



LOMBARDI

14 SEP
THRU 7 OCT



written by
ERIC SIMONSON

based on the biography
*"When Pride Still Mattered:
A Life of Vince Lombardi"*
by Pulitzer Prize-winning author
DAVID MARANISS

directed by
CASEY STANGL



PLAYGUIDE

HOW A LEADER IS MADE

"Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile."

-Vince Lombardi

Cleveland Play House's 2012-13 season is full of legends and icons—Vince Lombardi, Janis Joplin, Bessie Smith, even the Suze Orman-esque financial guru at the center of *Rich Girl*. With people like these, it's easy to forget that they weren't always the famous figures we now perceive them to be. This couldn't be more true than with the great Vince Lombardi, who struggled for nearly twenty years to get to the position that secured his place in the starting line-up of 'football's greatest.'

Lombardi developed his personal playbook of hard work and discipline early. Born to Italian immigrants in Brooklyn, New York in 1913, Lombardi was raised in a devoutly Catholic household; in his late teens he planned to become a priest. Instead, he accepted a football scholarship to Fordham University in the Bronx, where he overcame small size to become famous as one of the team's "Seven Blocks of Granite." After college he began teaching physics and Latin at St. Cecilia's High School in Englewood, New Jersey, while also working his way from assistant to head football coach. (It was during this time, in 1940, that he married Marie Planitz.) After 8 years there, he began a series of career moves: first at his alma mater back in the Bronx, then two years as an assistant coach to the great Red Blaik at West Point, and finally his first pro position, as offensive coordinator for the New York Giants, in 1954. Then one day in 1959, Vince Lombardi got a life-changing call from Wisconsin. (See *The Father of Football* on page 3 for a surprising Cleveland connection.)

The challenges of being married to a man who is married to football took their toll on his wife, Marie, who was known to drink heavily. In the Lombardi biography *When Pride Still Mattered* (on which playwright Eric Simonson based his *Lombardi* script), author David Maraniss writes, "[Lombardi] seemed preoccupied with football even on their honeymoon, and cut it short to get back to Englewood."

Lombardi was often frustrated during his nearly twenty years as a perpetual assistant. As a man known for a vicious bark—and equally fearsome bite—it may be surprising



Lombardi with his wife, Marie.

that Lombardi's Catholic faith and Jesuit philosophy of "freedom through discipline" are what he often credits with his success. "I derived my strength from daily mass and communion," he said. Of course, Lombardi's determination to overcome obstacles became a hallmark of his coaching style with Green Bay, where his players knew him not only for his fiery temper but for his commitment to discipline, teamwork, and excellence.

Lombardi developed his personal playbook of hard work and discipline early

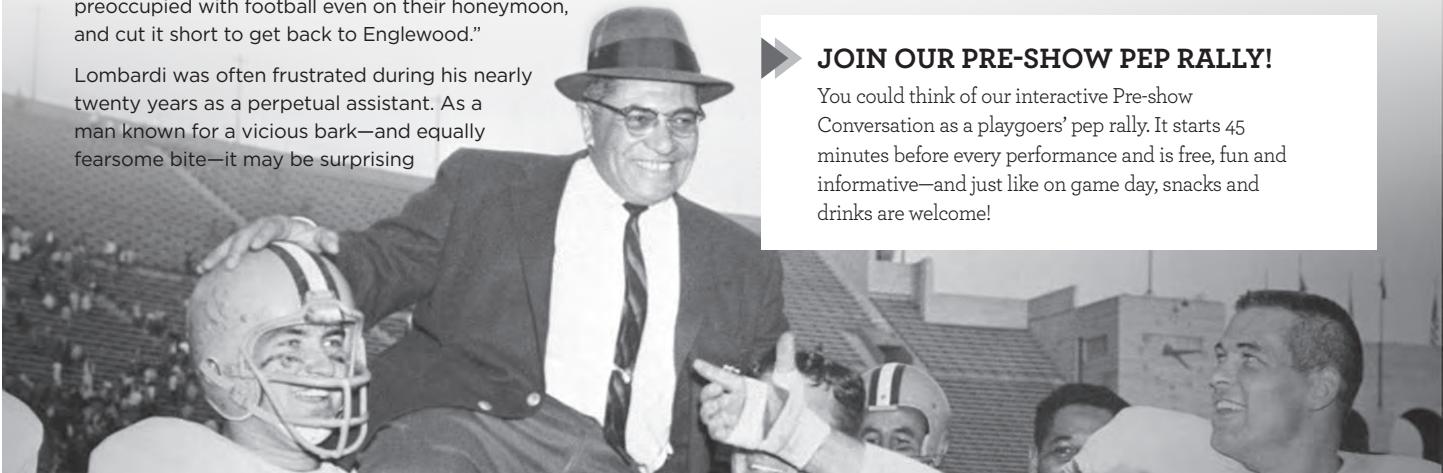
In 1959 Lombardi took over a team that had just had the worst season in Packers history, winning only one game, and led them on to win the

NFL championships just two years later, in 1961 and 1962—and then three more years in a row in '65, '66, and '67. He died unexpectedly from intestinal cancer in 1970 at the age of 57.

In honor of the man—a coach whose team won the very first Super Bowl—the Super Bowl trophy was named after him. It seems a fitting tribute that Lombardi's name is attached to the ongoing recognition of hard work and discipline in football's biggest game.

JOIN OUR PRE-SHOW PEP RALLY!

You could think of our interactive Pre-show Conversation as a playgoers' pep rally. It starts 45 minutes before every performance and is free, fun and informative—and just like on game day, snacks and drinks are welcome!



PAUL BROWN: The Father of Football

The Packers wouldn't be *The Packers* if it weren't for Vince Lombardi, but football wouldn't be football as we know it if it weren't for Cleveland's own Paul Brown. In fact, Lombardi might not be Lombardi if it weren't for Brown! (More on that later.) From training techniques, to the invention of new equipment, to advances in equality on the field and off, our own Cleveland Browns namesake was, as coach Bill Walsh once said, "the father of the modern game of football."

Paul Brown was born in 1908 and raised in Massillon, Ohio. Like Lombardi, he was the son of working class parents who instilled in their son the importance of hard work and perseverance. Also like Lombardi, he was not initially successful in football. As a young man, Lombardi's small stature and poor eyesight kept him off his high school team—but he became the 5'8", 180 lb. right guard in Fordham's famed "Seven Blocks of Granite." Likewise, Paul Brown's slight, 150 lb. frame made him an unlikely candidate for Massillon Washington High School's team—but the coach was impressed with his determination and by junior year Brown was the starting quarterback. He wasn't as fortunate as a freshman at Ohio State, where he didn't even make it past the Buckeyes' tryouts. The tide turned when Brown transferred to Ohio's Miami University. He again made starting quarterback, and guided the team to a 14-3 record in two seasons.

It took Lombardi nearly 20 years to get a head coaching job; Brown's ascent was quicker. Both Lombardi and Brown paid their dues as high school coaches, and as coaches (or in Lombardi's case, assistant coach) at colleges and military training academies. During World War II, Navy Lieutenant Brown coached the Bluejacket football team at Great Lakes Naval Training Station outside Chicago. Around the same

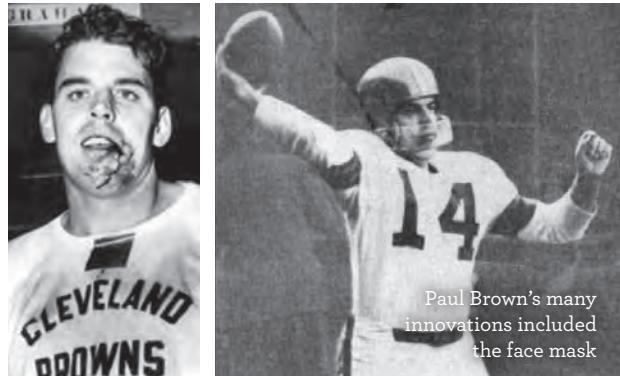
Lombardi might not be Lombardi if it weren't for Brown

time, Arch Ward, influential sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, proposed a new eight-team league to compete with the NFL, called the All-American Football

Conference. Just prior to the 1945 Bluejackets season, Ward visited Brown on behalf of the Cleveland franchise owner, "Mickey" McBride, to ask him to coach the new team. McBride offered \$17,500 a year—more than any coach at any level—plus a stake in the team and a stipend while Brown finished his time with the military. The City of Cleveland was so excited about the coach that the new team was named for him—against his wishes—by popular demand!

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Paul Brown's many innovations included the face mask



While McBride certainly knew the quality of coach he was hiring, he couldn't have known the extent to which Brown would change the game itself. Brown's innovations include:

- First head coach to give his prospective players intelligence tests.
- First to integrate pro football, two years prior to Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson in baseball.
- First professional coach to have players undergo classroom instruction, and to use film study.
- Invented the first helmet with a facemask.
- Created the first "practice squad," then called the "taxi squad." (Browns owner McBride also ran a cab company. Players who didn't make the final roster cut, but might fill in for injuries, drove cabs!)

Paul Brown was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1967

On top of all of these major changes to football, Brown is also owed credit for the opportunity that

made Lombardi a legend. When coach Scooter McLean was fired following a one-win season in 1958, Green Bay ownership phoned the now-legendary coach of the Browns looking for recommendations. Brown gave them the name of the offensive assistant who got the Giants to run to daylight: Vincent Thomas Lombardi.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND PIGSKIN: Football and Social Politics

"Player's Association gots a plan now. No one's going to be taken advantage of." -Dave Robinson, *Lombardi*

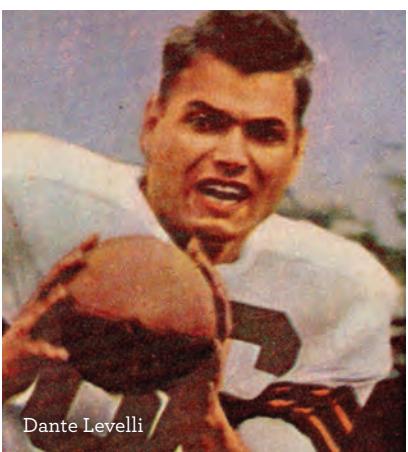
The opposing team's players aren't the only thing tackled in *Lombardi*. The 50s and 60s were a time of great social and political change in the U.S., and football was taking on the issues, too. Read on to learn how perspectives on racial prejudice and players unions impacted the game—and American culture.

PAY VS. PRIDE

Labor unions, like the one Dave Robinson represents in the play, have been a prominent and often controversial feature of American life for more than a century, and began to evolve even earlier. From the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire to Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's recent fight with public unions, differing views on what is 'fair' continue to shape our society.

Throughout the early 19th century various unions were formed—from the Mechanics' Trade Workers Union in 1827 Philadelphia to the somewhat shadowy Knights of Labor in

1869. Unions' roots really began to take hold during the Industrial Revolution, which introduced a totally new way of life to America's workers. Though productivity and manufacturing capabilities shot up, working conditions often failed to keep pace: long hours, hazardous



Dante Levelli

working conditions, health risks, low pay, and child labor were all rampant. The American Federation of Labor, an alliance of craft unions, was one of the major forerunners of modern trade unions, and was established in Columbus, Ohio, in 1886. (It still exists as the 'AFL' in AFL-CIO.)

The NFL Players Association, the labor union for NFL professional football players, was founded in 1956. It was initiated by two Cleveland Browns players, Abe Gibron and **Dante Levelli**, to address concerns like league-wide minimum salaries, unpaid exhibition games, and assurance of continued pay for injured players. Lombardi was not in favor of the Players' Union. When Packers player Jim Taylor approaches Lombardi about contract

"Pride...That's what we used to play for when the game was a game and not a bunch of show business and reporters and all the rest of that malarkey!"

negotiations in the play, Lombardi says, "Pride! That's what we play for! That's what we used to play for when the game was a game and not a bunch of show business and reporters and all the rest of that malarkey!"

Since the formation of the NFLPA, it has engaged in conflict with the team owners several times. The most recent was a 2011 lockout, which occurred for 18 weeks in the off-season when union members wanted better protections for retired players and improvements in safety, among other things, while the owners sought to extend the season to 18 games and change revenue sharing patterns. Both sides had to compromise to reach the agreement that allowed the 2011 season to proceed as planned.

"One of the first things coach did when he came to Green Bay was let folks know that wherever any of his players are not welcome, all his players are not welcome."
-Dave Robinson, *Lombardi*

PACKER GREEN AND REDSKIN WHITE

Lombardi said he saw his players as "neither black nor white, but Packer Green." The same was not true for everyone in football.

Modern professional football was integrated in 1946. **Bill Willis**, of the Cleveland Browns, is considered to be the first black starter in football. Marion Motley also played for the Browns that year. While most teams slowly made their way towards integration, Washington Redskins owner **George Preston Marshall** refused. He quipped, "We'll start signing Negroes when the Harlem Globetrotters start signing whites."



George Marshall

In 1961, the Washington Redskins were the only professional team to never have had a black player. The Kennedy administration, elected on a pro-civil rights platform, was embarrassed that a segregated team represented

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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND PIGSKIN: Football and Social Politics



Bill Willis

the nation's capital, and for the first time in history the federal government attempted to desegregate a professional sports team. In March of 1961, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall was informed that Redskins owner Marshall had recently signed a 30-year lease to play all home games, beginning October 1961, at the new D.C. Stadium—which was being built with public funds on land that was part of the National Capital Parks system. As the "residential landlord" of the parks

area, the Interior Department could deny use of the stadium to any party practicing discriminatory hiring policies. Faced with this surprise ultimatum, Marshall countered,

"We'll start signing Negroes when the Harlem Globetrotters start signing whites."

"Why Negroes particularly? Why not make us hire a player from any other race? ... Of course we have had players who played like girls, but never an actual girl player."

After reaching an agreement that let the Redskins play the 1961 season with an all-white team (a season which saw massive public protests and 17 straight games without a win), the

Redskins had the first draft pick on Dec. 4. They selected Ernie Davis, the first black player to win the Heisman Trophy. In mid-December, Marshall divulged that he had secretly traded Davis to the Cleveland Browns, who wanted him to join the league's leading rusher, Jim Brown, in their backfield. They had given the Redskins two black players: Bobby Mitchell, an established running back, and Leroy Jackson, a No. 1 draft choice. Several weeks later, the Redskins added another experienced African American athlete when they acquired offensive guard John Nisby from the Pittsburgh Steelers. Jackson rarely played, but Nisby and Mitchell became stars.



Paul Robeson as Othello

Interestingly, professional football had been integrated prior to 1934, including Ohio teams. The Akron Pros were a professional team from 1908-1926. Fritz Pollard, the first African American head coach in the NFL, co-coached the Pros in 1921. **Paul Robeson** played for the team in 1921 as well. He was among the earliest stars of professional football, before winning

acclaim as an actor and singer in such shows as Rogers and Hammerstein's *Showboat*, where he introduced the song "Ol' Man River" to the world.

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Taken alone, each play in CPH's season is entertaining and vital, but fascinating connections emerge when you examine them together.

The kind of pride and doggedness for which Vince Lombardi is known united the Packers and led them to greatness. But pride and unity can also create isolation and challenge. Margie Walsh, the protagonist of the Pulitzer prize-winning *Good People*, is another character who is deeply proud, though her pride has led her to a very different kind of life—that of a single mother who can't keep a job, and whose disabled teenage

daughter doesn't know her father. Pride runs deep in Margie's neighborhood, rough-and-tumble South Boston—or "Southie." Michael Patrick MacDonald, author of *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie* says, "...there was also this attitude in the neighborhood that, you know, you didn't need to go out into the bigger world, because we have it all, and that was kind of reinforced by not only the gangsters that ran the neighborhood, but their friends who are politicians...in the Massachusetts Senate, even."

GOOD PEOPLE • March 22-April 14 • Allen Theatre

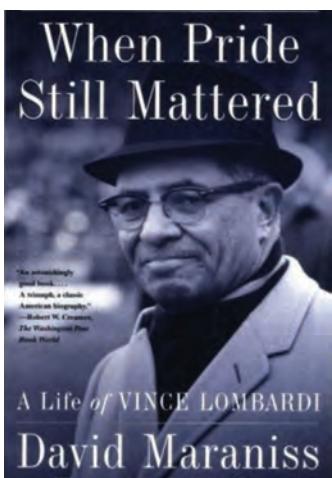
INSIDE CPH

InsideCPH lets you connect with the people and processes that bring our top-tier work to the stage. Here, *Lombardi* director Casey Stangl shares her thoughts on the play and her process.

Emma Brandt: Was there anything that surprised you about this play?

Casey Stangl: I think one surprise is that it's a play about more than football. If you are a football person, there is a lot of pleasure, but if you're not a football person, there is so much in the family dynamics and the relationships... I think it's really about that sense of how we relate to the people that are close to us, in our best and in our worst times. It's very universal in that sense. It's a play about fathers and sons, which sounds strange because it's about this football icon, and I think people think of it as a 'football play.' There's also quite a lot of humor in the play, particularly with the wife character. Not a lot is known about her and so I think that's something that will be fun, to get to know her a little more.

EB: Are you a sports fan? What kind of preparation are you doing to direct *Lombardi*?



book that he wrote with another guy. It's basically training camp, and it's not a great piece of filmmaking (laughs), but it's a fantastic resource—just to see him in terms of his physicality, talking to the players, parts of some of his speeches. Some of that text is verbatim in the play. There's also a maybe ten-second clip of Marie Lombardi, his wife, which, according to the playwright, is the only piece of footage of her that he was able to find.

EB: Why do you think Lombardi has remained so iconic?

CS: You know, the public is always interested in that last-place-to-first-place thing, and he was able to do that literally in the course of a year, using methodology that he had developed through his mentors and teachers for many, many years as a coach. He had wanted [a head

"I think it's really about that sense of how we relate to the people that are close to us, in our best and in our worst times."

coaching job] for years and years but had been passed over at various points in time. So he was very primed and ready, and he was also in an unusual situation in Green Bay where he was not just the coach but the general manager of the team. And even though he continued to foster that reputation of himself as, you know, "my way or the highway," he actually was a little more canny than that. He would know when it was time to back off on somebody, or he knew which players could handle being called out in front of the rest of the team, and which ones really needed it privately. He was also a devout Catholic, and he was very much about those principles. So he was a kind of fascinating figure of contradictions in a way. But why he remains iconic—I really think it goes back to this idea of him feeling like a symbol of a more innocent time, and a point in history when our heroes still loomed large. And the other reality of it is he died before any of that could be tarnished.

EB: Do you and your design team have any early thoughts regarding the physical production?

CS: The overall context for it is a football field. We'll see images of a scoreboard, and a field, and stadium lights, and that sort of thing, which will place us in that world. But the play has a lot of locations. Even though it takes place in this one week in time, it does a lot of flashbacks. So a lot of projections will take us to places, and we'll see some football footage as well. Another thing that we're talking about is it being very automated. So platforms and tracks move in and out on their own steam—you know, we're not seeing crew people pull them. The whole idea is that it looks a little bit like a well-executed football play. The technical elements moving in a giant power sweep, basically!

EB: People often make a big deal out of a woman directing anything that's typically considered "masculine"—like Katherine Bigelow and her war film *The Hurt Locker*. What do you think about that kind of scrutiny?

CS: It's one of the reasons why I was so delighted when they called me to do this, because, you know, it isn't necessarily a "chick play," you don't immediately go, "Oh, well, we need a woman to direct this." But anything that can help to redress the balance a little bit is a good thing! I do think that there is a sort of sense of when women do work that's "like men" that there's a perceived kind of positive to that. I don't really even know what that means, that idea of "writing like a man" or "directing like a man," but I guess when something upends those kinds of expectations, that's what people mean when they say that. I think it's great that Michael Bloom is thinking about it, but for me (smiles), it's just all about the work.



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BY THE NUMBERS



The Super Bowl holds a very different place in American culture than it did when Lombardi's Packers won the game's first incarnation. Check out some modern-day Super Bowl facts, by the numbers:

111 million

people watched the Packers play the Steelers in Super Bowl XLV. That's the highest U.S. television viewership for anything, ever.

6%

of Americans call in sick the Monday after Super Bowl.

8 million

pounds of guacamole are consumed on Super Bowl Sunday.

14,500 tons

of chips are eaten along with that guacamole.

\$11 billion

was spent on beer for last year's Bowl parties.

58%

of viewers go to the bathroom during the game so as not to miss the commercials.

\$3 million

was the average cost of a Super Bowl ad in 2011—that's about \$100,000 per second. (It was a mere \$700,000 in 1990.)



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InsideCPH

Connectors program *InsideCPH* events let you sit in on rehearsals, join exciting shop tours and designer demos, connect with CPH leaders and staff, and much more—ALL FOR FREE!

Saturday, September 8 - 11am -12:30pm—“The Art and Craft of Acting.” Join members of the cast of *Lombardi* for an intimate and interactive session about how actors do what they do!



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Remember to visit our interactive ***ENGAGECPH*** exhibit in the Fasenmeyer Lounge on the west side of the Allen lobby for more exciting ways to connect to the work on CPH stages!

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LOMBARDI PLAY GUIDE