

# Second FRONT

## George and Rudy, happy at last

By R. RANDY LEE

### Act I

Rudy congratulates George after the parade, noting he probably won't have the heart now to move the World Series champions from the Bronx when the lease expires in 2002. Au contraire, says George. "If I don't move the Yankees to Manhattan, I'd like someplace a little more west, safer and more family-oriented than the Bronx." The mayor clutches his chest.

### Act II

Rudy thinks it's a heart attack, but it turns out to be only heartburn. Holding a press conference the next day on the subway platform with Yankee Stadium shimmering in the background — George has barred him from the stadium — he vows to a jeering crowd that he will find a way

to keep the Bombers from taking off.

### Act III

Rudy huddles with Corporation Counsel Paul Crotty late at night. "There's gotta be a way," he mutters often. "I've talked to Andrew about this." Scene fades out with Rudy solemnly staring out of the window at the stars.

### Act IV

"By God, I've got it," Rudy finally shouts. "Back in law school I can remember reading about eminent domain. A government can seize private property for public use so long as it pays just compensation. Let's condemn the Yankees!" "That's it, boss," says Paul. "The Fifth Amendment allows 'takings' of all kinds of property, tangibles or not. Got to hand it to you — first you battled mob bosses, now you're taking on The Boss." He immediately lunges for the lawbooks.

### Act V

Paul finds a 1982 case where the city of Oakland started proceedings to condemn the Oakland Raiders because the football team's owners wanted to move them to Los Angeles. The Superior Court ruled "public use" by a government can include matters of public recreation, like a sports or entertainment franchise. The city of Oakland, however, moved too slow to be successful, but not our hero.

### Act VI

Rudy wakes up his favorite judge, an ardent Yankee fan, and overnight New York City condemns the Bronx Bombers to keep them in the borough of their triumphs. The new owners pay \$1 billion to George, who laughs his way to the bank.

### Act VII

It's a bit tough for the city budget to shell out \$1 billion, so Rudy, in a Milkenesque move, sells convertible junk bonds at 15 percent to the public. "Every New Yorker can own a piece of the World Champions," the slogan goes. The team name is officially changed to the New York City Yankees.

### Act VIII

To pay the interest, all free television is canceled and the city gets an even bigger cable contract. But, it's worth it, Rudy speculates, as blacked-out New Yorkers grumble.

### Act IX

After a few tense months of City Council hearings about picking Torre's replacement — he took an early buyout from the city — Rudy appoints Bill Bratton as manager of the Yankees. He promises to keep the ballplayers in line, and smiles broadly at Rudy's stern reminder not to get too much personal publicity.

### Act X

Well into his second term, Rudy realizes his life's ambition and resigns to take a 15-year no-cut contract as chief executive officer of the Yanks. The New York City scene closes with Rudy, in full electronic splendor, sitting in his skybox calling the pitches and threatening to fire Bratton, unless he puts in Strawberry.

### Act XI

Meanwhile, George is now living in Las Vegas, in a desert palace, modeled after Hadrian's Villa outside of Rome. He holds a press conference announcing that, after payment of \$100 million to major league baseball, they have granted him a franchise for Las Vegas and that Steve Wynn will be building a domed stadium for George's new team. "The children will be able to watch the game in air conditioned comfort, while the adults will have the opportunity of playing slot machines in a new built-in baseball-themed casino," says the Boss. Of course, the new stadium will be designed to look exactly like Yankee Stadium. The name of the new team will be The Vegas Vandals. George is happy at last.

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