

THE BRAIN DEAD NFL

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Let the record reflect that I saw all of this coming 10-years ago and I sounded the alarms as loudly as I could back then, all while being dismissed by so many.

In fact, with all of the changes and negative repercussions as the result of those changes in the sport of football, everything I said starting back in 2009 about what would become of football has, unfortunately, come to fruition.

The continuing ruination of America's pastime, that being football, continues, and there doesn't seem to be any signs that would suggest that this will be stopping anytime soon, in fact, I believe we're still only at the tip of the iceberg.

I'm thankful that a new book is out authored by former NFL player Merrill Hoge where Hoge openly concedes that in his view, the game of football continues to be under attack and a plan has been hatched to destroy the sport. What sane person could disagree?

Hoge's book (which I have not yet read) is titled; ***Brainwashed: The Bad Science Behind CTE And The Plot To Destroy Football.***

A few things to start:

1-Football has been ruined forever.

2-The NFL will never be the same.

3-The National Football League will never again be the kind of league that made me fall in love with it for so many years.

4-All of this (and more) has absolutely broken my heart.

Right now, if you still watch the NFL – so far as the on-field product is concerned – the continuing changes to the rules, the emphasis on offense, offense, and more offense, the castration of defensive football in all ways, you have been forced to condition yourself to the idea that in its current incarnation, this is as good as it gets. You also realize that as much as you are dissatisfied with the state of affairs within the league, you're more than cognizant that things will only get worse and that the game will become even more watered down in the years to come.

I shudder whenever I come to the realization that of the 1696 current players on active NFL rosters right now, that 1526 of them will at some point die horrible deaths attributable to the dreaded Chronic traumatic encephalopathy, also known as CTE. The 1526 players who will be afflicted with this deadly disease of the brain accounts for 90% of all NFL players on current rosters across the league's 32 franchises.

It is truly mind-blowing to consider, that this coming Sunday, players across the league will again strap on shoulder pads and put on helmets knowing that the vast majority of them will live utterly debilitating lives shortly after their careers have been completed.

Of course, I didn't come up with this grim prognosis or these startling numbers on my own, no, instead, this is the future of many NFL players as brought to us by football boogeyman Bennet Omalu, a coroner, who has gone on to become a very wealthy man by becoming the Johnny Appleseed of the CTE scare over the last several years. Omalu has stated that it is his belief that 90% of all active players in the National Football League have CTE.

NINETY (90) percent.

Following this crazed Dr. Omalu since the beginning when his name became somewhat synonymous with football, and in reading as much as I could on the subject over the years, and being aware of the devastating effects that Omalu's conclusions have had on this once great game, I've come to a few cessations of my own.

Namely, that I remain convinced that football and CTE have far less to do with one another than the good doctor would have us believe. Now, I'm obviously not a doctor myself and I'll never pretend to be one, but I believe that Mr. Omalu is not only recklessly and irresponsibly wrong concerning his theories about football and CTE – but in addition – I believe that CTE is more hereditary than anything else and that millions of people around the globe have had some form of CTE in their brains at the time of their passing, yet, they were never diagnosed with the disease because there was no reason to look for it during autopsies that were performed after their deaths.

I'll go so far as to make the claim that I might have some form of CTE in my brain right now. You, the reader of this piece, you might have some form as CTE in your brains as well, and when we die, like millions who died before us who were never diagnosed, we might very well go to our final resting place unaware that we had the disease, however, it never manifested itself to the degrees of some who have been diagnosed.

Of course, and I have made this assertion hundreds of times over the years on my radio shows, we only hear about the few who have been diagnosed with CTE — and the connection is then made that football was the culprit.

Thus, many have become brainwashed into believing that in terms of football players, the causes of CTE have everything to do with playing the sport – and if only the players who have been diagnosed with the disease after they passed away had never trotted out onto a playing field, that never playing the sport would have prevented them from ever getting the disease in the first place. In a word, and please pardon my French, I consider this to be bullshit.

Now understand, I'm not making the claim that CTE can't be acquired from playing contact sports, football, hockey, boxing, etc, but what I am saying is that I believe it is grossly exaggerated, and the question begs to be asked: how do we account for those who have this disease of the brain and many others like it who have never taken part in sports at all?

Let's also make another important point because it bears repeating even though the headlines and the hype surrounding this topic refuse to acknowledge it. For as many players who have died and been diagnosed with CTE, the inarguable fact remains that of all the players who have suited up over the years since the league started back in 1920, that those who had an appreciable career in the league (lets say 4-years), the overwhelming majority of those players not only were never diagnosed with CTE but in addition, the well majority of those players went on to live long and healthy lives after their playing careers were finished.



Bottom line? Despite the screaming headlines and the scare tactics that have become so commonplace over the last few years, despite Dr. Omalu's grossly inaccurate conclusions over the years, the facts suggest that only a microscopic amount of football players over the last almost 100-years have died as the result of this dreadful affliction that we know of.

Hundreds of thousands of people all around the world die of dementia and other related brain diseases each and every year, were all of those people NFL players? How many of those people never put on a football helmet a single time in their lives, yet, were still found to have some sort of CTE in their brains?

I'll make the additional argument of saying that even if a former player was diagnosed with CTE after their death it doesn't necessarily mean that that player died of the disease specifically. Take as one example, Frank Gifford. Gifford played 12-years in the NFL, after that, Gifford found even more fame and a lot more fortune in his post-career as a broadcaster on Monday Night Football for 27-years and as a pitchman for various companies and their products. Gifford passed away at the age of 84 back in 2015. Frank Gifford lived a perfectly healthy and prosperous life for decades after his playing career ended, and upon his passing, his family agreed to let his brain be tested for CTE. Low and behold, traces of CTE were found in Gifford's brain, but is that what killed Frank Gifford? No, Gifford died of what was described as natural causes, or, to put it another way, Frank Gifford passed away as the result of old age.

If CTE and football are so intertwined and as dramatic as the headlines would have us believe, then how do we account for the lives of some of the hardest-hitting and fiercest players in the history of the league who either died without any symptoms or are still alive and doing more than well these days?

Mike Ditka was not only the Bears head coach at one time, but he was also a bear of a football player. As a tight end, Ditka would catch passes and actually run straight at defenders attempting to tackle him unleashing hits to the very hitters looking to take him down. Has anyone seen Mike Ditka lately? The last time I saw Ditka he was talking about football on ESPN

and he looked and sounded like a guy with all of his mental faculties, looked like a guy who could play 18-holes of golf most days and a guy who could happily bounce his grandchildren on his knees without any problems. Mike Ditka is currently 79-years old. If Ditka died tomorrow and had his brain scanned for CTE, if the test came back positive, if the test showed traces of CTE in Ditka's brain, is there anyone who would be willing to say that CTE was the cause of Mike Ditka's passing?

The late Deacon Jones was one of the NFL's most savage like players during his years in the league. Jones lived to age 74 before dying of lung cancer — not CTE.



Dick Butkus, anyone? How many concussions do you think Butkus suffered during his legendary playing career? Right now Dick Butkus is 75-years old and with the way Butkus played the game one would imagine that he should have been dead years ago...from dementia or CTE, right?

Dick 'Night Train' Lane?

Joe Greene?

Conrad Dobler?

Ronnie Lott?

John Lynch?

Jack Lambert/Ham?

Lawrence Taylor?

Art Shell?

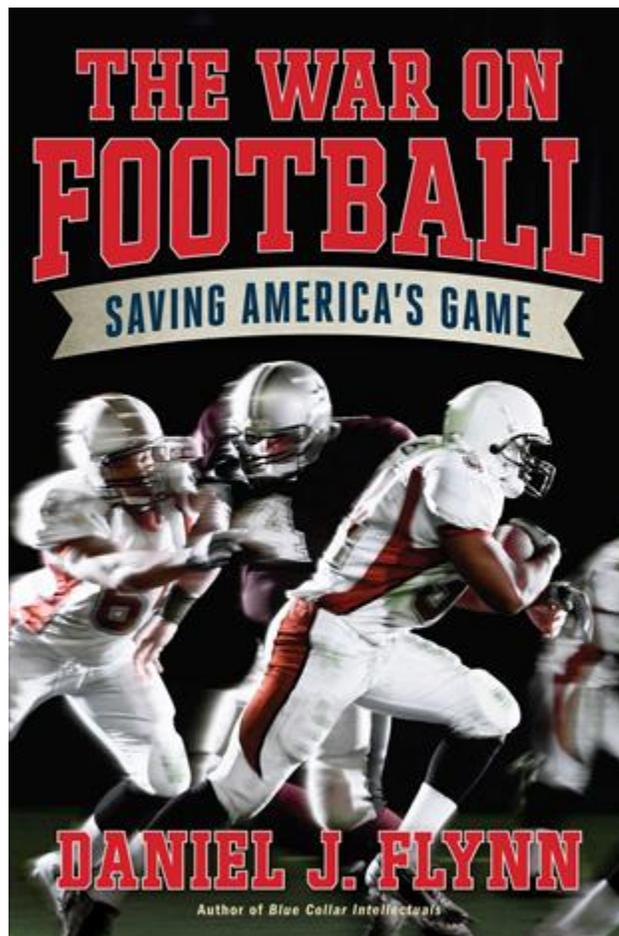
Jim Otto?

Troy Polamula?

Ray Lewis?

I could go on and on with hundreds if not thousands of players who bulldozed their way through football careers, guys who have gone on to live perfectly capable lives after football who have shown no signs of brain diseases of any kind at all.

As my very good friend, author Daniel J. Flynn points out in his must-read book; *The War On Football*, NFL players outlive the general population, in addition, NFL players rates of suicide are below the numbers of those in the general population. The alarmist 'reporting' that has been done since this became a hot-button topic is both misleading and beyond negligent in my opinion.



If 90% of all active NFL players have CTE right now, playing the game during an era where the game has never been safer and where equipment has never been better, then what do we say about players who played the game during a time when it was far more dangerous and the equipment was far less protective than it is today?

During the decade of the 1960's and 1970's, should we conclude that perhaps 98.7% of all players had CTE? If so, can someone please get back to me with the death records of those who played during that time and tell me how many died from brain injuries or brain diseases of some kind? The numbers must be truly staggering, right? And if we go back even farther to the decades of the 1940's and 1950's, then I guess we should all agree that 100% of all players during those times had to have CTE or some other kind of brain diseases, right?

Something that is overlooked in this area is what I'll refer to as; susceptibilities. Because many within the medical community have found no direct correlation between playing football and developing CTE (and as I noted up the page, I myself, could very well have traces of the disease in my brain), the fact is that for whatever the reason, family history, hereditary considerations, and a host of other things we might consider, I just might be more susceptible to CTE than you are and vice versa. I never played a single down of football on the NFL level, unlike, for instance, someone like Mel Blount. Blount (now 70-years old), was one of the NFL's biggest hitters during his day and played a total of 14-years for the Steelers. Maybe Dino Costa winds up with CTE someday while Mel Blount lives to the age of 88 and never had a foggy day in his life after he hung up his helmet. Susceptibilities.

Is it such a stretch to consider the possibility that there are people who have some form of CTE yet never show any signs of the debilitating effects of the disease throughout their lives? I don't know for sure, I'm merely asking the question.

Then there is this to consider. Not all CTE diagnoses are the same. To what degree, for example, did the aforementioned Frank Gifford have traces of CTE found in his brain after he died? To the best of my knowledge, there are 4-stages of CTE. Stages 1 through 4, with 1 & 2 being the mildest, and, of course, stages 3 and 4 representing the highest levels. Thus, not all CTE is the same much like not all burn victims are the same. A burn on my index finger while lighting a stove is a far cry from someone suffering from 3rd or 4th-degree burns.

Also, while studies have been done on various NFL players the last few years, how do we know what possible levels of CTE could be found in the brains of people in the general population unless a study is conducted in that area as well?

Obviously many unanswered questions remain in the areas of brain injuries, concussions, CTE, dementia, and a host of other related maladies related to these areas. Where one group of medical professionals will state their beliefs unequivocally, another group of professionals will disagree.

Whether or not I agree with one group versus another is probably less important than this though, and that is; over the last 10-years through assumptive conclusions the sport of football has been sucked dry of its fun, its former majesty, and its ability to make Sunday's a glorious day with riveting games being played the way the sport was always intended to be played.