



ESSE



PL: That's a lot of photos; do you have a favorite?

BB: I've changed my mind many times over the years on that subject. I've got a million to choose from and only a few really stand out. I always used to answer that it was Gretzky breaking Esposito's record for most goals in one season in Buffalo in 1982. It's really a boring shot, but it's "the moment" and it has been published so many times. More recently, I point to a black and white photo I shot of Guy Lafleur being hip checked by Denis Potvin of the New York Islanders. To me, it is an iconic photo of two stars colliding in a much different time in the history of hockey. These kind of open ice hits rarely happen anymore.

PL: What's the strangest thing you've ever seen while shooting for the NHL?

BB: Back in the mid '70's, I was only in my second or third year shooting when Red Wings coach Doug Barkley physically assaulted a New Jersey reporter when he didn't like the line of questioning. Then there was the time that a player engaged in some activity with a young lady in the locker room at Nassau Coliseum...during a game. On advice of counsel, I have no further comment on the matter.

PL: Who have been some of the best and worst players to work with?

BB: Hockey players are great. They really are. Most of them are cooperative and willing to help promote the sport when given the chance. Even the biggest guys who were in such high demand, like Gretzky and Lemieux, would squeeze in enough time for a photo shoot. Most difficult player was Don Mattingly, but I'll save that for BallLife Magazine. He's probably the reason I rarely strayed from working with hockey players.

PL: From a photography point-of-view, what's been the biggest change in the game from when you started?

BB: I guess the helmets...and then the face shields. I used to recognize all the players and for that matter, the fans did too! Now I don't and unfortunately neither do the fans. Sometimes when I am trying to identify a player at a game to caption an image, I'll show the image on the computer around to fans and they usually guess... and then guess again. And I'm talking about identifying their own hometown players.

PL: Have you ever done a photo-shoot with the commish? Is he as kind and jovial as he appears to be on TV?

BB: I've photographed him many times but I can't remember any one-on-one shoots. Fact is, he has a great sense of humor and is real easy to work with, although I know that's not the answer you were looking for.

PL: Do you have any compromising photos of Gary? If so, can we have them?

BB: Of course I have some – actually many. And of course, you can't have them

PL: Can you say something mean about Gary?

BB: I'm probably taller than him. Bet that hurts, huh?

PL: Can you get us a 1 on 1 with Gary?

BB: No problem at all. But I bet NHL security would tackle you before you made it to his office.

PL: Gee, thanks Bruce.