

Why Ryan Braun Reminds Us of Lance Armstrong

Written by Maury Brown
Friday, 23 August 2013 13:00



What are we to make of [Ryan Braun](#)'s public apology? Verbose in its length (see all 10 paragraphs and 944 words of it by selecting, [Read More](#)), it never once mentions performance-enhancing drugs, was released while on suspension, and not via press conference but through the Brewers via email. The whole thing was done from a distance. It goes into great lengths to try and heal the wounds he created (the word "sorry" is listed three times, while he apologizes four times), and says he has "no one to blame but myself," but it comes from an all too familiar playbook.

While the level with which the lies went on, the pain afflicted on others, and the trust he undermined are arguably different, the actions reminds one of Lance Armstrong: only when truly confronted with evidence he cannot dodge does he come out and say, "You got me."

In 2011, after it came out that he tested positive, he said a series of quotes that looking back on it now, has "Lance Armstrong" written all over it. "This is all B.S. I am completely innocent.".... "I have been an open book, willing to share details from every aspect of my life as part of this investigation, because I have nothing to hide".... "I truly believe in my heart and would bet my life on it that this substance never entered my body at any point."

Bet your life? Well, you probably didn't mean that *literally*.

He apologizes by name to the collector, Dino Laurenzi, Jr. For those don't recall, Laurenzi, Jr. was the man at the center of the Braun's ability to get out of his 2011 suspension for elevated levels of testosterone. Laurenzi, Jr. didn't get Braun's urine sample to the lab through Fed-Ex when he could have, leading Braun and his lawyer to say that it could have been tampered with by someone that may have held a grudge. [Confirmed](#) by three sources to T.J. Quinn of ESPN, Braun tried to lobby support from players before his 2011 suspension was overturned by

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painting Laurenzi, Jr. as a Cubs fan, and worse, anti-Semitic." I have been an open book" my tail end.

He did not mention whether he apologized directly to Shyam Das. While Braun said he apologized to those in the arbitration process, Das, the arbitrator that overturned his 2011 suspension was fired by MLB after the ruling. So, not only did he drag Dino Laurenzi, Jr. through the mud, he cost at least one person their job.

He apologized to the Brewers, but given that Braun still has a \$105 million contract that doesn't even kick-in till 2015, only time will tell if Braun sold the club a bad deal. "I'm sad," Brewers owner Mark Attanasio said at an impromptu news conference shortly after Braun was suspended for 65 games. "When I thought about Milwaukee baseball, this is not what I envisioned. But I recognize also that this organization is bigger than anyone, certainly bigger than me. ... I think we will work together to ride through the difficult times so we can enjoy some good times -- and there will be good times again."

Finally, the poet laureate Charles Barkley infamously said, "I am not a role model." Kids may have backed away somewhat in the years since we had PED scandals, but it's still there. I need only go to my own son's room to see a poster of [Manny Ramirez](#) in Dodger Blue to be reminded. Ryan Braun is just the next example of a terrible trait that has been seeping its way into the American collective consciousness: "If I tell the lie enough, it becomes the truth." Braun details this in his statement. "For a long time, I was in denial and convinced myself that I had not done anything wrong," he says. In other words, "I decided that lying was better than being accountable."

Ryan Braun might chip away at this matter over time, although any designs on making the Hall of Fame (should his numbers ever reach worthiness) are destroyed. What Ryan Braun can never get back is his integrity. There's little doubting that the only reason his "denial" stopped was when the house of cards fell in on him. Maybe Braun should use kids as his role model. Ask a youngster what one of the first lessons their parents teach them is. Kids might say to Braun, "Don't lie as it just makes the punishment worse. Eventually we all get caught."

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Statement from Ryan Braun

Now that the initial MLB investigation is over, I want to apologize for my actions and provide a more specific account of what I did and why I deserved to be suspended. I have no one to blame but myself. I know that over the last year and a half I made some serious mistakes, both in the information I failed to share during my arbitration hearing and the comments I made to the press afterwards.

I have disappointed the people closest to me - the ones who fought for me because they truly believed me all along. I kept the truth from everyone. For a long time, I was in denial and convinced myself that I had not done anything wrong.

It is important that people understand that I did not share details of what happened with anyone until recently. My family, my teammates, the Brewers organization, my friends, agents, and advisors had no knowledge of these facts, and no one should be blamed but me. Those who put their necks out for me have been embarrassed by my behavior. I don't have the words to express how sorry I am for that.

Here is what happened. During the latter part of the 2011 season, I was dealing with a nagging injury and I turned to products for a short period of time that I shouldn't have used. The products were a cream and a lozenge which I was told could help expedite my rehabilitation. It was a huge mistake for which I am deeply ashamed and I compounded the situation by not admitting my mistakes immediately.

I deeply regret many of the things I said at the press conference after the arbitrator's decision in February 2012. At that time, I still didn't want to believe that I had used a banned substance. I think a combination of feeling self righteous and having a lot of unjustified anger led me to react the way I did. I felt wronged and attacked, but looking back now, I was the one who was wrong. I am beyond embarrassed that I said what I thought I needed to say to defend my clouded vision of reality. I am just starting the process of trying to understand why I responded the way I did, which I continue to regret. There is no excuse for any of this.

For too long during this process, I convinced myself that I had not done anything wrong. After my interview with MLB in late June of this year, I came to the realization that it was time to come

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to grips with the truth. I was never presented with baseball's evidence against me, but I didn't need to be, because I knew what I had done. I realized the magnitude of my poor decisions and finally focused on dealing with the realities of-and the punishment for-my actions.

I requested a second meeting with Baseball to acknowledge my violation of the drug policy and to engage in discussions about appropriate punishment for my actions. By coming forward when I did and waiving my right to appeal any sanctions that were going to be imposed, I knew I was making the correct decision and taking the first step in the right direction. It was important to me to begin my suspension immediately to minimize the burden on everyone I had so negatively affected- my teammates, the entire Brewers organization, the fans and all of MLB. There has been plenty of rumor and speculation about my situation, and I am aware that my admission may result in additional attacks and accusations from others.

I love the great game of baseball and I am very sorry for any damage done to the game. I have privately expressed my apologies to Commissioner Selig and Rob Manfred of MLB and to Michael Weiner and his staff at the Players' Association. I'm very grateful for the support I've received from them. I sincerely apologize to everybody involved in the arbitration process, including the collector, Dino Laurenzi, Jr. I feel terrible that I put my teammates in a position where they were asked some very difficult and uncomfortable questions. One of my primary goals is to make amends with them.

I understand it's a blessing and a tremendous honor to play this game at the Major League level. I also understand the intensity of the disappointment from teammates, fans, and other players. When it comes to both my actions and my words, I made some very serious mistakes and I can only ask for the forgiveness of everyone I let down. I will never make the same errors again and I intend to share the lessons I learned with others so they don't repeat my mistakes. Moving forward, I want to be part of the solution and no longer part of the problem.

I support baseball's Joint Drug Treatment and Prevention Program and the importance of cleaning up the game. What I did goes against everything I have always valued- achieving through hard work and dedication, and being honest both on and off the field. I also understand that I will now have to work very, very hard to begin to earn back people's trust and support. I am dedicated to making amends and to earning back the trust of my teammates, the fans, the entire Brewers' organization, my sponsors, advisors and from MLB. I am hopeful that I can earn back the trust from those who I have disappointed and those who are willing to give me the opportunity. I am deeply sorry for my actions, and I apologize to everyone who has been adversely affected by them.

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