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# Chapter Thirty Five

## *Rowdy Golf Weekend*

*June 1-3, 2007 at Dogwood Hills (twice), Deer Chase, Old Kinderhook, Osage National. Rowdy Jones, Tom Shaughnessy, Gene Burnett, Dave Cox, Matt Piskulic, Bill Hawkins, Terry Cook, Wes Morgan and Galen Evans*

Ocean's 13 opened in movie theaters (with George Clooney and the gang) the week after I returned from the Rowdy Golf Weekend. Rowdy is kind of like Danny Ocean in pulling together this crew. (Even if you prefer the Frank Sinatra vintage Danny Ocean you get the idea). We all know the drill and we all know we're all in for whatever the caper. We trust Rowdy and, being guys, we are businesslike in the ritual of following through with plans to play a lot of golf on this scheduled weekend in June. We are on a mission.

Rowdy Golf is a tradition that dates back 14 years and all of us (with the exception of Galen) are veterans of this loosely organized event. If you've been on the trip more than a couple of times, chances are you will experience a Déjà vu. 'Lil Rizzo's restaurant on Friday Night and Camp Bagnell on Saturday night. Convincing ourselves that our games are improving and that Dogwood Hills is in excellent shape. (Well sure, compared to the flooded landscape last year.)

Like Jake and Elwood Blues, Shaughnessy and Jones have made this annual event something you just don't want to miss. But, like the Blues Brothers, it's about bringing the band back together. You get the call and you just go – no questions asked.

Karaoke at Camp Bagnell was even more "over the top" this year. But there was no-one to embarrass ourselves in front of except a handful of townies and our band of Rowdy Golfers. "Hattie told Mattie...It was the thing to do....Wooly Bully, Wooly Bully." Is it really important to get the words right? "Lahhhhh La La La La ...he was rockin'and bopping' to the Crockadile Rock – Well, Lordy Momma, those Friday Nights,

Suzie wore her dresses tight....Lahhhh La La,La La.” And the big close, “It’s up to you New York, New York!”

It was great to see Terry Cook out of the slammer. Hawkins is still beaming that confidence that can only come from running covert operations via helicopter and laughing in the face of danger. (Getting out of a sand bunker pales by comparison). Shaughnessy is keenly aware that golf, and this weekend, are much more than what they appear to be. The subtle turn of a phrase is often lost forever but to write it down as he speaks would be to lose the context. And what could be more special than the bond between Dave Cox and his uncle Gene?

Photo Matt is still chocking down on that putter – so much that I can’t watch for fear my own smooth stroke will be infected by his unorthodoxy on the putting surface. On most holes, Hawkins repairs divot marks while waiting for the rest of his group to get close to the pin. Terry Cook is struggling to make the patented “Cook Hook” work for him but clearly his short game is betraying him the most.

Rowdy is playing it cool but he’s experiencing a bit of a career crisis. He’s talented and will, no doubt, land on his feet and resume his prosperous ways. The Traveling Rowdy Golf Trophy and the custom Tee shirts are nice touches. At ‘Lil Rizzo’s, when he’s not making time with the bachelorette party, he offers a toast and a few words that we all know means that he’s moved that Rowdy Golf continues to be successful.

Galen is new to the crew this year, but he seems to understand the free flow of banter. “If I didn’t have a short game, I’d have no game at all.” he repeats as he approaches the bunker at Osage National. Failing to get out of that situation in one stroke only makes him human. Earlier in the same round he saved par after chipping onto the green on a par three from 15 feet below the hole. This game is so easy. The usually charmed Uncle Gene did not have the same success in a nearly identical situation on that hole.

We could have used a Bill Vann favorable ruling on creative scorekeeping – especially on Sunday. The weather was so

cooperative; there was no reason to stop playing. Even on Sunday it seemed like a shame to retreat. The weekend had plenty of F\*#%ing missed shots to keep Captain Mike in our thoughts. And we missed Fritz too - no doubt he's conquering a new course in Dubai or Kuala Lumpur. To Rowdy Golfers everywhere "God Bless us everyone!" Hope to see you again next year.