Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, distinguished guests; I am humbled by this opportunity to appear before you today. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that my athletic ability and love for America's game would lead me to this place and the subject that has brought me before the Committee. When I decided to write my life's story, I was aware that what I revealed about myself and the game I played for a majority of my life would create a stir in the athletic world. I did not know that my revelations would reverberate in the halls of this chamber and in the hearts of so many.

I had hoped that what I experienced first hand, when revealed, would give insight into a darker side of a game that I loved. That maybe it would force baseball to acknowledge it condoned this activity for the sole purpose of increasing revenue at the gate. Unfortunately, by our presence here today, it is clear that MLB is not interested in admitting the truth. It is also clear that although others have tried to come out in support of my revelations, fear of repercussions from MLB haunts their conscience.

The book that I wrote was meant to convey one message. The preface makes my position very clear. I do not condone or encourage the use of any particular drugs, medicine, or illegal substances in any aspect of life. My book was informational and intended to enlighten the world about a problem that until my book was released had only been spoken of in whispers. I did not write my book to single out any one individual or player. I am saddened that the media and others have chosen to focus on the names in the book and not on the real culprit behind the issue. That the focus of my life and those involved in it may have inadvertently damaged players was not my intent. I hoped rather that finally the media and the world would try and dig beyond the easy answer and not fix

blame but fix the problem. A problem that would continue unabated if I did not call attention to it.

Because of my truthful revelations I have had to endure attacks on my credibility. I have had to relive parts of my life that I thought had been long since buried and gone. All of these attacks have been spurred on by an organization that holds itself above the law. An organization that chose to exploit its players for the increased revenue that lines its pockets and then sacrifice those same players to protect the web of secrecy that was hidden for so many years. The time has come to end this secrecy and to confront those who refuse to acknowledge their role in encouraging the behavior we are gathered to discuss.

I love the sport of baseball. I love it in its purest and simplest form. I still long for the time when I could pick up a bat and ball and hit one over the fence for the game-winning run. I am appreciative of the opportunities that the sport of baseball has given to me along with the quality of life it has provided. It permitted me to take care of my family and provide a better life for myself and others close to me. However, had I known that this opportunity would cost me so much, I would have refused the offer so many years ago.

The pressure associated with winning games, pleasing fans, and getting the big contract, led me, and others, to engage in behavior that would produce immediate results. This is the same pressure that leads the youth of today, other athletes and professionals, to engage in that same behavior. The time has come to address this issue and set the record straight about what risks are involved in that behavior. To send a message to

America, especially the youth that these actions, while attractive at first, may tarnish and harm you later. That sometimes there are things more important than simply money.

Why did I take steroids? The answer is simple. Because, myself and others had no choice if we wanted to continue playing. Because MLB did nothing to take it out of the sport. As a result, no one truly knew who was on muscle enhancing drugs. As a result, a player who wanted to continue to play, to perform as a star, was forced to put into their bodies whatever they could just to compete at the same level as those around them.

However, why we are before Congress today is only part of a much larger problem. The American public continues to place athletes in a position above everyone else. "Some people are born to greatness and others have greatness thrust upon them." A successful athlete is viewed as the voice of a city, state, and country. He or she, in playing their sport, often represents the very spirit of a nation and its people. We rarely see riots and the gut wrenching emotion so apparent in sports in any other forum. When the Boston Red Sox failed to get to the World Series two years ago the pain echoed throughout the fans as a personal attack on the city and on the individual residents there. When a Chicago Cubs fan got caught up in the moment and interfered with the game, he was attacked, vilified, and forced to move and change his life.

Such emotional investment is felt by the players daily. We want only to please those who hold us in such high esteem. We feel deeply the obligation that we each have to perform and win. It is a burden that we take on willingly and without hesitation or regret. However, perhaps, in addition to addressing this pressing issue we should take the

opportunity to look at the priority that we place on athletes and athletics and change our focus.

Baseball owners and the players union have been very much aware of the undeniable fact that as a nation we will do anything to win. They turned a blind eye to the clear evidence of steroid use in baseball. Why? Because it sold tickets and resurrected a game that had recently suffered a black eye from a player strike. The result was an intentional act by baseball to promote, condone and encourage the players to do whatever they had to do to win games, bring back the fans, and answer the bottom line. Salaries went up, revenue increased and owners got richer. But this comes with a cost.

MLB issued press releases years ago stating clearly the position that banned substances that enhanced performance were not a part of MLB. MLB set forth "for cause testing" to support this position. However, during my entire career no player was ever tested for performance enhancing substances. "For Cause" became a hollow threat that was never used by anyone involved with MLB. It was again made clear that press releases were the only thing MLB was going to do to "clean up" MLB's image. The duplicity present throughout my career continues today.

Many have said that my motivation for revealing this problem is myriad; revenge, monetary gain, vindication. The truth is that I would have played baseball for free. I even offered to play for free some years ago and to donate my salary to charity just to be a part of the game. This offer was rejected and MLB turned its back on me just as it had turned a blind eye to the drugs that were running rampant through the sport. My motivation is nothing more than a clearing of conscience and an effort to resurrect a sport that has given joy to so many.

I am moved by the efforts Congress is taking to address this problem. I am humbled that my book may have played a small part in setting forth this juggernaut. I am hopeful that it will yield a positive result.

As I sit here today I would be remiss if I did not again stress that I do not condone the use of any drugs or illegal substances. I urge parents to become more active and involved in the lives of their children. I hope that my message will be received as it is intended, that we, as professional athletes, are no better than anyone else. We just have a special ability that permits us to play ball. We should not be held up to any higher standard of behavior than any other mother or father. Our children's heroes should not be solely the athletes they watch, but more importantly the parents who are with them each day.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I hope that my statements and answers to those questions posed to me will help find a solution to this problem. That the intentional failure of MLB to address this issue will finally be put to rest, and that those who follow me into this sport will have the opportunity to do so free of the pressure to compromise themselves simply for increased revenue.

To those players who have been thrust into this debate I simply ask them to tell the truth as I have told the truth. To join with me and help resurrect the sport we love from where the owners and union have let it go.

Thank you.

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Jose Canseco, Jr.