

# Disco demolition night

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On the eve July 12, 1979, at Comiskey Park in Chicago, Illinois, the double-header game was about to begin between the White Sox and the Detroit Tigers. However, it was not the baseball game that took the limelight that evening as along with the said baseball game was a promotional event dubbed, "Disco Demolition Night" spearheaded by WDAI Disk Jockeys Steve Dahl and Garry Meier who were both against the proliferation of Disco music which was then considered to be minority music as promoted by the blacks.

Other than this, the two jockeys also reasoned out that disco was causing the demise of rock and roll and consequently, the cancellation of the rock and roll show of both of these jockeys from the airwaves. The event was meant to jack up ticket sales for the baseball game as well as make a statement against disco music as it promised tickets to the game for only 98 cents if the spectators brought with them old disco records in exchange.

The management of the White Sox felt that the event would be successful in bringing in a big crowd for the game and just as expected, instead of the initial estimates, the crowd swelled up to 90,000, quite too much for the 52,000 seat capacity of the stadium. (Wikipedia) So, the event did not only have the propulsion of the two disk jockeys but the support of the owner of the Red Sox himself, Mike Veeck. The event began to become uncontrollable when after the first baseball game; the proponents of the said Disco Demolition Night took to the field and destroyed a huge pile of disco records using explosives.

From this point on the crowd became unruly and people from the bleachers went to the field to destroy certain equipment and even steal chunks of the field itself. Television commentators later explained that even before the event began, the air reeked with the smell of marijuana and many people were just walking around as if they were not within themselves. The ruckus broke out into an uncontrollable riot even when the proponents tried to use the PA system to implore the crowd to settle down.

In the end, riot police had to intervene as six people were taken to the hospital for injuries and thirty-nine other were 'arrested for disorderly conduct.' The officials of the Detroit Tigers refused to continue with the second game which was shortly forfeited in their favor on the grounds that the White Sox was not able to provide a suitable venue for the games. (Wikipedia) Bill Veeck, the father of Mike consequently had to face public reaction to the event; Mike was also eventually banned from Major League baseball because as a consequence of the event.

Viewing the video of the event on YouTube is a validation of what was initially written in the Wikipedia article. However, the Wikipedia article did not include such details as the interview with Veeck, Dahl and Meier. These interviews revealed the intentions of these individuals in relation to the event gone haywire. Veeck simply said that the event was a promotional activity which was organized to increase sales for the game while. Dahl, speaking for himself and in behalf of his partner Meier admitted that his purposes for the event stemmed from his dislike of disco music.

However, if earlier circumstances are taken into consideration, it has to be argued that even prior to the event; Dahl had lost his rock and roll program

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because of the growing demand for disco music which was then emerging during that time. Disco music was then associated with the blacks and the underground which all the more made people curious about it. Dahl, in his interview with a television news program explained what he hated about disco music and although he did not directly admit that it had something to do with blackculture, it was obvious that the disco patrons that he was describing at the moment were typical of the blacks.

(YouTube) The mere fact that Dahl lost his radio show is reason enough for him to develop a grudge for disco music, notwithstanding racist issues that may have been left unspoken as disco, is, as mentioned, originally from the blacks. Another feature that is noticeable in the Wikipedia article when compared to the YouTube video is the fact that in the article injuries were reported. These injuries were not mentioned in the video; in fact the reporter kept on saying that there were no injuries. (YouTube)

Obviously, the persons to blame for this particular event are the proponents, but when circumstances are considered, Mike Veeck should get more of the blame because over and above everybody else, he had the power to prevent it as the owner of the White Sox. Dahl was mere instrumental as the event's organizer and besides, if profit is considered, Veeck would have had profited the most from the event. Nevertheless, all things considered, the people at the stadium were also partly to blame because of the lack of discipline on their part.

However, if the claim of the Wikipedia article stating that there was a scent of marijuana in the air is considered, then it is possible that the crowd was not in their right mind during the event. In the case of the stadium and its

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management, such could have been prevented, possibly, if the management ensured that only a number representing the venue's capacity was allowed into the venue. Since the crowd swelled up to thousands beyond the capacity, then it would have been impossible to control the crowd. The riot police was there when they were needed and need not have been there to begin with if not for the chaotic situation that ensued.

All things considered, it is easy to lay the blame on certain individuals but it cannot be denied that such catastrophes cannot just result from a singular source; rather, it is a conglomeration of certain things happening all at the same time, at the right time, and with the right circumstances. Of course, the pointed finger will always single out the proponents, but in any case, they just organized the event, perhaps, the only mistake that they committed was their obvious negligence of what could happen, which, by the way, could not be accurately predicted as the facts would show.