

Conveniently Confused

Written by {ga=paulcousineau}

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It being the night of the All-Star Game (which interests some people, I guess), I was going to take a little break from posting much of anything as this created “mid-point” of the season just means that I’m not able to watch baseball that I care about. However, I find myself forced out of my cocoon (and watching DVD’s of “The Wire”) to deal with this absurdity of the revisionist history of CC Sabathia.

In case you missed it, [The Hefty Lefty articulated his lifeview in some sort of alternate reality when he stated this at the All-Star Weekend](#) :

When asked about his history with Lee and the Indians, Sabathia said, “That wasn’t our fault. They traded us. That’s on them.”

Sabathia feels the 2007 Indians, who reached the seventh game of the ALCS, had greatness in their future.

“If they had kept everybody at least for two more years, I think we had a chance of having a really good team,” said Sabathia. “You look back on Cleveland and the only one that’s left is Jake [Westbrook]. It’s kind of sad to me.

“We all came up together. We grew up together. It’s been a tough thing to watch.”

Never mind that Sabathia wasn’t taken to task immediately after making these comments, as Castrovince has a blistering and brilliant response to this, but let’s just set up some context here before getting to that as Sabathia’s comments presuppose that he would have stayed in Cleveland, along with every other significant player from that 2007 team that WAS signed through 2010...except for CC. You want to throw Blake in there as the other FA after 2007...have at it, but the fact is that CC was the only player that played a major role in 2007 that wasn’t under contract through this season.

This is backtracking a little bit and I’m loathe to even re-hash this, but if CC wants to open up this Pandora’s Box by making some asinine comment, let’s get after it. First, let’s all remember what happened in the season after that 2007 team, the one that “had greatness in their future”

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fell apart in short order and what CC's role was in that slow start. As much as I'd like to continue to black out that portion of the Indians' recent history (because the first three months of the 2008 season killed the Indians of the late-2000's as we knew them), it's time to dredge up this ugliness, if only to remind our former aCCe what exactly happened that prevented that group of players sticking around for "at least two more years".

Lest anyone forget, CC's April line in 2008 looked like this:
7.88 ERA, 1.78 WHIP, .911 OPS against in 32 IP over 6 starts

This, of course, came on the heels of CC posting these lines in the 2007 Playoffs:
8.80 ERA, 2.21 WHIP in 15 1/3 IP over 3 starts

That included a 10.45 ERA, 2.32 WHIP "performance" by the team's "ace" in the ALCS against the Red Sox during which the Indians lost BOTH of Sabathia's starts, outscored by a 17-4 margin in those 2 games. In case you don't remember, the Indians were up 3-1 in that series...no thanks to Sabathia.

Debate away about whether the Indians traded Lee and Martinez too early in 2009, but Sabathia was dealt from a team that was 37-51 on July 7th, 14 games behind the AL Central-leading White Sox. Just for some perspective on this, the 2010 Indians were 34-54 after having played the same amount of games as that 2008 team and were 15 1/2 games back with an identical number of games left in the season.

Let me put that down one more time so you can fully grasp how absurd this idea is from Sabathia:

Indians 2008

37-51 after 88 games

Last place, 14 games out of Central

Indians 2010

34-54 after 88 games

Last place, 15 1/2 games out of Central

That team, THAT 37-51 team with a player that would win the Cy Young Award (and it wasn't CC, who was the one coming off of a Cy Young season) "had greatness in their future", but CC broke off contract extension negotiations with the Indians in Spring Training, saying that he would re-visit the situation after the season, when he would presumably dip his toe in the water of Free Agency. With 84 games left in that 2007 season, the Indians did what every team outside of about three in MLB would do as they dealt their pending FA who had broken off contract negotiations for more than just two draft picks in the 2009 MLB Draft.

We all know how this story continued, with Sabathia signing a 7-year, \$161M deal with the richest team in baseball, dwarfing the the final offer by the Indians, which was reported to be 4 additional years past 2008 at \$18M per plus an extra \$7M on his 2008 salary that made the offer a total of 4 years and \$79M. The deal didn't just dwarf what the Indians had offered, but flew past the previous contract that was the largest to date for a MLB pitcher, which had been Johan Santana's 6-year, \$137.5M deal with the Mets.

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CC got what he wanted and, truthfully, what he had every right to as a Free Agent – to cash in as a 27-year-old front-of-the-rotation arm and maximize his value at the peak of his earning potential. But that isn't what made CC's comments so obtuse...for that we go right to [the piece from Anthony Castrovince](#)

as he pulls no punches in a..., well, a diatribe that calls to mind James Carville on the dais in "Old School" saying, "that was perfect...I have nothing..."

Read the whole piece, but here's one of the money shots:

This is the reality. But now, two and a half years later, CC -- which, in this case, stands for Clouded Context -- is selling a fantasy. An alternate universe in which those heinous, loveless Indians owners cast him out of the place he loved.

It's baloney.

Essentially, Sabathia got lucky. Because 50 years from now, Indians fans won't remember him as the guy who walked away from the Tribe for the big payday elsewhere. He won't go down with the likes of Albert Belle, Manny Ramirez and Jim Thome. Rather, he'll be remembered as the Cy Young winner the Indians stupidly dealt in his prime.

Nevermind, of course, that the Indians were forced to deal Sabathia because he was going to walk away three months later and because he and his teammates crumbled upon the weight of expectations in 2008. Nevermind that the primary reason that '07 team -- a "good team" in its own right, having won 96 games in the regular season -- didn't ascend to the World Series like it should have was because Sabathia was outpitched in Games 1 and 5.

If Sabathia were being honest with himself and honest with the fans, he would have said, "This is a business, and it's difficult for a team in a smaller market like Cleveland to afford to keep its core intact. That's why it's a shame we weren't able to take advantage of the special opportunity we had in '07. And as the ace of that pitching staff, I take the brunt of the blame."

Seriously, [go read the whole piece](#) if you didn't at your first chance...

What's most frustrating is that the majority of Indians fans blindly nod their head at CC's comments, quick to blame the Indians and not realizing that CC wasn't going to sign in Cleveland and he got his golden parachute BY being traded, leaving him as a gracious athlete who was traded by the team that he "loved so much" and "grew up in". Most "fans" will remember him as a class act because [CC took out the full-page ad in the paper](#) (and thanks to reader Richard Sheir for finding this) and he will eternally viewed as a player who was screwed by an organization who didn't want to pay him and more interested in cashing him in for a couple of prospects, instead of the 2 draft picks that the team would have received WHEN (not if) he left.

Meanwhile, here is CC writing his own revisionist history, after [openly campaigning for LeBron to leave the North Coast \(to NY of all places\)](#)

, blithely ignorant of the situation that caused the brutally fast breaking down of the 2007 team and how large of a role his decisions and performance played in that very tear-down.

However CC wants to remember his exit from Cleveland and the events leading up to that departure are up to him as we've learned over the last week how athletes are able to rationalize their decisions to fit neatly into their own personal agendas. If he sees himself as some sort of "victim" while casting the net of blame over the Front Offices at Carnegie and Ontario while he

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plays on a team full of mercenaries in an organization that has annual revenue streams of close to \$600M (where they CAN simply “keep guys together”), then that’s fine with me...whatever makes him sleep better at night.

Just tell him to stop opening his mouth and letting his memory of the events of 2007 and 2008 and his opinion of what has transpired since reach my eyes and ears...