



THE FINAL LEG

In the 25 years since Terry Fox dipped his artificial leg into the ocean in St. John's, Newfoundland, that leg has become a symbol of hope and courage. By Guy Saddy

DEVOID OF CONTEXT, the leg seems almost medieval. No high technology is evident; no glitzy accoutrements save it from being utilitarian in the extreme. Leather straps hang from metal as if it were a horse's bit and bridle, and the whole of the image suggests a millstone, something to be endured. Foremost, of course, it is a tool, and in this role it performed remarkably, exactly as the toolmaker intended, enabling its owner to run a gruelling 5,374 kilometres, nearly two-thirds the breadth of this country. But function is only part of the story of Terrance Stanley Fox's prosthetic limb.

On April 12, 25 years will have passed since Terry Fox dipped his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean in St. John's, Newfoundland, and began the Marathon of Hope, an 8,530-kilometre cross-country run to raise money for cancer research. His real journey had begun three years earlier, in March 1977, when, at 18, he had his right leg amputated to stave off the advance of osteogenic sarcoma, a rare and highly malignant strain of bone cancer that originated in his knee. After the amputation, a temporary prosthesis was devised to accommodate the swelling of the stump. A month or so later, the swelling in check, Fox was fitted for a more permanent leg by Vancouver prosthetist Ben Speicher. He soon went back to Simon Fraser University to continue his studies—he was, ironically, majoring in kinesiology—and joined a wheelchair basketball team organized by Rick Hansen (who, in 1985, began a marathon that would take him 40,000 kilometres, the circumference of the Earth).

The night before Fox's surgery, his high school basketball coach had brought him a magazine article about Dick Traum, an amputee who, in 1976, became the first disabled athlete to complete the New York City Marathon. Fox saw in the accomplishment the challenge and hope he needed to overcome his own misfortune. And in 1979, Fox approached his prosthetist with a special request: design a leg that would allow him to compete in marathons.

Speicher experimented by incorporating motorcycle springs into a conventional prosthetic design. Emulating a pogo stick, the shocks were intended to cushion the jarring impact of the leg on pavement. When that tack proved to be a bust, Speicher opted for a more straightforward prosthesis, using existing technology. The key parts were commercially available through a German company. The critical knee joint was made of titanium and stainless steel. The foot, made of wood, plastic and sponge, was a standard "SACH"—"solid ankle, cushion heel"—and cost about \$200, the cheapest model available. It was fitted with an Adidas running shoe, which, as Douglas Coupland

In 143 days, Terry Fox logged 5,374 kilometres. To date, more than \$360 million has been raised worldwide for cancer research through the annual Terry Fox Run

notes in his new book, *Terry*, was the only one used on the prosthesis throughout the entire run. The socket—the heart of any artificial limb—was altered slightly. The entire apparatus weighed approximately four kilograms and cost around \$2,000. Although its components are still available today, Fox's leg is a long way from some of the \$12,000 carbon-fibre legs now being used, and the standard-issue foot must seem almost primitive next to the \$5,000 products one can buy today. In the end, the extraordinary thing about Fox's prosthetic leg was how entirely ordinary it was.

During the marathon, the leg would occasionally fight Fox hard. Near Moncton, New Brunswick, 1,819 kilometres into the run, the springs in the knee joint gave way and had to be sent to Fredericton to be repaired. Close to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, another knee joint spring broke; it was fixed by a local welder, who heard about Fox's predicament. The run was hard—on average, Fox logged 42 kilometres each day—and painful cysts developed on his stump. A concerned but occasionally hysterical media reported that blood was seen oozing from the prosthesis and onto Fox's shorts. (It was, more likely, sweat that leaked through a valve hole, functioning exactly as intended.) For a time, the leg was put aside in favour of two replacements made by Armand Viau, a renowned prosthetist from Hull, Quebec. But each was soon replaced with the original, and it would be this leg, the one made in Vancouver, that would see him through until the Marathon of Hope ended prematurely on September 1, 1980, outside Thunder Bay, Ontario, 143 days into his run.

Perhaps the most important thing about the leg was that it dictated how Fox would run. To accommodate it, he developed a stutter step, a double hop-and-swing action that made his gait instantly identifiable. It is this image that we remember so vividly: a young man, slight but muscled, his curly hair framed against a setting or rising sun. It is the leg that elevates the image to iconography and haunts Canadians old enough to remember where they were in the summer of 1980.

Terry Fox died on June 28, 1981, 10 months after the cancer he thought he'd beaten was discovered in his lungs. A few months before he died, the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope fund grew to \$24.17 million, a dollar for every Canadian then alive. Fox was buried in the municipal cemetery in his hometown of Port Coquitlam, B.C. The leg, of course, outlived the man. It rests in a Plexiglas case in the Terry Fox Library, also in Port Coquitlam.

Although well-intentioned, there is something slightly vulgar in the display; the leg seems too integral to Terry Fox to be presented as a disembodied piece. That said, it speaks powerfully of a time when a one-legged runner united a nation both in grief and in resolve. □



NO MAN'S ISLAND

Its defining image implies a stalemate. Fifteen years later, a clearer picture of the Oka Standoff's winners and losers is beginning to emerge. By Guy Saddy

EVEN WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, it stands as an extraordinary portrait of confrontation. The masked man, dressed in contrasting fatigues, exudes pure menace. The soldier, noticeably smaller and looking younger than his 20 years, stares steadily ahead. In the shadow of the surrounding pines, the men appear to be one step away from the precipice, so close they can feel each other's breath. Fifteen years ago, on September 1, 1990, as dusk descended on what was either ancient Mohawk land or the future site of a challenging back nine, Canadian Army Private Patrick Cloutier and an unidentified native thought to be a half-Italian Mohawk known as "Lasagna" became symbols. The unflinching Canadian soldier, standing for peace, order and good government — member of a proud military that did not yet have the blood of a Somali teenager on its hands. And the Mohawk warrior, a representative of all aboriginal peoples, frustrated by unresolved centuries-old grievances, out of patience. Canada versus its original inhabitants: the defining image of the 1990 Oka standoff.

The crisis began in the spring of 1990, when the town of Oka, west of Montreal, moved ahead with plans to expand an existing golf course. The Mohawk of the nearby Kanesatake reserve claimed the territory as part of an unresolved land claim. On March 11 a group of Mohawk militants barricaded the disputed lands' access roads. It was local news until July 11, when some 100 members of the Sûreté du Québec, the provincial police force, stormed the ramparts with tear gas canisters and concussion grenades. At the end of the day Marcel Lemay, a 31-year-old SQ corporal, lay dead, killed by a bullet both sides claimed they didn't fire. The next day the larger Mohawk sister community of Kahnawake blocked access to the Mercier Bridge, one of the main points of entry to the Island of Montreal, initiating what became known simply as "Oka."

Across the country, native voices rose in support of the Mohawk. And non-native Canadians struggled to understand how a dispute over a golf course had gotten so out of hand. Many tried to wrap their tongues around a mash of strange spellings and unfamiliar sounds, some of which, like Kahnawake and Kanesatake, seemed almost interchangeable and merely added to the confusion about what was taking place, and where. To most, concepts like "self-government" and "aboriginal title" were utterly foreign, as was the political incorrectness of the term "Indian."

On September 1, more than 350 army soldiers rolled through the forests and quickly dismantled three barricades, en route to the original roadblock

near Oka and its contingent of heavily armed militants. It was here at "the Pines" that events threatened to spiral out of control. Both sides' refusal to shoot first — combined with the timely intervention of native women, who literally pulled their men out of the line of fire — prevented a bloodbath. Tensions eased as the day wore on. By the time Oka's most famous photograph was taken, the confrontation was limited to chest-thumping dramatics, documented by a swarm of media. In truth, the defining image of Oka is a study in macho posturing.

The gulf between perception and reality extends to the photo's subjects. After Oka, Patrick Cloutier received an "accelerated promotion" to master corporal. His ascent was short-lived. In 1992 he was demoted after admitting to cocaine use. In 1993, in Quebec City, he was charged with injuring people while driving drunk, and dismissed from the military. The following year he again engaged in some further macho posturing, this time in a pornographic film, *Quebec Sexy Girls #2*. In it Cloutier, standing very much at attention, re-enacted his famously stoic pose, unclothed and staring into the face of a naked woman, who eventually drops to her knees and performs oral sex. (SOLDIER BARES PRIVATES was one of the more creative headlines on the subject.) Reportedly, he later moved to Florida.

When Ronald Cross, a.k.a. Lasagna, died of heart failure in 1999 at age 41, many news agencies still mistakenly referred to him as the masked man in the Oka Standoff's most famous image. He wasn't. The Mohawk warrior wasn't even a Mohawk: Brad Laroque, a soft-spoken Ojibwa from Saskatchewan, was eventually identified as the masked man in the photo. As for the Mohawk warriors, after the events of 1990 many of them went back to cigarette and alcohol smuggling, and controlling the gambling on the reserves that straddle the border between Canada and the United States. To this day, they remain highly controversial within the Mohawk community, seen as patriots by some, criminal charlatans by others.



Shutter speed: 1/30th of a second. Film speed: 1600 ASA. Lens: 85mm. Aperture: f1.8 (a wide lens opening to allow lots of natural light for a photo taken at dusk). Flash: none — photographer Shaney Komulainen left it in her car. Result: a photo as piercing as any bullet

Oka finally ended on September 26, 1990, without further loss of life, but the events that followed would put the lie to the photograph's peacekeeping connotations. Oka became the blueprint for other confrontations whose violence would equal, if not exceed, what happened in Quebec. At the September 1995 occupation of Ontario's Ipperwash Provincial Park, an Ontario Provincial Police sniper shot and killed native leader Anthony (Dudley) George; 10 years later, an inquiry is still winding its way through those events. That same month, British Columbia's Gustafsen Lake standoff led to the largest use of firepower on Canadian soil since the Riel rebellion.

Oka was also, in many ways, a turning point. The ill-fated 1992 Charlottetown accord was forged with extensive input from native groups, a radical

departure from the earlier Meech Lake experience. In 1999, the Nunavut territory — whose population is 85 per cent aboriginal — was created. In 2000, a landmark settlement was struck with the Nisga'a in B.C. Even common language has changed. Today, most Canadians are familiar with the term "self-government," and only the intentionally provocative or truly ignorant wonder why First Peoples aren't thrilled to be called "Indian."

Although the bullet that killed Marcel Lemay was determined to have been fired from the Mohawk side, no one was ever found responsible for his death. In 1997, the land at the heart of the conflict was purchased from the town by the federal government and given to the community of Kanesatake. The woods are quiet now. The Mohawk use the land to bury their dead. □

1,000 WORDS

COME TOGETHER

Twenty-five years after John Lennon's murder, his Bed-In for peace remains a brilliant-and absurd-piece of political theatre. By Guy Saddy

AT FIRST GLANCE THE SUBJECT IS ELUSIVE, buried in the chaos of the moment. The focus, however, quickly becomes obvious. On the bed, dressed in white nightclothes, surrounded by microphones and a bank of white carnations, are John Lennon and his wife, Yoko Ono, leading dozens in a chant that will reverberate for decades. It is June 1, 1969, and Room 1742 of Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel is the scene of a pivotal pop cultural moment: the actual recording of "Give Peace a Chance," the unofficial anthem of the peace movement, and the climax of a weeklong bit of political theatre known simply as the "Bed-In." But the moment is, at its core, it is about the final transfiguration of John Lennon, Beatle, into John Lennon, prophet of peace—and everything this will portend.

The road to Montreal was winding, if not particularly long. On March 20, 1969, Lennon and Ono married. To celebrate, they spent a week in bed in an Amsterdam hotel, with the world as witness. "We knew our honeymoon was going to be public anyway, so we decided to use it to make a statement," Lennon explained in a 1980 *Playboy* interview. "In effect, we were doing a commercial for peace on the front page of the papers." It worked. Even media that were openly hostile to the stunt couldn't *not* mention "peace" in their coverage. The Lennons were selling peace like soap; naturally, as any savvy marketer would, they began to look at ways of positioning more product.

Originally, their intent was to stage a subsequent Bed-In in New York City. But visa problems—Lennon had been convicted of hashish possession—meant that America was not an option. A second attempt, in the Bahamas, was aborted; the place was hot, and too far out of the media loop. Montreal, however, was as close to the Big Apple as you could get without crossing the border. For reasons of proximity, Canada's then-largest city was designated peace central.

On May 26, the Lennons and their entourage descended on Montreal and began to receive a steady stream of visitors. Singer Petula Clark was in town, and dropped by to ask Lennon's advice on how to showcase a bilingual repertoire in a city that, despite the lingering Expo 67 feel-good hype, was still very much divided. (When she sang French songs, the English jeered; when she sang English songs, the French booed. Lennon's advice: "Fuck 'em.") Beat poet Allen Ginsberg came; so did New York disc jockey Murray (the K) Kaufman, who had appointed himself "the Fifth Beatle" after eagerly embracing the group. University of Ottawa student president Allan Rock persuaded Lennon to come to Ottawa to address an upcoming peace conference that, despite Rock's claims, hadn't even been planned. (The conference was cobbled together once Lennon agreed to attend. Rock, of course, would later go into politics.)

As with any marketing campaign, some excitement was manufactured: Patrick Watson's CBC-TV current affairs show, *The Way It Is*, with the Lennons' collusion, actually flew in some of the more prominent guests, including African-American comedian/activist Dick Gregory and comedian Tommy Smothers, whose stridently anti-Vietnam War views had contributed to the cancellation of *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, his and brother Dick's popular television program. They also flew up *Li'l Abner* cartoonist Al Capp, a self-described "neanderthal fascist" who crudely baited Lennon and called Ono "Madame Nhu"—presumably since, to him, all women of Asian descent resembled the despised sister-in-law of assassinated South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem. Lennon, a violent man who had used his fists on men and women alike, had to restrain himself, lest he violate the premise of his own protest. It was, as they say, good TV.

As the week wore on and celebrities, nobodies and Hare Krishna devotees alike spilled into the Lennons' suite, Canadians tried to make sense of it all. Expo, with its futuristic buildings and francophone flair, was still a vibrant memory; our newly elected prime minister, a Montreal native, was (relatively) young and (relatively) hip. The Olympics were seven years away. Things were happening to our sleepy little nation, and at the centre of all of it was Montreal, metaphor for a new and peculiarly Canadian brand of peaceful coexistence, as bright and shining as any geodesic dome, a cosmopolitan city that wore its skirt high and stayed out way past bedtime. Through Montreal's ascent, Canadians were starting to believe that we were starting to matter. The Bed-In was evidence we already did.

Weeks after it was recorded, "Give Peace a Chance" went on to become the first hit single from any free-agent Beatle. Canadians, aware of their role, wallowed in pride. Although it was a milestone, the song also presaged the group's demise. The following year the Fab Four went their separate ways. Ringo became a punchline. George became a better musician. Paul continued to compose compelling melodies marred by saccharine, banal lyrics. John's career was checked. After three experimental-music albums with Ono, he formed the Plastic Ono Band, which, despite critical raves, failed to garner much popular success. In 1971, he cut "Imagine," perhaps his finest post-Beatles song.



During his week at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in 1969, Lennon wrote and recorded "Give Peace a Chance," his anthem to nonviolence. The song peaked at No. 14 on *Billboard* magazine's U.S. charts, the first hit single from any free-agent Beatle. Joining Lennon and Ono are Dr. Timothy Leary and his wife Rosemary, comedian Tommy Smothers and other supporters

His next few years, however, were a blur: drunk in L.A. with Harry Nilsson and the Who's Keith Moon; a relationship with the Lennons' assistant, May Pang—part of a "lost weekend" that lasted a year and a half. In 1975 Lennon and Ono had a son, Sean, and Lennon gave up music altogether. It would be five years before he returned to the recording studio to cut *Double Fantasy*. The single was—ironically, as it turned out—"Just Like Starting Over." In Hawaii, Mark David Chapman responded by purchasing a Charter Arms .38-calibre revolver and a plane ticket to New York.

This month marks the 25th anniversary of Lennon's murder. To date, the number of posthumously released albums is almost equal to his solo output while alive. His artwork, once derided as mere doodles, now fetches thousands. His Gibson acoustic guitar, long discontinued, was reissued in 2002 as the J-160E Peace model. For the coyly set price of \$1,969 you can book Room 1742 at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel; the "Give Peace a Chance" package includes, among

other goodies, a pair of white pyjamas and a framed photo of the hotel's most famous event. And in August, *Lennon*, a Broadway musical sanctioned and promoted by Yoko Ono, premiered in New York City to a resounding critical chorus of Bronx cheers. The marketing of John Lennon continues apace.

As a brand, Montreal has fared less well. In 1970, during the FLQ crisis, the city would be in lockdown on orders from a prime minister whose long hair disguised, if not a red neck, a very authoritarian streak. The 1976 Montreal Olympics were boycotted by many African nations; the \$2-billion debt incurred by the city will finally be cleared next year. Also in 1976, the separatist Parti Québécois was, for the first time, elected as the provincial government. Soon after, many head offices and an ocean of capital abandoned Montreal.

Decades after it ceded its supremacy to staid, sexless Toronto, a modest recovery is underway. In a city that has become exhausted by the French-English debate, a de facto truce is in place. Peace, of a sort, prevails. □

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