SPECIAL REPORT

WHO KNEW?

THAT WAS BASEBALL'S PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE STEROIDS QUESTION. HERE IS THE ANSWER: PLAYERS, GMs, TRAINERS, DOCTORS, THE UNION—AND THE COMMISSIONER HIMSELF

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

WHO ELSE KNEW? The coach, the historian and the injured hurler, for starters. Read their stories and more on ESPN.com. Keyword: steroids.

THIS INVESTIGATION SPANNED six months and comprised more than 150 interviews and the examination of hundreds of pages of documents. The series was written by Shaun Assael and Peter Keating. It was reported by Assael, Keating, Buster Olney and Amy K. Nelson, with help from Jerry Crasnick and Tom Farrey, and from researchers R.M. Schneiderman and Doug Mittler. The project was directed by Jon Pessah and Neil Fine. The photographs were taken by Phillip Toledano.

INTRODUCTION

CODE OF SILENCE

Bud Selig had many reasons to feel good about baseball as he spoke to the press gathered in a Detroit hotel ballroom for his State of the Game address during the 2005 All-Star break. Major League Baseball would bring in an estimated $4.5 billion in revenues in 2005, nearly triple the amount from 1992, when Selig had first taken office. The overachieving White Sox and Nationals were surprise division leaders. The Red Sox and Yankees were in the midst of another epic battle. Fans everywhere were talking about Dontrelle Willis and Derrek Lee and Roger Clemens. And he had a labor agreement that ran to the end of 2006.

But then came this question from one of the reporters: are you worried you will be remembered as the commissioner who turned a blind eye to steroids?

Looking slightly irritated, Selig responded, "Yes, I'm the commissioner of baseball, so naturally, I accept this. But in the '90s, I went from camp to camp and talked to every manager, general manager, owners in some cases. And not one person ever came to me." He mentioned the names of well-respected GMs he'd talked to—Billy Beane, Brian Cashman, John Schuerholz. He also turned the tables on the journalists: "This sanctimonious, 'Well, he should have known … ' Okay, maybe." He then went on to decry the lack of press coverage while the issue was building. "I'm not being critical of you guys," he continued. "I was there with you."

His implication was clear. If team executives hadn't known about the scourge of steroids, how was the commissioner supposed to have known? If baseball writers, who saw players up close every day, hadn't reported the problem, how could they accuse Selig of turning a blind eye to it?

In short, who knew?

Who knew? We all knew: the trainers who looked the other way as they were treating a whole new class of injuries; the players who saw teammates inject themselves but kept the clubhouse code of silence; the journalists who "buried the lead" and told jokes among themselves about the newly muscled; the GMs who wittingly acquired players on steroids; and, yes, owners and players, who openly applauded the home run boom and moved at glacial speed to address the problem that fueled the explosion.

In a way, the story of steroids in baseball is not so much about the power added to the game, but about the power that was always there. It's a power that has entranced millions for more than a hundred years, surviving game-fixing, labor strife, all sorts of drug scandals. It's a power that has both a bright and a dark side. Becoming a baseball star is a noble dream, but to do that, some players did the ignoble, ingesting and injecting dangerous and often illegal substances to enhance performance. And because the people who depend on baseball for livelihood and amusement wanted so much to believe in the essential goodness of the game and the greatness of the players, we missed or ignored the signs: the larger biceps, the back acne, the outsize statistics. (As it happened, *ESPN The Magazine* was born in 1998, as home run totals were exploding, and we devoted four of our early covers to Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa.)

Years later, we would all confront the deception. Or was it self-deception? And so *The Magazine* decided to go back and trace the arc of the steroids age in baseball, from introduction to proliferation to condemnation. It is a tale told through some of the principals: a trainer, a supplier, an FBI agent, a GM, a writer, a doctor and several players—a tale of crime, corruption and complicity. Many were put in difficult positions that required choices they now regret.

Why tell the story now? Actually, with the glory of the White Sox and the beauty of baseball still fresh in our minds, this is as good a time as any to look back on what went wrong.

We tell the story now so that we won't fall into the same web of deceit again.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

PART I

1987-1994 STEROIDS MEET BASEBALL

THE TRAINER

Larry Starr pulled into the parking lot of Gold's Gym in suburban Cincinnati. He'd come at the invitation of his boss, Pete Rose. The Reds legend had ratcheted up his weight training since retiring as a player to manage full-time the previous September, and he was a fixture at Gold's. T-shirts sold at the gym boasted that it was the "Home of Pete Rose." But as Starr got out of the car, he couldn't get a friend's warning out of his head: "Don't take off your shoes. I hear there are used needles all over that place."

It was January 1987. Starr, the trainer of the Reds, went back more than 15 years with Rose. When they first met, late in 1971, Starr was a 25-year-old rookie employee with a master's in education and plenty of new ideas about fitness. Two years later, he bought 10 pieces of Nautilus equipment and set up the first real clubhouse weight room in baseball. The players all laughed. Johnny Bench. Joe Morgan. Tony Perez. Rose. All of them. Now the rest of baseball had caught up to his vision. A new generation of players was coming of age in state-of-the-art facilities everywhere.

Two of them, Jose Canseco and Wally Joyner, had just finished 1-2 in the American League Rookie of the Year vote. Young slugger Mark McGwire had made his big league debut; Ken Caminiti and Matt Williams were about to make theirs. Future All-Stars Al Leiter and Tom Glavine were rookies. The game still had its hard-partying types, of course. Many of the Mets were still shaking off the aftereffects of October's World Series celebration. And the specter of 1985's Pittsburgh drug trials continued to hang over the game. On the stand, seven players had admitted to using cocaine, including All-Stars Dave Parker and Keith Hernandez. Six of the users (the seventh had retired) were ordered to be randomly tested and to donate one-tenth of his salary to drug treatment and prevention programs. Baseball's rowdy image was on the way out.

There was no doubt where Starr stood on the issue of drugs in the game. In his first season with the Reds, he removed a candy jar filled with uppers from the training room. Now, on the front desk at Gold's, he noticed a glass case that displayed supplements for sale. Starr knew some major leaguers looked for help to get "up" before games. One of his power hitters—the one with pale-brown splotches all over his uniform—drank 30 cups of coffee over the course of nine innings. But the names of the products in that case scared the trainer. UpTime? The gym was selling stuff Starr would never endorse. How could he? He had no idea what was in it, or, for that matter, what else might be for sale at the Home of Pete Rose.

Rose spotted Starr and ran over. He threw his thick arms around the trainer's slim, marathoner's body and dragged him into the weight room. "This is the guy I was telling you about," he yelled to gym manager Tommy Gioiosa. The 28-year-old Gioiosa was Rose's kind of guy; the ex-minor leaguer would do anything to be in the orbit of a superstar. He and Pete were tight: they played touch football at the indoor rink across the street after workouts. Gioiosa, a 5'7" wall of muscle built with a chemical assist, extended his hand to Starr.

Starr didn't trust the guy. He knew steroids were illegal in this country without a prescription and had been for decades. And they were rare in baseball. In fact, Starr was suspicious of only one Red: an outfielder who had come to spring training the year before with 30 extra pounds and a lame explanation about changing his diet. He'd asked Starr if he should do steroids, then looked as if he'd ignored the advice. Rose was more bemused than angry about the possibility. Once, when reporters were lingering by the player's locker, one of them heard Rose tease, "Tell them

LARRY STARR; FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

what steroids can do for you." The guy was still the exception in the dugout, but Starr wondered how much longer he would be, especially now that Pete was inviting his Reds to train at a gym Rose knew was managed by a self-confessed juicer.

Gioiosa says Rose listened with glee whenever his bodybuilder buddy talked about the fights he started in 'roid rages. Rose also would watch him shoot up and ask questions about what he was using. Good stuff, Gioiosa would reply. Parabolin. Human growth hormone. A German extract from the pituitary gland of monkeys. Pete had been tempted to take a shot himself, especially in 1985 and 1986 when he was losing bat speed. But he told Gioiosa it was too late to try something new. (Rose, through a spokesman, declined comment.)

After his workout at Gold's ended, Rose suggested to Starr that they get some lunch. The two piled into the Hit King's red Ferrari and drove to a local buffet. They talked baseball. Starr said he looked forward to a great 1987 season.

But by midsummer, with the Reds hanging onto a slim lead in the NL West, rumors of steroid dealing in the suburban Cincinnati gym were becoming too persistent to ignore. (Word that Rose was betting on baseball, through Gioiosa among others, had yet to emerge.) Starr, worried about how the talk could taint his friend, called another old pal of Rose's and arranged an intervention.

Ralph Greisser, a Nautilus salesman who quarterbacked the high school team on which Rose was the halfback, sat down in the manager's office at Riverfront Stadium and got to the point. "Pete, do you know what's going on in that gym?" he said. "The rumor is steroids are being sold there."

Starr then heard Rose wave off the issue. "I don't know anything about that," he said. "But don't worry—the mayor of Cincinnati works out there."

As a trainer, Starr knew he lived at the bottom of the clubhouse pecking order, working at the pleasure of the manager and the whims of high-priced players. Trust was his most precious commodity, and if he pushed any further, it would be lost. He left the meeting, just another frustrated employee convinced he'd never get a hearing for what he feared was coming.

THE DEALER

Curtis Wenzlaff sat in the Oakland A's owners box behind home plate and watched Mark McGwire foul off three straight pitches. The visiting Dodgers were leading the 1988 World Series two games to none, and with the score 1-1 in Game 3 and one out in the ninth, the crowd was itching for McGwire to make something happen. Catching up with a 2-2 pitch, the A's first baseman let loose. As

the ball sailed over the wall at Oakland Coliseum, Wenzlaff jumped out of his seat and hugged the man next to him.

Getting hugged by Wenzlaff was a risky proposition. No ordinary bodybuilder, he practiced the art of exteme training. He jolted himself with a cattle prod, taped weights to his hands so he couldn't let go and napped in a deprivation tank filled with salt water. At the Southern California gym where he worked out, he met Reggie Jackson. After retiring from baseball, Jackson had gone looking for a new challenge and found it in Wenzlaff's exhausting workouts. As the friendship extended beyond the weight room, Wenzlaff, a former Cal State Fullerton football walk-on, was treated to a taste of big league life, from the Carlyle Hotel in New York to the VIP tables at Newport Beach's hottest spots. And all the while, Wenzlaff was plunging ever deeper into the world of illegal performance enhancers.

Around the league, weight-lifting and conditioning regimens like the one Larry Starr had championed were now commonplace. But another way was infiltrating the game. In Oakland, Dave McKay, a former infielder who had remade himself into one of baseball's first strength coaches, was at the forefront of a new, bigger-is-better movement. He was much more gung ho than Starr, instituting morning weight training for his guys when they were home and coaxing gym owners to open their doors for private sessions when the team was on the road. Not everyone played along: Dave Parker, the aging DH, made it clear that when he got home at 3 a.m. from a road trip he wanted no one calling him until noon. But plenty of others tolerated the wake-up, including McGwire and Jose Canseco. After games, many of the Bash Brothers would strip off their uniforms and head for the gym. Soon, the A's clubhouse resembled backstage at a bodybuilding show.

Wenzlaff says that whenever he ran into either of them during the 1988 season, he'd sidle up and suggest, "Dude, we should catch some workout time." After the A's lost the Series to the Dodgers, Canseco accepted the invite. Later, he welcomed the trainer into his home in Miami.

Canseco was no steroids newbie. He'd begun to use in the mid-1980s, in Huntsville, Ala., while playing Double-A ball. To look at him was to know, or to choose not to see. *The Washington Post*'s Thomas Boswell caused a furor in September 1988 when he broke the silence. On a CBS News show, he said Canseco, headed for a 40/40 year and the MVP award, was "the most conspicuous example of a player who has made himself great with steroids."

But Canseco wasn't in Wenzlaff's league. Wenzlaff trafficked in exotics. He had a scientist who gave him synthesized testosterone and a European dealer who sent him the latest Olympic-quality stuff. Wenzlaff worked out with Canseco more than a dozen times and suggested a regimen built around several cutting-edge drugs, among them a

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

steroid cream that was rubbed on wrists and forearms. He says he soon picked up McGwire as a client, too. Wenzlaff's training-session notes show he put McGwire on a mix of Winstrol V, testosterone and the veterinary steroid Equipoise. (McGwire, through a spokesman, declined comment.)

The A's returned to the World Series in 1989, beating the Giants, and again in 1990, losing to the Reds. Their dominance caused talk among players and doctors and front-office execs: had Oakland acquired an unfair edge? Wenzlaff continued to hide in plain sight around the Coliseum. If anyone asked what he did, he'd flash a card from his new business: Lakeview Auto Radio. He never sold steroids at the ballpark. He didn't have to.

As the grapevine spread his name, he got calls from men he'd never met. By 1991, he was supplying 20 to 30 MLB players and 10 NFL players. He often flew to their homes with a few thousand dollars' worth of Deca or Parabolin in vials he'd wrap in tin foil and stuff into shoes in his luggage.

A year earlier Congress had raised penalties for possessing those and 25 other anabolics. But now the stuff violated baseball's rules, too. On June 7, 1991, commissioner Fay Vincent sent a memo to each team and the players union that stated: "The possession, sale or use of any illegal drug or controlled substance by Major League players or personnel is strictly prohibited ... This prohibition applies to all illegal drugs ... including steroids." The seven-page document didn't cover random testing—that had to be bargained with the union—but it did outline treatment and penalties.

For a while, Wenzlaff shuttled between California, Arizona, Texas, Florida and Massachusetts. He'd stay an hour with a client and offer diet and lifting tips, too. And his baseball connection helped him find other clients. On Jan. 11, 1992, a gym owner named Eddie Schmidt visited Wenzlaff's Oakland condo to buy $2,000 worth of juice. While he was there, he commented on the photo of Wenzlaff and Canseco that was hanging on the wall. "Yeah, I was his trainer," Wenzlaff said. "I put him on a couple of cycles."

The photo was from simpler days. What was once a lark had become a business. Now, Wenzlaff worried about drawing the wrong kind of attention. As he drove Schmidt to dinner that night, he repeatedly snuck peeks in the rearview mirror. "You can't be too careful," he said, laughing nervously.

In early February, Schmidt doubled the amount of steroids he bought from Wenzlaff. He doubled it again in May. On July 7, the two met in Room 618 of the Guest Quarters Hotel in Santa Monica and talked a while before Schmidt ordered room service. A knock came on the door and Wenzlaff answered it. He was met by a tall, graying man.

"Mr. Wenzlaff," said Greg Stejskal, holding out an FBI badge, "you're under arrest."

THE EXECUTIVE

Steve Phillips walked the cloverleaf of fields that connected his office to the Gulf Coast and Florida State League teams he oversaw. As he stopped at each diamond to watch his draftees being put through their paces, he wrestled with an uncomfortable question: what to do about the bizarrely bulky bodies parading in front of him?

In the spring of 1994, Phillips, just 31, was the Mets' hotshot director of minor league operations, in charge of one of the best farm systems in baseball. As an executive, Phillips (now an analyst for ESPN) was definitively new school, a goateed former psychology major and sometime motivational speaker; someone more likely to line up pens on his desk than cans of chaw. But he'd also spent seven inauspicious years in the minors as a second baseman; his claim to fame was pulling the hidden-ball trick seven times in one season. It was a career path that ensured he'd get a steroids education.

In 1987, while he was playing for the Mets' Double-A affiliate in Jackson, Miss., Phillips arrived early at the ballpark one day for some extra BP. As he walked into the clubhouse he was greeted by the sight of one teammate injecting another in his upper body. Phillips stared but said nothing. The user, who'd shown up at spring training with new biceps, shot back a conspiratorial grin that Phillips says he took to mean, "You know. We all know. And this is what it looks like." He walked away, struck by how little effort his teammate had made at concealment. Players simply took for granted that they wouldn't rat each other out.

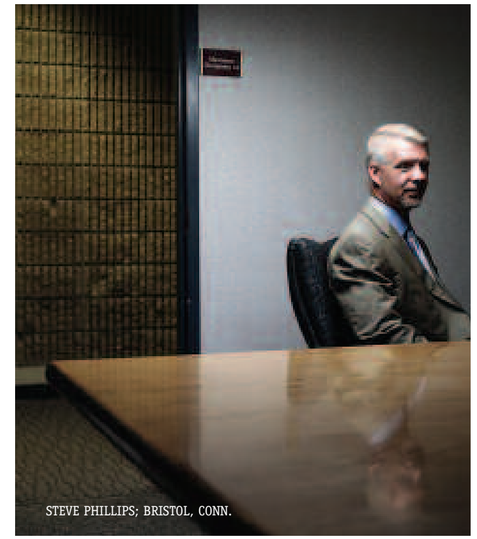
Seven years later, Phillips was running across newly minted monsters more often. And now he was their boss. Concerned, he began to test some who were suspiciously oversize and behaving oddly. That summer, the first of several players flunked. Phillips handled it internally, as a human resources issue. Officials at the Mets' Employee Assistance Program informed the player of the result, countered his claims of innocence with assertions of the quality of the test and offered him education about drug use.

Soon, though, Phillips had more urgent concerns. Two years earlier, hard-line owners had sacked Fay Vincent, who they thought was too cozy with the players. Now, smoldering tensions between owners, led by interim commissioner Bud Selig, and the players were about to explode.

Selig was easy for fans and sportswriters to caricature as the used-car dealer he once was. Here was a 60-year-old man whom friends called Buddy. If his demeanor was an expression of his small-town values, so was his unshakable belief that small-market teams like his beloved Brewers had to be protected from skyrocketing payrolls. Even before he took over as acting commissioner in 1992, Selig had crafted alliances among the low-revenue teams. By 1994 he was finally in a position to make demands—for a salary cap, an end to arbitration and restrictions on free agency. The players responded to him by going on strike on Aug. 12.

The strike squashed a potentially historic season and shattered the covenant between the keepers of the game and its fans. The Expos, who had never been to the World Series, owned the best record in the game. The AL East-leading Yankees were eyeing a return to the postseason for the first time in 13 years. The Padres' Tony Gwynn, hitting .394, had a legitimate shot at .400. Matt Williams, with 43 home runs, was on pace to tie Roger Maris. His teammate Barry Bonds, in his second season at Candlestick, had 37.

The strike dragged on for 232 days, wiping out



STEVE PHILLIPS; BRISTOL, CONN.

nearly 1,000 games over two seasons. When Selig was forced to cancel the World Series on Sept. 14, millions of fans came to the same conclusion: the game wasn't worth their time, money or love anymore.

The battle intensified the already incredible animosity on both sides of the table. Labor secretary Robert Reich, monitoring the stalemate, said he'd never witnessed such hatred in a negotiation. The deep divide ensured that the players would support Donald Fehr, the union's dour executive director, almost unconditionally.

With the financial stakes so high, steroid testing was not at the top of management's list of priorities. When it did come up, it was in the context of an overall drug policy. Even after the 1980s cocaine scandals, the owners hadn't been able to get testing into the 1990 agreement. The union and its leader were resolute in their position: drug use warranted treatment, not punishment, and drug testing was a violation of privacy rights.

Sitting in his office in Florida, Phillips began to worry that the labor strife might cost him his job. As it was, the federal government was about to make the one he had more difficult. Two months after the players walked out, Congress passed a law that gutted the FDA's ability to regulate nutritional supplements. The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act freed manufacturers of everything from andro to ephedra to toad venom from the burden of proving them safe.

That winter, major leaguers—who had been locked out of their clubhouse weight rooms—turned to local gyms for their workouts. Awaiting them were strength coaches and gurus who could now legally pass around performance enhancers as if they were Life Savers. The medical department of one American League contender was worried enough about unsupervised supplement and steroid use to send a letter to its players that read, "What you do in the off-season can reflect on your performance next year—think twice before you do something that might cause harm to your career."

A federal judge finally issued an injunction against the owners in the spring of 1995, saving fans from the prospect of fields manned by replacement players. The owners had put testing on the table, but when the union resisted, Selig, anxious to reach a settlement, let the issue die without a fight.

So did Phillips. Sitting with the Mets owners during the abbreviated spring training, he got the feeling that his job was to listen, not to lead. And they were talking finances, not drugs. The pros went back to work on April 25. A comprehensive testing program for the Mets' minor league system would have to wait.

PART II

1994-1998 THE TIPPING POINT

THE FED

In the two years since special agent Greg Stejskal had arrested Curtis Wenzlaff, Stejskal hadn't told anyone on the outside what he'd learned about baseball's steroid problem. He certainly hadn't shared his knowledge with Major League Baseball. But on this August 1994 night, Stejskal decided to change that.

After a day of seminars about sports scandals at

the FBI's training center in Quantico, Va., Stejskal found himself at a table with other attendees, nursing beers and talking about their cases. Kevin Hallinan, baseball's chief of security and one of the presenters, was at the table, too. Everyone was talking about work when the subject of Stejskal's investigations into steroid trafficking arose. What the hell, he figured, glancing at the ex-New York City cop. Might as well let Hallinan know what I found.

Stejskal and his partner, Bill Randall (who'd posed undercover as steroid buyer Eddie Schmidt), had been sitting on information that had never been made public. Wenzlaff, it turned out, had been a very helpful witness. He'd talked a blue streak about Jose Canseco and the drugs he'd supplied the slugger. He'd also said he believed Canseco was dealing to other major leaguers.

But those details hadn't come out on Aug. 10, 1992, when the U.S. Attorney's office in Detroit unsealed indictments against Wenzlaff and 36 others. Operation Equine, as it was dubbed by its Detroit-bureau FBI architects, had targeted suppliers, not users like Canseco. The absence in the indictment of any mention of the former MVP kept his connection to Wenzlaff under wraps. Even A's GM Sandy Alderson (later Bud Selig's director of baseball operations) would claim he'd never heard of the guy who had hung around his club. Three weeks after the indictments, Canseco had been traded to Texas, where he'd joined a murderer's row that included Ivan Rodriguez, Rafael Palmeiro and Juan Gonzalez.

Since that day, Stejskal says now, he couldn't help wondering whether he and his colleagues had done the right thing by keeping what he knew about Canseco to himself. He'd hoped Operation Equine would generate huge headlines, that it would deter further steroid use. But while the initial wave of 37 indictments all yielded guilty pleas (Wenzlaff got six months and a $2,500 fine), the case had received almost no attention. With Hurricane Andrew battering South Florida and an upstart governor named Bill Clinton campaigning for the presidency, the press was otherwise engaged.

Stejskal went back to working bank robberies and mail frauds and tried not to be bitter. But in Quantico, almost exactly two years later, and with several Equine-related trials still under way, he was talking about steroids again. "Hey, Kevin, you may be interested in this," the FBI agent said. Then he spent the next few minutes talking about Wenzlaff, Canseco and their unexplored relationship. To his surprise, the security chief just shrugged.

"We've heard it too, but what can we do?" Stejskal recalls Hallinan saying. "The union won't let us test the players. Our hands are tied."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

THE BODYBUILDER

Jeff Scott held the syringe up to the light in his bedroom, pushing the plunger with his thumb to expel an air bubble, and turned to Lenny Dykstra.

The Phillies' All-Star outfielder had been kicking around Florida since late January, hoping for a break in the eight-month-old strike. Now it was March, and the owners were working out replacement players for the upcoming season; 40 of them were already at the Phillies' Jack Russell Stadium in Clearwater. Watching them whiff at pitches, boot grounders and muff fly balls in official Philly unis made Dykstra madder than hell. He'd already lost $800,000 and, with a big raise set to kick in for the 1995 season, he was looking at losing another $500,000 for each month those scabs played on his field. It was enough to make him suggest to a TV interviewer that he might cross a picket line. Teammate Dave Hollins had to stand up at a tense union meeting to defend his friend's right to free speech after that one.

The hardest thing, though, was keeping your head in a game you weren't playing. Fellow Phillie John Kruk loved to say, "I'm not an athlete, I'm a baseball player." But Dykstra, at 32, couldn't laugh about his failing body. He walked around with a Dunhill briefcase full of bottles of pills he took to ease the postoperative pain in his arthritic knee.

The bodybuilding trophies that dotted Scott's apartment suggested a better-than-average knowledge of steroids, a knowledge he was happy to share with fellow athletes on the mend. Hollins, who'd lost 15 pounds after it was discovered he had diabetes in the winter of 1993, was struggling to get back to his 205-pound playing weight. On visits to Scott's place, he asked about steroids. (Hollins denies ever being in the apartment, but a second source besides Scott insists he was there often.)

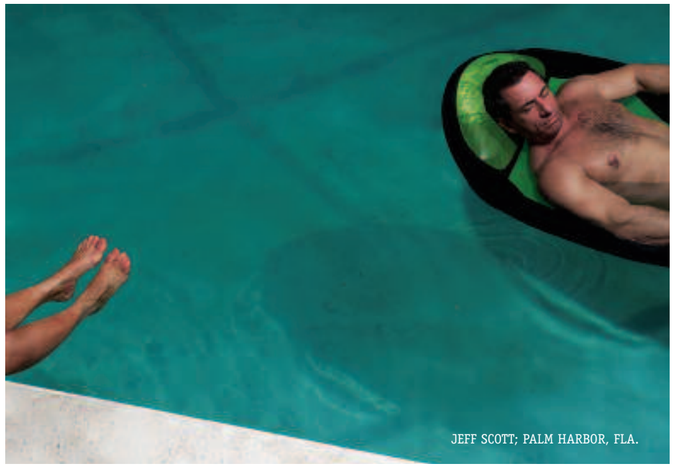
In the bedroom, Scott injected Dykstra. After accepting payment—100 bucks—he asked if Dykstra wanted to grab lunch. It was all so casual, Scott thought, just two guys hanging out.

Scott liked to kid that Dykstra was his "science experiment." They'd met four years earlier at Joe Doogan's, a Clearwater haunt, after Scott had done 13 months in jail for cocaine trafficking. Lenny made a joke about Scott's huge muscles. Soon he was asking to score some 'roids. Scott hunted down some Deca-Durabolin for him. (Dykstra declined comment through his lawyer.)

For that, Scott earned a pass into Dykstra's entourage. In 1991, and again in 1992, Scott was his new friend's January-to-April sidekick, and the two cut a broad swath through Clearwater's strip clubs. When it was time for the big leaguer to head north each spring, Scott sent him off with a present: 100 vials of Deca—a season's worth.

In 1993, Dykstra came to spring training with a purposefulness Scott hadn't seen before. It was his option year. "I want to put on size, dude," Scott remembers Lenny saying. Scott "prescribed" a cocktail that blended several steroids, oral and injectable, and watched the little man explode. By season's end, he was the first player ever to lead the National League in at-bats, hits, walks and runs. The Phillies reached the World Series and Dykstra finished second to Barry Bonds in the MVP balloting. That winter, the team gave him a four-year, $24.9 million extension. The deal showed just how much money was available to players who could pump up their stats.

"I want to put on size, dude," Scott remembers Dykstra saying. So he put him on a steroid cocktail and watched the little man explode.



JEFF SCOTT; PALM HARBOR, FLA.

But it was the beginning of the end for Nails. Instead of pushing it in the gym during spring training of 1994, he lounged at a waterside spa and continued a long-running extramarital affair with the sister of his business partner's mistress. The four of them were tight, staying in four-star hotels, drinking $3,000 champagne, throwing around cash. Scott was often the fifth in a crowd who often talked about steroids. One of the sisters says she even injected Lenny in a hotel room bathroom in St. Louis because he hated doing it himself.

As the strike lingered on, Dykstra moved back in with his family in a beach house in nearby Feather Sound. Often, when Scott stopped by early in 1995, Dykstra looked sullen. A report at the time said plans for two unbuilt car washes sat on Dykstra's desk up in his New Jersey office, and bankers were knocking on his door. Plus, his knees still creaked. On one visit, Dykstra invited Scott to watch his favorite movie, *A Few Good Men*. In a darkened home theater, Dykstra shouted his favorite line: *You can't handle the truth!* Scott wondered whether Lenny meant that for Tom Cruise or for himself.

The labor crisis was settled in time to salvage the 1995 season, but the Phillies were out of the race by August. Weeks before, though, Hollins, hitting .229 at the break, was benched and then traded to Boston. And on July 28 Dykstra went back on the DL. The prescription: more surgery on his right knee. His season was over. Scott would have a lot of work to do when spring training rolled back around.

THE FRIEND

Wally Joyner had a choice to make.

This was his third spring training with the Padres, and the 1998 season was shaping up to be a good one. The team already had a trio of All-Stars—Ken Caminiti at third, Tony Gwynn in right, Steve Finley in center—and an intimidating closer, Trevor Hoffman. Acquiring Kevin Brown in the off-season to anchor the rotation made them the fashionable pick to win the NL West.

Joyner was one of the team's most popular players, the kind of guy management dreamed about. GM Kevin Towers, Joyner's former teammate and roommate at BYU, compared him to Wally in *Leave It to Beaver*. "He was the good kid on the block," Towers said a few months after trading for him. Joyner was active in San Diego charities, played a superb first base and had hit .300 in three of the previous four seasons.

But now, on a practice field underneath the blazing Arizona sun, Joyner was at a career crossroads. Yes, the team had picked up his $3.75 million option after a nice 1997. Then again, he'd hit only 21 home runs over the past two seasons, a long way from the 56 he'd hit as an Angel in his first two a decade earlier. Those home runs had helped make him runner-up to Jose Canseco in the AL Rookie of the Year vote in 1986 and had turned Anaheim Stadium into Wally World. Still, he'd told reporters he wasn't a home run hitter. And he was right; he hit more than 16 just once again after 1988.

It didn't matter then, but it did now. In 1996, two players—Mark McGwire and Brady Anderson—had at least 50 home runs for the first time since 1961. (Anderson's career high to that point was 21.) That year, three teams—the A's, Mariners and Orioles—surpassed the 1961 Yankees' single-season record for home runs. The next year, McGwire forced a trade, rejoining his old Oakland colleagues, manager Tony La Russa and coach Dave McKay, in St. Louis—and hit 24 homers in 51 games. The game was changing.

Joyner approached his friend and asked how he could get some steroids. Caminiti didn't blink. "Call this guy," he said.

WALLY JOYNER; MAPLETON, UTAH

Joyner was also just shy of 36 years old and beginning to break down. He was one of the game's early weightlifters, but his swing was rooted more in timing than in power, and he felt his bat slowing. His body, too. Strains and pulls he once shook off now took weeks to heal. Joyner had had arthroscopic surgery to ease patella tendinitis on his right knee the previous October, on the same day Caminiti had had his right knee scoped. Caminiti, 10 months his junior, always bounced back from injuries quicker than Joyner did. And Wally knew why.

So on this March day, he approached his friend after a workout and asked how he could get some steroids. Caminiti didn't blink. He grabbed a piece of paper, scribbled a number and handed it over. "Call this guy," he said.

Joyner adored his teammate. All of the Padres did, just as the Astros had before them. Cammy played the game hard, wrestling grounders into the dust before throwing lasers to first and making every at-bat count. His fierceness intimidated opponents—and sometimes his own teammates. Once, when a veteran was griping too much, Caminiti turned to Padres manager Bruce Bochy. "You want me to take care of it?" he asked. "Don't beat him up," Bochy replied.

That was Cammy. The ultimate teammate. He'd do whatever it took. And, man, could he play. In 1996, their first season together, Joyner marveled as Caminiti smashed 40 homers, knocked in 130, hit .326, played a Gold Glove third and won the NL MVP award. "He's so intense it makes the other players want to take their play to a different level," Joyner told reporters.

But he saw the demons that plagued his friend. Most everyone knew about the drinking, and some suspected the drug use. It was an easy hole to fall into. Ballplayers wake up and can't remember what city they're in, the pressure to perform is relentless, pitfalls abound. Need a pick-me-up? Grab a greenie. Need to smooth out? The bat boy will grab you a beer. Steroids? A FedEx envelope will be in your locker tomorrow. Coke? The "green flies"—what players call fans desperate to cozy up to big leaguers—wait in the parking lot, the hotel lobbies, the gyms and bars. They have whatever you need.

Joyner saw using steroids as cheating; he suspected Canseco and others were using and resented what they'd accomplished. But he didn't lump Caminiti with them. Like many of Cammy's close friends, he was happy the man was for once doing something to build his body up instead of tear it down.

Joyner stared at the phone number in his hand. Everyone fights decline. He'd done it by taking more BP, studying more video, spending more time in the weight room. But that wasn't working anymore.

He made the call. A man answered, they exchanged a few sentences and Joyner hung up. The next day, Caminiti handed him one of those flimsy overnight packages Joyner had learned to recognize. It was from the man he'd called. "This is for you," Cammy said.

Joyner took the package, went back to his apartment and opened it. Inside was a small bottle filled with pills; he didn't know what they were called. Caminiti had given him instructions on how to use them, though. Joyner carried the pills around for a few days, sometimes taking one out to stare at it. Finally, he took one. The next day, he took another. "What am I doing?" he asked himself. Ten days passed before he took a third.

The Cactus League was going well for the Padres. Brown looked sharp, Caminiti looked strong and leftfielder Greg Vaughn looked ready to rebound from a subpar season. But the normally upbeat Joyner was somber. He hated what he was doing, hated how dirty he felt.

In his apartment after a workout toward the end of spring training, he rethought for the hundredth time the choice he'd made. He'd played 12 years in the big leagues, 12 great years. Why ruin that? He walked into the bathroom, held the bottle over the toilet and turned it upside down. The pills made a pile under the water. He flushed.

The next day, Joyner sought out his friend. "It's not for me," he said to Caminiti, and walked away.

PART III

1998-2001 BUSTING OUT

THE WRITER

In July 1998, Steve Wilstein, a feature writer for the Associated Press, hit the road to follow the Great American Home Run Chase. As Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa went yard at a record pace, their awesome power and friendly competition reintroduced fans to the virtues of the national pastime. Crowds that had been driven away by the strike once again scanned box scores and bought tickets. Wilstein wasn't a regular on the baseball beat; going back to 1971, he'd covered events such as the U.S. Open tennis tournament, an Ali title bout and the Olympics. He appreciated the chase as a historic, if not magical, event. But today he admits even he was awed by the Bunyanesque feats of the Cards slugger.

STEVE WILSTEIN; ARLINGTON, WASH.

After one game in St. Louis, with Big Mac taking his time in the trainer's room, Wilstein gathered with a dozen other reporters by his locker. As they waited, he began to fill his notebook with descriptions of the scene. He saw a photo of McGwire's son, a bat boy, on the top shelf of the locker, and sugarless gum—a nice touch: McGwire's dad was a dentist. He saw a cap from a Roger Maris celebrity golf tournament. Interesting, given that McGwire denied paying attention to the man whose ghost loomed before him. And Wilstein saw a brown bottle labeled with a word he didn't recognize. He jotted it all down.

The moment passed, as did the night. After three weeks of tailing Mac and Sammy and Ken Griffey Jr., Wilstein returned home to Palo Alto to write another story about the race. When he came to the name on the bottle in his notes, he called a doctor friend. "What's androstenedione?" he asked.

"A precursor to testosterone," the cardiologist replied. "And it can be really bad for the heart."

Wilstein's own heart skipped a beat. He realized he had a story that was bigger than the one he had been assigned. Andro, he soon learned, was one metabolic step from testosterone and readily converted by the human body. Football's steroids adviser, John Lombardo, told Wilstein, "Androstenedione is a steroid. It has anabolic qualities. Therefore, it is an anabolic steroid." The NFL had banned it a year earlier, as had the NCAA and the Olympics. In fact, Randy Barnes, the 1996 gold-medal shot-putter, had recently been barred from competition for life for using it.

When Wilstein sought confirmation of McGwire's andro use, the Cardinals dismissed him. "Androstenedione?" said a team spokesman. "He doesn't even know how to spell it." But then McGwire admitted to the AP that he'd taken andro for more than a year, and added, "Everybody I know in the game of baseball uses the same stuff I use."

Wilstein's piece, "Drug OK in Baseball, Not Olympics," ran on Friday, Aug. 21. He made it clear McGwire had broken neither the law of the land nor the rules of the game. But he also wrote that andro's ability to raise testosterone levels "is seen outside baseball as cheating and potentially dangerous."

At the time, McGwire was at 51 homers and counting. Big Mac jerseys were flying off racks, his team was posting a huge attendance gain and the chase was national news. The revelation threatened to unmask the slugger as more Frankenstein's

monster than Popeye. Before that could happen, though, the manager, the team and the press all shifted blame to the messenger.

McGwire himself accused the reporter of "snooping." His manager, Tony La Russa, stoked the outrage. "A player's locker isn't something that you should snoop around and see what you can find out," he barked. "That's a clear invasion of privacy. And it's causing some real garbage here." The Cardinals wouldn't let La Russa bar AP's reporters from the clubhouse. Instead, they permitted *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* columnist Bernie Miklasz to stand in front of McGwire's locker to see if he could re-create the infamous moment. "To be able to decipher the label on this andro bottle, you have to intentionally look, and look hard," Miklasz wrote. "And that's out of bounds."

Wilstein was disappointed by the reaction, but he knew he hadn't touched anything in the locker. Plus, he had McGwire's admission. What he didn't know was how much added pop andro was giving the slugger. That was the part of the discussion Wilstein figured MLB would try to spin.

But Bud Selig and his advisers didn't know what andro was. The Sunday after Wilstein's story appeared, Selig sought the advice of his pharmacist in Milwaukee and also called George Steinbrenner, who'd served on the U.S. Olympic Committee. Steinbrenner put him in touch with Don Catlin, head of the Olympic drug-testing lab at UCLA. Catlin told Selig about andro's anabolic properties, then said there was only one way to rid the sport of drugs—random testing, the kind the NFL did.

As commissioner, Selig was facing two realities.

When he looked through his notes and came to the name on the bottle, Wilstein called a doctor friend. "What's androstenedione?" he asked.

First of all, baseball's power jolt had lit up attendance and revenues. But he also knew the players union opposed stricter regulation of which substances its members could take. The union, chief negotiator Gene Orza said, would not discuss andro "at a time when Mark McGwire's chase of the home run record might be compromised."

So on the Monday after Wilstein's story ran, Selig publicly ignored the effects of andro. "I think what Mark McGwire has accomplished is so remarkable, and he has handled it all so beautifully, we want to do everything we can to enjoy a great moment in baseball history." But he also realized he needed to learn more. On Wednesday, Aug. 26, he and Donald Fehr announced a jointly launched study of supplements, while leaving the details vague.

That was enough to satisfy the nation's sportswriters and talking heads. When *Sports Illustrated* named McGwire and Sosa its 1998 Sportsmen of the Year, the story didn't mention androstenedione. *ESPN the Magazine*, which had launched that spring, put McGwire on its cover twice in its first 13 issues. This was the magazine's

take on McGwire and Sosa on Oct. 5, 1998: "All the downsides—the andro revelation ... had less to do with them than with us. Besides, what they gave us will far outlast the controversies ... Everywhere men were laughing. Everywhere children shouted ... Thanks to them, we escaped."

By the end of the 1998 season, many team doctors were warning players to stay away from andro because of its potential to damage the liver and sex organs. But MLB would not take that step unilaterally. In October, as supplement sales were skyrocketing—andro sales increased 1,000%, to $50 million the year following McGwire's admission—Selig was asked about a rumor that had baseball outlawing andro. "It's not only premature, but very unfair," he replied. "None of this should ever diminish from Mark McGwire's extraordinary season."

In December, Wilstein, still working the lonely andro beat, wrote that Robert Millman, Selig's chief medical adviser, believed he had a dual agenda: as physician and as defender of the game. Asked about the effects of what McGwire was taking, Millman, a professor of psychiatry at Cornell, said, "There is no evidence andro does anything bad or good."

"I want to protect McGwire and get the truth," the MLB's doctor told Wilstein. "That would serve everybody. It wouldn't hurt baseball, either."

THE DOCTOR

Bill Wilder, the medical director for the Cleveland Indians, couldn't believe what he was hearing. As baseball's physicians and trainers gathered for their annual meetings at Nashville's Opryland Hotel on Dec. 12, 1998, the Tribe's chief doc and many others in the room knew their game had developed quite a drug problem. At least half a dozen physicians would later admit to increasing concern about a growing number of players ingesting anabolics and gobbling stimulants. Team employees handed out everything from amino-acid shakes to greenies. Supplement companies put players on their payrolls: 1995 AL MVP Mo Vaughn hawked a company called MET-Rx, while All-Stars Randy Johnson and Edgar Martinez endorsed Champion Nutrition. Ripped personal trainers and "nutritionists"—guys the Reds doctor, Tim Kremchek, called Klingons—infiltrated clubhouses.

Wilder knew from talking to players that most of them didn't fully understand the effects of what they took. More were getting hurt (the number of players on the DL jumped 31%, from 266 in 1989 to 349 in 1998) and hurt badly (time spent on the DL per injury increased 13% over that span). And injuries that were rarely problems before all the bulking up were now almost common: patellar tendinitis, strained rib cages, torn hamstrings—the kind of stuff that happened when oversize muscles ripped away from bones that could no longer support them.

Most doctors had neither the time nor strong incentive to bring the steroid fight. Wilder, for example, had been with the Indians since 1970 while maintaining an office at Cleveland's Lutheran Hospital and a busy private practice. But he and the others also knew it was against baseball's rules to take steroids, and had been for years.

Updating the memo Fay Vincent had issued in 1991, Bud Selig had sent out a new policy with only minor revisions in May 1997. In contrast to their enforcement of baseball's rules against gambling, though, many teams were casual about the drug policy. Some GMs lost track of it amid other edicts from the commissioner's office. Others didn't know for sure if, as required, it had ever been posted in their clubhouses at all. The union didn't even think the policy applied to its members because it wasn't collectively bargained.

Now, after the publicity Mark McGwire and andro

WILL TO POWER

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STEROIDS ERA

1926
After stewing 40 pounds of bull testicles, Fred Koch and Lemuel McGee extract 20 milligrams of "substance [with] male sex hormone capacities."

1935
Amsterdam chemists isolate male sex hormone. They call it testosterone.

1956
John Ziegler synthesizes methandrostenolone. Sold as Dianabol, it will be America's first commercially available anabolic steroid.

1973
Four-minute miler Roger Bannister urges universal adoption of recently discovered screening test for anabolic steroids.

1984
Victor Conte, former bassist in power-funk band Tower of Power, opens Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative—BALCO—in San Francisco suburb.

1986
Jose Canseco (33 HRs, 117 RBI, .240) wins AL Rookie of the Year.

1988
Ronald Reagan signs Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, outlawing sale of steroids for nonmedical purposes.

1991
Commissioner Fay Vincent adds steroids to baseball's banned list in memo he sends to all teams and union.

1994
Dietary Supplements Health and Education Act passes on Oct. 25, deregulates supplements industry.

1995
Padres GM Randy Smith tells *LA Times*, "We all know there's steroid use, and it is definitely becoming more prevalent." He estimates 10-20% of MLB are users.

1996
Orioles, Mariners, A's break single-season HR record.

Mark McGwire tells *The Denver Post*: "People are making a big deal about so many home runs being hit. They wonder why guys you've never heard about are hitting home runs. My answer is, 'Let's accept it. It's good for the game.'"

Ken Caminiti (40, 130, .326) is NL MVP.

1997
McGwire (58 HRs) becomes second MLer (after The Babe) with consecutive 50-HR seasons.

Six months after signing new labor deal that doesn't include testing for steroids, interim commissioner Bud Selig reissues memo banning their use.

1998
Barry Bonds hires boyhood pal Greg Anderson as personal trainer.

McGwire (70 HRs) breaks Roger Maris' record; NL MVP Sammy Sosa ends up with 66, 26 more than career high.

1999
McGwire (65 HRs), Sosa (63) are first with back-to-back seasons of 60-plus.

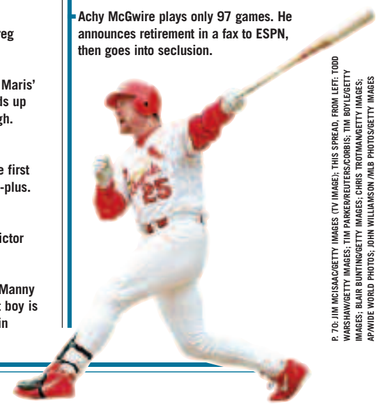
2000
Bonds agrees to endorse ZMA, Victor Conte's supplement.

Mercedes belonging to Red Sox Manny Alexander but driven by team bat boy is stopped in routine traffic sweep in June. Anabolics are found inside. A *New York Times* special report on Oct. 11 says "steroid abuse has become a problem in baseball."

A's Jason Giambi hits career-high 43 HRs with 137 RBIs, wins MVP.

2001
Bonds (73) breaks McGwire's record, wins fourth MVP. He'll win next three, too.

Achy McGwire plays only 97 games. He announces retirement in a fax to ESPN, then goes into seclusion.



Baseball institutes testing for steroids for minor leaguers, who aren't covered by MLB Players Association.

2002
Free agent Canseco goes unsigned. He'll later say he was blackballed and may write a book.

Gary Sheffield works out in off-season with Bonds and trainer Anderson. Sheff uses cream he says he believed was cortisone. It is tetrahydrogestrinone—THG—an undetectable synthetic anabolic steroid.

Confidential report by MLB's insurance company notes spike in players' injuries and cites steroids as possible factor.

A retired Caminiti is first star MLB player to admit to taking steroids. In *Sports Illustrated*, Caminiti also says 50% of players take them.

New labor deal includes first steroid-testing policy. Confidential and random, it calls for tougher testing if more than 5% of players test positive in 2003.

USA Today poll of 556 MLB players indicates 79% favor testing.

2003
David Wells says in draft of book *Perfect I'm Not* that 25-40% of big leaguers use steroids. In published version, range is downgraded to 10-25%. Caminiti is only player mentioned.

U.S. Anti-Doping Agency announces existence and history of THG, fingers BALCO as source.

2004
In February, Attorney General John Ashcroft announces 42-count indictment against Conte, Anderson and two others on charges of conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute steroids and money laundering.

Senator John McCain tells baseball and football officials in March that Congress will intervene unless tougher testing is instituted.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reports on Dec. 2 that Giambi admitted to BALCO grand jury he used steroids and human growth hormone. Next day, paper reports Bonds testified to using steroids unknowingly.

2005
MLB and MLBPA announce new drug-testing policy on Jan. 13. It includes year-round testing for steroids and stricter penalties, starting with 10-day unpaid suspension for first offense.

Anabolic Steroids Control Act of 2004 kicks in, outlawing andro and 35 steroids and precursors not banned in 1990.

In his book *Juiced*, Canseco says he and other players routinely injected each other with steroids. Rafael Palmeiro, McGwire, Juan Gonzalez, Ivan Rodriguez and Giambi are cited as users.

Jeremy Giambi tells *The Kansas City Star* he used steroids, calls it a mistake.

In March, Congress holds hearings on steroids in baseball. Selig and union head Donald Fehr appear, as do Canseco, McGwire, Palmeiro and Sosa.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that Bonds' ex-girlfriend testified he told her he knowingly used steroids.

Devil Rays' Alex Sanchez is first player suspended for violating new policy.

Selig proposes 50-game suspension for first-time steroid offenders and lifetime ban for third violation.

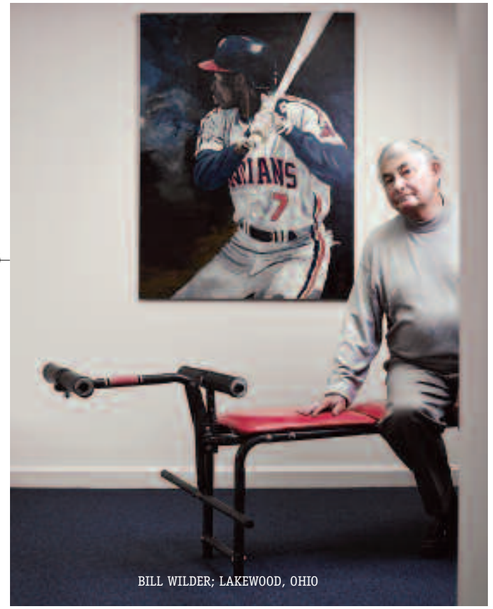
Two weeks after taking out ad in *USA Today* to congratulate him on 3,000th hit, MLB suspends Palmeiro for violating drug policy.

P. 70: JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES (TV IMAGE); THIS SPREAD, FROM LEFT: TODD WARSHAW/GETTY IMAGES; TIM PARKER/REUTERS/CORBIS; TIM BOYLE/GETTY IMAGES; BLAIR BUNTING/GETTY IMAGES; CHRIS TROTMAN/GETTY IMAGES; APWIDE WORLD PHOTOS; JOHN WILLIAMSON/MLB PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

generated in 1998, Wilder hoped drug use would be taken more seriously. And he had been heartened to see Selig put on the Nashville docket a seminar called New Drug Policy for Major League Baseball.

Then he listened to a presentation by the doctors who'd recently been commissioned by MLB and the union to study supplements. Joel Finkelstein and Benjamin Leder, two Harvard endocrinologists, were talking, but not about andro; they said it was too early to draw conclusions. Instead, they lectured on testosterone. *Testosterone increases muscle mass and endurance*, they told the room. No kidding, the doctors thought. They teach that in high school.

Wilder was surprised by the scientists' equivocations about andro—he and others already had concluded it was an anabolic steroid. But he was shocked by what they weren't saying about testosterone. What about testicular tumors? What about liver damage? What about discussing whether athletes should be using anabolics at all?



BILL WILDER; LAKEWOOD, OHIO

It dawned on Wilder: baseball wasn't about to embrace any "new" policy. In fact, Selig and his deputies were just coming to the idea that their drug rules needed changing. But they were unwilling and unable to move without the union and knew reform would require a long-term political effort. Studying andro was as far as they were willing to go.

At the previous year's winter meetings, Bill Bryan, the Astros doctor, had offered a list of various supplements and substances, safe and unsafe, with advice about which ones players should avoid. His colleagues voted to recommend giving the list to players. But when they made the recommendation to Robert Millman, Selig's top medical adviser, Wilder heard him say, "We'll think about it." (Millman has declined comment.)

"Blithe" was the word that came to Wilder's mind when he heard Millman's reaction. Wilder had expected him to be the doctors' advocate in the commissioner's office, as Dr. Bobby Brown had been during his term as American League president from 1984 to 1994. Instead, Millman seemed to be an advocate for baseball's drug policy.

Wilder says he tried again in July 1998, at a meeting of team human resources officials at O'Hare Airport. When he asked Millman about distributing the information, Millman was noncommittal. The message wended its way to the commissioner's office, but the subject became one more Ping-Pong ball in the endless match between MLB and the players union.

So in Nashville, the doctors made one more attempt to sound the alarm, this time going directly to the union. After Finkelstein and Leder concluded their presentation, Wilder questioned one of the men who had introduced them, Gene Orza. Why can't we give players standardized, comprehensive information about the substances they are swallowing and shooting into their bodies, he asked.

Orza replied with circular logic: not enough was known yet about the substances to endorse such a proposal. The doctors' bewilderment curdled into frustration. Over the past four years, they'd spent more time in meetings talking about smokeless tobacco than anabolic steroids. They continued to advise individual players who asked for help, but not one ever went public with his worries.

On Jan. 21, 1999, Wilder walked into his home office, strode past a photo of ex-Indians pitcher Dennis Martinez wearing one of Wilder's stethoscopes, sat down at his computer and, as he always did after the winter meetings, typed a memo to GM John Hart.

"There is no reason that some preliminary literature can't be sent out to the players concerning the known and unknown data about the performance-enhancing substances," he wrote. "I would like to get something like that out to all players, but when I asked Orza, he said wait 'til we have more information. That will be never! Orza and the players association want to do 'further study'—so nothing will be done."

That wasn't quite true. Change would come. But not before Wilder retired after the 2000 season.

THE VET

November wasn't too early for Rico Brogna to begin his 2000 winter workouts. He reached into a bathroom bag for his bottle of andro, popped the first of two pills for the day and headed down the stairs of his Connecticut home.

There were no windows in the basement, just a mirror to reflect the quality of his labor: ribbons of rising sinew acquired by attacking the $12,000 of equipment every morning. Hours disappeared in that room, the clank-clank of the weight machines providing treble to the classic rock that blared as Brogna lifted. When he took andro, he felt like he just wanted to keep lifting. "Do another set!" he'd tell himself. "And let's do it again tomorrow!"

Brogna remembers first buying andro off the Internet three years earlier, in 1997; he then played the best ball of his career, hitting 44 homers and knocking in 206 runs for the Phillies over the following two seasons. Nearly 15 pounds of fresh muscle allowed him to feel as strong in August as he did in April. Late in the 1998 season, he reaped the reward: a one-year, $3.2 million extension, easily his richest payday. The next August, he topped it, signing a second extension for $4.2 million.

Two years later, though, Brogna had to wonder if his body was finally breaking down for good. The 2000 season had been brutal: a shattered wrist, surgery on his right knee, pink slips from the Phillies, then the Red Sox. With his career up in the air, Brogna fleetingly considered taking a step up, to injectable steroids. He'd heard about the benefits of those drugs in 1991, when he was given a diagnosis of ankylosing spondylitis, a debilitating form of arthritis; a minor league teammate offered to hook him up at the time. More recently, one Phillie was so overt with his steroid use that on a road trip he called Brogna in his room and asked for help with the injection.

Brogna says he opted against injectable steroids in 1991 and again in 2000 for the same reason he'd declined to pump them into that teammate: he hated needles. They were already too big a part of his life—cortisone shots offered the only relief from his worsening arthritis—and he'd fainted many times from the sight of them. Plus, no matter how he justified to himself the use of andro, he still felt dirty popping it. He kept the pills a secret, even from his wife. Upgrading to harder stuff would feel even worse.

As Brogna waited to hear from potential employers before the 2001 season, he heard Andres Galarraga was leaving Atlanta. He told his agent to call the Braves. "Do the deal," he said. "Whatever it takes." The Braves made a $1.5 million offer, and Brogna accepted. But almost as soon as the season started, there were days when his stiffening spine and hips ached so badly, he needed help with tying his shoes. One night, as he rounded third trying to score, he wasn't sure he could make the final 90 feet. Painkillers were all that stood between him and the bench.

Atlanta got off to a 26–26 start, but elsewhere the season was looking like another record breaker. By June 1, Barry Bonds had 29 home runs and was on pace to better Mark McGwire, whose troublesome right knee would limit him to 97 games and force him into retirement. Alex Rodriguez was in his first season as the $250 million Ranger. Roger Clemens, at 38, was headed to a sixth Cy Young.

In July, the Braves decided Brogna, at 31, was finished. To replace him, they brought in a former MVP, but one who wasn't a regular first baseman. Before the Braves let Brogna go, they asked him to take one more for the team.

They asked him to teach Ken Caminiti how to play his position.

PART IV

2002-2005 CRASH AND BURN

THE UNION MEN

By the spring of 2002, Al Leiter, 36 years old and pitching for his fourth team, and Todd Zeile, also 36 and playing for his ninth, had been around a long time. Both had been union men from the start. Leiter and Zeile reached the big leagues in the late 1980s, when baseball's owners had brazenly and illegally colluded to limit free agent salaries, eventually paying a $280 million settlement to the players association. Both were there in 1990, when the owners locked out players for 32 days, and again in 1994, when the players walked out. And both had been team reps, who knew the brethren would march in lockstep on every labor issue.

Until now.

Steroids had divided the players. And with the labor deal already expired, union members had until Aug. 30, their strike date, to reach a new agreement with the owners.

Publicly, the players union had always opposed testing. But Leiter had seen opinion begin to split as early as December 2000, at a meeting of the union's executive committee in Arizona. By that time, he'd been fairly certain for years that there were hitters using steroids. So he wasn't shocked when a pitcher declared that he was tired of giving up 500-foot homers. It did intrigue Leiter when several guys he thought of as "everyday hitters" voiced their concerns, too. Those guys were frustrated by sportswriters' questions about their loss of power, even though their slugging stats hadn't declined but just looked weaker compared with the ungodly totals some of their hulking teammates were posting.

It wasn't just pitchers vs. hitters, Leiter realized. Steroids were forcing hitters to make an uncomfortable choice: get on or miss the ride.

Over the past few years, Zeile had watched entire teams develop an outsize musculature and wondered, "What do these guys have in their back pocket?" He too had heard the player complaints about steroids, the nonusers worried about losing jobs to users. And as the 2001 season continued to ride baseball's power surge—Barry Bonds slammed 73 homers and Sammy Sosa hit more than 60 for the third time—Zeile was weary of hearing players and writers speculate about who was using.

Zeile thought taking steroids was cheating, plain and simple. He suspected some of the other team reps were on steroids themselves. And he wondered if Donald Fehr understood the depth of the anger of the union members who wanted their sport cleaned up.

Fehr had spent the past two years traveling from team to team, trying to forge a consensus on testing. But on the issue of what they did to their bodies, his members weren't easily led.

The men across the table were also holding different cards by the spring of 2002. Since the end of the 1998 season, Bud Selig had tried to educate himself about steroids, but rarely commented on the subject in public. Behind the scenes, the commissioner had told his deputies to "surround and predicate." Translated from Seligese, that meant collect information about steroids, and lay the groundwork that would force the players to accept testing in the next labor deal.

The strategy was slow to develop. In February 2000, 14 months after the Harvard study was commissioned, Selig received its results: daily 300-mg doses of andro increased testosterone levels by an average of 34% within seven days. Selig declared he was "pleased to have played a part in the advancement of science" but added, "more research is needed," and took no immediate action.

Almost a year later, in January 2001, Selig held a meeting in Milwaukee with about a dozen team doctors. He asked each one to name the most pressing issue in baseball. The same answer came back, again and again: steroids.

The doctors told Selig about the rising rate of disabled-list trips they were reporting. They described new kinds of injuries they were seeing. They spoke of the obstinacy of the players union. They said what they had been saying for years.

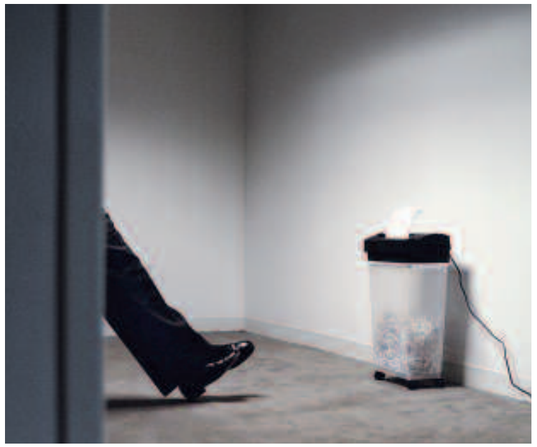
And yet, Selig expressed surprise.

In March, he finally acted unilaterally and instituted in-season testing for various drugs, including steroids and andro, in the minor leagues. And in June, more than three years after the team doctors had offered their original list, MLB and the

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

union issued a 32-page bilingual booklet called "Steroids and Nutritional Supplements," which described the effects of various substances.

The results of the 2001 minor league tests were



alarming: more than 500 players, about 11% of those not on major league 40-man rosters, had tested positive for steroids. Selig didn't announce the numbers. But with some of those users headed for the majors, it was time to reach an agreement with the union.

When the owners sent their first proposal to the players in early 2002, it called for testing only during the baseball season. And it mandated counseling, not suspensions or fines, for first-time offenders. Chief negotiator Gene Orza opposed the plan on principle: as far as he was concerned, testing presumed players were guilty and violated their privacy. Later, though, he'd say he thought the proposal wasn't as bad as it could have been.

The argument was shifting: the central issue was no longer whether to test, but how.

Then, suddenly, everyone was talking about steroids. In May, Jose Canseco told a Fox Sports Net interviewer that 85% of major leaguers were juicing. In the June 3 issue of *Sports Illustrated*, Ken Caminiti became the first prominent player to admit steroid use in a story that detailed how anabolics were saturating the major and minor leagues. "It's no secret what's going on in baseball," Caminiti claimed. "At least half the guys are using steroids. I can't say, 'Don't do it,' not when the guy next to you is as big as a house and he's going to take your job."

Reporters rushed to players, asking about steroids and testing. Zeile said, "I think there are a lot of people inside and outside the game who realize some things are going on." Then he added: "Now, do you expose everybody for it? I think the issue there is almost as evenly split as those people using it or not." In New York, Leiter told beat writers he favored testing, but thought players would vote against it.

But the divide melted that summer under the heat of public glare. For a crucial number of players who disliked steroids and mistrusted the owners, the need to take a real step to clean up baseball trumped privacy. And a July 8 *USA Today* poll showed there was no turning back. Of the 556 players surveyed, 79% favored steroids testing. In August, the players union announced it would accept random testing—the first major concession the union had ever made. "It is not a watered-down type of proposal," Zeile told the press. "It is a legitimate proposal to try to do something."

The two sides spent the rest of the month arguing about parameters, not principles. They agreed to anonymous survey testing in 2003 that would trigger punitive testing the following year if 5% or more of players were found to have illegal steroids in their bodies. The owners sought four random tests a season; the players negotiated down to one. The owners wanted punishments ranging from a maximum suspension of 30 days for a second violation to a lifetime ban for a fifth; the players whittled that to 15 days and a year. The owners wanted to ban andro; the players got them to drop the idea. The players wanted to eliminate testing if fewer than 5% flunked; the owners chopped that to two straight years of 2.5%.

Zeile thought taking steroids was cheating, plain and simple. He suspected some team reps were on steroids themselves.

On Aug. 30, Zeile learned the negotiators had averted a strike. There would be no random tests right away, and no immediate penalties. Players who were using would have time to clean up. If players who wanted testing had pushed for more, there might not have been any at all. But a tougher program could someday follow.

They had, he believed, taken a first step.

THE BUSINESSMAN

The blood test dated December 2002 made it clear Jason Giambi had a problem. And as Victor Conte stared at the report in his office in Burlingame, Calif., he knew he could deliver a solution.

Conte didn't know Giambi. Not personally. Their connection was through Greg Anderson, a squarely built personal trainer who was a member of Conte's inner circle, as well as a boyhood friend and confidant of Barry Bonds. A month earlier, Anderson had been tagging along with Bonds on a barnstorming tour of Japan when he met Giambi. During the weeklong trip, Anderson told the Yankees first baseman about BALCO, the small but influential nutrition company that produced a supplement that Bonds endorsed. The two agreed to meet in California when the tour was over.

Despite the autographed photo of Bonds on his wall, Conte wasn't much of a baseball fan. He was an ex-high school track star, and the Olympics were more his thing. But a Bay Area resident couldn't help but know about Giambi. The big man had played seven years across the bridge in Oakland, studying at the feet of McGwire and Canseco. After the A's barely lost to the Yankees in the 2001 ALDS, Giambi had taken George Steinbrenner's $120 million to wear the pinstripes of his dad's favorite team. The slugger almost gave The Boss his money's worth, hitting 41 homers and knocking in 122 runs as the Yanks won the AL East easily. But they were pushed aside by Anaheim in the ALDS. So in Bronx terms, the season was a failure.

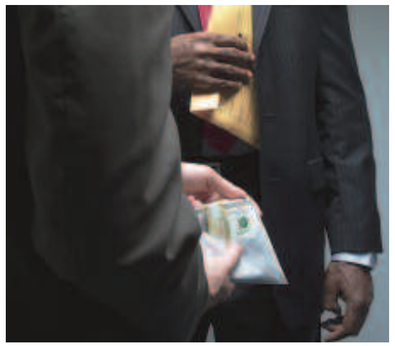
Giambi knew that the next season would be different: baseball would be testing its players for steroids for the first time. And Conte knew, as he looked at the blood workup provided by Anderson from Giambi, that the Yankees slugger was loaded with Deca-Durabolin, a steroid that lingers in the blood for months. He'd be a sitting duck for the new testers.

Conte considered himself the MVP of the steroid underground. He gave Tim Montgomery a variety of performance enhancers and saw him become the world's fastest man in September 2002—and no one had caught on yet. Two of the drugs Montgomery used were still in Conte's storeroom: a liquid steroid called the clear and a testosterone-laced lotion called the cream. Anderson knew their powers well. Conte says he told him about them himself. (Anderson, and Giambi, through a spokesman, declined comment for this story.)

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

From Christmas to July 2003, Anderson called Conte roughly once a month to ask for doses from his exclusive stash. Conte asked no questions. He'd just drop a half-dozen 7-cc vials into a small cardboard box, cradle it in bubble wrap and leave it at BALCO's front desk for Anderson to pick up.

Giambi later described in grand jury testimony that was leaked to the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he arrived at spring training in 2003 with both substances coursing through him. He also was using human growth hormone (hGH) that he'd gotten from a supplier in Las Vegas, where he owned a house. Anderson told him he could supply more



should Giambi run out and added that his new friend was very lucky to be in Conte's club.

As the 2003 season reached its dog days, business couldn't have been better for Conte. Bonds, his

As he looked at Giambi's blood work, Conte knew the Yankees slugger would be a sitting duck for the new testers.

chief endorser, was making a case for a sixth MVP at Pac-Bell Park, and BALCO's supplements were being sold by 70 companies worldwide. But while Conte counted his millions, federal agents were searching his trash and rifling through his mail. On Sept. 3, they swooped down on his lab. Conte sat in his lobby for hours as agents seized his records.

Two days later, many of the same agents raided Anderson's nearby apartment. They found steroids, drug calendars, detailed invoices and $63,920 in cash stuffed in envelopes. Among the names on the calendars: Giambi and Bonds. (Bonds' lawyers later asserted the calendars tracked a legal supplement their client decided not to use.)

The raid hardly registered in the Bronx, where Giambi was putting the finishing touches on another strong season. But by mid-October, he looked like a different player. He would later testify that he'd stopped using steroids after the All-Star break when he injured his left knee, and the injury had only gotten worse since. When the Bombers met Boston in the ALCS, he had only three singles in the first five games before redeeming himself with three solo homers in the final two. His struggles continued against the Marlins in the Series, and he even asked out of Game 5. After the Yanks lost in six, a somber Giambi said: "We had an opportunity to win these games, no doubt about it. We just could never seem to get that big hit."

The big hit. That's what his life was about now. Like McGwire and Canseco before him, Giambi had become a prisoner of the big hit and all that went into launching one. Ironically, Giambi was about to take the biggest swing of his career—off the field. And it would help to expose Conte's business and the wall of silence that sheathed it.

On Dec. 11, Giambi walked into a grand jury room in the San Francisco federal courthouse. Three weeks earlier, MLB had announced that more than 5% of its players had flunked their drug tests. Testing was here to stay. Now the 32-year-old star was going to tell all. Did Mr. Anderson provide you with injectable testosterone, federal prosecutor Jeffrey Nedrow asked. According to testimony, Giambi replied, "Yes."

He said he assumed Bonds used the same stuff, although he added that Anderson never actually told him so. He also said he'd taken steroids in his final season in Oakland. And he admitted to using hGH and several different colored pills supplied by Anderson, including one he thought was Clomid, a female fertility drug that boosts testosterone levels.

Conte watched news footage of Giambi leaving the courtroom. By then, he knew his own run was

A PEEK INSIDE

The message board was a forum where hard-core baseball fans could indulge in shoptalk, a place for seamheads seeking refuge. Discussion threads ranged from the arcane (best bench players) to the universal (Yankees payroll). But by the turn of the century, a new topic had elbowed its way into heavy rotation: steroids.

What little the fans knew about steroid use in baseball they'd picked up from newspapers and TV. That left a lot of room for best-guess speculation: on who might be juicing, how it was changing the game and whether MLB would ever take action. Like their off-line brethren, these fans were just outsiders looking in. And then one day, in the fall of 2004, that all changed.

The minor leaguer who logged on that day called himself Farmhand. *[Ed.'s note: the screen name has been changed to protect the player's identity.]* He'd been in the game for more than six years, with only a handful of days in the majors to show for it. In fact, he'd stumbled onto the site while he was trolling for job openings in Japan. Before long he was dropping insider knowledge, and the fans ate it up. They quizzed him on the difference between a cutoff and a relay throw, the economics of being a minor leaguer—and steroids.

On Dec. 2, 2004, the discussion was about the latest headline: Jason Giambi had told a grand jury he'd used steroids. "Can they void Giambi's contract?" a fan asked.

Farmhand jumped: "Do you think that teams never knew? Sure they do, and they know that the possibility of the player being great because of it outweighs the possibility of them having problems." He went on to say that steroids weaken tendons, but human growth hormone doesn't, and plenty of guys were taking that.

Finally, some real answers. Throughout that winter the headlines kept coming, and Farmhand kept posting. He said greenies were actually a bigger problem than steroids. He said he'd never used, himself.

On Jan. 12, 2005, he seized on a thread about MLB's recently amended steroid policy. A fan suggested that because chemists constantly created new and undetectable drugs, testers would fall hopelessly behind. Farmhand was just as pessimistic. "The only way those steroids will be found is if somebody rats," he typed. "I don't see that happening much."

The mid-February publication of Jose Canseco's tell-all, *Juiced*, sparked another round of steroid chatter. One fan posted that MLB didn't have "the courage to go out and start an investigation into Canseco's accusations." Farmhand clarified: "MLB is not going to do an extensive investigation into Canseco's claims because they already know they are true."

On the afternoon of March 17, the fans wanted Farmhand's take on the hearing Congress was holding on steroids that day. In an earlier post, he'd written, "The prospect of hearings were upsetting a lot of us." Now, as he battled for a roster spot, his focus was elsewhere. "My guess is that it will be business as usual, with limited talk on the subject," he typed. "We're more concerned with getting the pools set up for the college basketball tourney."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

over. The clear and the cream had been uncovered and his supplier, whom the feds would later claim was the self-described father of andro, Patrick Arnold, was no longer sending him new samples. The BALCO raid had made him radioactive.

But, for the most part, baseball's wall of silence stood strong. When a noticeably leaner Giambi arrived at spring training in 2004, beat writers peppered him with questions about his grand jury appearance and rumored drug use. He denied ever taking steroids. So did teammate Gary Sheffield, who had testified in the case as well. Later that summer, as a mysterious parasite and benign pituitary tumor threatened Giambi's health and torpedoed his season, he never admitted to doing anything wrong.

Conte knew better.

POSTSCRIPT

FACING FACTS

"We have nothing to hide," said Bud Selig, as he concluded his State of the Game remarks in Detroit on July 12.

Perhaps. But the impression to the contrary was hard to shake. For more than a decade, the men putting on the show—the owners and the players—had evidence that there was a serious problem with their product. But they continued to sell a game contaminated by steroids while they pursued their separate agendas. Baseball, like any private business, usually heeds demands for change from only two groups: customers and regulators. And through all of this, we, the fans, kept on buying.

But the feds are a different story. The flak-jacketed IRS agents who raided BALCO in 2003 and the showboating congressmen now demanding immediate changes to MLB's drug policy have pushed steroids into the open. Since BALCO grand jury testimony began to trickle into the news last winter, it was clear that a season that should have been about Barry Bonds' pursuit of Hank Aaron's home run record was instead defined by a procession of steroids revelations.

And after Selig and Donald Fehr defended baseball's policy even as Mark McGwire was embarrassing himself and Raphael Palmeiro was denying steroid use at the congressional hearings in March, Washington smelled red meat. "The only reason Congress became involved in this is because baseball didn't," says Representative Henry Waxman, the ranking Democrat on the House Government Reform Committee. "Bud Selig has said he won't look back at what happened in the '90s to make sure it doesn't happen again in the future."

Selig has been flashing new political skills. In April, he boldly broke with the players union on the issue of penalties. His demand: a 50-game suspension for first-time violators, 100 games for a second offense, a lifetime ban for a third. He also asked the union to agree to independent testing, more frequent tests and a ban on amphetamines.

Finally, it was Selig who was framing the public debate. And when the commissioner returned to Capitol Hill on Sept. 28 with Hall of Famers Aaron, Lou Brock, Phil Niekro, Robin Roberts and Ryne Sandberg in tow, he glided through his testimony. As the Senate Commerce Committee accepted his arguments, Fehr was left alone on the hot seat. "Are you and the players in such rarified atmosphere that you don't see this as a transcendent issue, beyond collective bargaining?" Senator John McCain asked Fehr. "Don't you get it? Don't you understand?"

THESE DAYS, owners and players are battling mostly over details of punishment. Both sides have agreed on the basic structure of MLB's drug policy, which both Selig and Fehr claim is "working."

"Working draft" is more like it. Baseball's policy—which has already been changed once and is headed for more revisions currently under discussion—has all the omissions and ambiguities of an early-stage document. But while MLB and the union

try to get the details right, baseball continues to lose ground in the race against anabolics. Although players think the policy is already working, they also acknowledge there are still ways to beat it.

Nobody understands this better than Victor Conte, who will be heading to prison for four months on Dec. 1 for funneling steroids to star athletes. After taking a close look at the MLB drug policy at the request of *The Magazine* in late September, he concluded that it is still remarkably easy for players to cheat. Conte suspects players are already turning to oral rather than injectable steroids, because they clear the body faster. Something that he says may be making clubhouse rounds is testosterone undecanoate, brown, football-shape pills also known as the beans that are taken four times daily and clear the body four days later. Useful stuff in a sport that guarantees each player will be tested only once per season.

Conte's experience has also taught him that pro ballplayers juice up most heavily in the off-season. But while MLB's policy states players "shall be subject to" off-season testing, the two sides haven't figured out yet how to make that work. Then there's the elephant in the room of anabolics, human growth hormone. Scientists are just beginning to understand its scary side effects, but Conte knows if he wanted to get the best-quality hGH, he could get it in 10-unit, easily replaceable twist-off cartridges from Denmark for just $1,000. MLB bans growth hormone, but there is no urine test for it. There's also insulin, which is a favorite among bodybuilders for its muscle-building effects, but is not covered by the current policy.

"A professional baseball player," says Conte, "can drive a Mack truck through the loopholes in the current antidoping program being administered."

ON OCT. 1, Mariano Rivera tossed a Johnny Damon comebacker to Tino Martinez to seal a Yankees win at Fenway, and the club's eighth straight AL East title. As his teammates streamed out of the visitors dugout, Jason Giambi found Joe Torre at the mound and embraced him.

Later, Giambi lit up the cramped clubhouse, cranking music, embracing every teammate and coach within reach, popping Korbel corks. He talked to the media, slicking back his soaked hair, rambling on about how a year earlier he'd been so sick that he felt on the verge of collapse and had to be left off the playoff roster. He described how proud he was of his team as well as himself, for battling through injuries.

Giambi didn't bring up his BALCO testimony, and no reporter asked him about it. His teammates accepted his silence. And so did the fans: five days later, MLB announced they'd voted Giambi AL Comeback Player of the Year.

But when Giambi embraced Torre, was growth hormone coursing through his veins, the way he told a grand jury it had in 2003?

When Bonds passes The Babe next spring on his way to Aaron, will new designer steroids have found their way into his body, the way he testified the cream and the clear did two years ago?

Is MLB finally in a position to root out cheating?

Who knows?

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? For updates on the key players in this story, go to ESPN.com. Keyword: steroids

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO