seen in close up, peering down to get the sign (those of a certain age will well remember such shots from games in the forties, fifties and sixties, shots which are supposed to be live-action but aren't- in fact, couldn't be, unless the camera man was allowed to film between the plate and the mound. Wally Moon is also billed, and shown batting. The other billed baseball figure is Vin Scully, who is not shown but whose broadcast of the game is heard. Unbilled, though shown in close up, is Johnny Roseboro (no comment on why he did not receive on-screen credit). Shown in live-action, but not credited, are Joey Amalfitano, Mike McCormick and Felipe Alou.

I was interested in seeing when the game was played and decided to look it up in one of baseball research's most incredible sources, Dave Smith's Retrosheet which is (or should be) well known to all who are reading this (if only Howe were as generous as Dave and his hearty crew of looker-uppers and transcribers). I figured "No Problem!"- after all, the game window was so narrow. It couldn't have been a '62 game- not enough time to edit it into the movie. It couldn't have been a '60 game- no Harvey Kuenn on the Giants. So, it was narrowed down to a 1961 match up between Don and Mike. This is where the trouble started.

McCormick faced the Dodgers at The 'Stick twice in 1961, on 20 May and again on 8 September. Drysdale pitched in neither game (Roger Craig pitched

a CG for the Dodgers in the first game, and in the second Johnny Podres was knocked out of the box in the first and was followed by Craig, Jim Golden and Turk Farrell). And just like that, an entire year (and the *only* possible year, given Harvey Kuenn) was shot and the idea that identifying the game was going to be a snap was deader than a dittohead's brain. It was now obvious that at *least* two games in at least two different seasons, were superimposed upon one another for the movie.

The next move was two-fold: Find a 1960 game played in San Francisco which featured a McCormick/Drysdale matchup and another which featured a Kuenn as a Giant hitting a double. McCormick and Drysdale faced each other twice in Candlestick in 1960: 20 April, when McCormick won 1-0 and 13 May, when Mike again won, 3-0. The problem, aside from the absence of Harvey? No home runs in either game. (I did go back to 1959, although I was almost certain that the film-makers did not use a two year old game to make their movie. There was indeed a Drysdale/McCormick game on 19 September, but the Dodgers won that one 5-3).

Well, alright- so we now know that the film of the opposing pitchers was shot on one of two dates. The problem? Kuenn didn't play in either of those games, nor was there a two-run homer in either game. My next move was to then find a 1960 game, played in San Francisco, pitched by Drysdale, in which Kuenn hit a double. It turns out, there was one such game, on 19 May. But, McCormick did not pitch in that game, nor was there a two-run homer off of Drysdale. The question then became, when in 1961 did Drysdale give up a two-run homer to the Giants in their home park? The answer- 9 September, to Willie Mays in the seventh. Problem? McCormick did not pitch (Dick LeMay picked up the win in relief of Juan Marichal), and Harvey was 0-1 as a pinch hitter.

So, we now know that (at least) three different games were conflated for the

movie (there may have perhaps more, but there are not enough details to ascertain anything further without resorting to wild speculation).

Game #1: Given the large crowd in attendance, I think the McCormick/Drysdale matchup took place on 13 May- there were 41,867 fans in the stands that night.

Game #2: 19 May, Kuenn doubles off Drysdale.

Game # 3: 9 September, Drysdale gives up a two-run homer at The 'Stick.

But the story of the baseball content of the movie does not end there. In the film, the game ends with a ninth inning double play by the giants, 5-4-3. But, this play, as is easy to tell by the camera angles, was *not* actual game footage, and was added later. The ball goes from Davenport to Amalfitano to... Bowman! (Yes, for filming purposes, Ernie Bowman was used as the first baseman instead of Cepeda or McCovey).

And, finally, the movie ends with Lynch getting shot on the pitchers mound and dying sprawled across the rubber, with the closing shot being from a helicopter ascending over the mound until the whole infield and much of the stands are in the frame.

An excellent movie with an interesting baseball touch- catch it if you can.