

[PDF] Vindicated: Big Names, Big Liars, And The Battle To Save Baseball

Jose Canseco - pdf download free book



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Description:

About the Author Jose Canseco was born in Havana, Cuba, and immigrated to Miami with his family in the 1970s. He was drafted by the Oakland Athletics, eventually playing for seven different major-league teams, winning several awards, and hitting 462 home runs in his seventeen-year career. Today, Canseco lives a quiet life in California with his daughter, Josie.

The Godfather of Steroids

In early February 2005, some years after I left Major League Baseball, I was getting ready to launch a second career, this time as a writer. My debut book, *Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big*, was about to be published, and I guess I was as excited as any first-time author. Maybe *more* excited, to be honest, because I had some pretty controversial things to say about the game, and I knew I was about to really stir things up. In the book, I admitted that I had been a frequent user of anabolic steroids, a performance-enhancing drug, and I made no apologies for it. I said that 80 percent of my fellow players also did steroids, and I named names: Mark McGwire, Jason Giambi, Rafael Palmeiro, Ivan Rodriguez, Juan Gonzalez, and others.

I talked about how I taught many of the guys, named and unnamed, everything they needed to know about steroids, and said I shared my knowledge freely as I moved from one team to the next. Whenever anyone wanted to know anything about steroids, he always got the same answer: "Talk to Jose. Jose knows. Jose's your man." So they came, and talked, and asked questions. And I shared everything I knew, with friend and foe alike.

"The first thing you will notice is an increase in strength," I would tell them. "But you won't see much difference at the beginning. You'll feel it, though, and that'll give you a psychological edge. Then, in about four or five weeks, you'll start seeing some real, physical changes, and at that point, hell -- the sky's the limit."

I was like a goodwill ambassador, the Godfather of Steroids, and I was genuinely glad to be of help. Why? Because I was a huge fan of the stuff. I thought steroids were the future. As far as I was concerned, steroids were a miracle drug, and I thought *everyone* should be on them. You could build strength, heal faster, and live longer. You'd have to be crazy *not* to try them.

Did I think I was giving away some kind of trade secret? Was I worried about helping the other guys, guys who would compete against me on the field or try to take my job? Hell, no! Steroids didn't make me a great baseball player. I was *already* a great player. Steroids simply gave me an edge, physical and psychological, and I loved that about them. I loved the whole idea. So I spread the wealth. I was happy to do it. I wanted to share and I did so hundreds of times, too many times to count.

A couple of weeks before my book was scheduled to appear, I got a call from HarperCollins, the publisher. One of the names I was naming had to go, they said. That name was Roger Clemens.

"Why?" I asked. I didn't understand. This guy was a huge star. He belonged in the book.

They didn't have an answer. I asked my agent. He didn't know. My manager didn't know either. And the publisher couldn't, or wouldn't, explain it to me. I asked my book editor, the publisher herself, even the publisher's attorney -- no one could give me a decent reason.

Still, Roger Clemens was effectively excised from my book. One of the greatest players of all time, and what I really wanted to say about him and steroids was taken out of my book. Somebody, somewhere, had decided, for reasons that were never fully explained to any of us, that Roger Clemens, arguably the greatest pitcher in Major League Baseball history, seven-time winner of the Cy Young Award, the reigning Cy Young champion, was not going to be connected, in any way, to the steroid scandal.

"But why?" I protested. "All I said is that I thought Roger *might have* been dabbling. It's not like the other guys, the ones I saw with my own eyes."

Nobody knew why. That was essentially the answer: *We don't know*.

If there was a lesson to be learned from the experience, it was a pretty simple one: that stuff about the truth setting you free? It's bullshit.

I thought back to some of the lighter moments I'd shared with Roger over the years. I would hit a 500-foot homer, and his head would snap back in wonderment and awe. "Man!" he'd say. "You must have had your juice this morning!" One day, in the field, he took a look at the veins popping out of my arms, big as plow lines, and he shook his head in amazement. "I bet if I sliced that vein, Deca would fly out and hit me in the face!" (He meant Deca-Durabolin, a tissue-building steroid that manages to keep swelling to a minimum.)

On other occasions, casual as you please, Roger might say, "I think I need a B-twelve shot right about now." And off he'd go into the sunset. I didn't follow him into the sunset, or into the locker room, for that matter, but at the time I figured he was going off to juice up. That was the way baseball players commonly referred to steroids, as B12. On the other hand, for all I knew, Roger really was a fan of vitamins.

"I still don't get it," I said. "Why can't I name Clemens, when I can name all the other guys? Don't they believe me?"

"No, no, no," my lawyer told me. "They believe you. They know it's just you and a guy in a room, your word against his, which is the case with all of these players. But with Clemens, well -- it's different."

"How is it different?"

"We don't know, Jose. It just *is*, okay?"

"No, it's not okay. I'm not claiming I saw him juice up. I didn't. I'm talking about connecting the dots, about an educated guess."

"Well, I guess it still bothers them. You're implying that he might have taken steroids. They don't like it, and it's not going in the book."

That made no sense at all. None of it made any sense, on any level, but I couldn't do anything about it. Roger Clemens was out, and no amount of arguing was going to change that. The "offending" sections were removed, and the book quickly marched toward publication.

At that point, it was time to start the press junket. My first stop was New York City, to meet Mike Wallace and the *60 Minutes* crew. They were waiting for me in a spacious loft in downtown Manhattan, empty except for a couple of chairs. As soon as they got the lighting figured out, the cameras began to roll. I looked at Wallace and plunged right in. I told him about my book, I told him about steroids and how they had taken over the game. I told him how I thought the owners had condoned steroids because they made the game more exciting and sold more tickets. I told him I used steroids while I played. And I named names. *Again*. I went through all the same names I'd mentioned in the book, including the one name the publisher had left out: Roger Clemens.

I admitted to Mike that I had never seen Clemens shoot up, but that I had my suspicions. All those Cy Young Awards. The way he was throwing, hard and fast and steady, without seeming to break a sweat. The way he seemed to be getting stronger as he got older. What else could it be? Good

genes? Hell, while most of Clemens's peers were sitting on porches, in rocking chairs, with old dogs at their feet, he was still pitching rockets.

I went on to tell Wallace that I was a fan of steroids, within reason: "I truly believe that because I've experimented with it for so many years that it can make an average athlete a superathlete. It can make a superathlete incredible; just legendary." I also told him that I didn't think I would have hit 462 home runs or become the first player to hit 40 homers and steal 40 bases in the same season, back in 1988, if I hadn't juiced up. But you still needed talent. Steroids couldn't do anything for you if you didn't already have talent.

When Wallace asked me if I was ashamed of what I had done, I was honest about that, too: "That's a tough question. I tried to do everything possible to become the best player in the world. Do I believe that steroids and growth hormones helped me achieve that? Yes. Were there a lot of players doing it that I had to compete against? Yes."

I guess I never answered the question, so maybe I should try to answer it now. I wanted to be the best baseball player in the world. That was my goal, my only goal, really, and I never let things stand in the way of my goals. So in that sense, no, I'm not ashamed of it. I cared so much about winning, and about making the game more exciting for the fans, that I did what I had to do. Let's face it, when people come to the ballpark, or watch us on TV, they want to be entertained. I took steroids to make myself the greatest entertainer I could be, and that didn't seem like too high a price to pay.

Wallace went back to the names. I told him that I, personally, had injected Mark McGwire, and that I'd counseled Jason Giambi on the proper use of steroids. I also described Giambi as "the biggest juicer in baseball."

I talked about Rafael Palmeiro, Juan Gonzalez, and Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez, juicers all. I had injected each of those men myself, on numerous occasions, and I had also watched them do the deed themselves.

"And what you're doing to baseball now -- you're taking on the whole establishment?" Wallace asked.

"I don't know if I'm directly trying to take on the whole baseball establishment," I replied. "I'm just basically telling the story of my life."

"How much of your entire career's success do you attribute to the use of steroids?"

"Maybe not accomplish [*sic*] the things I did, the freakish things I did. [But] who knows? A lot of it is psychological. I mean, you really believe you have the edge. You feel the strength, and the stamina." This is exactly what I always told my fellow players when they asked me about steroids. The psychological edge is a huge component. You believe in steroids to such a degree that it changes the way you play. Confidence is a huge part of the game. Confidence intimidates your opponents. And it could be argued that the psychological benefits are even more significant than the physical.

Wallace went on, "Did you give some of the steroids to other players?"

"Not mine, no. No. Did I put them in contact with people to acquire them? Yes. Did I educate them on how to use them properly, in what way, shape, or form, and when, and with what supplements? Yes. Absolutely."

When the cameras stopp... --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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