

Clemens should look at self in mirror for blame

By Jared Shanker

There weren't many people who bought Roger Clemens' testimony in front of Congress two years ago. Even fewer do now.

But not a single one of those opinions carried any weight, merely just around-the-water-cooler fodder for slow Monday mornings at the office. The only opinion that matters is that of a federal grand jury's, and last week, the jury became the newest member of the Clemens-is-a-stinkin'-liar bandwagon, a bandwagon with enough people to fill the Guatemalan sinkhole.

On Thursday, the grand jury handed Clemens a series of indictments on charges that he lied to Congress by denying his use of performance-enhancing drugs during a Feb. 2008 hearing in front of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The charges: three counts of making false statements, two counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of Congress.

The last of those charges hits harder than a Clemens fastball to the head. (Mike Piazza is surely smiling somewhere.) Obstruction of Congress.

This isn't the man who flooded the Gulf of Mexico with oil or decided to announce on national television that he's taking his



MY OPINION

basketball talents to South Beach. The man affectionately known as "The Rocket" for 24 MLB seasons is public enemy No. 1 in sports right now — somehow managing to take that title away from LeBron James — for allegedly taking performance-enhancing drugs. His lying made it all the way to the top, far enough that it reached Congress.

And he has nobody to blame but himself. The saga began when Clemens went on a warpath to clear his name after being mentioned extensively in the Mitchell Report, the Bud Selig craftwork to finally bring the sport's darkest time into the light.

In a move that would have made King Leonidas proud, Clemens stood his ground in front of Capitol Hill's army of politicians, volunteering to speak before the committee.

In Washington, Clemens vehemently denied the accusations of his former trainer Brian McNamee, who testified that he had injected the seven-time Cy Young Award winner with human growth hormone (HGH) and had the bloody gauze and needles to prove it. Without the same venom he spit at McNamee, Clemens softened his anger toward longtime teammate and friend Andy Pettitte, saying Pettitte "misremembers" (no, that isn't a word) a past conversation about Clemens' HGH use.

The evidence is mounting, if not overwhelming, against Clemens, yet he says he couldn't be happier. He even rejected a

plea bargain that would have forced Clemens to admit his use.

"Roger is looking forward to his day in court," Clemens' lawyer Rusty Hardin said at a news conference last week. "He is happy this has finally happened. We have known for some time this was going to happen. We'll let everything get taken care of in court."

Unless the Clemens camp has a red-hot star witness under wraps to deny the testimonies of McNamee and Pettitte, it looks like Clemens will be spending part of his retirement locked up in a federal prison. If given the maximum sentence on all charges, Clemens would receive 30 years, but the more likely scenario seems to be 12 to 18 months.

At this point, there doesn't seem like there is much reason for Clemens to continue his march toward redemption. His baseball reputation is beyond repair, and he'll forever be labeled a cheater in the public eye. Already a long shot Hall of Famer, even if he is cleared in the case, it is still unlikely he would garner the required 75 percent of votes needed for entrance.

Known as one of the fiercest competitors around and with a mean streak worse than that of a Longhorn, the emblem he donned for two All-American seasons at the University of Texas in 1982 and '83, it's time for Clemens to wave the white flag and drop the charade. With a plea bargain, Clemens can take it on the chin for a week instead of a year and then settle into base-

ball's abyss with other disgraced players Rafael Palmeiro, Sammy Sosa and Gary Sheffield.

Miguel Tejada, still playing in the majors, pleaded guilty to perjury and received just one year of probation. That would seem to be Clemens' best option, but he just continues to keep his foot on the gas, blowing any and all stop signs and red lights from his attorneys, friends and even Congressmen.

By keeping his name in newspaper and Internet headlines across the country and dragging this out into trial, Clemens is jumping in front of the firing squad aimed squarely at Barry Bonds, who will go on trial for making false statements to a grand jury in March. Clemens could end all of this now and let Bonds be the final and most notorious fall guy for baseball's steroids era.

Instead, Clemens will take Bonds' spot as the sole focus of the scandal again, relieving Bonds of public scrutiny once more.

Clemens has chosen to sit across from a judge and jury sometime over the next 18 months and once again appeal that, despite all the testimonies, bloody gauze, needles and empty steroids bottles, he is the one telling the truth.

He will lose. And he has nobody to blame but himself.

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By Jacqueline Bigar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2010:

This year, you swing back and forth as you determine your boundaries in key associations. Sometimes you feel as if you don't give enough. Other times you feel as if you give too much. While juggling this back and forth, you discover greater self-discipline with finances and other indulgences as well. If you are single, you meet people with ease. In fact, you will meet someone you feel passionately about. If you are attached, add sparks and fire to your bond. These feelings come from you but will be returned. PISCES can be challenging.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-No-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

*** Take what a partner says with a grain of salt. Others act quickly. They also could release frustration or anger. News filters through the workplace. Give yourself 24 hours to process it and determine the appropriate response. Tonight: Tearing much-needed space.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

*** Meetings prove to be substantial and the key to moving forward. Your creativity surges. Share some great ideas that pop into your mind. Those you deal with on a daily basis could be out of sorts. Know that good intentions surround your associates. Tonight: Where people are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

*** You might be called on to push a project forward. Your inner dialog is right-on. However, you note that your efforts bring odd results, not what was expected. Discuss a better or more effective path with a trusted partner. Tonight:

Talks over dinner.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

*** Keep reaching out for others at a distance, and stay on top of communication. A personal situation could be in the back of your mind. Handle this issue as soon as possible so that you can flourish and function 100 percent. Tonight: Discuss a problem with a detached attitude.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

*** Relate directly to others. Success is more likely if you pursue conversations on a one-on-one level. Talk and discuss your feelings directly. You might waiver between wanting to take immediate action and being receptive and thoughtful. Tonight: Don't forget to schedule a doctor's appointment. Take up a new pastime.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

*** Defer to others and go with the flow. You could be prone to spending, especially as you seem to work through your feelings that way. Know that there are other ways. Avoid taking any risks when the negative result could cause a problem. Tonight: Defer to a partner.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

*** Focus on the job at hand. You could be overwhelmed by everything that lands on your plate. You have the drive to deal with everything. Your sense of which approach will work best is renewed on tonight. Take some time to renew your energy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

*** Your creativity comes forward when dealing with people and their issues. Once more, be careful about swallowing your feelings. You could be trying to handle more than you can possibly work through. Tonight: Open up to a trusted friend and discuss your feelings. This person's feedback could be helpful.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

*** Demands surround you. A meeting provides plenty of ideas to move a project forward. Others also offer to pitch in. Your ability to regenerate your financial perspective can make a big difference. You feel pressured by a boss. Tonight: Head home.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

*** Keep a conversation moving, and refuse to lock on any issue. You can always go back and revisit this problem with a new approach or perspective. Someone you look up to indeed is changeable. Tonight: Join friends for a casual dinner.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

*** You mean well, but your aspirations could cost you a pretty penny. Discussions bring another way of handling money. You don't want to shoulder all the responsibility. Tonight: Hop on the web, surf and relax.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

*** You are all smiles, despite others' mood. Your goals and perhaps even your immediate circle of friends could be in the process of change. A partner could swing between two strong feelings, hence the ambivalence. Tonight: Someone lets you know that he or she doesn't agree and why in no uncertain terms.

BORN TODAY

Celebrity chef Rachel Ray (1968), actress Blake Lively (1987), movie director Tim Burton (1958).

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com.

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