# SUPER BOWL Chronicles

The Super Bowl Chronicle of all Chronicles



FEBRUARY 2014

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"Vinnie?" Sharon emailed Sandy back. "The guy's name is Vinnie?"

It was a few days before the 49er-Seahawks NFC Championship game and for weeks, Sandy had been book-marking Super Bowl ticket websites and packages (Stubhub, NFL Ticket Exchange, Ticketmaster).

Sharon was obsessed with getting to New York to honour a commitment

she made to Seahawk wide receiver Doug Baldwin (see p.3 "Dougie B. and Me")—and a commitment she had made to herself. And Sandy, well, she was all over that too.

They both wanted a Seattle Super Bowl experience. It wasn't a bucket list item—bucket lists are things you want to do. They had a 'To-Do' list—things they had to do, and a Seattle Super Bowl was at the top of that list.

On a mission, and for fun, Sandy had checked out usedvictoria.com and found a guy (Vinnie) selling four Super Bowl tickets, \$1,000 a piece. How Vinnie—or anyone—got their hands on Super Bowl tickets was complicated



THE EMPTY SEATS FILLED UP NOT ONLY WITH SPECTATORS, BUT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE TWINS' FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

and involved a bit of chance and a lot of loose change.

The twins were expecting to pay about \$3,000 and didn't care if they were sitting together or sitting on the uprights—as long as they were sitting inside MetLife Stadium. Cheering on the Seahawks would be worth every penny—or thirty thousand of them.

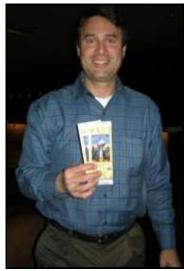
After doing months of online research to find out how one could get tickets and scoping "strategic friendships or contacts" to find someone able or willing to offer unwanted Super Bowl tickets to the twins, they did the math and started looking elsewhere for





not





ABOVE: JOHNNY, MARTY AND ROBIN GET LUCKY WITH THE TWINS. (SEE PAST CHRONICLES); FAR RIGHT: TWINS GET LUCKY WITH WYNN.

tickets and to potential sellers like Vinnie.

"Would you buy Super Bowl tickets from a guy named Vinnie?" Sharon asked her running buddies —who were painfully aware of her Seattle Super Bowl and Dougie B obsessions.

"Yeah. Vinnie," her buddies Matt and Steve chided. "Yup, we know Vinnie. Sure. He's a good guy."

"Well that was helpful," Sharon, thought with a sigh.

"Why don't you try Costco?" Bill Boothman said.

"Huh? Costco? Really?"

"Yeah really," Bill replied. "They had a package last year."

(Attention K-Mart shoppers: unknowingly, Bill Boothman had just set in motion a chain of events that would award him bragging rights of fulfilling a twin fantasy.)

Before cycling home that night, Sharon decided to check out Bill's Costco tip. The Costco site linked her to a sport travel agency called Benchwarmer Sports that was offering a guarantee that if you reserved a package with them and if your team didn't win the conference championship that weekend (sending them to the Super Bowl) you would get a full refund.

"I've never heard in the Y men's locker room, more talk about twins in a non-sexual way," friend John Kelly told Sharon.
"I'm disappointed," she

were going to responded, "You'll tell me when they do talk about us that way:"

convinced enough to take a chance of buying a ticket until the Hawks hoisted the NFC Championship trophy in the air—the twins stayed home during the championships so they could be at a computer to book their twin fantasy immediately after the Hawks beat the 49ers.

But the sweet deal seemed a little too good to be true so Sharon phoned the agency's 1-800

number to ensure everything was legit and that a guy named Vinnie didn't answer the phone.

"It's all legit," the ticket agent said.
"You authorize your credit card for the cost of the package and we only process it if your team wins."

"Well, I have to check with my sister first," Sharon said.

"That's fine," he said. "My name is Wynn. If you have any more questions, here's my direct phone line number."

"Wynn," Sharon thought.
"Win....that's a good omen."

Sharon immediately called Sandy to tell her about the deal.

"Costco?" Sandy said, a little skeptical. "Does the package come with a giant jar of mayonnaise?"

Sharon then cycled home and called Sandy to see if she had checked out the site.

"It got a good rating on the Better Business Bureau site," Sandy told Sharon. "But I have to call you back as I have Wynn on the other line."

# The Real Imaginary Thing Dougle B. and Me

In July 2013 (before their Storybook Season—and this Chronicle), the Seahawks sent their mascot Blitz, a few SeaGals and wide receiver Doug Baldwin to Victoria for a promotional appearance at the Mayfair mall and then later, the Strathcona Hotel.

Incredibly excited about the promo, the twins grabbed their jerseys—Sandy grabbing her camera and Sharon grabbing her football and headed to the mall for photos and autographs. Sharon, the proud owner of vanity license plates that read "C-HAWK", was on another mission. She was determined to get the "money shot"—a photo of her and Blitz in her car for Sandy's anti-social media fakebook page.

... "Victoria twin sisters and passionate Seahawk fans Sharon White and Sandy McClary are among those from the Island who will be at MetLife Stadium today for the Super Bowl....

In doing so, White upheld a good-natured promise she made when Seahawks receiver Doug Baldwin was in Victoria over the summer as part of a team promotion.

"I had asked Doug Baldwin if I would see him in New York in February because we're planning to go if they get in," White said.

"He emphatically said: 'Yes you will' so basically, he's kept up his side of the bargain by making clutch catches all year. Who am I not to honour my side of the bargain?"

Sister McClary jokes that White now dreams of meeting Baldwin atop of the Empire State Building after a Seahawks Super Bowl victory a là Sleepless in Seattle.

- Times Colonist, Cleve Dheensaw, Feb 2, 2014 Not only was Sharon successful getting the "money shot," the real big deal was getting to meet Doug Baldwin at the Strathcona—an encounter which would set in motion a chain of unimaginable (except in Sharon's mind) events.

At the hotel mixer, the far -more-famous-than-theyougtta-be twins set out to "chat the Seahawk player up."

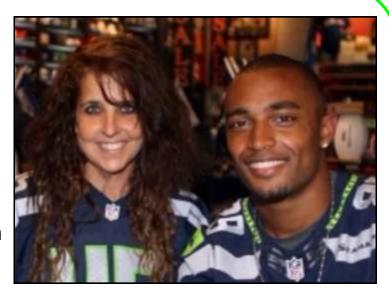
"We LOVE Seahawks!"
Sandy told Doug.

"I love Seahawk fans," Doug said.

"He loves me," Sharon heard.

"Are you going to be in New York in February?"
Sharon asked him, determined that she and the Seahawks would be at Super Bowl XVLIII.

"because we plan to be."



DON'T THEY MAKE A CUTE COUPLE? SHARON AND DOUGIE B. PHOTO BY BRUCE STOTTEBURY, TIMES COLONIST.

"I absolutely will be," Baldwin responded, with the same conviction.

#### "That's a date," Sharon heard.

"Forty-five," Baldwin said, indicating the number on Sharon's jersey. "That's Kenny Easley (Seahawk safety from the 90s) isn't it?"

"Yes," Sharon said.

"And White—on the back of your jersey," Baldwin said, politely referring to the name banner. "That's your last name, right?"

"Asking for my name and number," Sharon thought. "He's totally checking me out."

"Or getting information for a restraining order," Sandy thought.

The twins thanked Baldwin for his autograph (Sandy's jersey and Sharon's souvenir mini-helmet) and went on their way, both determined to start checking for Super Bowl ticket packages; Sharon determined to keep her "date."

In the months to follow, Baldwin—by making spectacular clutch catches—and his teammates started laying the tracks to New York. And Sharon let anybody and everybody know her plans, showing everybody the photo of her and Dougie B and that come February 2014, they'll keep their "date."

"They'll see," Sharon said to Sandy. "They'll see."

Sandy, the website-papers-penand-clipboard *Chronicles* travels researcher of the two, was on the phone grilling Wynn about the package. The deal included Super Bowl ticket, three-night's hotel stay, shuttle transportation to and from the airport, bus charter to and from MetLife Stadium and a lanyard/ticket-holder (that was the selling point for Sharon).

Sandy proceeded to give Wynn a recap of *Chronicles* misadventures, "We arrived in July in Paris for the Tour de France only to find out our hotel—that we reserved in March—had burned down in February....black market hotel room above a massage parlour in Croatia....missed Seattle marathon because the hotel didn't give us a wake-up call....pushed our broken car on and off the ferry....detained at Customs......."

"So you see, Wynn," Sandy said, now on a first-name basis with the booking agent. "Why I'm a little hesitant making travel plans."

The line went silent. It was as if, like checking to see if a friend who had just fallen was okay before laughing, Wynn was stifling himself.

"Ummm," Wynn said, hesitantly. That's....that's kind of funny,"

"I KNOW-WWWW!!!" Sandy said.
"We were killing ourselves
laughing too. But these things
always happen and we just want to
be sure that the hotels really exist,
the tickets aren't black market,
and so on, and so on...."



THE 'MONEY SHOT'. BLITZ THE SEAHAWK MASCOT IN SHARON'S CAR. THE PHOTO (BY BRUCE STOTTESBURY) RAN IN COLOUR, FRONT PAGE ABOVE THE FOLD IN THE TIMES COLONIST FOLLOWING THE SEAHAWKS PROMO STOP IN VICTORIA, JULY 2013.

"I tell you what, Sandy," Wynn said. "I will guarantee that NONE of those things will happen to you. In fact, I really, really want the Seahawks to win now, because I really, really want to meet you two."

With this assurance, Sandy checked her credit limit and signed up for two Seahawk Super Bowl experiences.

With the "guarantee" package in hand, all they had to do was sweat out the San Francisco-Seattle NFC Conference championship and find a flight to NYC immediately after the Seahawks won. The NFC final was a "sweat out" with the Hawks' Richard-the-best-cornerback-in-the-league-Sherman batting away a Colin Kaepernick pass to Michael Crabtree into the arms of Malcolm Smith for the game-saving interception. It was a nail-biter, but one that sent the twins to their trip of a lifetime.

Minutes after the game—minus time for requisite screaming, awkward, mistimed chest bumps, hugging and crying—Sandy booked two flights to LaGuardia. The entire trip including four nights at the not-a-burned-down-Paris-hotel-or-above-massageparlour-black-market-hotel (the Westin at Times Square in Manhattan) flight, Super Bowl ticket, and transportation...and a lanyard...taxes, Canadian exchange and everything—\$5,400 each. Priceless. The same the twins typically paid for Ironman training, travel and competitions and European trips (to burneddown-Paris-hotels or abovemassage-parlour-black-markethotels). Or what Sharon typically spends on coffee every week.

The two-week bye between the NFC Conference championships and Super Bowl Weekend

provided the twins plenty of time for preparation. They practiced Richard Sherman's signature "Sherman Shuffle;" Beast Mode Marshawn Lynch's end zone victory move—a handshake (what is he, an accountant?) and the not-too-pretty Brandon Mebane's jellybelly rolling "Truffle Shuffle" sack dance.

"I don't really have the gut to do this one," Sharon said, hands behind her head, torso gyrating.

"You don't?" thought Sandy, but responded. "You nailed it."

On their Saturday bike rides, Sharon grilled Sandy on the offence/defence starting line-ups, their positions, their depth charts, the read-option (and how to defend) and Harvin's side sweep plays. And of course, Sharon penned and distributed her annual Super Bowl predictions (see p. 28 "Sharon's Super Bowl Predictions").

It was these predictions that started another ugly and absurd chain of *Chronicles* events (aren't they all?). The morning after she sent out the predictions to her Far-Less-Famous-Than-We-Oughtta-Be (*FLFTWOB*) football email bloggers she hadn't had any response. Odd, considering this motley crew relished any and all opportunities to respond, deride and ridicule her FLFTWOB emails.

"What's up, guys? I haven't heard a peep from you," she emailed. "My

from being identified.



running buddy, The UnaBaumber<sup>1</sup> has already replied to my email saying that—let the record show—#14 has come true and that he has pictures to prove it (see Sharon's Super Bowl Predictions photo)".

"We were scared off by the "do not reply to all" warning," Marty blogged.

An assault of FLFTWOB emails ensued, flooding their respective in-boxes with various "Twins Take Manhattan" predictions. The result: a dare to get a photo of the twins—preferably the one of the twins and Dougie B. atop the Empire State Building—onto the MetLife Stadium Jumbotron. But Sandy and Sharon had a better idea....

1. The UnaBaumber (Steve Baumber) did not want to be associated in any way with the *Chronicles* so insisted Sharon use a pseudonym for Steve Baumber to protect Steve Baumber's identity. She chose "The UnaBaumber" to shield Steve Baumber

### Happy Trails to You...

(Saturday, Feb. 1)

Sandy silently reached into her luggage bag beside her hotel bed, pulled out a piece of rumpled plastic fabric and methodically put her right leg, then left leg into the pants.

"What I wouldn't do for my
FLFTWOB and Chronicles friends,"
she sighed as she turned on the
inflating switch and made the final
adjustments to her knit Seahawk
Mohawk hat. "It's Show Time!"

"Giddy-up," Sharon said in her best Kramer voice as she turned on her switch and followed Sandy out the door. "You know your script, right?"

"Yes," Sandy said, rehearsing her lines for the inevitable media interviews. "We up here in Canada, well we know a little something about wild animals. We're here to break some of them there Broncos."

Getting two inflatable horses from west to east wasn't as simple as one would expect.

"I can't believe I'm asking you twice in one year," Sharon emailed her co-worker Milena on the Tuesday morning before their Friday departure. (The twins had just borrowed hers for a Halloween party.) "But could you bring the horsey into work?"

The first thing the next morning, the bag of inflatable fun was on Sharon's chair.

Going through U.S. Immigration at the Toronto airport between connecting flights was the next steeplechase hurdle. Sandy and Sharon had many, many "experiences" at Customs—and save for one "smuggling incident" at the Peace Arch crossing in Washington State, leaving the country always seemed more difficult than entering.

"What's in your luggage?" the U.S. Customs officer asked Sharon, referring to the bag she retrieved from the Toronto flight. "Do you have anything to declare?"

"Um," Sharon responded nervously. "... an inflatable horse."

"What you do in your personal life is your business," the officer deadpanned. "I'm not here to judge."

"Well, you kinda are," Sharon said, staring at his U.S. Customs badge stitched onto his shirt<sup>2</sup>.





RING MATES

SUPER BOWL RING-CLAD SHARON, AND THEN DITKA.

## A Hit On and Off Broadway

Decked out in full gear, not in a thousand years could the twins anticipate just how many doors inflatable horse outfits could open. The ensuing ten hours brought a deluge of public and media attention and made for a few incredibly well-timed and fluky encounters.

"Man," Sharon thought as they basked in the attention. "What I could have saved in getting a university degree."

"Man," Sandy thought. "What I could have saved in dancing lessons."

The twins entered the elevator to join a man who immediately laughed and commented on their

costumes. As they were about to leave the elevator, Sandy noticed something big, bold and brilliant on the man's right ring finger.

"Holy Crap! What's that on your finger?" Sandy asked. "Can I take a picture?"

"Want to try it on?," the guy said, offering to Sharon what was a Super Bowl ring—a heavy ornate piece of jewelry so large that her fist could almost fit into it; so encrusted with diamonds that it was difficult to make out the Dallas Cowboy logo etched into the solid gold.

"Oh....my....Gawd," Sharon silently mouthed. She was so gobsmacked that she didn't look up to see if she recognized the man; so speechless she couldn't ask which of the five Super Bowl victories it was from (it was 1995).

"Oh....my.....Gawd....." she thought as she gingerly and reluctantly handed it back to its owner, who left her tongue-tied, still staring at

2. Sharon never had a problem responding to Customs officers. When a U.S. Customs officer at the Blaine border once exclaimed that she and Sandy were dressed the same, Sharon pointed to all the officers behind the counter. "Well so are you." An hour and a pair of rubber gloves later, the twins were sent on their way to Seattle.







her finger, not believing that it had just adorned such a coveted prize.

"Oh....my...." she said, bumping into the closing elevator door.

From there, after a quick photo in the lobby with Pro Football Hall of Fame player and Chicago Bear coach Mike Ditka, the two headed to Super Bowl Boulevard—a fanpacked, closed off 12 blocks of Broadway Street. Starting in Times Square and stretching to Macy's, the attraction-laced Boulevard cowered under the beastly colossally-oversized electronic billboards of lanky thinly-sized supermodel beauties that towered above.

As the procession of New Yorkers, tourists and fans paraded down Super Bowl Boulevard, it was interrupted by a motorcade of police cars fencing in a black limousine. Expecting the President or royalty, the twins craned their

necks to see who or what discharged from the limo.

It was NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. Draped in a black wool overcoat and a curtain of security officers and NFL henchmen, he steadfastly marched through a secured path towards the Fox Sports Broadcasting Centre. Sharon, of course, on inflatablehorseback doggedly followed. She had a few questions to ask Mr. Commissioner, particularly about plans to add more NFL games to the European schedule.

"The London games are already taking home games away from fans," she reasoned. "I know it's all a ratings ploy but did you learn NOTHING from Arena League football or the U.S. Football League?"

Sandy, trying to capture yet another brush with "greatness" changed the photo card in her camera, followed suit in the

pursuit, happily clicking away. This scene played out successfully for about a block, when a security guard finally noticed hop-a-long Cassidy tailing and turned Sharon away.

"Miss," he said, positioning his imposing body to obstruct her. "This is as far as you go." It was then, as Sandy tried to capture the moment, that she noticed that her new camera card wasn't working.

They headed back to the camera store they had purchased it from earlier. Unfortunately, they had to surrender the "we-saw-Roger-Goodell" evidence for a new card but the sacrifice was worth it as unknowingly they were hot on the trail of some undreamed-of photo ops.

Smack in the middle of Super Bowl Boulevard was the Fox Sports Super Bowl Broadcast Centre. The

small outdoor studio sat adjacent to a massive three-storey 65-foothigh temporary indoor structure—the rooftop floor sporting a mini football-field for broadcasts and one inside floor dedicated to the broadcast panel sitting in front of full-view windows that overlooked iconic Times Square. This windowed-backdrop featured temporary viewing bleachers—crammed with football-crazed fans hoping to get on camera when the cherry-picker camera made its routine rounds.

Sandy and Sharon stood there long enough to fulfill a cluster of requests from media and onlookers for a shot of the twins on "horse-back" with the Seahawks "Pope" and other colourful fans.

From there, the twins climbed down to the metal barricades surrounding the outdoor broadcast area, and waited while television crews set up cameras and lights. This small outdoor studio also held a patch of artificial field, encased by Fox Sports banners and was host to frequent Fox news, sports and affiliate networks live broadcasts.

The twins waited for about a half hour and were about to leave when Sharon noticed a commotion. Heading towards them on his way to the inside studio was New Orleans Saint quarterback Drew Brees—the twins' all-time favourite non-Seahawk player (Hawk QB Russell Wilson was also a Brees' fan). The Super Bowl XLIV winner and MVP, recognizable by his birthmark on



THE MAN HIMSELF. NEW ORLEANS QB DREW BREES.

his right cheek, was slowly making his way through the adoring crowd, stopping briefly to sign autographs and give out swag. Looking over towards the twins, he abruptly changed course, saying to his assistant, "Hey wait. I want to give something to these two Seahawk fans."

Sandy and Sharon looked behind them to see just who those lucky fans were, surprised that Brees would even venture to make a special effort to reward fans from the team that unceremoniously creamed his team in December and then knocked the Saints out of the playoffs about a month later.

As he got closer, they realized that they were indeed the lucky fans and would be recipients of an expensive *Monster iSport* ear bud (his new endorsement deal), a towel, a handshake and a high five.

"Oh....my....Gawd...." Sandy said, nervously trying to get a picture of

the future Hall of Famer, but actually turning on and off her camera several times in her agitation. "It's Drew Brees! Oh (switching camera off)...my (switching camera on)...Gawd... (off, on, off, on, then click)."

Seconds later, heading up to his interview, Brees left the twins—Sharon staring at the overly-packaged iSport ear phones, making a mental note to check the eBay price; Sandy checking her camera to see that she had managed to click a Kodak moment of the Saints quarterback.

By late afternoon, Super Bowl Boulevard filled with shoulder-toshoulder crowds but not uncomfortably so. The attractions—such as the photo op with the Vince Lombardi Trophy, the NFL Exhibit and the Toboggan Run—had Expo-size line-ups so





MEDIA FRENZY:
ABOVE
CLOCKWISE:
TWINS GET
HOUNDED BY
MASCOTS (AND
TWO OTHER TWIN
MASCOTS), KOMO
4 IN SEATTLE,
QUEBEC TV, AND
AN AUSTRALIAN
TV STATION.





the twins settled for being their own photo op.

Think Robson Street during the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Replace the CTV indoor and outdoor studios with Fox Sports, the zip-line with a Toboggan Run (which reciprocally would have been more appropriate), the five Olympic rings with the glassencased Vince Lombardi trophy, a sea of red with a sea of blue and orange (more blue than orange) and add a few ten thousand more people and you have Super Bowl Boulevard.

Now think twins—and these twins—in Seahawk jerseys and knit
Mohawk hats and throw on
cartoonish inflatable horses. It was
too much and not enough for
Broadway. The twins wished they

had a lap counter to tally up the number of photo ops, requests for —and to be in—photos. It was like they were on the Oscar's red carpet. "Horses, look over here!" a guy would shout amidst a chorus of camera clicks and flashbulbs. "Over here!" someone else would call, the twins guiding their ponies from one camera angle to the next. It would be the theme of the day hundreds of people stopping them asking if they would mind posing for photos. The twins absolutely didn't mind this—that's what you sign up for when you strap on an inflatable horse. Police and security officers, kids and adults, all laughing and making comments—"That's hilarious!", "That's Perfect!" "That's the best outfit ever," "What a pair of asses." (which the twins thought

was an odd comment considering that at the time, they weren't wearing the costume).

And the paparazzi....Justin Bieber and Rob Ford would be jealous. Back home, Sandy and Sharon were used to being "media darlings." You got to expect that being twins.

"It's a curse," Sharon often sighed.

Right after the NFL Conference championship, *Times Colonist* sport columnist Cleve Dheensaw emailed Sharon and asked if she went to the game. Cleve knew she was a fan from the July 2013 "photo op."

"I stayed home," she wrote back, cc'ing Sandy. "Because Sandy and I are GOING TO THE BIG DANCE!!!!"

"Wow," Cleve emailed back. "Now I can write a local angle into the Super Bowl story." (see p. 3)

"Aren't your readers going to be a little sick of hearing about the twins again?"

"Are you kidding?" Cleve wrote back. "It's all the twins, all the time."

Sharon related her "See you in New York" commitment to Doug Baldwin.

"That's awesome," Cleve said. "I'll use that as an angle. It will give me a lead for the story."

"Yeah. Gives Baldwin a lead for his restraining order," Sandy said adding, to make sure that that dig made it into the paper, "It's Sandy McClary....big M, little c, big C, little l, a, r, y."

But here on Broadway, fame is fleeting—and apparently required inflatable horses. For that moment, that 15 minutes of fame (which stretched into about 10 hours as the twins hoofed their wares up and down the Boulevard) made the two the most-famous (albeit sober, almost too sober) Canadians. Seattle's KOMO and KING 5 News, Australian and Quebec television stations, Seattle Post Intelligencer, NFL Network.com, freelance professional photographers, social media sites—all interviewed, rolled film and snapped still photos of the Sea-horse-hawks.

"It's big M, little c, big C, little l, a, r, y," Sandy told the Seattle Post Intelligencer reporter as he scribbled down their names.



SHARON AND WHAT'S HIS NAME - PAUL ALEXANDER NOLAN, STAR OF TONY WINNING "ONCE".

"There's a John A. MacDonald in it for you if you can get us on the MetLife Stadium Jumbotron," Sandy said to the NFLNetwork.com cameraman, pushing a crumpled

"Are you real

from Texas asked

"John who?"

\$10 bill towards him

They decided to take their act "off Broadway" and headed down 42nd Street towards their hotel on 43rd Avenue. These blocks—42nd and 43rd Street were lined with theaters showcasing hits like Mamma Mia, Motown, Bullets Over Broadway and Lion King.

In front of the theater that staged the Tony Award-winning "Once," the twins noticed a group of teenaged girls seeking autographs from what appeared to be the male star of the show. In his 20s, he had Hollywood-star good looks, confirmed by the squeals of the girls as he signed pictures. Looking up to see two cartoonish twins/ horses heading his way down the sidewalk, he laughed and reached into his pocket for what the twins thought was a pen.

"Can I get a photo of you?" he said, bringing his iPhone out.

"Absolutely," Sharon said, politely flashing a grin.

"Do you want one with me?" he said as an afterthought as he jumped to Sharon's side and into Sandy's camera range.

"Um. Okay," Sharon said, again being polite as she had no idea who he was and why he would think the twins would want a photo with him.

"Thank you," Sharon said as he smiled and went back to his twins?" a man autograph-signing duties.

the twins on the way "Who was that?" Sharon asked to the hotel, one of his adoring fans.

> "That was Paul Alexander Nolan," the young girl answered. "He won a Tony."

They continued on from their brush with stardom.

Blocks away from their hotel streets now New-York-crowded (just a bit more dispersed than the Boulevard) an excited young boy ran up to Sandy to check out the back of her jersey. He had noticed it as the twins had stopped again for a photo.



"Do you want a picture with us?"
Sandy asked, looking to
accommodate another kid's wish.

"No," he responded to a surprised Sandy (all the kids wanted photos —even spurning the Disneyland, Sesame Street and other mascots to get a shot with the horseys).
"No, I wanted to see who signed your jersey."

"Doug Baldwin," Sandy said (he had done so at that auspicious meeting in Victoria).

"I know," the boy said, proudly.
"I'm Devon, his little brother."

Excited and surprised, Sandy could only do what was expected of her. She picked him up and shook him—which took an unusual and supernatural effort as despite being about 11 or 12, the young boy was athletic like his older brother (and Sandy sorely lacked upper body strength).

"YOU'RE....DOUG....BALDWIN'S...... BROTHER!?!" Sandy shrieked, shaking him in rhythm to every screamed word.



AT LEFT: "SHE'S LOVELY," CINDY BALDWIN IS PROBABLY TELLING HER SON. ABOVE: THE TWINS MEET THE BALDWINS.

She then tossed him to an unsuspecting and equally armfeeble Sharon.

"SHARON, THIS IS DOUG BALDWIN'S BROTHER!"

"YOU'RE....DOUG....BALDWIN'S.......
BROTHER!?!" Sharon took up the chorus, she too mustering unusual strength to keep Devon, his feet practically dangling, in the air.
"NO....WAY!!!"

Devon, as excited that the girls were excited to meet him, spread a huge grin from one ear to another.

"Oh look," a pretty, petite woman— the boy's mom—said, finishing a cell phone call and running over to the twins. "Can I get a photo?"

Again, the twins obliged, Sandy tossing her camera to someone—

"Can you take a photo for me too?"
—as the group of "future in-laws"
bunched together for a family
photo (the twins, Devon, his
mother Cindy and his uncle).

"Hi, I'm Cindy," the woman said, introducing herself to Sharon after the shot.

"That's my mom," Devon said.
Sharon, not wanting to offend her
"future mother-in-law," resisted
the urge to pick her up and give
her a "YOU'RE DOUG BALDWIN'S
MOM!" shake. Instead...

"Don't we make a cute couple?"
Sharon said, clicking onto her
iPhone's camera roll, showing the
me-and-Dougie-B photo and
asking the same question she had
showed-and-asked to dozens of
people in Victoria, and dozens
more from there to New York.

"Well, yes you do," Cindy Baldwin responded, totally playing along.

"Yeah, we met in Victoria last July...he told me he would see me in NY in February (etc.)" Sharon told Cindy, relating the whole sadand-pathetic "that's a date, right?" charade she had been playing for months.

"And when he wins the MVP tomorrow," Sharon sighed, dreamily, "He'll take me to Disneyland."

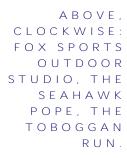
"Why yes," Cindy cheerfully deadpanned, "I hope you have your bags all packed."

Sharon laughed and then explained just how unbelievable it was to be meeting her "future inlaws" particularly as she had been so intent on honouring her prediction and commitment to see the Seahawks in the Super Bowl—and for months she had mischievously shown the "Dougie B and Me" photo and joked about their "real imaginary thing" to anybody and everybody.

"I'm even quoted in an article which will run in our hometown newspaper tomorrow about how I met your son and told him I would see him in New York in February," Sharon said. "I'll send it to you." Cindy gave Sharon her phone number to text it.

It was even more remarkable that it was this family—and not another—that stumbled onto the twins. Had there been another Seahawk at that promo event in July, Sharon would have carried on





the same conversation and continued the playful fantasy spoof (as she did following her brush with pro cyclist Mark Cavendish — see Croatia Chronicle) with another player. But the fact that it was Doug Baldwin and that little Devon ran up to Sandy was too good to be true.

The twins then told Cindy just how great all the Seahawks were playing and how exciting it must be for her and her family.

"I can't even imagine what you guys are feeling right now," the twins both gushed.

Cindy agreed that it was quite an amazing feeling and then the group continued on their way.





"I love people with a sense of humour," Sandy heard Cindy say to the uncle as they left the twins.

"I'll see you at the wedding," Sharon called to her as they walked away, wanting to get just one more shot in.

Later that night, after a bite to eat and another round of the Broadway scene, the twins stretched out on their respective hotel beds watching the NFL Today live broadcasts and pre-Gameday shows.



THE ACTUAL MEDIA SHOTS:
ABOVE: KIRO 7 ACTION
BEFORE THE GAME; RIGHT:
SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCE
PHOTO OF "SHARON AND
SANDY MCCLARY GETTING A
BITE TO EAT" AT AUNT
ANNIE'S PRETZELS. "SHARON
MCCLARY??"



While exhausted from almost ten hours of inflated inflatable fame, they were energized and euphoric by the events of the day. They kept looking over at each other and remarking on just how unbelievable, exciting and fun the day had been.

"Man, and we haven't even got to the Super Bowl yet," Sandy said.

"I know," Sharon said. "And how uncanny was it that with all the delays—everybody stopping us for photos, having to get and return the camera card, having to get more batteries, losing and looking for the battery case door ...the entire day unfolding like it did and all of that putting us in the right spot at the right time to get the pictures of the Super Bowl ring, Ditka, Brees, that actor...."

"...and the Baldwins!!!" Sandy continued. "How did THAT happen? What a fluke that with all

the people that came up to us, all the people on Super Bowl Boulevard, all the people in New York, little Devon Baldwin comes up to ME!"

"I know," Sharon said. "NO ONE is going to believe us. They already think we make up things for the *Chronicles*. They're going to think we just grabbed a Filipino-American family and got someone to take our picture with them. NO ONE is going to believe us."

Though the next night, anyone watching the *NFL Today* post-Super Bowl show would. As the *NFL Today* on-field reporter interviewed Doug Baldwin after the Seahawk win amidst the chaos and confetti, there behind Doug was Devon, jumping up and down—the proud, broad ear-to-ear smile that he had given the twins in their excitement to meet him was on display for millions to see.

"So how is your little brother Devon taking all this?" the reporter asked Doug, the camera closing in on the exuberant young boy.

"He's just speechless," Doug said.
"He can't say a word he's so
excited."

He didn't have to. His face told the world what words couldn't.

### The World as We Know It, Changes

If and how the twins got any sleep that night would be just as phenomenal as their experience thus far.

Super Bowl Sunday morning started for Sharon with a Starbucks-and-bagel run and a NY Times Crossword; and for Sandy,



checking all the online media to see if their Broadway debut hit the cyber-waves.

Unsuccessful, she checked all the twitter and twatter about Manning and his Broncos being the best offense in the universe.

The Benchwarmersports bus charter left for East Rutherford, New Jersey at 2:45 p.m. for the 6:30 p.m. game kick-off. It was the only way to go.

Wynn was there at every junction, keeping his promise to the girls that they would get to the game without *Chronicles* misadventures.

Because of exceptionally tight security, the Super Bowl organizers didn't allow tail-gating and people could not walk directly to the stadium. Parking spots were at a premium and so too were bus shuttles (organizers warned people to expect day-of-game transportation costs to be \$100 or more and to expect traffic delays).

The hot topic before, during and after the game was not the merits

of the Broncos or Seahawks' game plan, but the cost of game tickets and getting there. A polite "where are you from?" was quickly followed by a not-as-polite, but not unexpected "how much did you pay?" and then "where are your seats?"

HEAD, BIG FOOTBALL.

In the days leading up to the game, ticket prices fell by about \$1,000 and so too did ticket travel packages, including Benchwarmersports' (which continued to offer the best deal).

But nothing was worth more than having the security of a reputable ticket, hotel and transportation.

It was even more worth it to have everything arranged up front, particularly with a mega-event being hosted by two States and the associated transportation issues piled on top of existing big-city traffic woes. In fact, Super Bowl fans leaving by trains after the game spent hours waiting to board

the packed cars, some not getting home to New York boroughs until 2 or 3 a.m.

ACROSS STADIUM SECURITY; ABOVE: BIG

The bus charters, however, didn't seem to have the same problems—arriving and departing in waves.
The twins arrived at MetLife
Stadium a few hours before the game, giving them (and their horses) time for more media stints, including a KIRO-TV
(Seattle)-staged "twins-on-horses corralling" of Denver Bronco fans.

The twins also filled the pre-Game time with back-and-forth jaunts between the bus and the gate—trying to gauge the security risks of getting inflatable horses into the stadium and closer to the Jumbotron.

The twins asked various volunteers and security officers if they could bring the horses in.
They couldn't get the same answer twice. They were prepared to lose the horses if taken away, but after





NEW YORK GIANTS QB A**ND PEYTON'S YOUNGER BROTHER ELI MANNING AND** METLIFE STADIUM.

getting this far, this close to their Super Bowl dream experience, being turned away at security and/or arrested was too great a risk. So they reluctantly packed their horses onto the bus and headed one last time to the stadium and into the life after 9/11 and Boston Marathon-bombing security checks.

There was nothing specifically aimed at detecting inflatable horses or the twins, but U.S. Homeland Security did instigate unprecedented Super Bowl security measures including: helicopters to patrol the temporary no-fly zone around the stadium, F-16s based in Atlantic City ready to be scrambled if an unauthorized aircraft entered the restricted airspace, bomb-sniffing dogs, extra radiation detection boats in the Hudson River, infrared imaging, 4,000 security personnel and 700 New Jersey State Troopers.

The twins' entry, however, into the security maze of cordoned lanes, baggage checks and X-Ray machines was efficient. With people just dribbling in at this point, the screening took only a few minutes.

Entering MetLife Stadium was like entering an L.A.-soundstage. The Super Bowl painted lights, cameras and glamour glared onto a stadium that was already exceptional. Built in 2005, it held 82,000 coliseum-style seats and boasted state-of-the-art energyefficient and other technology. It was unique in its distinction of being the only major league stadium home to two major football teams—the New York Jets and the New York Giants—and in a major media centre with major fan followings.

In constructing the \$1.6-billion titan, there was consensus and

compromise, agreements and disagreements, as the builders tried to appease two very distinctive teams—the bluecollared Bruce Springsteen-ish Giants based in East Rutherford, New Jersey and the white-Wall-Street-collared, Broadway Joe-ish Jets based in New York, New York. It was a covenant involving coin flips for locker rooms, neutral colour schemes and mammoth TV screens which would bring the two teams' respective personalities to light for alternating home game schedules.

In a week of Super Bowl largess, if there was any underwhelming, it was with the *Fan Zone* in the concourse surrounding the stadium. There wasn't a lot of "fan" activity outside of a small stage with a huge line-up for photos with a not-yet-glum NY Giant quarterback Eli Manning—
Peyton's little brother being posed





ICONIC NY QBS JOE NAMATH AND PHIL SIMMS; ICONIC WR DOUG BALDWIN.

like a Broadway Show prop before a professional photographer taking souvenir pictures, expertly cropping out the "Only one item per person autographed" sign at the side of the stage.

The twins took their seats on the 300-level, 15 rows up at around the 10-yard line, overlooking the Seahawk end zone. For "cheap seats," these were exceptional—much better than the nose-bleeds they were used to at Century Link field.

The stands filled up efficiently—with 12th men out-numbering
Bronco fans almost five to one. In
the area surrounding Sharon and
Sandy, orange jerseys were lightly
scattered like pylons warning of
enemy territory.

The group (from Colorado) seated on Sandy's left launched the standard where-are-you-fromhow-much-did-you-pay conversation. The two young girls sitting to Sharon's right, overhearing the twins "Victoria, BC" shrieked "Omigawd, we're from Nanaimo."

For girls in their early 20s, the two were gutsy. They had decided a few days before the Super Bowl to go, found tickets for \$1,100 apiece and then used their Air Miles for their hotel and flights.

"We took the ferry to Vancouver not even knowing if we would be able to find a flight to New York," one of the young girls, Trina Brubaker (Marsha Bishop was the other) said. They had found a flight, but their luggage didn't find them, as both had to buy clothes for the game.

As anticipated, the Super Bowl was larger than life and there was no doubt that this was America's game. The pre-kick-off ceremonies were teemed with patriotism — military bands, forever stars and stripes flags and fireworks.

Queen Latifah beautifully sung *America the Beautiful* and opera star Renee Fleming classically sang the national anthem which closed with toy-like but commanding grey-green military helicopters, deceivingly close enough to touch, flying dramatically over the stadium.

It was patriotic pomp and ceremony and perhaps with too much artillery fuss. Still, it seemed almost fitting as make no mistake about it, the 100 or so players that were shortly to take to the field were going to war.

The coin toss featured New York's finest—New York Giants Hall-of-Famer quarterback and current broadcaster Phil Simms who won and was voted MVP of Super Bowl XXI; and Broadway Joe Willy Namath—the flashy former New York quarterback who had arrogantly and correctly predicted a Super Bowl III underdog win for his Jets.

Broadway Joe, who was tossing the coin, wore his trademark garish fur coat—a fashion statement which most likely infuriated animal activists and certainly reminded everybody that this day, February 2, was Groundhog's Day.

Perhaps foreshadowing things to come, Joe messed

up the first toss (flipping the coin before it was called). With the second toss, Seattle won, electing to defer receiving the ball to the second half and giving Denver the first possession.

Through the season, Denver had rewritten the record books on offense, completing the most passes and scoring the most points. The night before Super Bowl (at the NFL's annual awards) Quarterback Peyton Manning was awarded league MVP and best offensive player for his stellar 2013 season, throwing 55 TD passes—the most ever.

Twelve seconds into the game, however, the Broncos would rewrite the Super Bowl record book. Manning uncharacteristically muffed a snap that scored a safety, the quickest score in Super Bowl history. It would only get worse. Seattle's defense—the season's best and arguably the NFL's best ever—completely and humbling





STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER; SEAHAWK TOUCHDOWNS ALL NIGHT.

shutting down the season's best offense.

And Seattle's offense left no doubt that they had been sorely underrated all year. The game's final score— 43-8 — was even more of a blow-out than it seemed—with a few penalties, a misstep out of bounds and one recovered Bronco fumble keeping more points off the board. Other than that — Seattle's game plan was perfectly executed.

Denver's only victory was somewhat containing Marshawn *Beast Mode* Lynch and attaining-albeit meaningless in defeat—Super Bowl records (most pass completions at 34; and most receptions, 13 by Demaryius Thomas).

It was a total blow-out and for most a total surprise. The only one seemingly to have seen it coming was Sharon. She had called the massacre almost six months before when Sandy, during FLFTWOB blogging, had lamented that she forgot to PVR the Seahawks' pre-season 40-10 win over the Broncos.

"Set your PVR for five and a half months from now," Sharon told Sandy. "This game will be re-run."

Everyone expected Seattle's defence to shine in Super Bowl XLVIII—and it did—but few gave credit to Seattle's offence and special teams. By the end of the day the Hawks had, in fact, set a Super Bowl record, scoring on a safety, field goal, rushing, passing, interception, kick-off return touchdowns—scoring in every way imaginable.

And Harvin's kick-off return TD to start the second half—12 seconds in—set new twitter records as well.

As this Bronco flogging—and the entire Super Bowl experience—unfolded, Sandy and Sharon sat side by side—two best friends, soaking in what could only be described as the best experience





they could ever hope to imagine. If someone had given them money—and were told to spend their good fortune on something they would remember forever and which would mean the most to them—this would be it.

At half-time, they sat under a starlit crisp winter sky, under fan-lit tuques that, embedded with a programmed computer chip, twinkled in kaleidoscope time with Bruno Mars' performance.

If they weren't the biggest fans of Bruno Mars, they suddenly turned into ones, as from now on whenever they would hear one of his songs, it would take them back to this magical moment.

"These are really cool," Sandy said, referring to the black cotton knit hats that were provided in the Super Bowl swag-filled seat cushion they found on their seats. "Yes," Sharon said. "We have to pull a 'Marty' and grab a whole

bunch of left-behind swag for our friends before we leave."

It was not lost on them that while they were there in MetLife Stadium, they were not alone. There were people back in Victoria, or along the road to New York, that were thinking of them, watching the game, being as excited for the twins as the twins were for themselves. And that made Sandy and Sharon feel like this wasn't just their trip.

"Man, I NEVER thought we would ever get a chance to do this," Sandy said. "I thought only rich people or people who knew people could get Super Bowl tickets."

"Yes," Sharon said. "I'm living my dream. I'm done. Watching our Seahawks here in the Super Bowl—this is what I've been put on this earth to do. A 'Super Bowl moment.' Every one should have one—and I truly hope every one we know gets theirs."

"Yeah. The Super Bowl moment," Sandy said. "It must be like when people have kids."

A few rows in front, a group of \$20 -beer-fuelled, face-painted Broncos fans were still twerking to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, long after the show ended, perhaps coming to terms with the fact that the musical scores would be the only ones they would be celebrating.

"Yeah, though I guess it depends on the kid," Sharon said as one Denver fan high-fived and missed, sending him and his beer over the back of his chair.

This ruminating was a bit too profound for twins who hours earlier were donning inflatable horses.

"Do you want to get another \$10 pretzel for the second half?"
Sharon asked Sandy, hoping to move from one Zen moment back to a Seahawks' one.

As the Seahawk domination ascended to the final seconds, the twins soaked up every sight and sound. Even the celebratory cannon-blast that sent blue and green confetti hanging too long and not long enough in the air, could not shake the revelry. The only thing that would have made it perfect would be if their Dad was still alive and with them—but in every way imaginable, he was.

П

#### New York State of Mind

The non-Super Bowl time was about the twins tackling their other New York 'to-do's'—seeing the sites, buying souvenirs and pursuing some personal interests.

Sharon wanted to replicate her Sunday morning Starbucks-drinking-*New-York-Times*-crossword-thinking (in the city itself) and settle a friendly "bagel score."<sup>3</sup>

Sandy wanted to see the David Letterman show, have a Seinfeld moment and a typical New York/ Jewish experience a là corned beef sandwich.

Having accomplished Sharon's todo's on Sunday, Monday was left for Sandy's. Weeks before, Sandy had submitted applications for Letterman tickets and on Sunday morning, a tour bus operator, recognizing the twins from their "horsing around" had given them a



THE MONEY SHOT—WHAT EVERY SEAHAWK AND EVERY SEAHAWK FAN CAME TO SEE.

deal on a New York bus tour. This would give Sandy an opportunity to give a "Kramer" tour.

But first, they had to head to Macy's fourth-floor NFL Pro Shop. Macy's, steps away from Madison Square Gardens, is North America's largest department store and the destination venue for the fabled Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

Deep in Manhattan's garment district, the 2.2-million-square-foot store is the stage for many of the world's top designers and flagship for many independent stores that set up shop on cascading streets around Macy's.

In the early 1900s, this garment district produced 80 per cent of the country's clothing—however, cheaper overseas labour and production essentially wiped out

this industry. Still, as a centre for the world's top designers and shops, Manhattan's fashion industry continues to attract huge amounts of visitors, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity annually.

After their arrival on Friday night (and a quick bite at *Bubba Gump's Shrimp* restaurant), the twins had headed to the NFL Pro Shop, but with minutes to closing they had only managed to buy a few things. That was a good thing, as here on Super Bowl Monday, Macy's seemed intent to clear out precious floor space and put every last piece of NFL gear on sale for half price. Despite the bargainhunting football fan crowd, the supply was still ripe.

After selecting a few pieces of Seahawk gear (the Super Bowl

3. On her cross-American cycling trek, Sharon had befriended a rider from Dallas, Jeff Green. After Sharon lamented that she couldn't find a decent cup of coffee or bagel on the trek, the two (who both had Jewish heritage) had light-heartedly wagered over which was best—Montreal or New York bagels. They loosely arranged to go to New York after the trek to settle the bet. Sadly, when they got to Indiana, Jeff was hit and killed by a hit-and-run driver. Sharon vowed that if she ever got to NYC, she would salute her friend with a toasted bagel— and a coffee toast.

champion stuff had sold out hours earlier) they headed to the AFC side of the store for generic Super Bowl memorabilia. This side, for obvious reasons, wasn't as busy and the Seahawk-crazed fans hadn't caught on that there was more selection in the "loser" section.

"Have we got everybody?" the twins asked each other, arms full of t-shirts, caps, pins and bags for themselves, family and friends.

"I hope so," Sharon said, as they both dropped their respective piles onto the floor of the vacated AFC side for another inventory check. The check-out lines were long and thick, but Macy's efficient corp of cashiers got everybody and everything on their way quickly.

The twins then headed out back to the bus stop to rejoin the hop-on-hop-off bus tour—a feat that wasted at least an hour as they couldn't remember where they hopped off and the weather conditions were delaying the hop-ons substantially.

With this delay and the news that the weather had cut short the last run to 4 p.m., the twins decided that save for a quick stop at the Empire State Building and the 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero, their tour would be from the comfort of a bus.

With the fog hiding the view and the seaway, the Statue of Liberty and a visit to the top of the Empire State Building were out, so the twins made do with Sharon running into the lobby of the Empire State Building to show



FOG PREVENTED THEM FROM GETTING TO THE TOP OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING (ABOVE) BUT THEY GOT TO SEE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY. KINDA.



"she was there" while Sandy kept watch for the next bus.

A few too-short minutes later, the next bus arrived, so they hopped on and took their seats, both wiping condensation off the bus windows,

It was classic.

Sandy. A cross

greeter and a lap

entertained the

dog, she

troops.

between a Walmart

watching the landmarks pass by.

Perched on the top of the double-decker, Sandy gave a

Kramer-esque

description of the sites to their fellow tourists, resisting the urge to grab the microphone hanging over the front seat so that lower level tourists could also hear her ramble. It was classic Sandy. Throughout the trip, she was a cross between a Walmart greeter and a lap dog using any opportunity to do what she calls, "entertaining the troops," telling classic *Chronicles* tales, the Douglas White story and now a new addition to her repertoire—meeting the Baldwins.

One young guy sitting next to Sharon, noticing the twins' Ironman knapsacks and listening to Kramer, er, Sandy, said, "Wow. And you've done Ironman too? You are the coolest twins I've ever met."

"That's just sad," Sharon thought.

#### Ground Zero

Ground Zero—the site of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks—commanded the time and respect for a dedicated tour stop.

SUPER BOWL CHRONICLE

In 2006, the city started rebuilding One World Trade Centre, naming what would be the United States tallest building, the Freedom Tower. Rising like a phoenix on ground zero to a symbolic 1,776 feet, it is an elegant and stately reminder and tribute to the resilience of New York City, its people and those who died in the blast and its aftermath.

The twins visited the World Trade Centre Memorial which while shaded by the Freedom Tower, illuminates and honours the nearly 3,000 people who died. The memorial is man-made waterfalls that cascade down two pools located in the footprints of the former Twin Towers. The names of 2,983 victims from the attacks in New York City, Arlington, Virginia and Pennsylvania are inscribed in bronze plates attached to the walls that form the edge of the pools.

So rare are events that change the world forever, that it is hard to describe the indescribable feeling you get when you visit the monuments that honour them. But here at Ground Zero, visiting the spectre of 9/11, the twins felt the same way they did when they were haunted by the ghost of the Holocaust on their visit to Anne Frank's house in Amsterdam.

The twins silently read the names that solemnly framed the wells that seemed too impossible to fill. They then peered upwards to the empty sky. Even the dense fog couldn't hide what was once there.



STEPS AWAY FROM GROUND ZERO THIS WALL HONOURS THE 343 NEW YORK CITY FIREFIGHTERS WHO DIED DURING 9/11 RESCUE EFFORTS.

The bus tour continued through China Town, past fogged-drenched Brooklyn Bridge, the United Nations building and snowmagical Central Park. As it passed the Ed Sullivan Theatre (where the Letterman Show is filmed), Sandy bemoaned her failure to get tickets and the minute chance to trot their inflatable horses on national TV.

"Man, I didn't even hear from them." Sandy said, accepting that getting tickets was a long shot.

Throughout their Monday excursion and Super Bowl experience, New York was everything they expected and everything they didn't. What was striking, however, was that the iconic landmarks—Rockefeller

Centre, Empire State Building,
Central Park—were both larger
than life in isolation, but dwarfed
by the enormity of the city and the
density of all what made NYC one
of the must-go places in the world
and in some respects, considered
the centre of the world. It was this
illusion that made storied
streets—Broadway, Fifth Avenue,
Wall Street—look like ordinary
roads.

And if there were such things as brash New Yorkers, the twins never met them. To a man (or woman) every one they met were courteous, friendly and helpful. And as far as the small city chicks in a big city—the twins felt as safe walking up Broadway at night as walking down Blanshard during the day. Outside of the Super Bowl Boulevard and MetLife Stadium events—which had troop-loads of



GROUND ZERO MEMORIAL (ABOVE) SITS IN THE FOOTPRINT OF THE FORMER WORLD TRADE CENTRE AT RIGHT, THE FREEDOM TOWER.

officers at every corner—police presence in New York was subtle but effective. You couldn't go a New York minute without seeing a NYPD officer, but it wasn't like they were in a locked-down New York state of mind. One officer, stationed inside the corner convenience store, could almost be mistaken for a stock-boy.

"Hey, how many NYPD officers are there in New York?" Sharon asked the officer who greeted her in the store.

"About 36,000," he said.

"Hmm," Sharon said. "That's a lot. In Canada, we have three."

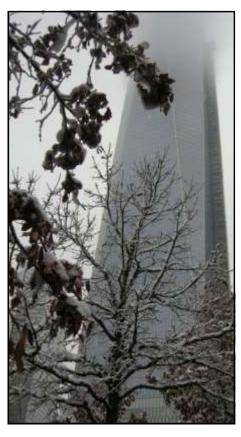
"Yeah," Sandy added. "And two of them are for the parade."

That night—their last in New York—the twins wanted to celebrate their New York experience and the Seahawk's

exceptional Super Bowl win. They ditched the Seahawk uniforms and knit hats and donned their sequined-Seahawk-logo bedazzled black tops—a purchase made months ago as they wanted something special to wear after the Seahawks won.

The plan was to get a corned beef sandwich to go (for Tuesday's lunch) and find a nice restaurant within their budget for dinner. The Westin's concierge gave suggestions for both so they headed to Ben's Restaurant about five blocks from their hotel. Ben's Restaurant was perfect—a delistyle counter service on one side, a sit-down restaurant on the other, decorated with the aroma of corned beef and Jewish-themed artwork on the walls.

After a "which is more Jewish / which is more New York"—



pastrami or corned beef exchange with the Jewish New Yorker owner, the twins settled on sharing a corned beef on rye with a side of dill pickles.

From there they headed out to check out the restaurants for dinner. On their way, the bright light of Broadway shows beckoned.

"Do you really want to spend our last night eating a \$50 steak that we won't remember..." Sandy asked Sharon.

"...Or should we go see a show instead?" Sharon finished her thought.

Sandy checked the doors of the closest theatre to see what was open.

Mama Mia was the only door that opened so they both headed in to

buy a ticket. The show was \$75 each—the price of a steak, Shirley Temple (the twins don't drink) and tip. Their last-minute decision only cost missing the first ten minutes of a two and a half hour show. Mama Mia was magnificent and the sandwich—which the theatre usher invited them to eat in the lobby at intermission—was scrumptious. Their alternate plan for their last night in New York was well worth it as it prompted another important decision.

"Why don't we postpone our summer Spain bike trip / Paris Tour de France do-over until next year?" Sandy meekly asked Sharon. "2014 can be the year of the Super Bowl."

Sharon, mentally tallying up her VISA bill listing \$20 sandwiches and \$10 bottles of water, agreed.

#### The Chronicle Moment

So this is how it's going to end, Sharon thought as the thousands of evacuees filed out of LaGuardia's Terminal C and as far as they could from the building that at any time could blow up.

No. Not their lives. Years ago—and many *Chronicles* adventures later—she had come to terms with the fact that the twins dying an unnatural and dramatic death (possibly involving farm, circus or balloon animals) was an almost foregone conclusion.

"No," Sharon thought. "Is this how this *Chronicle* will end?"



LAST NIGHT ON THE TOWN. SEAHAWK GLITTER, MAMMA MIA AND CORNED BEEF SPLENDOR.

The twins' cousin Jenniffer—a Chronicle-ite—says it's moments like this—a burned down hotel, a missed wake-up call, being trapped in an elevator, and now this, a large-scale security breach, that she waits for. "The Chronicle *Moment*." The moment that escalates from a series of weird and wonderful, slightly unbelievable twin Chronicles events and explodes into a situation where the reader can stop reading and say, yes, this is how it is going to end. This is how it should end. THE Chronicle Moment.

Minutes before, the twins had sat happily in the hotel-airport shuttle, a commute slowed by untimely and rude stops by moving vans on one-lane streets, traffic recovering from Monday's dump of snow, and friendly passengers hopping out of their hotels and onto the shuttle at pickup stops along the way.

And just as she had done for captivated, er, captive new audiences all weekend, Sandy chattered and blathered as they made their way to LaGuardia.

"You guys are hilarious," the woman being dropped off at Terminal One said. "Have a safe trip."

"Well, don't worry," David (a Seahawks fan from Seattle) said as he was being dropped off at Terminal Two, leaving the twins as the lone passengers for Terminal Three. "Your trip is almost over now. You don't have to worry about hotels, or wake-up calls or anything like that."

"That's right," the twins said, waving and bidding him safe passage.

With a couple hours until departure, the twins hugged the shuttle driver<sup>4</sup> and headed to the baggage check-in.

"We don't need our heavy warm Team BC jackets anymore," Sharon said as they both packed their jackets into their check-in bags, exchanging them for lighter, less cumbersome gear.

Successfully checked in, they headed to the security screening —an exercise cut short by a dozen security agents simultaneously

4. They were old friends now as he had been their driver (and audience member) for their arrival shuttle.

receiving a call that instantaneously painted a worried look on their faces and a sense of urgency in their actions.

There was no announcement. Like sheepdogs and cattle, the security officers urgently marshalled a giant herd of travelers out and away from the building.

Sandy and Sharon walked as far as they could and into the best sunwarm spot they could find.
Obviously worried about theirs, and the safety of others, they also couldn't help but be a little concerned about the fate of their souvenir-laden luggage.

Despite being one of the largest U.S. airports, LaGuardia didn't provide free Wi-Fi access so agitated evacuees phoned their families or friends, asking them to check the internet to see what was happening.

The web reports indicated that someone had left a suspicious package unattended, and it was smoking.

"This must happen a lot," Sharon commented to an airport security officer keeping the crowd away from the exit roads. "With 9-11 and terrorist threats and all."

"Not really," the officer responded.
"It never happens."

Sandy turned on her cell phone so she could call her husband Mike to tell him that they would probably be late arriving in Victoria.

It was then that she noticed an unchecked voicemail on her phone.



"What's going on?" Sharon asked as she watched Sandy grimacing and writhing as she listened to the voice mail.

"It's the David Letterman Show," Sandy said after hanging up. "They phoned yesterday while we were at Macy's to tell us to come pick up our tickets for last night's show."

"They what?" Sharon said. "They phoned you? Were they supposed to phone you? You didn't have your phone on?"

"Well I didn't expect them to phone on the day of the show," Sandy whimpered. "I didn't think they would phone. People said there was a slim to none chance of us getting tickets."

"Slim to none chance?" Sharon said, playfully hitting Sandy repeatedly on her head with her passport. "SLIM TO NONE CHANCE? Did you not just hear the security officer said that they never evacuate airports. Do you not remember reserving a hotel

that didn't exist? Us getting Super Bowl tickets? Meeting the Baldwin family amongst a city of millions? Slim to none chance? Does our *Chronicles* Adventures not tell you that for us, there's no such thing as a slim to none chance?"

"Right," Sandy said, it slowly sinking in that they and their horses missed a potential opportunity to cavort with David Letterman and his guest Russell Wilson. "Well, we can tell everybody that we blew off David Letterman."

"Yeah," Sharon said. "Or blame our friends—we can tell people we were busy buying friends gifts at Macy's."

Ш

Amazingly, the evacuation didn't delay the twins' flight to Toronto. After about an hour, the airport security allowed the evacuees back in and incredibly, with efficient proficiency, the thousands of passengers were pushed through security checks once again.

Settled in their seats on the West Jet flight, the twins sighed, relaxed and reflected on their incredible Super Bowl experience.

There was one thing they always championed—not just in their lives but for others. Whether it's a small decision like not reacting to a driver cutting you off in traffic, or a big one that could change the course of your future, live your life so you don't regret what you do; and live your life so you don't regret what you don't regret what you don't do.

So there they sat, satisfyingly exhausted and exhilarated, thinking about their experience and their respective credit card bills.

"Any regrets?" Sharon asked Sandy.

"Not a one," Sandy replied.

A few minutes later...

"Well, it's a bummer we didn't get on Letterman," Sandy sulked.

"Yeah that really sucked," Sharon agreed.

#### Epilogue

After the Super Bowl win, the 12th man felt a sense of camaraderie like no other. The twins, not wanting the experience to end, wore their pride in the form of jerseys, hats and arm warmers and were determined to do so until they were safe and sound back in their beds in Victoria. This elicited High Fives or smiles or cheers from every Hawk fan they encountered, but no exchange was





"I'M NOT SURE I WANT YOU ON MY PLANE," THE INCREDULOUS WESTJET FIRST CAPTAIN (LEFT) SAID TO SANDY AFTER SHE TOLD HIM CHRONICLE MISADVENTURES TALES. SANDY THEN ASKED THE PILOT IF HE WAS LISTENING. HE SAID, "I'M TRYING NOT TO."

so meaningful as the one they got as they were lining up to go through security at LaGuardia airport.

Sandy saw a man donning a huge smile and Seahawks gear approach her. Expecting a High Five, she raised her arm in the prone position, ready to take the smack. Instead, he surprised her with a huge bear hug.

"I was thinking of your Dad the whole time I was at the game," he said. She realized then that he was one of many she had shared, and who was touched by, the Douglas White story.

Almost immediately after the Seahawks won, Seattle started making plans to celebrate (no doubt that there were plans to celebrate win or lose). The city with financial support from the Seahawk organization—quickly brought together plans to hold a parade on the Wednesday after the game—a parade that would start at Seattle Centre (near the Space Needle) and end at Century Link field. The twins seriously thought about playing Hawk-hooky, checking harbour and airport flights, Victoria Clipper, ferry schedules and costs on their iPads while waiting for their connecting Calgary-Victoria flight on Tuesday. It was not to be—all travel was fully-booked or the schedule/price was prohibitive (cheapest Victoria -to-Seattle airport-to-airport flight was \$650 each—the same cost as the Victoria-to-New York flight).

As much as they didn't want to miss another inflatable horse

opportunity to cheer on the Seahawks, it was fortunate that they did. More than 700,000 fans (plus another 80,000+ at Century Link, and those spilling into adjacent Safeco Field) showed up at the celebration—a log-jam that would have meant getting from Sea-Tac airport downtown—and even a look at the parade — impossible.

The "12th Man" spirit figured prominently at Super Bowl XLVIII. The fastest score in Super Bowl history (the safety) occurred 12 seconds into the game; Harvin's kick-off touchdown occurred 12 seconds into the second half and the playoff loss was Peyton Manning's 12th. But this number-12-streak stretched to Victoria. The twins' friends John and Julie host an annual Super Bowl party for friends to view on their theatre -style 10-foot screen. (They invited the twins and a few friends back for a "re-viewing" party the following weekend.) With the twins not being able to make it this year, the number of people who did end up watching? Twelve.

Doing a 'Marty' (looking for leftover swag) in the stands only amassed a few extra (but empty) seat cushions. Two of these though, the twins presented to John and Julie so they could re-live the spirit of the game at their Super Bowl parties.

# The Douglas White Story

By Sharon

So much of what makes us "us" was from our Dad,
Douglas White. We inherited his curly hair, the "White Wit" and his love of sports, particularly football. Which is why the bittersweet part of the road to Super Bowl XLVIII was that we couldn't take him with us, as he passed away in July 2012.



DOUGLAS WHITE—SWITCH THEIR ORDER, PUT THEM SITTING ON A BENCH AND YOU SEE WHAT SHARON SAW.

They say the first year after a close one's passing is the hardest—twelve months of going through the first milestones—first birthday, first Christmas, first experiences without them. September 30, 2012 —our parents' anniversary — would be such a time.

It was a Sunday. As I watched the Seahawks game, I missed him celebrating his anniversary. I missed his watching the game and calling me afterwards. The Seahawks game finished (another win) and the station immediately switched to an Atlanta Falcons game already in progress. I looked at the screen and astonishingly, the first TV image I saw was two Falcons players, their jersey backs facing towards me, their name banners emblazoned boldly, Harry Douglas on the left, Roddy White on the right—"Douglas" then "White." "Douglas White" sitting on the players bench, there watching the game. With me.

Throughout the rest of the season, I brushed off Sandy's consistent insistence that Dad was still there with us, watching and orchestrating the season.

"He's phoning you," Sandy said after I received a "hang up" call from Washington, DC, minutes after Seattle beat the Redskins in the 2012 NFC quarter-finals.

"He's here—there's Douglas congratulating White after his touchdown," Sandy said at the 2012 NFC conference semi-finals against the Seahawks, played on Jan. 13 (which was coincidentally Dad's birthday)."

"He's here," Sandy said the following year, every time she saw the two players sitting on the bench. Douglas always on the left, White on the right.

And when Percy Harvin took to the field at the Super Bowl to receive the second half kick off, I bet Sandy \$5 that he would return it for a touchdown.

"Of course he will," Sandy said, not taking the bet. "Dad will make him."

So as Sandy and I stood mesmerized by the Vince Lombardi Trophy being presented to our beloved Seahawks, confetti swirling around, 12th men cheering at our sides, I couldn't help but wonder if Dad was really up there above, sitting with a home-brewed Spinnaker's pale ale in his hand, our brother Bryan at his side, watching and cheering not just for the Seahawks, but for his two little twin girls, having the time of their lives. Because right there, right then—it really felt like heaven (was) on earth.

The FLFTWOB dare to get a photo onto the MetLife Stadium was not as improbable as it might seem. Once at the stadium, the Jumbotron advertised an opportunity for spectators to tweet their photos. Sharon tried furiously but failed to make a connection. This also prevented the girls from getting texts and phone calls from friends (who told them they tried) during the game.

Alert-shopper Sandy was impressed to find Benchwarmers Sports rating an "A+" on the Better Business Bureau's website; she was less impressed to find an "F" BBB rating for Broadway Cameras and far less impressed to find a \$130 charge on her MasterCard bill for a ten-dollar 4MB camera card. Appears that this scam-cam company swindled her and, according to Google reviews, a dozen more unsuspecting tourists by charging buckets more than "suggested" retail. "Clipboard

Sandy" is now reporting her credit card "impressions" to the Better Business Bureau and her credit card company.

Sandy and Sharon, celebrating the Seahawks Super Bowl victory bought and ordered a number of champion souvenirs—but the biggest and most special was brand new Seahawks home jerseys with the silver Super Bowl logo custom-ordered with "Big Head" for Sandy (to continue to honour her nickname) and "White" for Sharon (to honour her family name). But with one change—both gave up their respective #3 and #45 numbers in exchange for #89 (Baldwin's)—honouring an incredible Super Bowl victory and an even more incredible experience.



# Official Swag Count

- Seat Cushion
- Ear Muffs
- Tuque (with computer chip light)
- Quarterback-Style Hand muffs
- Neck gaiter (a what?)
- Radio (to listen to coverage)
- Texting Gloves
- Hand Warmers
- Monster iSport ear buds
- Super Bowl program
- Towel
- Coffee Mug sleeve
- Lanyard and Ticket Holder
- Lip Balm ("Suh-weet," said Burt's Bees Balm-addict Sandy)
- Corned beef morsel left on Sharon's plate. ("Suh-weet," said Sandy, popping it in her mouth. "You know that piece fell on the floor?" Sharon was about to say, but decided against it as she didn't want to ruin it for her sister, given Sandy's odd penchant for deli meats (see San Francisco Chronicles swag list).)

#### Can't Get Enough of The Twins Adventures?

Beat the Christmas Rush. Need something for that hard-to-buy-for-person or for your own guilty pleasure? The Twin Chronicles are available on-line. Follow the twins at the Tour de France (France and Croatia Chronicles), Ironman, Canucks Stanley Cup Finals, Seahawks at home, away and at the Super Bowl, or their visit to a brothel in Nevada. Email Sharon.white@telus.net Void where prohibited by law or good taste.





HAPPY TAILS TO YOU...

## Sharon's Super Bowl XVLIII Predictions

- Seahawk's Legion of Boom secondary will be all over the Broncos' Legion of Zoom receivers like Miley Cyrus on a wrecking ball.
- 2. Bronco QB Peyton Manning, a pocket passer, will be pressured by the Hawks' d-line and be forced to run. It will be awkward...and hard to watch—kinda like watching a teen-aged boy at a high school dance. Miffed, he will then try to draw the Hawks off-side by extending the snap count and shouting "Oklahoma" (his favourite State).
- 3. As the league's most-penalized team, the Seahawks will continue to be plagued by yellow flags. Cornerback Richard Sherman will be called for 'unnecessary brashness.' Then Coach Pete Carroll will be called for 'unnecessary high fiving.' An extra 10 yards will be tacked on for 'unsportsmanlike hugging.'



AT THE TOP OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. PHOTO BY THE UNABAUMBER.

- 4. After telling *Sports Illustrated* that he will pass on the Pro Bowl and won't even watch the Super Bowl, spoiled Patriots QB **Pretty Boy Tom Brady won't be able to resist the temptation and will tune in for Bruno Mars' half time show. Getting** caught up in the music, he will start tapping his toe to "*Grenade*." His supermodel wife Gisele will have another hissy fit, get on twitter and demand that Bruno changes the lyrics to "I'll throw and catcha grenade for ya."
- 5. Ignoring the NFL-imposed 'no tail-gating party' rule, thousands of 12th men will flock to New Jersey with their RVs, causing massive traffic jams. After New Jersey Governor Christie calls in the national guard, New York Governor will tweet "#build a bridge Chris and get over it." (note: Governor Christie did declare a state of emergency the day after the twins left town. We "think" it was weather related.)
- 6. Canadian broadcast networks, not wanting to lose viewers to popular U.S. Super Bowl ads, will air their own ads featuring Justin Bieber in a *Go Daddy* commercial facing off in a street race against NASCAR-star Danica Patrick. In true Canadian fashion, Bieber's rented Lamborghini will be replaced with a tricked up Zamboni.
- 7. U.S. broadcasters will counter with a Mars candy bar ad featuring Betty White on a wrecking ball. She will break a hip during the ensuing twerking.
- 8. Trying to avoid another NFL fine for not talking to the media and inspired by how Richard Sherman's media 'acumen' led to Sherman merchandise sales sky-rocketing, running back 'Beast Mode' Marshawn Lynch will quit channelling Greta Garbo and will participate on the mandatory Super Bowl Week Media Day (Monday). Lynch's Speech Mode will be short-lived after everyone realizes that Lynch actually has nothing to say outside of "I run. I eat Skittles." After excitingly learning that the two Super Bowl teams hail from the only states that legalized marijuana, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford will demand VIP Super Bowl tickets but will be refused. Miffed, in his best Jamaican accent, he will launch a "I'm the Best Mayor in the World!" rant.
- 9. The next day, Richard Sherman will hold a press conference to clarify that he is not Jamaican (though he doesn't feel being confused with one is offensive). He will then launch a new line of "You Mad, Rob?" t-shirts.
- 10. Seahawks Quarterback Russell Wilson will miss his wake-up call, sleep in and won't show up at MetLife Stadium until 5:30 a.m. for his pre-game preparations.
- 11. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell will continue to staunchly defend the decision to hold the Super Bowl in a cold-weather stadium and will offer to shovel snow off the field between plays. Ford will offer to clear off the lines.
- 12. Bieber and Ford will both issue apologies in a joint You-Tube video and will vow to only drink American beer from now on.
- 13. Following her highly-successful fakebook.com, Sandy will launch her second anti-social media site called "TALKER" which will have her walking down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue announcing in a loud voice what she is doing and her random thoughts. "HASHTAG-I'M-HAILING-A-TAXI!" "HASHTAG I WONDER WHAT PARKER WOULD LOOK LIKE WITH A PERM?" She will get 5 followers. Two will be NYPD officers.
- 14. Sharon and (Hawks wide receiver) Doug Baldwin will meet at the top of the Empire State Building.