

# Sports and Riches

The Sequel to  
SportsFan Chronicles™

Kurt Weichert

*Sports and Riches: The Sequel to SportsFan Chronicles™*  
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## A NOTE TO THE READER

*Sports and Riches* is the sequel to *SportsFan Chronicles*<sup>™</sup>, a series of fictional comedies. Kurt and Brian are best friends with a shared dream: NFL ownership. In the first book Kurt and Brian won the largest lottery in history—half of it, anyway. The windfall allowed them to quit their jobs. It also put them one step closer to realizing their once-impossible dream of becoming owners in the greatest league in the world. They were filthy rich, but realized they needed a lot more money to purchase a franchise. So they did the unthinkable and persuaded the other lottery ticket holder to combine his fortune with theirs. The catch? He happened to be their hated ex-boss, Frank.

For readers who didn't get a chance to read the last book, the main character is a fictional version of me. As for my real-life friends, I left them out so as not to embarrass them. Instead each character is a composite of people I've encountered through the years, and the situations are much the same—combined events.

The basis for *SportsFan Chronicles*<sup>™</sup> and *Sports and Riches* is a body of scripts I wrote for television in the 1990s called *The Sportsfan*. Despite positive response to the project, I decided to take a hiatus and found myself taking a long break from writing.

It was inevitable that the characters would not be still until they could continue their journey, and that they would not be silent until their tale was told. And so it was, over a decade later, I was ready to return to writing. I have decided go back to my roots: sports and comedy.

Don't forget to follow me on Twitter, @kurtweichert, and visit my website: [www.sportsfanchronicles.com](http://www.sportsfanchronicles.com).



## CHAPTER 1

# That's What the Sign Says

Kurt parked his car and started across the parking lot toward the building. He stopped in his tracks at the sound of a loud voice that could only be coming from a megaphone. “A megaphone? What the hell is that?”

“It needs to be raised another two feet and more to the left,” yelled Frank, megaphone in hand, as a large crane lifted the new company logo onto the building. He was a pudgy man in his midforties and was sweating profusely even though the weather was mild. Despite his eight-figure portfolio, he always came to work in ill-fitting, run-of-the-mill polyester suits that had him mistaken for a vagrant on more than one occasion.

Kurt's daily must-have Starbucks was still steaming as he took a small sip and looked around, wondering not what but why Frank was commanding a job better left to the experts. A few college interns who worked directly under Frank turned toward Kurt to say good morning then returned their gaze to Frank, who continued yelling at the sign company workers.

“I said the left, you idiot. You do know the difference between left and right, right?” All the interns started laughing at Frank's brash way of handling the sign installers. They saw what Frank failed to see. His left was their right and until he got that, he would have to continue his barrage of searing comments and epithets. They weren't going to tell him.

Kurt waved at the interns and shook his head as he walked past

the angry crane operators. The sign was massive...something you would see in Las Vegas, not in Chicago. The new company logo was the reason for the new sign displaying a giant SFC with the words Sportsfan Chronicles underneath the logo letters. While Kurt, Brian, and Frank had agreed to name their young company the Sportsfan Chronicles, they more often referred to it as SFC.

Upon entering his new corporate headquarters, Kurt was greeted by Kalia who took his arm and virtually moved him along at a fast clip. "Kurt, Chuck needs you in his office right away. Pronto. His word."

Kurt looked at his watch and then smiled at Kalia. "It's too early in the morning to see Chuck. I have a new rule. No speaking to Chuck first thing in the morning, whether it's morning or afternoon. 'First thing' being the operative phrase." That merited a laugh from Kalia, who continued to gently but firmly guide him from the reception area and toward Chuck's office.

Kalia, a slim and petite woman, surprised Kurt with the strength of her grip on his arm. It was easy to believe that she had at one time been a dancer. She came to SFC from Pointy Foods where she had been given a temporary job in the aftermath of one of Chuck's more obnoxious stunts.

She excelled there. It was a natural progression of events that she would leave Pointy Foods and join the guys at SFC, where she grew into her position and was now as essential as any one of the partners. Perhaps more so since she managed the daily affairs of all departments and, more importantly, managed Frank.

"I think it is important. As a matter of fact, I know it's important." As they walked from the reception area toward the back of the building, Kurt couldn't ignore that this was arguably the coolest office in America. Staffed with lots of young people, where every day was casual Friday, job performance was anything but casual. They clearly liked their work in the Pit.

The Pit occupied the ground-floor space in the atrium-style center of the building. It was a large open area with an abundance of workstations, lots of open space, and more than a few employees wearing Rollerblades. Also in abundance were skateboards and

bikes resting in every available nook, because half the employees didn't even own a car.

"Okay, Kalia, what's this morning's drama?" asked Kurt, knowing full well he could rely on Kalia's opinion.

"It's Vanessa Roberts. She's thinking about leaving SFC and moving back to Northern California." That definitely got Kurt's attention. "Brian is talking with her in the conference room right now." Kurt stopped to look at Kalia. "So, tell me, why I'm going to Chuck's office instead of the conference room?"

"I don't know why, but Chuck was very clear in telling me to take you to his office instead of the conference room."

As Kurt entered the office, Chuck greeted them by his door. "Thanks, Kalia." Kalia left the room, and Chuck closed the door behind her, giving Kurt more than enough time to see what Chuck was wearing.

"What the hell is going on, Chuck, and why the hell are you dressed like that again?" Chuck's new thing was to dress like Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, who was famous for wearing hoodies and jeans around the office. Not that anyone would ever confuse the two. True, if Zuckerberg dyed his curly hair blond, it might be a match. And though Chuck was ten years older than the Facebook founder, he'd maintained a trim, youthful appearance. No, the two would never be confused, at least not in Chicago, because Chuck's face was the one stenciled onto the Chuckles' Deli sign, and you couldn't walk a half-dozen blocks in the city without seeing one of those. "I thought Alice made you quit dressing like that."

"Aw, come on, Kurt, she's my girlfriend, but make no mistake, I wear the pants in our relationship," responded Chuck, by now looking quite smug and disproportionately pleased with himself.

"Oh, that's right. Your pain-in-the-ass girlfriend is out of town with Darci right now, so I guess you do wear the pants or, in this case, jeans, in your relationship...when she's not around, that is." Kurt turned his head sideways to better take in Chuck's version of Zuckerberg's style and said, "I don't think Zuckerberg wears skinny jeans and you look ridiculous, Chuck." Chuck was used

to catching flack from Kurt and Brian and his expression didn't change upon hearing Kurt's unsolicited fashion review.

Kurt was quietly waxing contemplative over the state-of-the-art surveillance system when Chuck walked over to a newly added video monitor and turned up the volume. "Listen up. I recently added the conference room to my surveillance system. Already paying off. Vanessa Roberts is thinking about quitting SFC, and Brian is in there with her trying to find out why. We absolutely cannot lose her. She is way too smart and talented to leave. Plus she's working on some lucrative projects right now."

Kurt nodded in agreement. "She probably wants more money. That employment contract Frank tricked her into signing is embarrassing. Crank it up a bit more, I wanna hear what Brian is saying to her."

When they turned up the volume, they heard Brian clearly. "Vanessa, you said that your boyfriend is pressuring you to move back to California and I understand that, believe me, I do. I also agree you are being paid way below what you should be paid. So I'm prepared to offer you ten thousand dollars more per year."

"Thanks, Brian, the money would help, but I don't think my boyfriend will be happy. It's not just about money. He's really jealous right now."

"He needs to get over being jealous of your success, Vanessa. He needs to sit back and smell the roses."

"It's not that simple. He's not jealous of my success. He's jealous of my boss. He thinks I have a thing for my boss."

"Now that I don't understand. Yeah, you work in Frank's department, but you have a thing for Frank?" said Brian in his most incredulous tone. "Frank? Your boyfriend thinks you're attracted to a loud, drunk, smelly man who likes to wear the same wrinkled polyester suit every day?"

"No, silly, I got mad at my boyfriend because he's always taking me for granted, and I wanted to make him jealous, soooo I might have told him that you have a thing for me."

"Wow, I wasn't expecting that." Brian paused and then leaned

over and smiled at Vanessa. “You know, if you really want to make him jealous, you could sleep with me...no strings attached, of course. You know, a little...”

Not waiting to hear the rest, Kurt jumped out of his seat, propelled by every legal ramification imaginable. “Chuck, erase this video now.” He charged into the conference room. “Hello, Vanessa, so sorry I’m late for this meeting. Unavoidably detained, but better late than never...right, Brian?”

Brian wasn’t much older than Chuck, and there was already some white creeping into his brown hair, but he kept up on his gym membership. It wasn’t difficult to imagine Vanessa honestly considering the clumsy proposition. “Bad timing, bro. I’ve got it handled,” interjected Brian, almost whining. “Let me finish my meeting with her alone.”

“Sorry, Brian, no can do. Vanessa is one of our brightest young stars. I need to give her our new offer.” Turning his head toward her, “Vanessa, I reviewed your current pay. Not up to par. I’ve decided to sign a twenty-thousand-dollar annual salary increase for you. That, of course, includes the added benefits for that level. Standard operating procedure. That level requires only a signed confidentiality agreement. Everything else in your file is fine. This is effective immediately.” Kurt was careful to sandwich the “confidentiality” reference between the more positive incentives.

“Wow. Thanks, Kurt. I’ll take it,” said Vanessa without a moment of hesitation.

“Great. Good to hear. You’ll continue to work for Frank. Keep up the good work.”

Brian, not to be outdone or outwitted, said that he had been about to offer her a position in his office. “I am sure you were,” said Kurt, carefully enunciating every word. “Yeah, I’m sure you were, but she needs to continue to work on the website for our new sports magazine.”

Not needing to hear anything else, Vanessa left the conference room happy, with Kurt relieved and Brian clearly annoyed. At the sound of the door closing, Kurt turned to Brian. “Are you crazy

or what? Are you trying to get us sued for sexual harassment... again? If that's the case, you're doing a damn good job of it. I guess practice makes perfect, eh, Brian? Did you not learn a thing the last time?"

"What are you talking about, Kurt? I haven't a clue," answered Brian at his disingenuous best.

"Do you think I came in by accident, apologizing for being late for a meeting I knew nothing about? We were watching you the whole time on Chuck's video surveillance camera!"

"Crap, you heard all that? Well, you can't blame me. She is pretty good looking."

"I thought you would have learned after the last settlement you had to pay. That was fifty thousand dollars to get that one to walk away without suing our ass, and your answer is that she's 'pretty good looking'? Where's your head, bro?"

"Come on, what are you complaining about? I forked out the money. Fifty thousand dollars, and I didn't even get to first base with her."

"That you 'didn't even get to first base' is your considered response? It's the comments, Brian. You gotta tone it down, bro. Larger companies than ours have been brought down by less, and all you're thinking about is first base? I don't get it!"

"Come on, Kurt, I never had to worry about that at Pointy Foods."

"That's because you never had any money when you worked at Pointy Foods. You also had no employees working for you. You didn't worry then, but you'd better worry about it now. We just worked at that company. Now we are the company. Just neutralize your comments to our female employees, so we don't get sued again. No sexual innuendo, no double entendres, no anything. Business, just business! Oh, one more thing, it's less about the money and more about reputation bringing us down."

"We didn't get sued. That other chick threatened to sue us, but I settled with her before she sued us."

"Oh, well, that's very reassuring Brian. And, by the way, drop

the word *chick* when you are referring to employees. Even that has liabilities.”

Brian looked up, not quite sure whether or not Kurt was serious. It appeared he was. Knowing when to push back in protest and when to be satisfied with saying okay, Brian opted for the last word, knowing full well that all-business Kurt would have something else to add. “Is there any other lecture you want to give me before our big company meeting?”

“Now that you mention it, yeah, there is. Why are you still dressing like Steve Jobs all the time? Come on, Brian, you wear black shirts with the black jeans at work every day. I don’t know who’s worse, you and your Steve Jobs attire or Chuck and his Mark Zuckerberg hoodies.”

“Hey, there’s a big difference between Chuck and me. Admit it, Chuck looks like the Unabomber, while I on the other hand look good.”

“If you say so. At least you’re not wearing skinny jeans. Come on, we’ve got to go downstairs to get ready for our staff meeting in the Pit.”

“Sorry, Kurt, you can’t say that. It sounded like you said a meeting about our staff’s tits.”

“Good one, Brian, good one. I said, staff. Meeting. In. The. Pit,” replied Kurt, again carefully enunciating every word. “Just don’t get us sued!”

“All this money and power have made you too politically correct. Boring.”

## CHAPTER 2

# What's in a Name?

Kurt and Brian went down to the stage at the back of the large room known as the Pit. The space was massive enough that the large open area buffered the stage from all the workstations. Kalia's voice could be heard over the intercom, asking all the employees and interns to make their way forward. Having arrived first, Brian and Kurt were sitting by themselves.

"Where's pie-eyed Frank the Tank? Isn't he usually the first one up here?" asked Brian as he looked around for Frank.

"He was outside with all the interns, verbally abusing the sign company workers. My guess is he's trying to teach our interns a business lesson."

"Right, Kurt, a lesson on how to be a big asshole... You know, complain enough, and you'll always get a discount. At least that's his theory."

"I can't believe he's our partner...equal partner. It was only a couple of years ago that I wanted to kill him, and now he's a big part of our team."

"I hate to admit it, oh God, how I hate to admit it, but he has done a good job. I mean, he has really kept our operational costs down, and he's on top of our sales team."

"Yeah, remember what it was like when we worked for him? When we were that sales team? I do. All those stupid Napoleon Bonaparte speeches and all his lies and broken promises. And of course who could ever forget his motivational insults?"

“Yeah, but didn’t we always get him back ten times over? Made it worthwhile!” said Brian. “The funny thing is, this younger group of employees really think Frank is funny. And he’s a lot easier on them than he ever was on us.”

“Brian, of course he’s a lot easier on them. They’re making us an insane amount of money!”

“He also loves being an owner. He actually believes they’re his disciples. Kurt, no doubt in my mind, if we had been making that amount of money, he would have used a whip, thinking we’d make that much more. Admit it, it was somewhat personal and here it’s not. These kids are his disciples. Forget his being our boss, we were equals, and he didn’t like that one bit. Twisted.”

“Way too analytical for me. Napoleon’s happy, we’re all happy, and I don’t want to be around when the little Corsican resurfaces.” Kurt banished the thought and took the microphone as Kalia walked them on stage.

“Come on, everybody, take a break from whatever you’re working on. Gather round.” Kalia leaned over and quietly said, “Almost everybody is here except Chuck. He just disappeared, and I can’t find him. Neither can I find six members of his team.”

Ignoring Chuck’s absence, Brian asked Kalia if Frank was done screwing around with the sign outside. “Yes, I told him we’re getting ready to start. He keeps telling the installers that the sign is crooked, but honestly, it’s not. In fact, it’s perfect.”

Kurt turned to see Frank and an imminent disaster. “Uh oh, here he comes, and it looks like that’s the owner of the sign company with him. Oh no, now it looks like our marketing director is standing between the two them. I better get over there.”

Kurt walked over to Frank to ask what was going on, praying that nothing was going on and knowing that something most definitely was going on or, at the very least, brewing. Brewing he could handle; going on was another matter whenever Frank was involved. “Okay, Frank, what’s up?”

Frank, his long-sleeve polyester shirt untucked and askew,

was still drenched with sweat that was dripping onto the megaphone still clutched in his right hand. “What’s going on here is we are not paying these morons until the sign is perfect.”

The angry sign company owner, equally determined to be paid and to be heard, shouted the megaphone. “The sign is perfect! I just got here and double-checked my guys’ work. I can show you the measurements. It is perfect!”

“It’s not perfect, and I want a ten-percent discount, so I can find another company to adjust it...now!”

“You got it. The sign is perfect, but I’ll give you ten percent off if you pay me now, so I don’t have to see your ugly mug again.”

“Deal!” The sign was perfect, and everybody knew it.

Frank scribbled a note on a piece of paper and handed it to the marketing director, authorizing accounting to cut a check. The sign guy left before Frank could change his mind, vowing to never again do business with anyone named Frank.

Kurt walked close to Frank and whispered, “Really Frank? What did you save us, two thousand dollars? Now who’s going to change the lightbulbs when they go out on that giant sign of yours? Was it really worth it?”

Expecting no answer, nor wanting one, Kurt turned to walk away. Frank placed the megaphone to the back of Kurt’s head, making him jump when he yelled, “Yes, it was worth it!”

Frank’s interns appeared to be amused by his management style. “Take notes, kids... always try to squeeze more from our vendors!”

Kurt, whose ears were still ringing, and Frank finally joined Brian on stage, where he was pacing stage left to stage right and back again, waving at the staff as if he was the celebrity he thought he was.

Kurt now addressed the issue at hand. “Brian, where is Chuck?”

“Who knows? Let’s get this meeting started on time for once. We don’t need him,” answered Frank as he walked up to the microphone and addressed the staff while conveniently forgetting that he himself had already delayed the meeting.

“Listen up, everybody. We have some announcements to make. We hit our eighteenth-month goals, we now have our new large corporate headquarters, we’ve grown our staff to over one hundred, and I can say that we have become one hell of a successful conglomerate. What have we become? We have become the Sportsfan Chronicles, also known as SFC. You saw that big, beautiful sign on our new building. Look at it with pride because this is our brand. We are venture capitalists. We are Internet entrepreneurs. We have great food products licensed and distributed to restaurants and supermarkets all over the country, and this is only the beginning. We still have a long way to go to reach our ultimate goal, and what is our ultimate goal?”

The entire room yelled in unison: “To buy a professional football team!”

“Exactly! Eighteen months ago, Kurt, Brian, and I invested most of our lottery winnings into this company. That’s over two hundred million dollars toward the goal of purchasing a football team. Kurt, come on up to the microphone and say a few words.”

“Thanks, Coach Frank.”

Frank made Kurt jump once again when he yelled in the megaphone right behind Kurt’s head, “You’re welcome.”

“Give me that thing, Frank. Go stand over there by Steve Jobs.” Kurt grabbed the megaphone and asked Kalia to take it away and hide it.

Everyone was laughing as Brian said, “You bet I am the next Steve Jobs,” except Kurt, who was not laughing as he caught Brian smiling and waving at Vanessa Roberts.

“Sure you are, Brian. Anyway, you guys have been great, and we’re going to continue investing into as many more companies that can help us reach our goal as we can. The main reason for this meeting was to thank you for your hard work.”

Kurt let the applause die down. “Now it’s time for a little history lesson. The Chicago Bears is owned by the McCaskey family. The McCaskeys are descendents of the great George ‘Papa Bear’ Halas. I’m going to bottom line this... We have accepted the fact

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