



# **Terror in the City of Champions: Murder, Baseball, and the Secret Society that Shocked Depression-era Detroit**

*Tom Stanton*

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Detroit, mid-1930s: In a city abuzz over its unrivaled sports success, gun-loving baseball fan Dayton Dean became ensnared in the nefarious and deadly Black Legion. The secretive, Klan-like group was executing a wicked plan of terror, murdering enemies, flogging associates, and contemplating armed rebellion. The Legion boasted tens of thousands of members across the Midwest, among them politicians and prominent citizens—even, possibly, a beloved athlete.

*Terror in the City of Champions* opens with the arrival of Mickey Cochrane, a fiery baseball star who roused the Great Depression's hardest-hit city by leading the Tigers to the 1934 pennant. A year later he guided the team to its first championship. Within seven months the Lions and Red Wings follow in football and hockey—all while Joe Louis chased boxing's heavyweight crown.

Amidst such glory, the Legion's dreadful toll grew unchecked: staged "suicides," bodies dumped along roadsides, high-profile assassination plots. Talkative Dayton Dean's involvement would deepen as heroic Mickey's Cochrane's reputation would rise. But the ballplayer had his own demons, including a close friendship with Harry Bennett, Henry Ford's brutal union buster.

Award-winning author Tom Stanton weaves a stunning tale of history, crime, and sports. Richly portraying 1930s America, *Terror in the City of Champions* features a pageant of colorful figures: iconic athletes, sanctimonious criminals, scheming industrial titans, a bigoted radio priest, a love-smitten celebrity couple, J. Edgar Hoover, and two future presidents, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. It is a rollicking true story set at the confluence of hard luck, hope, victory, and violence.

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