

Naked Curiosity: Balls and Strikes

“It’s more than just strikes and balls,” Lonny explained.

My sports-loving acquaintance likened his weekend job as an umpire for a gay softball league to a combination of diplomat and disciplinarian. He complained about the stressful moments but, mostly, he raved about the good times. For Lonny, the camaraderie of spending time with a bunch of other gay athletes made it all worthwhile.

There were added bonuses, as well. Between a pair of balls, Lonny found love.

Glenn stepped up to bat with a swagger that caught Lonny’s eye. After tossing one quick strike, the pitcher tossed two balls and, between the first and second, Glenn turned to Lonny and asked him out for brunch after the game.

A pair of balls, indeed.

Glenn got a double, that

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sure job in the financial sector and Lonny was a restaurant manager. They rarely saw each other during the week, due to their disparate schedules. But, from Friday night through Sunday afternoon, they were inseparable. Lonny continued to umpire games, though he made a point of not working any of Glenn’s games. He didn’t want there to be any question about impartiality.

After the morning back-to-back games, they’d go out for brunch. Then, they’d go back to

sex. Lonny was happy to comply.

Then, one evening, Lonny had to cover a shift at the restaurant so he modified his plans with Glenn. Dinner was out but he promised to go over to his pouting boyfriend’s apartment as soon as he finished work. Things didn’t go as smoothly as he’d hoped and Lonny didn’t make it to Glenn’s ’til almost midnight.

Lonny figured he would find Glenn in front of the TV watching ESPN. Instead, Glenn was waiting with clenched fists in the proverbial on-deck circle.

Batterer up.

Lonny says he doesn’t remember how many times Glenn hit him and admits to offering no verbal request for the beating to stop because he was shocked silent at seeing his dreamy boyfriend become a pummeling nightmare.

You wouldn’t know it, judging from the absence of media attention it receives, but domestic violence in same-sex relationships is a very real and pervasive problem.

In the best TV-movie-like tradition, Lonny made excuses for Glenn’s rage and rationalized that he’d provoked it by being so late and not calling to give a status update earlier in the evening. And, in similar form, Glenn apologized, blamed his actions on the cocktails he had while waiting for Lonny to show up and said it would never, ever happen, again.

Not quite a week later, Lonny found himself on the receiving end of Glenn’s fury again. It was a veritable instant replay of the prior incident. This time, Lonny shouted, “Stop it,” but Glenn didn’t stop until he cut his hand on Lonny’s chipped front tooth. And that only made him angrier.

Again, Lonny tried to make it seem like he was at fault and, again, Glenn said he was sorry and promised that it wouldn’t happen any more.

Lonny claims that he still loves Glenn and he believes that Glenn loves him and feels badly about what’s happened. Glenn has refused Lonny’s suggestion that they get some counseling because he thinks they should figure it out for themselves. Lonny says he respects that decision.

It seems like the umpire doesn’t know the score.

What started between a pair of balls has now come to two strikes. And that’s two strikes too many. ▼

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**Glenn
got a
double,
that time
at bat,
and hit a
home run
back at
his place
with Lonny
after
brunch.**

time at bat, and hit a home run back at his place with Lonny after brunch. Lonny was thoroughly jazzed about how well and how quickly they meshed. They connected on several levels, from sports to movies and political perspectives. Lonny described Glenn as his ideal man.

“He’s masculine but not in a way that makes it seem like he’s trying to pass for straight,” Lonny clarified. “The sex is amazing but all the stuff out of bed works really well, too.”

Glenn had a high-pres-

Glenn’s for an amorous double-header. They were each equally comfortable pitching and catching and both had sizable bats. Lonny boasted that they should make a series of sports-themed porn flicks.

After a couple months, Glenn began to grumble about the lack of time that Lonny had available for him. He insisted that Lonny rearrange his schedule to have at least a couple weeknights free for them to get together. Their dates were to include dinner and the requisite sweaty jack

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