

# Matt Slade, Esq.--Mascot Defense Attorney

*by* Con Chapman

Pat Patriot, the mascot of the New England Patriots, has been arrested in a prostitution sting.

The Boston Herald

*Pat Patriot: He plays both ways.*

The buzzer on my alarm clock wakens me, and I stare groggily at the dial. I try to peel my eyelids open but they stick to my eyeballs. Apparently the I.W. Harper I drank last night has both intoxicating and mucilaginous properties.



I roll over towards the wall, hoping to get another half hour of sleep. I've got a full day ahead of me; I have to write a brief in the case of *Lipshutz v. Fredbird*, a property damage claim against the St. Louis Cardinals' mascot for breaking a fan's glasses as part of his routine. I've wracked my brain for possible defenses—assumption of risk, *res ipsa loquitur*, insanity—but I think the best I'm gonna be able to get for the big bird is to settle out of court. Maybe do a

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birthday party for the guy's kids, autograph a couple of baseballs.  
I'm not a miracle worker.



*“Hey—give me my glasses back!”*

The phone rings. I roll over towards the wall, hoping the caller will just leave a message. I hear the answering machine kick in: “You have reached Matt Slade, Esq., pro and college mascot defense attorney. I'm not available right now, so please leave your name, team, and the nature of your predicament, and I'll get back to you as soon as I can. Have a nice day.”

The machine beeps, and I hear a voice say “Uh, Mr. Slade, this is Pat Patriot, mascot of the THREE-TIME SUPER BOWL-WINNING NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS! Anyway, I got myself into some trouble here and I was wondering . . .”



*The whole thing smells fishy to me.*

I dive for the phone and pick it up. A case this big, with an NFL mascot, doesn't come along every day.

“Matt Slade, Mr. Patriot. What kind of a jam are you in?” I ask.

“Well, I . . . uh . . . answered this ad on Craigslist . . .”

“And let me guess—you weren't looking to buy a used candy apple blue Fender Squire guitar, were you?”

“No,” the voice says. “How'd you guess?”



"I've been trying to sell one for months. No takers."

"I don't play guitar."

"I know—I'm pulling your leg. You got caught in a prostitution sting, didn't you?"

*Cruisin' for babes.*

"Yeah—how'd you guess?"

"It's the oldest trick in the book. You want to cause trouble for a team the day before a big game, you go after the mascot."

"Really?"

"Didn't you ever hear the story of what the Cleveland Indians tried to do to Billy the Marlin in the 1997 World Series?"

"No, what?"

"They tried to set him up with Baby Bop . . ."

“The three-year-old protoceratops on Barney & Friends?”

“You got it.”

There was silence at the end of the line. “That is sick.”

“Yeah . . . they told him to meet her at the changing table in the men's room at a rest stop on Interstate 90.”



“And did he fall for it?”

“No—thankfully, Al Leiter and Kevin Brown took him out and got him shit-faced drunk,” I said. “He spent the night in his hotel room. Probably saved his career.”

I could almost hear the synapses popping in the head next to the phone at the end of the line. The guy was watching a semi-prosperous career in which he'd been loved by fans and hugged by Patriots' cheerleaders—swirling down the drain.



“So what exactly happened?” I asked.

“Well, I called the girl up and met her at a hotel parking lot.”

“All very innocent so far.”

“We, uh, negotiated for awhile, agreed on an exchange of value for professional services rendered . . .”



*David Ricardo: Not implicated in the incident.*

“Wasn't it British economist David Ricardo who said “Trade benefits both parties'?”

“Either him or Bill Parcells,” the perp replied. “Anyway, I was so stupid.” He was distraught. I hoped he wasn't in a phone booth, because he was beside himself, and it could have gotten crowded.



I exhaled a haughty snort of contempt. “You're talking to the #1 mascot defense attorney in America,” I said, and not without reason. “I got the San Diego Chicken off on charges of eating a guy's French fries. Without me, the Phoenix Gorilla would be serving time for fire code violations. Buster T. Bison . . .”

*Buster T. Bison: I know his sordid past.*

“The mascot for the Triple A affiliate of the New York Mets?”

"The same. He, uh, gets a little frisky with female fans from time to time, but he's never paid a penny in damages."

"Gosh," the guy said. "So what's my defense?"

"Entrapment," I said with cool detachment. "You're protected by the U.S. Constitution."

"I am?" the guy asked in a shocked tone. "But I was born in America, so I never had to learn anything about the Constitution."

"Unlike, say, a legal immigrant," I said with smug satisfaction.

*"I solemnly swear that I know more about the United States Constitution than most people born here."*

"Yeah—life is unfair," he said, then went silent. "But I'm guilty," the guy said at last. "I was looking for love—"

"I don't want to hear it," I said. "The more I know, the more trouble I can get into."

"You don't know what it's like," he said, and I could tell he was on the verge of tears. "People think it's easy being a mascot—they see the dance team members crowding around you in the publicity photographs and figure you're getting it right and left. But as soon as the lights go off, everything changes. 'Uh, sorry, Pat,' Brandi or Candi or Krystal will say. 'I can't see getting involved with a guy who's got a gigantic plastic head.'"



*"But . . . it's high-quality plastic!"*

"Then we'll plead necessity," I said. "Prostitution is a victimless crime, you were only satisfying a basic human need, you were . . ."

“No, thanks but no thanks,” he said, and I could tell he was resigned to his fate. “I’d better just serve my debt to society and—after I’ve served my time—turn my life around.”



*Vince Wilfork*

“But,” I said, and it was a big butt, the kind you see on All-Pro Nose Tackle Vince Wilfork, “what will you do when you get out? The only profession you know is mascotting.”



“I’d like to take a crack at children’s television,” he said. “Maybe Snuffleupagus will retire.”

