

At A Glanz ...

Monday Night Miracle



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Well its February, and guess what? The Jets won't be playing in the Super Bowl. Again. No matter what quarterback or head coach Gang Green has employed, the Jets have never been the best team in football during my lifetime.

And when or if they finally do win the big one, I will damn perspective. I feel perspective is a terrible thing, and I truly fight it. But it's a losing battle. No matter how much I want my day to be based on the Mets, Rangers or Jets, it rarely is anymore. But every so often, that can change.

So in 2000 while I was working for my first television job, WMBC-TV Channel 63 in New Jersey, I decided to fulfill a lifelong dream. Watch a Jets vs. Dolphins game. Throughout my childhood I hated the Dolphins. They broke my hearts more than once. So even though I was no longer a big Jets fan, thanks to meeting some of the Jets and not liking a few of them, I was looking forward to this Monday Night game. The date was October 23, 2000. I didn't know what was in store for me that night. I invited my brother to come along, but he foolishly said no. So I brought one of my best friends Steve Kilmnick to the game.

As a cameraman (I was both the reporter and cameraman), you were allowed to film part of the game from the field. It's a pretty neat perk. I still laugh when someone says they have great seats to me. They cant beat standing on the sidelines.

But as great as the perks are, the reality is something different. The pay sucks. I was making around \$22,000 a year. Nobody knew who I was, and I was stuck at this job.

It was these thoughts that filled my head, when Lamar Smith was running right at me. He was a running back for the Dolphins. He was being chased by two Jets, and they were all coming right to where I was shooting. I actually remember exactly what I was thinking. I thought, Smith is going to miss me by an inch on my right, and the Jet defender is going to miss me by an inch on my left. And I am going to get the greatest shot ever. And if I'm wrong by an inch, I will be on Monday Night Football forever.

I was hoping I'd get smashed. I thought it would be really cool to be leveled. I'm tough, I can take it. Plus maybe I'll get more exposure and a better job. So instead of running away from the players, I stayed with my shot. And I was severely disappointed my math was correct. They both barely missed me. A veteran cameraman came up to me and said, "You almost got killed!!!" I replied excitedly, "I know!!!"

But as great as that moment was, the game was a real dud. The Dolphins were smoking the Jets, and even though I was supposed to be impartial, I was secretly rooting for the

Jets. The Jets were down by 23 points heading into the 4th Quarter, and the vast majority of the fans started to leave. The game was over, and everyone knew it. Everyone, except the Jets and one reporter/cameraman.

I have no proof of this thought, but its true. I never once thought the Jets were going to lose. I just had this feeling in the pit of my stomach that something amazing was going to happen. And sure enough, it did. Jet quarterback Vinny Testaverde started to put on a clinic. The Jets started a thrilling comeback. The few fans that were left were going crazy.

My friend Steve, with my reporter credentials was allowed on the field with four minutes left. He came down and he couldn't be more excited. It was a big moment for him.

The game was a classic and everyone wanted to see the Jets finish off their amazing comeback. Finally, the Jets tied it up. Steve was on the sideline jumping up and down. I shot him a look and said, "You're supposed to be a reporter. You have to stay impartial!! You can't do that, they can take my credentials away!" Steve apologized and swore he would remain calm the rest of the game.

So the game continued and after blowing a 23-point lead, the Dolphins came back late in the 4th Quarter to take the lead. But there was magic that night at the Meadowlands, and sure enough, the Jets came back to tie it up again, when Testaverde threw a pass to

Jumbo Elliot, an offensive lineman who probably never caught a ball in his life before that pass.

The place was going crazy. The few fans that were left were going ballistic. Steve comes up to me and is jumping up and down again. He was saying, "I can't what?? I can't jump up and down???" HAHHAHAHAHA!!!!!" I started laughing. What else could I do? I may lose my credentials but screw it. It was an amazing game. Steve deserved to jump.

The Jets finished off the Dolphins in Overtime. My shot of the game-winning field goal was perfect. The game is considered to be the greatest Monday Night Football game in the storied history of MNF.

So they may never win the Super Bowl in my lifetime, but as far as I'm concerned, the Jets made me happier for one night, than any Lombardi Trophy can. And they gave a lifelong memory to me and Steve.