The Black Sox Scandal And Al Capone

The 1920’s was a time period full of growth, expanding boundaries, and the creation of corruption that affected many Americans. Because of the increasingly large amounts of leisure time that the typical American had during this time period, baseball rapidly became a new and pure release for Americans in the form of entertainment. This game was transformed by the famous home run hitters of the decade, Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, that represented the sport with class and integrity. All of these features of the 1920’s can be related to the scandal that will never be forgotten among baseball fans for the rest of time, The Black Sox Scandal. This scandal, that involves eight of the Chicago White Socks players who agreed to purposely lose the 1919 World Series in exchange for gambling money, can be tied back to many well known corruptions present during the 1920’s. The Black Sox Scandal relates to the political, and economical corruption, such as the Teapot Dome Scandal and Al Capone’s gangster rule in Chicago, in the 1920’s post WWI greatly, because of the similar styles of corruption and the lasting impact they had on their regarding category.

One of the major economic corruptions of this decade was The Teapot Dome Scandal. During the 1910-1920’s The United States Navy began to use oil as fuel for their ships instead of coal. To be certain that these massive war machines would be have a plentiful supply of petroleum, federal lands that were rich in oils were set aside for the Navy as emergency reserves in the 1910’s. In 1920, Albert Fall, the Secretary of the Interior, arranged for the current president, Warren G Harding, to pass The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. “The act, however, gave authority to the Secretary of the Interior to prevent the wasteful practices which had been employed in the past, and was a major piece of conservation legislation.” (Miller 518). Shortly after the passing of this act, Albert Fall began to accept bribes from larger oil companies, such as Edward Doheny and Harry Sinclair, in exchange for the leasing of the Naval Oil Reserves, (Roberts). This extremely illegal scandal that was orchestrated by Mr. Fall, not only resulted in fines along with jail time for Albert, it also completed changed the way he was looked at as a political figure for the rest of his career. “In contrast Fall was ruined by the scandal. He was sentenced to a year in prison, but was released after nine months due to ill health. He returned to New Mexico in 1932, where he attempted to resume his business interests, with limited success.” (Conliffe). One way that the Teapot Dome Scandal can be related back to the Black Sox Scandal remains in the fact that all famous figures involved in these corruption filled incidents reputation’s were completely destroyed. After the throwing 1919 Major League Baseball World Series, “Shoeless” Joe Jackson, who was one of the “best natural athletes in baseball history”, was completely kicked out of playing any professional organized baseball game, league, or team ever again, (Girod). Although his motive was to escape a greedy owner that played a low salary, accepting these bribes took “Shoeless” Joe Jackson’s career right out of his own two hands and made him a laughing stock in the game of baseball. In a similar aspect of never fully regaining one’s well character reputation, after the Teapot Dome Scandal Albert Fall became very untrustworthy and never had a fully successful business experience again. Both of the behind the scenes, illegal activity of the Black Sox Scandal, and the Teapot Dome Scandal can be connected through the life changing negative impact that was put on those involved in these corrupt situation, such as Albert Fall and “Shoeless” Joe Jackson.

On the side of political corruption that was present through the 1920’s, one of the major

examples was Al Capone’s gangster rule full of organized crime, violence, and arranged murders. Al Capone, was a New York native who was quickly introduced to the ideas of illegal distribution of alcohol during the days of prohibition when he joined John Torrio’s mob in Chicago, displayed the old versus new world shift that took places during the 1920’s that was also known as modernism during the 1920’s. Modernist views commonly went against many traditionalist views whose believes stemmed from religion and old world views. One of the major differences in the views of the traditionalist and modernist, especially during the decade of the 1920’s, was prohibition. Modernalist, who represented a want for a new, wilder, and more free experience out of life, typically were typically more likely to be against Prohibition Laws and more likely to commit illegal actions that violate these laws. These new ideas of the modernism of the 1920’s Jazz Age represented a shift from the old world to the new world, and represented viewpoints that the traditionalist of the time period didn’t understand, “During the Jazz Age, the older generation became increasingly shocked by the younger generation's new morals and manners.” (Spanner). Al Capone is a prime example of these modernistic views coming into play with the organized crime that took place as a result of his mobster gangs throughout Chicago. With the passing of the Prohibition Laws in 1919, “Americans across the country were outraged, and began producing their own homemade alcohol in bathtubs and hidden backwoods stills. The illegal drinks were sold privately, or secretly in 'speakeasies' and restaurants. At the height of Prohibition, an estimated 20,000 speakeasies were operating in the city of Chicago, Illinois.” (McGill). These rebellious morals regarding Prohibition confused the traditionalist and fueled the moderalist, like Al Capone, who sought to have control, make money, and go against traditionalist views by organizing crime. Al Capone represented the new ideas of modernism, because he believed that the prohibition law needed to be taken away and shifted to conform to the ideas of the new world, “Some call it bootlegging. Some call it racketeering. I call it a business.” (Al Capone). In the same way that Al Capone transformed the ideas, beliefs, and viewpoint of traditionalist and modern list of the 1920’s, the Black Sox Scandal transformed the game of baseball. Prior to this very serious scandal, The Major League Baseball Association didn't have any commissioned officers, but after the scandal The MLB hired Kenesaw Mountain Landis as the first commision of the MLB. Although this very untrustworthy situation between the eight white socks players and gamblers damaged the trust that the game of baseball had in its players, it also helped raise awareness in the need for new job positions that help control, regulate, and create rules so that something as horrible as The Black Sox Scandal never happens again. Both the political corruption of Al Capone regarding prohibition and corruption present during the Black Sox Scandal shifted the new vs old world realities of both of these topics.

The Black Sox Scandal can be related back to many famous corruptions of the 1920’s, such as Al Capone’s mobster rule throughout Chicago and the Teapot Dome Scandal that involved illegal bribes and leasing of oil to large companies. The extremely consequential impact that the Teapot Dome Scandal had on the major political figures involved in the corruption can be related to the impact that the Black Sox Scandal had on “Shoeless” Joe Jackson that ended his baseball career forever. Al Capone’s organized crime, that involved the illegal distribution of alcohol under the prohibition law, represented the shift in American morals from the old world to the new world that can be related back to the shift in new rules, regulations, and control that the Black Sox Scandal caused by influencing the MLB to hire the first commissioner to fix this corruption. The political and economical corruption on the 1920’s can be related back to the Black Sox Scandal, because they have similar corruption styles and effects.