



When dealing with made-up words, it's good to have an idea of what you intend them to mean. The thing is, with "Ualdology", I'm not sure what to do with it. Is it a play on **apology, eulogy, or the study of something**

? That something, of course, would be one Ubaldo Jimenez.

Let's just start with the oft criticized Indians pitcher himself, looking at who he is and, perhaps more importantly, who he is not. First off, he was not a summer rental. At the time, it was quite apparent that the Indians agreed to a price-tag that came with some expectations of reliability over multiple seasons, as club-friendly as Jimenez's deal with the Rockies may have been. Forget that we now know there's probably not much in the way of special when it comes to Drew Pomeranz or Alex White, on the morning of July 30, 2001, that was a big chunk of the future of the rotation. Little did we know.

It isn't like he was lighting the world on fire with the Rockies in 2011, or that he was even a shadow of his brilliant 2010-self. One year he was throwing the first no-hitter in Colorado Rockies history, starting for the National League in the All-Star game, and finishing third in the Cy Young balloting. The next, he's 6-9, the ERA is up, he's giving up almost 3 times as many home runs per start, and spiraling himself into a 5 and fly guy. He also finds himself as the centerpiece in the blockbuster deadline deal of 2011, somehow. It made sense; the Indians were a game and a half behind the division leading Tigers, while the Rockies were 10 games out at the time. It was unclear what exactly he was supposed to be, maybe the 1-A to Justin Masterson's 1, but no one was thinking 4-4 with an ERA over 5.

So, he wasn't a carbon copy of what CC Sabathia was to the Brewers when the Indians dumped him for a package built around Matt LaPorta in 2008, but few are. In 17 starts, CC was 11-2 with an ERA under 2, and he essentially carried the Brewers to the postseason on his shoulders, but no one expected that of Jimenez. In fact, forget Sabathia, Rick Sutcliffe, or any

other pitcher whose star would shine brighter in greener pastures after being dealt out of Cleveland. Ken Hill was an acquisition that worked for the Indians in 1995. The 3.98 ERA wasn't brilliant, but he went 4-1 in his 11 starts and the team was even 5-1 when he registered a No Decision. Before I get the nasty e-mails and tweets, I must acknowledge the team went 44-22 after acquiring Hill in '95, but 21-37 after the Jimenez deal two years ago, so no one is putting those numbers on one guy who gets the ball every fifth day.

Then came 2012. He struggled in Spring Training and told everyone he wasn't worried about it. Yielding a .316 average to opposing hitters, and an ERA over 7 to boot, suggested that he was the only one that wasn't worrying. After that, when the games started to count, he went out there and led the American League...in losses with 19. A year and a half in, this thing was looking worse than the deal Lando made with Vader in Cloud City.

Hope springs eternal for all pitchers and catchers in February, as they reported to Goodyear for Spring Training. I got my first glimpse of Ublado in Phoenix on February 25th; he looked good, good enough to wonder if he'd challenge Masterson in Terry Francona's eyes enough to get the ball on Opening Day. That dream was squashed the next day, when Tito told Masterson he'd be the man in Toronto on April 2nd.

It was obviously the right call, and Jimenez was a train wreck against San Diego, a week later, in 2 innings of work. To be fair, Mickey Callaway is the 4th pitching coach Jimenez has worked with, but they seemed to have figured it out this year, whether it was a mental thing or a mechanical thing, something has been clicking with U of late.

This is where the apology might kick in, the only question is which way to direct this sentiment. Does Ubaldo Jimenez apologize to Cleveland fans for two years of sand-bagging? Does the media apologize for not believing in his potential, despite the fact that there's been nothing concrete east of the Rockies to dispute such doubt. Or, are the fans due an apology, ahem--a "Ubalogy", from the organization for not getting the real Ubaldo Jimenez out of his shell sooner? I recommend that no one holds their breath awaiting any such spoken word of sorry, so just stick those in a sack.

Eight strikeouts and a win in Oakland on August 17th was a good start, even if the walks were up and he had to depart in the sixth inning because the pitch count was up. It was his only win in the record books in a month of August that only saw one really bad start from the former Colorado ace, despite a 1-4 record on the month. Six days later, the Twins got to him for 4

Ubaldology

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doubles early, but he stayed in the game and struck out 10; the Tribe lost because the offense was epically dormant on that particular Friday night, but this was the Ubaldo that John Mirabelli pushed really hard for Chris Antonetti to pull the trigger for.

Even if it hasn't been showing up in the standings, he has kept on keeping on ever since. Another ten strikeout night, this one with seven innings and 3 full trips through the Braves lineup in Atlanta, resulted in a loss last week. He finally got the win in a big game with playoff implications against Baltimore on Tuesday night, even if the stat line was nothing spectacular.

I mentioned earlier that we'd have loved for him to come out of his shell sooner, but sooner than what? Sooner than now, would have been nice, sure, but specifically sooner than the last month in a contract year. As much faith and good will that you want to send his way right now, you can't help but wonder why this guy can't get motivated by anything other than pending free agency in his last handful of starts before he walks.

This begins the eulogy portion of the narrative. Look, I like money, so I'm not faulting anyone for going out and getting theirs, especially when it's there for the taking. I don't know what Ubaldo Jimenez can get on the open market; he'll be 30 this winter and it will be difficult to overlook that he's been 23-30 since being acquired by the Indians 25 months ago. Maybe he sees something special in Terry Francona's coaching staff, namely Callaway, or this team's overall potential. I don't think he can do anything, short of carrying this team deep into the playoffs, to value himself out of what Cleveland can afford to pay to retain him, assuming either side opts out of the mutual option to keep him on the books in 2014 for \$8 million. That seems a little high to me for a pitcher that, realistically, is on the back 9 of his career, a career that's seen an average W-L record of 13-12 and an ERA sitting right at 4.

This is the portion of the program where we wrap up Ubaldology, having analyzed, apologized, and said good-bye to someone who might just be around for the long haul. If he's brilliant in September, and I mean the type of brilliant that spells a 163rd game, does anyone even seek an apology? He came from Denver to get the Indians into the post-season, are we going to nitpick about it being two years later than we cared for? If he's 30-30 as a member of the Indians, but back in the Dominican shooting hoops and awaiting free agency while the Tigers and Braves are playing each other in October, can we just be happy that the Tribe got more out of him than Colorado did from any of the "prospects" they loaded in the '84 Sheepdog headed for Colorado? I think so.

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The study is incomplete, as of right now, but with Justin Masterson on the shelf, he can crash and burn or erase any ill-will this fan base has developed for him over the last three seasons.