

A SHORT STORY:

“AND THEY COOKED THE GOOSE.”

Or

“I LOVE THE SMELL OF BANANAS IN THE MORNING.”

By: Don Jonson.

Once upon a time not so long ago in a land near the bottom of the world, some filthy...filthy degenerates decided to get together on a Saturday to hit a little white ball around on a patch of grass. This pass time became immensely popular and the group of filthy, filthy degenerates grew. This was because either hitting a little white ball was fun, or the fact that afterwards the group gathered together as one and consumed a lot of bubbly drinks, munchies and sacred communion.

After a while the regular's of the 'hitting of the white ball' decided that they needed an identity, a name fitting the philosophy of all the individuals, and one that would fit the philosophy of future filthy, filthy degenerates. And so the “NOBBLED NOMADS” was born. The idea was a great success. Degenerates from various parts of the land near the bottom of the world gathered together under the banner of the “NOBBLED NOMADS” and became filthy, filthy.

Times were good, the rules were loose. The philosophy was, “Don't let the art of hitting a little white ball (golf) get in the road of having fun.” It was all about getting together, and the more degenerates the better. Rule (1) was 'Never Let The Golf Get In The Way', (and we all can remember what rule (2) is). But the good times couldn't last. As is the way world, “All things must pass”. There were murmurings, there was evil a-foot.

Some of the filthy, filthy degenerates wanted to be just 'filthy degenerates'. They thought that the art of hitting a little white ball (golf) was very important and that there should be a competition and that degenerates would be graded according to skill, and that it would be fun; join the filthy degenerates.....or else. This meant that there was no more room for the filthy, filthy degenerates; it was either compete or go. And so they went; to where? No one knows; they either drifted off into the ether world, or got left at the pub.

And so under the banner name of “nNOMADS” the filthy degenerates set off. Competing at all sorts’ places, hitting the little white ball all the time, and being serious about it. They gave each other little white balls for beating the other filthy degenerates or for certain skills displayed on the day. They also decided to give out trophies, a reward for excellence on certain times of the year, and also a yearly trophy to the “Ultimate Filthy Degenerate”. They still consumed a lot of bubbly drinks, munchies and sacred communion; after all they were still...filthy degenerates.

But, a simple name change and a different modis operandi did not mean that it was a complete coup. The filthy degenerates were a group that included various members of the filthy, filthy degenerates. Even though the politics had changed from those of a ‘BANANA Republic’ to those of a so called ‘Democracy’ with a quorum mandate, the original rules, or lack there of, were still in place. The so called ‘BANANA RULES’ were still there, hiding under the rug (or green), ready to make their appearance and be exploited at any given time. The leaders of the coup; the filthy degenerates, had failed to re-write the constitution. The filthy, filthy degenerates still wielded some power. ‘The BANANA RULES’ live on.

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It was some time ago when I was staying at a little rich enclave not far from Guatemala. I was sun baking at the time, when I got a call from a filthy degenerate who wanted to stay for a few days. That was o.k. by me, I wasn’t really doing much; the surf wasn’t going to pick up for another week and my fishing trip to the Bahamas was on hold. I hadn’t seen any filthy degenerates for awhile, so the visit would do me good.

The filthy degenerate arrived and we immediately headed to the golf course to hit a little white ball around. It was during this time, or maybe later at bar after a few rounds of bubbly drinks, that the filthy degenerate informed me about the “nNOMADS” competition, especially the one about the yearly trophy for the “Ultimate Filthy Degenerate”. At this stage I was unaware of the coup between the filthy, filthy degenerates and the filthy degenerates.

It was explained to me that the yearly trophy for the “Ultimate Filthy Degenerate” was based on the amount of golf games played and the score cards submitted to the “Temple of The nNOMADS”. All I had to do was submit my weekly score cards and I would get a point awarded. The filthy degenerate who had the most points was awarded a trophy for being the “Ultimate Filthy Degenerate”. And....this is the best bit....because I didn't live in the land at the bottom of the world, I would be awarded an extra ½ point per game. ‘Well, how could I lose?’, I thought to myself. I play more golf than those filthy degenerates who have to go to work every week.

This all sounded a bit fishy to me and a bit of a ‘BANANA RULE’. I mean, how could I win a trophy that was set up by filthy degenerates at the land at the bottom of the world, that was meant for filthy degenerates who ‘lived’ at the bottom of the world? I lived half a world away. But who was I to question an authority. I mean, the filthy degenerate who explained all this to me was one of the original filthy, filthy degenerates.

I had a feeling that, this system of awarding a trophy couldn't last, it was obviously a loophole. But; there is one thing about loopholes; you had better exploit them while they are there, because sooner or later they will be gone, and then no-one benefits. And so, if there is to be a beneficiary, it may as well be me. ‘I had to get in quick’, I thought; before the window of opportunity closes. So, I submitted all my golf score cards for the year to the “Temple of The nNOMADS”.

Oh, there was one other thing. To be eligible for the trophy, I had to play at least one game of golf in the land at the bottom of the world. ‘Easy’, I thought. I could fly down there, play one game and pick up the trophy.

Anyway, the end of the year was nearly nigh, and I was informed that I had an insurmountable lead in the running for the trophy for the “Ultimate Filthy Degenerate”. All I had to do was get to the land at the bottom of the world. Maybe I could go skiing in Japan for a month, play golf, pick up a trophy, go on a dog sled race to the South Pole, and then fly home.

And so, to cut a short story short; I arrived in the land at the bottom of the world (after getting a bunch of fresh tracks in Japan) and played golf. It was then that I was informed that I had indeed won the trophy for the “Ultimate Filthy Degenerate”....WooHoo!!! I

mean, I still thought it a little strange that a trophy was awarded 'on time spent', rather than 'skill'; terribly 'BANANA-ish'. But who was I to argue. I was ready to accept my trophy.

Then a funny thing happened. At the trophy presentation I found out that there wasn't even a trophy. I was awarded a used plastic bottle. It seemed that the last filthy degenerate who had won the trophy, had refused to hand it over; he was pissed-off that I had won the trophy, and that he hadn't. Talk about sour grapes. It was then that I was informed about the coup between the filthy, filthy degenerates and the filthy degenerates. Apparently the rules had changed, and there was no trophy. A few months after that, I received a picture of me with a super imposed picture of a cardboard cut-out of a trophy slapped on it...WooBloodyHoo!! What the hell!! The rules of the game had changed mid-game. This 'BANANA RULE' was no more.

p.s: When the trophy did surface, I did get my name on it though. Hooray!, for loopholes and 'BANANA RULES'.

A long time had passed since that incident, and I was now not living near Guatemala. I was living in the land at the bottom of the world, and was preparing for a round the world ocean yacht race. I needed to practice in the southern ocean and prepare the boat, and this would take some time. It was also a good time to catch up with "The Filthy Degenerates", and play some golf.

It must be said that, now; the golf game that the filthy degenerates played was a serious business. There were all sorts of rules in place, and competitions within the competition, and certain prizes awarded according to how many filthy degenerates were playing, and all this was recorded at "The Temple of The nNOMADS", and all this was heavily scrutinized. There were charts, analytical reports, graphs, lists, progress reports, photos, videos, and more charts. Most important of all, there was a bladder and a strike rate report. This was sacred. This was the report that determined who was going to be the "Ultimate Filthy Degenerate" for the year. If this was messed with, then existence was futile. What ever happened to "don't let the art of hitting a little white ball get in the road of having fun". Golf was never meant to be this way. It was invented as a game for friends (or filthy degenerates) to get together and have bubble drinks, munchies, and sacred communion; and the scores and stats were irrelevant. But all that's o.k., if you

don't want to get on the horse, then don't get on the horse. A little bit of competition never hurt anyone. And if you do have a competition, then it must be accurate. And the privilege of playing with "The Filthy Degenerates" far exceeds or out-ways any differences or philosophies that might crop up.

Anyway, I had been in the land at the bottom of the world for some time, battling 40 to 50 ft swells in Bass Strait and working with dodgy navigational equipment, and playing golf with the filthy degenerates, when on one weekend, there was only one filthy degenerate and myself who wanted to play golf. 'No big deal, no dramas', I thought. Just the two of us.

Just before our start of play, the filthy degenerate suggested that we invoke the "additional ball" rule. 'What's that?' I said. He said, 'It's where we put in extra money, to have more prizes on offer to make it more interesting'. 'Cool', I thought.

I didn't think too much more about it until I was walking down the second fairway. I thought it a bit strange that prizes were on offer anyway. I thought, that you needed three filthy degenerates golfing before prizes were on offer?. Maybe I was wrong. But, if on this day, we were getting extra prizes, then this would affect the 'sacred' bladder and strike rate report. And then it hit me, this was a "BANANA RULE" .....WooHoo!! This was a rule left over from the dynasty of the filthy, filthy degenerates when golf was all about the good times. If on this day we invoked the 'additional ball' rule, this will cause controversy.....WooHoo!! This will make some of the filthy degenerates upset, even though it is legal.....WooHoo!! A loophole; ready to be exploited. And you know how I feel about loopholes, sooner or later they will disappear, and if you don't take your opportunities when they present themselves, you miss out.

And so; because on this day that the "additional ball rule", this "BANANA RULE" was invoked, a lot of filthy degenerates became upset. Although I don't know why, because the rules have been displayed at the "Temple Of The nNOMAD" for time immemorial. If you sign up for a game, you abide by the rules of the game. I mean, if you're going to complain about something, complain at the beginning or end of the game; not during it. But, on the other hand, if you're going to have a so-called competition that is based on accuracy, then it should be accurate, ie : the amount of prizes on offer should not exceed the number of players playing (except in "Trophy Games", where there should be

prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and more prizes). And, while we're on the subject, why not give out lots of prizes that don't get registered on the 'sacred' bladder and strike rate. This brings in lots of friendly competition on the day (pure golf), without the seriousness. If the club can afford it (which it can), then why not?

All this brings up another point about a so called splinter group that is located down near the southern ocean, the so-called "Splitters". I am a member of this group, and while we do answer to that name, we are actually called " The People Who Like To Where Brightly Coloured Shirts With Floral Prints On Them Whilst Singing The Praises Of The Good King Neptune" (that's this week, anyway). But we do adhere to some of the rules that are set out in the "Temple of The nNOMAD" in that we only give out prizes according to the number of members playing. That is not to say that we will not invoke the "Additional Ball Rule", or any other 'BANANA RULE", or loopholes that are on offer, because we abide by the constitution (or lack thereof) of "The Temple Of The nNOMAD". Now; how we give out prizes is up to us, and we are very creative about how we do it. We make sure every body has a good day.

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That brings this little tale to an end, I have to test some navigational equipment and some new sails, although it's been raining a lot lately so I might go sit on a beach in Tahiti. It's also been dumping in Chile so I could go get some freshies there. I do like "BANANA RULES" and loopholes, it's just a shame that they only turn up once every 5 or 6 years or so. These rules are a reminder of the good times when games were just games, and there was no difference between first and last. I also like a good competition, and nothing beats a good controversy. "Long Live The BANANA"!!!!

THE END. (or is it)

P.S. For those interested, I don't have a picture of Chuck, but I do have a picture of his boat.

