

Sometimes You Can’t See the Woods for the Tree

By Duane Plank

When the blurb crawled across the bottom of the TV screen around noon on Friday that a golfer by the name of Tiger Woods had been involved in a car accident, and was “seriously” injured, I immediately thought back to a day 12 years ago when the first reports surfaced that Britains’ Lady Diana had been “seriously” injured in a car crash while she was being motored around Paris, France. Chased by the idiots who prided themselves on being card-carrying members of the paparazzi.

Didn’t think, upon first listen 12 years ago, that the injuries suffered by Lady Di would lead to her demise, but they unfortunately did. So when I heard that Woods was seriously hurt, can’t say that I prayed for his health cuz I don’t really pray on the physical status of sports guys unless they happen to be Arnold Palmer, but I did hope that the kid who hits a pretty sweet six-iron would come out of the ordeal okay.

Heck, I didn’t even pray for the safety of the “Balloon Boy.” Good thing, wouldn’t have wanted to have wasted one of my “ups” with the Big Guy over a publicity-seeking hoax dreamed up by a couple of morons.

Anyway, as the day progressed last Friday, the reports on the health of the one-time California golfing prodigy got a heck of a lot better. From “seriously” injured, his status turned into “okay, cuts on his face,” blah, blah, blah. I wish for Mr. Tiger’s full recovery, cuz running over a fire hydrant and a neighbor’s tree isn’t that big of a deal, right?

I mean, that could happen to any of us, right?

Course I got to thinking...it was 2:30 in the a.m. when the “accident” occurred. A Woods apologist, or maybe someone who is fairly naive, mentioned that maybe he had an early tee time at a local golf course. Getting up early to hit some balls at the range. Possible, though not probable. Most courses probably don’t open up at 3 a.m., but what the hell do I know? I haven’t been up too early recently, preferring to hit the snooze button repeatedly until I have to arise and feed the hounds at the mansion.

So I retorted that maybe the early a.m. mishap had something to do with a tee, but not necessarily a golf tee, but may be a Long Island Ice Tea? Which, to the uninformed, is a pretty stiff cocktail made with a tad bit of extra booze. Saw one made the other day, by an incredibly top-notch mixologist. Nice cocktail. One of those, and it could be “good night now.” Especially if someone is chasing you with a four iron.

So one of the myriad stories going round, and remember, faithful readers, that I file this wonderful column early Monday morning, is that Woods was high-tailing it out of his mansion at 2:30 a.m. because of some type of domestic dispute. Imagine that. How can that happen? He has a ton of money! And maybe *that* is why his lovely wife Elin was chasing him down the driveway with a four iron. Which she was so lucky to be in possession of when she had to bust through the rear window to rescue her betrothed after the accident.

All is well that ends well, right? No one was hurt, other than a fire hydrant, a tree, and maybe Tiger’s reputation. And two of those three things can be replaced rather quickly. But riddle me this. Tiger was apparently able to stonewall the authorities for at least

three days before he had to face the music. Gee, that would be plenty of time for the Woods’ family and their phalanx of spin-meisters to concoct a bogus story. If such story was necessary. And why would it be necessary to fabricate a tall tale? Dude hit something. No one was hurt. Guy has sufficient scratch, I assume, to replace the fire hydrant and the tree.

Heck, even the nutcases who bleed “green” should be copacetic with the Tiger making good on the horrendous tree damage.

Course the longer Mr. Woods doesn’t speak with the authorities, the more convoluted his story seems. Yup, he released a statement, probably on his website, taking responsibility for the fire hydrant and tree mayhem. And saying all is well, and that he was disappointed with the scurrilous rumors that were circulating. Hi infidelity and all of that. Which is great, but if you or I, no, if *you* crashed into a couple of inanimate objects way early on a Friday morning, think that the cops would allow you to wait three days or more before speaking with them? Hmm...

Just asking. Wonder if Woods will be out in SoCal this week to play in his golf tourney that is taking place on the Westside? Oh, the humanity!

Was shopping a little bit on a frenetic Wednesday at the local supermarket. Day before Thanksgiving, frazzled folks everywhere. Or at least they appeared to be a tad bit out of sorts, but maybe they knew exactly what they were doing, where to find the cranberry stuff and the gerbil stuffing, and the other all-important items that we deem necessary for a Thanksgiving feast. I went in for one item, found it, stood in a short checkout line. Which gave me a moment or two to peruse the mags that they rack up so that we have something to read while standing in line.

One of the mags was going to let us know the “real” reason why Ms. Oprah Winfrey was quitting her incredibly lucrative TV show. I gotta believe that it has something to do with food, maybe that the buffet hour at Applebees didn’t coincide with the early taping of her show?

Also saw a blurb that may have said that Brad Pitt was on some sort of “booze binge.” Criminy, and I always thought that folks with millions of dollars in the bank and tons of spare time just went to the library to read books, or to the church to pray to the god of their choice. Who would have thought that they may occasionally hang out and overindulge in the grape?

And that Chastity/Chaz Bono has apparently become a man. Hope so, cuz she looked like she weighed in at about 300 pounds on the picture that I saw on the cover of the mag. A heavyweight. Good for her. According to one of the fan mags, Bono, who reiterated his/her stance that “gender is between your ears and not between your legs,” said the biggest hurdle of her/his decision to begin gender reassignment was the realization that “I’m not going to be able to do this privately as most people can.”

“Then it came down to realizing that I have to live my life for myself,” he/she said, “and that life is short and life is precious.” All cheap shots aside, good for Bono. Life is fairly short. Do what is best for you, and if you have a family, them. People will ridicule you for a week or two, and then move on to the next all-important diversion. That’s *their* problem, isn’t it? •

Frankly Plank

By Duane Plank

Don’t think that this guy is a relative, but a story was brought to my attention recently by brother Chris. Seems that one Michael Plank was arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle reptiles into the good old US of A. Plank was arrested at LAX by customs’ officials as he tried to reenter the country from Australia with 15 little reptiles hiding under his shirt, strapped to his chest. Or maybe they were hiding in his pants. Don’t know--wasn’t there when the arrest took place. Who needs Viagra when you have little reptiles that you can strategically place in your skivvies?

So heard from a semi-reliable source that relentlessly positive Bruin football coach Slick Rick Neuheisel met recently with a bunch of redshirt kids and basically told them to take a hike--that they were done participating in the constantly underachieving Bruin football program. Neuheisel hadn’t recruited these kids. They were part of the ill-fated Karl Dorrell regime and they are, apparently, being cast adrift. So a bunch of them quit. Nice job, coach. Way to treat the student-athletes who chose to attend the Westside campus. Course these kids didn’t choose to matriculate in Westwood because of the incredibly hot coeds, right?

And that one-time starter, and a senior himself, lineman Nick Ekbatani, met with his OL coach, who told him, basically, “Goodbye to you,” to quote the title of a Patty Smyth and Scandal peppy tune from years and years ago. Nick apparently won’t be seeing the field himself, a victim of the “we didn’t recruit ‘em, we ain’t playin’ ‘em” mantra of Slick Rick. Who has done a marvelous job of turning around the Bruin football program, right Air Force Blue fans? Sure that y’all supporters would accept a 6-6 campaign from Dorrell, right?

Course the Bruins, while toilet bowl eligible, may have played their last game of the season. And Ekbatani didn’t see much of the field during the embarrassing loss to rub-it-in Pete Carroll and the Trojans.

Heck, the best part of the whole game the other night was the brouhaha that occurred after the Trojans and 2010 Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Matt Barkley rubbed it in the basketball school’s face, and tossed a “bleep you, Coach Neuheisel” 48-yard TD pass in the last minute of the incredibly boring contest. No wonder that they played this game at 7 p.m. If Sominex wasn’t available to any of the folks unfortunate enough to tune in, this game was the perfect sleeping pill. Till the last minute. When the Bruins called a late timeout, which was their prerogative. Which seemed to tick off the SC brain trust, who decided to take to the air to seal the deal.

Someone mentioned that the gutty little Bruins and relentlessly positive Slick Rick wouldn’t forget the final minute. Someone much smarter than the *other* someone, that would be *Plank*, retorted that until the Bruins can actually field a decent team, it doesn’t make a whole lot of difference how ticked off the Bruins and their Juco-type players are. Early prediction for the 2010 game: USC 42, UCLA, 14.

By the way, UCLA fans, will the football team or the fellas’ basketball team win more games this year? Talk about Bruins in ruins.

Anyway, predicted that the Trojans would triumph over the basketball school from Westwood in last Saturday’s tilt at the Coliseum. My score: 31-14, Trojans. Final score: 28-7, University of Southern California. Pretty darn good prediction, eh?

Wife told me that another person actually read and liked one of my columns last week. Up to five supporters, the number is growing, and in 2010 the goal is to take this sucker national, to reap in the big bucks that the syndicated guys like Mitch Albom garner. Led a column last week with the reference to garages, and does anyone still park their

car there? This lady apparently has two cars that she shoehorns into her garage. Good for her. But then where does she store all of her nebulous junk? Boy, am I jealous. I pay for a storage unit, store stuff here and there, and still don’t have enough room. Thinking of subletting some of my storage space. Any takers?

Mentioned last week that the front-room TV in the mansion wasn’t working, that the DVR box had a corrupted access card. Talked to the DirecTV folks Thursday night and still hadn’t seen the replacement card by Wednesday morning. Yikes! Almost a full week without access to the boob tube in the front. Maybe shouldn’t use “boob tube” because of last week’s reference to adult TV. But how the hell did I survive? *Did* I survive? As of Monday a.m., still no card. What a pisser!

Bet you really care how my Fantasy Football team is doing, right, fans? Especially after everyone’s favorite fantasy QB, the blob that was/is JaMarcus Russell, was finally cast off to the pine by the next Vince Lombardi of the NFL, Raider coach Tom Cable. Who may have some trouble of his own down the road, what with his reported “anger” issues.

Well, thanks for asking. I am currently sitting in fourth place after losing in my game against my kid this week. He is leading the family league that we play in, trying to defend his crown that he won last year.

I have actually been paying attention to my team this season, shuffling guys in and out of the lineup each week. Dropped a bunch of Ram players from the roster, but have held on to running back Steven Jackson, who has been playing his butt off for the woebegone Rambos. Who are going to have to survive the rest of the season, probably, without QB Marc “Tinman” Bulger, who got himself hurt, again, a couple of weeks ago. Still cashing the checks, though. Course I benched Jackson this week because he was “questionable” before the loss against Seattle. But he played. Oh, well. Win some, lose some.

Back to my Rams. In reality, I am way too critical of Bulger. Not his fault that he is way overpaid, having put up some gaudy numbers when the offensive genius, Mike Martz, was still running the foosball show that used to be known as the Greatest Show on Turf. I wouldn’t have turned down the ludicrous money that was bestowed upon the second-tier QB. By the way, the original gunslinger in the Martz offense, one grocery-bagger from the now-defunct Arena League, Kurt Warner, is still doing a pretty decent job captaining the ship that is the Arizona Cardinals. And Mr. Warner, who I have admitted to having a man-crush on, also happens to be my Fantasy QB. But he missed last week’s loss to Tennessee with a nasty concussion.

By the way, did you notice that when Warner was dinged in the noggin in a recent game against my Rams, Matt Leinart, pride of the school down the street Figueroa way, came into the game and led the Cardinal offense straight into the tank? Which seems par for the course for Matty boy. And on the same day, some ex-SC QB by the name of Sanchez continued to circle the drain, chucking picks left and right in another Jet loss, this time to the New England Pats?

Wasn’t it about two months ago when the Sanchez kid was being sent straight to the Hall of Fame in Canton by the East Coast frontrunners and myopic morons who blather on at ESPN? Watching the ex-Trojan QB stink up the joint, sitting next to a local ex-SC sports legend who was definitely beside himself. And then said legend of the sand took a shot at current SC disappearing D-back Taylor Mays, who decided to stay at SC and not enter the pro draft, as the befuddled Sanchez did last spring. Said the legend, and I paraphrase, “Mays stinks!”

Maybe the legend of the sand is a little more forgiving after the Trojans’ victory? •

