

The way Whitey sees things

Gosh. The news just gets better and better. A few months ago, you may recall, an Australian doctor proclaimed that exercise and nutrition don't help you live longer. And now, a world-renowned

expert has announced that vegetarianism is bad for you.

Well, let me qualify that statement, just slightly. The expert in question is not an expert in medicine — he's St. Louis Cardinals manager Whitey Herzog, which makes him an expert on baseball instead.

Still, an expert is (after all) an expert. And besides, lots of people develop new areas of expertise almost overnight — witness John Crosbie, who has suddenly become an expert on CBC-type snivellers, self-appointed fakirs and philosophers, and encyclopedia pedlars.

In any case, Mr. Herzog made his comments after one of his pitchers had to leave a game with a pulled muscle — the third Cardinal pitcher to be injured this season.

And, said Mr. Herzog, all three pitchers have one thing in common: "They're all vegetarians. They're all on salt-free diets. They're all so finely tuned. They snap too frequently. 'Babe Ruth,'" he continued, "never

had a pulled muscle. Babe lived on hot dogs and beer."

Well, it's possible that we should take Mr. Herzog's analysis with a grain of salt — except, of course, for those of us on salt-free diets.

Much as we might like to believe it, we should probably be skeptical about the thesis that Babe Ruth was protected from injury by eating all those hot dogs. My own suspicion is that it was the beer that did the trick.

Even so, Mr. Herzog's comments serve a wonderful humanitarian purpose: they help undermine the vegetarian plot to make the rest of us feel wicked.

Let us be under no illusions. This plot exists, and it has existed for years.

Way back at the turn of the century, George Bernard Shaw opined that the critics who attacked his plays did so precisely because he was a vegetarian — and that they, as carnivores, secretly loathed themselves and resented his purity.

(It's possible that George had a point.

On the other hand, George also believed that the plays of Shaw were vastly superior to the plays of Shakespeare. George did not, shall we say, bat 1,000.) Latterly, the plot has taken an even nastier turn, with all those books proclaiming that eating meat is not only wicked but fatal — that the vegetarians will be hale and hearty and eating al-

out, with wide-eyed anxiety: "I don't suppose anyone here is a... a vegetarian?"

This is followed by an outpouring of relief and joy when all assembled confess their carnivorous habit, and the host at last feels confident enough to reveal the truth — that Clover the Cow is this very moment in the microwave.

It's because of this terrible guilt-load that I've occasionally let my purer friends drag me to vegetarian restaurants.

You know all about veggie restaurants. These are the ones where — because you know they don't serve beer — you cheerfully order a Pepsi.

That's when a look of ill-concealed disgust on the waiter's pasty face tips you off to the fact that you don't drink Pepsi here, either. You drink carrot juice. And you like it.

At one such restaurant, I actually ordered a soybean burger. Honest. I ordered a soybean burger, and I had a whole bite of it.

The bite was enough to make me start thinking — for the first time in my life — that a Big Mac might actually be worth dying for.



Weir's View

By Ian Weir
Thomson News Service

falfa-sprouts decades after the rest of us have been murdered by cheeseburgers.

And the truly insidious fact is that this plot is effective. 'Fess up, now — if you eat meat, there are times when you feel secretly guilty.

You can try all the logical arguments you like — that if God had not meant us to barbecue steaks, He would not have created charcoal — but you can't quite shake the nagging suspicion that the vegetarians actually are more virtuous.

You can see evidence of this deep-seated unease at any dinner party. Some time between taking the coats and serving the second drinks, either the host or hostess will invariably blurt

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