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SPORTS

Belichick Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry

The great hooded one makes an apology to the media, and a columnist is worried



Patriots coach Bill Belichick apologized to the media for being short with them after a loss to the Colts.

PHOTO: JUSTIN CASTERLINE/GETTY IMAGES



By

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My friends, there are certain things you can count on with football. You know that snow makes any game better. So does grilled sausage and a cold beer. You know there will be a moment while watching any Jacksonville Jaguars contest when you will say to yourself, “What am I doing with my life?”

To those I’ll add another:

You know Bill Belichick does not apologize to the media.

And yet it happened, just the other day, in a New England Patriots media briefing, the Grumpy Lobster Boat Captain stepping to a Foxborough podium in a drab hoodie and

apologizing to the press for being gruff following Saturday's 27-17 loss to the Indianapolis Colts.

"Look, fellas, I apologize if it seemed like I was a little short with you after the game," Belichick said. "Obviously, a frustrating game."



Was it polite? Yes. Admirable? Sure. This column endorses civility and self-awareness, especially during these acrimonious, know-it-all times.

But a Belichick apology? To the media? It was like hearing a leopard say it was sorry for his spots. It was like a doughnut apologizing for being delicious.

Perhaps the greatest coach to ever do it, Belichick has a long, deserved reputation of not suffering fools of the Fourth Estate, of regarding his media obligations like a request to

help a stranger move a piano.

The Grumpy Lobster Boat Captain has never been interested in currying the media's fickle favor. He's a brilliant tactician who hasn't met a question he couldn't answer with a grunt, or, at most, two grunts. The GLBC can flick away any query—even sharp ones—by simply staring long enough into the camera that it melts from embarrassment.

I'm not complaining. Belichick vs. the media is comical entertainment. It's part of the Patriots mystique, like the rings, trophies and blunt slogans like DO YOUR JOB.

So to hear The Hooded Gridiron Kenobi apologize was jarring, a shock wave to the equilibrium of the universe.

And honestly, it has me worried.

Perhaps The End is near.

I don't mean The End of the Patriots dynasty. I mean the End of Days. I worry it's a signal of an impending apocalypse—the whole wazoo, boiling seas, volcanoes, locusts, demons in the fridge, serpents in the pipes, lousy Wi-Fi, and televisions that only play cable news networks.

When I hear Belichick apologize to the media, I fear I'm about to see the streets filling with lava. I'm wondering if I should buy flashlights and canned goods. Everyone I know with lots of cryptocurrency holdings is going to call me and exclaim "This is it!"

I'm worried I'm going to walk into the kitchen and find a talking werewolf standing on the countertop.

"What are you doing here?" I'll ask the talking werewolf.

"I'm here to bite you and turn you into a blood-thirsty zombie," the werewolf will reply. "But also: Do you have any decaf?"

Yes, it's possible I'm overreacting. Christmas is just days away, and I want to give Belichick the benefit of the doubt on a good deed in the holiday season. More than a few voices on the Internet wondered about a Dickensian twist: Had Belichick been visited the prior night by Jacob Marley and three ghosts?

It's important to note that Belichick can be loquacious at times—especially if it's a chance to show his respect for the game and its innovations. His guest appearance on the NFL's 100 was a mirthful marvel of historical insight (for which he won an Emmy).

Attendees to Patriots press conferences know Belichick can be downright chatty on arcane topics: Left-footed punters. The wildcat formation. Long snappers. Ask the Grumpy Lobster Boat Captain about long snappers, as the Boston Globe's Ben Volin did earlier this year, and you might get a thrilling 10-minute Belichick guitar solo.

It's tempting to see an evolution—a kinder, softer Bill. The relentless spotlight of the Tom Brady era is over—they got the Bill vs. Brady showdown out of the way this fall, both parties meeting for a restorative postgame chat. Belichick appears pleased to be helming a scrappy team with another overachieving young quarterback, Mac Jones. Despite the dud against Indy, the Patriots are 9-5, still positioned for the playoffs and perhaps more.

Maybe this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Maybe it's a signal that mutual respect and manners still mean something, even in this flame-throwing, increasingly remorseless world.

Or perhaps this is how it all ends.

Bill Belichick told the media sorry, and life will never be the same.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

What do you think of Bill Belichick politely apologizing to the media this week?

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