

# Me 'shawk' bait? — not on your life, or rather mine

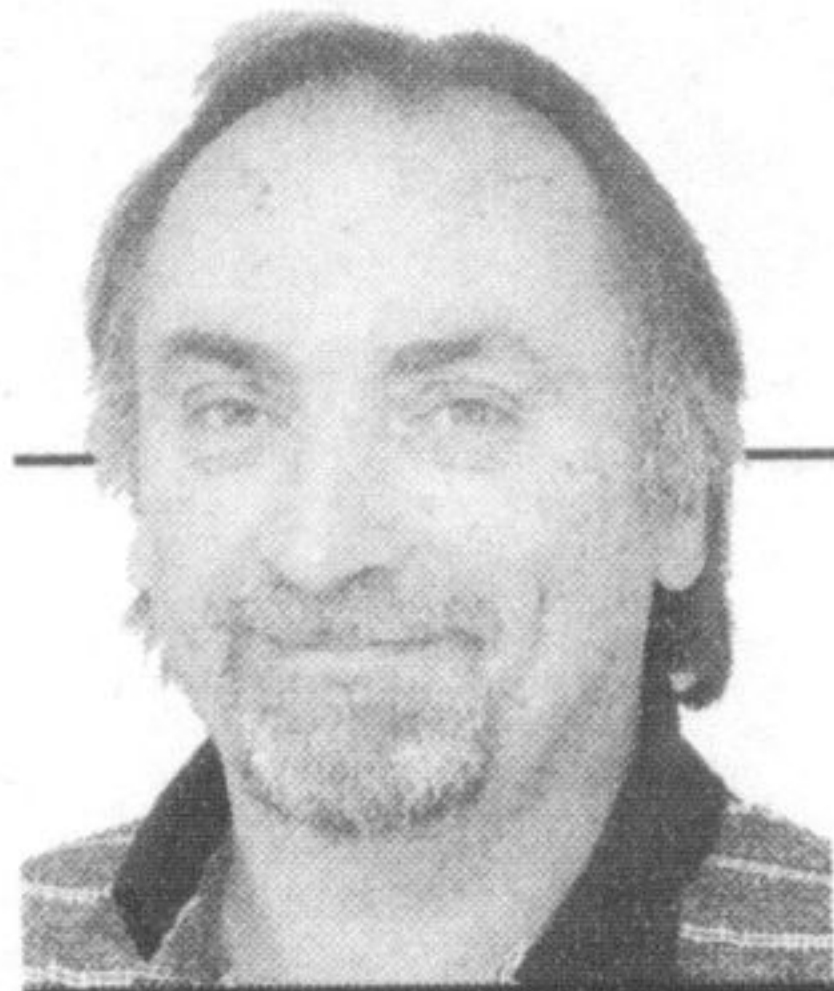
Normally, this time of year I'm busy with NHL previews and such, but with the lockout, I'm not. I think players having to live with an average salary of \$1.3 million, and having a salary cap on top of that, is like a crime against humanity.

Instead, I'm working in Foxboro, Massachusetts at Gillette Stadium, where the New England Patriots play. Massachusetts is nice, but I'm bored out of my dim-witted mind at the moment sitting in my hotel, which is why I'm writing this from here.

I was watching ESPN Sportscentre for the 16th time when I decided it was time to switch the channel. I hear this classical music running during the credits for a movie, and at the same time I notice leaves falling gracefully from trees, as if to the music. When you're bored, let me tell you, this can be a fascinating thing. So, I turn on the radio and find a classical music station and watch leaves falling from trees to music for the next hour. Then I watch Sportscentre for the 17th time.

But, that's not what I was going to tell you. I'm not far from Cape Cod, and I've never been there before, so I thought it would be nice to go and dip my toe into the Atlantic Ocean, if only so I could say I'd done it.

I go off, as prepared as usual. I'll just follow the signs. But, what



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they have in Massachusetts are these things they call a rotary. It's like an intersection, but you go around in a circle, and there can be five or six exits.

It's confusing if you're not used to it, and when I get to Cape Cod, I keep going around this rotary and getting off at the wrong spot. Then I have to drive a distance, turn around, and go back to the rotary. Eventually, I get tired of that game and it's dark, so I go back to the hotel to watch Sportscentre.

The big news in Boston, apart from the Red Sox playing the Yankees, was this great white shark that got into this inlet in a

small town called Woods Hole, and wouldn't leave. That was definitely one place I planned to stay away from.

The next day, I headed back to Cape Cod. This time, I asked someone which way to go off the rotary, so I was extra prepared. I figured I'd just follow that highway until I saw the Atlantic Ocean.

The problem with that plan was that you couldn't see the ocean from the highway. Eventually, however, I came to this beautiful little hamlet, picture perfect like in a movie, and I could see the Atlantic Ocean. Wonderful. I'm going in.

It's a busy little town, which doesn't surprise me in Cape Cod on a nice weekend, and I can't find parking anywhere. Plus, the roads are jam packed with other people trying to find a spot.

I have my window down because it's such a perfect day, and I can hear people talking as I wait for cars in front of me to move.

You know how a Boston accent sounds — they don't pronounce the letter "r" if it doesn't start a word. Year becomes "yeya"; four becomes "fowa"; and beer is "beeya." You get used to it before too long.

One word keeps popping up, but it takes me a while before I catch on.

They're talking about the "shawk."

The shawk? Why are they talking about the shawk? It occurs to me at this point that I should check to see where I am.

Sure enough, I've landed in Woods Hole. The first time in my life that I can step into the Atlantic Ocean, and there's a shark waiting for me. I didn't like the odds, and some people say there's no such thing as coincidence.

I saw Jaws, and I'm nobody's lunch, so I stayed in the car and went back to the hotel to watch Sportscentre.

If there are any NHL players association union people reading this, I'd like to recommend a nice spot to hold some meetings — Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Don't forget your swimming trunks.

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