



THE DEATH OF CRICKET
BY
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THE DEATH OF CRICKET

A tragedy by Paul Smith

Characters

Chairman of The Cricket Board of the UK

Chief Executive of The Cricket Board of the UK

Board Member 1

Board Member 2

Board Member 3

England Cricket Captain

Interviewer

SCENE ONE - A Press Briefing

CHAIR

I was appointed to this position 4 years ago and I have one more year to serve. In that time, I will hope to have achieved my aim. To transform the game of cricket. It's a far cry from my life running supermarkets. Stack em high. Sell em cheap. Fast food. Exactly my plan for this game. I loved selling baked beans and pot noodles. I fucking hate cricket. What a fucking boring sport. Give me boxing any day. Quick, to the point and over in a few minutes sometimes. Not this fucking nonsense which goes on for fucking days. I always say you don't have to like the product you sell, but you have a duty to mould it to your liking. And I mean to make this sport something that everyone wants. I don't care who stands in my way and who gets knocked over in the process. Progress. That's what we need to achieve. Progress. Not something that's boring, dead and fucking out of date.

CHIEF

We are so lucky with our Chair. He does speak as he finds and leaves you in no doubt about his aims and priorities. He is one of the clearest thinking businessmen I have ever worked with and a visionary of the game. I sincerely share his view that we have a duty to save this old-fashioned game from drowning in its own self-importance. In many ways, we have helped transform the sport in recent years with the increasing use of technology and the support for the 20/20 format across the world and the increased support for the women's game and we are looking to make further changes and bringing in new and exciting formats and using more and more technology. This is an exciting time for the sport, the players and the general public, many of whom we are targeting to enter the world of cricket - a new world, an exciting world and one which is finally accessible to all.

SCENE TWO - A TV Interview

- INTERVIEWER Welcome gentlemen, it's good to have you with us today for the important announcements which I know you are very keen to make. Firstly, Mr Chairman, you have made a number of controversial comments and outlined some significant changes in the game of cricket over the tenure of your office, do you think you are going to make more friends or enemies after today.
- CHAIR Well, as I mentioned before, I don't actually give a flying fuck what people think of me. My job is to take this sport and bring it into today. It can't be stuck in the middle of the 19th Century or whenever it was founded. My aim is to get every family in the whole of the country watching and playing cricket. Who can argue with that as an aim?
- INTERVIEWER I doubt anyone can, Thank you. Mr Chief Executive. We have seen the amazing changes in cricket brought about by the advent of the 20 over game and white ball cricket in general. What can we expect to be seeing in the future?
- CHIEF Well the 10 over game is already having a major impact and we are delighted it has the backing of one of our national captains who is totally behind the white ball format. Obviously the 100 ball plans are well advanced, and we are so looking forward to rolling this out. We do have plans to bring the 10 over game into the country and are looking at a further development which will see a whole competition in a day which will see a round robin format and knockout 10 ball game. Fantastic.
- CHAIR I think we should also add that we are trying new techniques within the game and so people should look out for that. I am fed up with this fucking complicated method of measuring the accuracy of the way in which a ball is bowled. It's just bollocks. The whole point of the bowler is to get it to the batter down the other end of the pitch. So, throwing will be quite legitimate. We expect to see more under arm stuff and as many bouncers as the guys care to bowl.
- INTERVIEWER Are you not worried about the safety of the players?
- CHIEF Of course we are concerned about that, but we have to measure that with the need for more excitement. The players have increasingly good protection and so we will make sure they are well catered for in that department. So, don't worry.
- INTERVIEWER And I believe technology will become an even more important part of the game
- CHAIR Umpires will be made redundant. Don't need them anymore. That make far too many errors. All bats and stumps will be fitted with electronic signaling devices and from that we will be able to see what has been hit and where. Same with batsmen's protection. Arm guards, pads, all will have sensors.

Automatic decisions will be made. No need for reviews. Just slows down an already slow game.

INTERVIEWER

Well, gentlemen, thank you. Exciting times. We will be back with you in a moment.

SCENE THREE - A Meeting

CHAIR My big bugbear is what to do about this idiotic county set up. I mean, who has ever been to fucking Worcestershire? I don't even know where it is and no one knows anything about Derbyshire and Durham is in the Arctic isn't it? No, this is something that needs to be dealt with.

CHIEF I think we will face quite some opposition to the reduction in the number of counties.

MEMBER 1 But I am inclined to agree with the Chairman. We cannot bail out these counties who do not run their business well. We have to make them realise that cricket is a commercial enterprise. I have no interest in the game itself. I am only keen to know about the balance sheets.

MEMBER 2 Seconded. We have already tried to get shot of Durham, we must try harder. I suggest we swing the blade on at least 10 counties.

CAPTAIN As captain of the national team I think that might be a few too many, we are in danger of the pool being too shallow.

CHAIR Don't be daft. There is going to be so much going on that you will have plenty to choose from and they will be better quality. Too many shitty little players around. Too old, too young or too fat. Get shot of them.

CHIEF So, what would your suggestion be?

CHAIR We keep the big ones. Yorkshire.

MEMBER 3 Hear hear.

CHAIR Yorkshire, Surrey of course - the golden egg. Middlesex

CAPTAIN Thank goodness!

CHAIR I suppose we will have to have Lancashire

MEMBER 1 They'd be another war of the Roses if you scrapped them.

CHAIR Don't tempt me. Essex probably. Nottinghamshire

MEMBER 2 What about the Welsh?

CHAIR Yes, well, I would rather not.

MEMBER 3 They will rebel too.

CHAIR Gloucestershire I suppose as well as the Welsh. How many is that?

CHIEF That's your eight.

MEMBER 2 No Hampshire?

CHAIR Swap Essex for Hampshire. Essex is a shithole.

MEMBER 3 No Somerset?

CHAIR Too small. Never win anything.

CAPTAIN No Kent?

CHAIR Too near Surrey. No Northamptonshire, no Leicestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire..

CHIEF Edgbaston Chairman?

CHAIR Mmmmmmm get rid of Gloucester then. Birmingham in then.

MEMBER 2 Good call Sir.

CHAIR Durham is out as I said and Sussex. What do you think of that?

CHIEF You don't want to keep another 2?

CHAIR No, its 8. Only 8. Close the rest of the clubs down. Perfect for hypermarkets and car parks.

MEMBER 1 Looks good to me. Means we can save millions funding them, make millions selling the real estate and spend more promoting the new formats.

CHIEF Exactly. And get rid of some troublemakers into the bargain.

CHAIR Some hard decisions had to be made. We were all chosen to be in charge of the game because none of us understand it or have and liking for it at all. So, we need to keep up this momentum.

CAPTAIN Well I rather like it and understand it.

CHAIR Well, of course, but you are the exception. A cricketer who despises test matches and county cricket played over more than a few overs. So, we include you.

CAPTAIN Thank you Mr Chairman. I really favour all these changes. I think there are more we could make. The short sharp nature of the game is rather like baseball in my eyes.

CHIEF That's very interesting. It was something that was said when the 20/20 format was first introduced. In my book that's a really good comparison. Look how the baseball stadiums pack them in.

CHAIR Bring back the dancing girls I say. Get more sex into the game. It's about as sexy as a wet weekend in Whitby at the moment. It needs more filth. Get some of the players - men and women - doing centre-fold spreads. Get the Mums in! Sex sells.