

Case 5

To some, Oswaldo José Guillén Barrios is a free spirit. To others he is a loose cannon. Many agree, however, that discretion and tact are not his long suits.

Guillén, known as Ozzie to most, is a Venezuelan-born American best known for his career as a major league baseball player, coach, and manager. In recent years, though, Ozzie's baseball prowess has been overshadowed by his public comments on everything from journalists to his wife. He called Jay Mariotti of the *Chicago Sun Times* a fag; about his own wife he said, "What attracted me to my wife is she's hot. She's also nice, she's a great mom, but that comes after she's hot."

Many criticize Ozzie as a poor role model. Asked about his off-field routine on team road trips, Ozzie told reporters, "I get drunk because I'm happy we win or I get drunk because I'm very sad and disturbed because we lose. Same routine, it never changes." About work he said, "I'm not going to quit. I'm not a quitter. When I want to quit, I'll do a lot of stupid things and make sure they fire me and get paid." Ozzie also offered, "I'm the Charlie Sheen of baseball without the drugs and a prostitute."

Ultimately, it was Ozzie's diplomacy—or lack thereof—that landed him in hot water. Recently hired to manage the major league baseball franchise in South Florida, the Miami Marlins, Ozzie shared his thinking about world figures with *Time* in April 2012. "I love Fidel Castro. I respect Fidel Castro. You know why? A lot of people have wanted to kill Fidel Castro for the last 60 years, but that mother***** is still here." The backlash was swift.

Outside the new taxpayer-funded Marlins Park in the Little Havana section of Miami, protesters marched and called on Jeffrey Loria, owner of the Marlins franchise, to fire Guillén. Politicians from across South Florida also weighed in on the controversy. Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez condemned Guillén's comments and urged the owners to "take decisive steps" to end the controversy. The Hialeah, Florida, City Council went so far as to unanimously pass a resolution "strongly urging the Miami Marlins to immediately dismiss team manager, Ozzie Guillén, for his remarks about Cuban tyrant, Fidel Castro."

Soon after the *Time* comments were published, Guillén flew back to Miami from Cincinnati, where the Marlins were playing, to hold a press conference. A contrite Guillén apologized to the community for his comments in a mea culpa orchestrated by the front office. The Miami Marlins later suspended Guillén for five days without pay and pledged to donate the \$150,000 he would have earned during those five days to local charities.

In the eyes of many, the team didn't go far enough. Others, even in the South Florida Cuban community, felt the outrage misplaced. One fan seemed bewildered by the anger because Guillén followed up his controversial comments with the explanation that his love and respect for Castro stemmed from Castro's longevity, despite being a hated figure. Another common response by Guillén sympathizers accuses the Cuban community of mirroring Castro's deeds in their censure of Guillén: "It's just un-American".