

# Metropolitan view



## 'Playing results' pays off big as the fish plays sucker

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Class, our lesson for today involves a little known but profitable game called "playing results."

"Playing results" is a game that can be staged in the criminal courts system or in any legislative body, such as a legislature, a city council, a police jury or other similar body.

We are indebted, class, to former Police Capt. Frederick Soule, who recently gave us under oath one of the best descriptions ever rendered publicly of "playing results."

CAPT. SOULE, as you probably know, was testifying in the current pinball trial in our federal courts. Because his description of the rules of "playing results" was not particularly relevant to the pinball trial, it has gotten little notice.

That is unfortunate because "playing results" is a sufficiently important part of our system and your understanding of the system won't be complete unless you understand the role that this particular game plays.

Let's start with an example of how "playing results" could function in the criminal courts system.

In the example offered by Soule on the witness stand, the game sometimes begins with a police officer who learns that certain charges that have been brought in some particular case aren't going to stand up. The case, he learns, will be thrown out of court for lack of evidence or on some similar technical grounds.

IN SOULE'S example, the policeman passes this information on to his co-player who acts as go-between.

With the knowledge that the case is going to be thrown out, the go-between goes to the person charged and makes an offer to this effect: "Look, this is a tough rap that you're facing but I've got the leverage to get this thing fixed for you.

"Quite frankly, I can reach the (.....)."

This is the fill-in-the-blank part of the game. The go-between may say he can reach the district attorney or the judge. Having said this, the go-between continues:

"However, it's going to cost something. I think it will cost (.....)."

THIS AGAIN is a fill-in-the-blank. The go-between asks for what he thinks the traffic will bear. Then, as a clincher, he might add: "But, look. I can't make any promises. It will be tough for me to do, even with the money. However, if I can't fix the case and get the charges thrown out, it won't cost you anything."

The third party in the game, who is usually known as the fish, might rise to this bait. If he goes along, he is hooked. If the charges are thrown out as the go-between and his partner anticipate, the go-between then collects from the fish, saying, "Look, it wasn't easy but I got to that fella for you. I'll tell you, at the price you're getting him, it's cheap."

Now, class, I'm sure it isn't necessary to tell you that at this point, the fish has been hooked, landed and gutted. He has paid up in the belief that he was fixing a case that was going to be thrown out anyway. The fish thinks he has paid to bribe someone but the money goes no further than the go-between and his partner.

OF COURSE, the reason that "playing results" works is that a lot of people think that you can put in the fix. And, history would seem to tell that this is sometimes possible.

That, of course, is one of the more sordid aspects of any system. In "playing results," the essence of the game is that the fish believes the system is corrupt so he plays willingly and later says of whomever he thinks he has bribed, "Boy, I'll tell you. You can get to old (.....). He's definitely on the take. I should know because he's got some of my money."

Well, class, although the period is coming to an end, I'd like to briefly describe a legislative variation on how "playing results" can be staged.

In this variation, the go-between goes to legislator A and says, "I don't care personally one way or another but would you tell me how you're going to vote on Issue B." The legislator, who would be naive indeed not to know what is going on, may agree to tell the go-between.

FOR THE PURPOSES of this example, let's assume he goes along and says he will vote against Issue B.

The go-between then seeks out someone who has a vested interest in beating Issue B and says, "Look, I think I can get to legislator A on this thing and deliver him to you. But, it will cost you ..... ." Once again, class, this is the fill-in-the-blank part based on what the go-between thinks the traffic will bear. The go-between again adds the decorous touch, saying, "But, if I don't deliver, you don't owe me a thing."

If the fish bites and legislator A votes against Issue B as he indicated to the go-between he would, the fish is then told by the go-between, "Look, I delivered your man. Boy, it was tough but because I really like you, I put something extra on it and cashed some of my own green stamps." Once again, the fish—hooked, landed and gutted—pays up what he thinks is a bribe but he has been conned out of his money.

SO, CLASS, "playing results" is the ultimate hustle. The fish, hooked in some variation of the game either in the judicial, legislative and executive level of our system, is a happy fish because he thinks he's bought something, not knowing he was going to get it anyway.

In a way, he is the perfect victim. He set out to corrupt and ended up getting bilked. But, he's also pathetic because he can see so much evidence of corruption that he thinks that's the only way the system works.

In conclusion, class, we don't really know how often "playing results" is staged because there is no official scorer and no official records are kept. That makes it very difficult to establish league standings, batting averages or other relevant data.

But, based on Capt. Soule's testimony and on what we know of the practice in its numerous variations, we can assume that "playing results" is not uncommon. An interesting sidelight of "playing results" is that it isn't clear anything illegal takes place because in its purest form, "playing results" does not involve any money ever getting to a public official. So, there's no bribe.

I SEE A HAND in the back of the class. What's that question? You want to know the moral of this lesson about the rules of "playing results?" Hmmm. That's a tough one.

I guess the most practical moral is that bribery is for fish. I mean, it always seems such a perfect way of guaranteeing the results you want until you begin to consider the possibilities of a double-cross.

You just never know when someone is "playing results."