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# Andy Pettitte's Half-Assed Apology

Posted December 16, 2007 | 02:19 AM (EST)

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Andy Pettitte released a statement confirming he cheated and used human growth hormone just as detailed in the Mitchell Report. Pettitte is a very nice guy, one of my favorite Yankees and a prominent Christian in the world of athletics and I love him for it. Unfortunately, his statement is defensive, petty, and hair-splitting; he seems to be engaging in damage control rather than making the heart-felt confession he should and still could. And let's get one thing straight: Pettitte is not being "courageous" or a stand-up guy. He was caught cheating in the worst scandal in baseball history, he was outed convincingly to the world and unless he successfully sued the people making the claims he knew to be true, Pettitte would forever be tarred as a blot on baseball. Yes, he's admitting the obvious and that's more than most (so far), but he never came forward of his own volition and he's still making excuses for his action. That's not being courageous. **Let's look at his statement as quoted in the New York Times.**

He begins by attacking: "First, I would like to say that contrary to media reports, I have never used steroids. I have no idea why the media would say that I have used steroids, but they have done so repeatedly. This is hurtful to me and my family," says Pettitte. Uh, Andy, steroids are not somehow "worse" than human growth hormone. It's like attacking people who say you've used cocaine a second before you admit using heroin. HGH and steroids are illegal without a doctor's valid prescription. Being shocked that you're linked to one when you've illegally used the other, breaking federal law in the process, is a little rich.

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Then Pettitte tries to downplay his cheating: "In 2002 I was injured. I had heard that human growth hormone could promote faster healing for my elbow. I felt an obligation to get back to my team as soon as possible. For this reason, and only this reason, for

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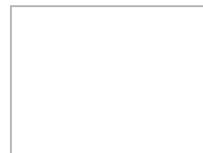
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This Story to Digg ▶ two days I tried human growth hormone. Though it was not against baseball rules, I was not comfortable with what I was doing, so I stopped. This is it -- two days out of my life; two days out of my entire career, when I was injured and on the disabled list."

Again, using human growth hormone is AGAINST THE LAW, federal law to be exact. There was no specific baseball rule against that particular illegal drug. But any action that brings dishonor to the game is illegal under the rules of baseball and can be punished by the commissioner. They've never specifically banned the use of a motocross bike to get around the bases quicker, but it's still cheating. Further, cheating to recover from an injury quicker is not somehow less awful than cheating to gain muscle mass. In fact, it can be argued that it's worse. Using HGH to recover from an injury is a short-term strategy that minimizes your health risks, is impossible to detect since there is no useful test for HGH -- unlike steroids -- and won't leave any permanent changes like a head the size of a watermelon or arms like Popeye. Further, casting his cheating as simply trying to shoulder responsibility and help his team is just terrible. No one has a "responsibility" to cheat. Acting as if cheating was somehow a noble course of action is disheartening to say the least. He was taking advantage of every other player on every other team who was injured but refused to cheat and break the law so they could give their team an unfair advantage. And it benefitted Pettitte, too, both at the time and today.

Then comes the kicker: "If what I did was an error in judgment on my part, I apologize. I accept responsibility for those two days. Everything else written or said about me knowingly using illegal drugs is nonsense, wrong and hurtful. I have the utmost respect for baseball and have always tried to live my life in a way that would be honorable. I wasn't looking for an edge; I was looking to heal."

There's nothing I hate more than people who use caveats like "If what I said was offensive to some" or "If my robbing that bank of \$50,000 inconvenienced any customers" or "If my slapping you in the face was painful...." How could Pettitte say "IF" what he did was an error of judgment? Of course it was an error in judgment. And everything else said about him being "nonsense, wrong and hurtful?" No, once you've cheated with one illegal drug, it's not nonsense in any way shape or form for people to wonder what other drugs you've taken or how else you might have cheated. And bouncing back days or weeks early from an injury is not just "healing" but of course an edge, a huge edge over players and teams that play by both the rules and spirit of the game. Suggesting otherwise when you want people to think you're apologizing is offensive and shows how far Pettitte has to go in order to truly accept what he's done and begin making amends.

And finally, he says, "If I have let down people that care about me, I am sorry, but I hope that you will listen to me carefully and understand that two days of perhaps bad judgment should not ruin a lifetime of hard work and dedication. I have tried to do things the right way my entire life, and, again, ask that you put those two days in the proper context. People that know me will know that what I say is true."

Again with the caveats. Pettitte says "if" he has let people down? In what world does he not think cheating and bringing shame on himself and baseball is letting people down? Then he calls his cheating "perhaps bad judgment?" What makes him think it might not have been bad judgment?

As a die-hard Yankee fan, I have cheered Pettitte repeatedly and was thrilled he came back to the team. But he broke my heart by cheating, more so than any other player on the list. He let me down. Now he's let me down again by not taking full responsibility for what he's done. Pettitte can and must be suspended for a number of games next season by Commissioner Bud Selig. It would be a shame if that discouraged other players from coming forward, taking their lumps and starting to rebuild their tattered images. Do they think finally 'fessing up after being caught red-handed means they shouldn't be punished? But Pettitte has a long way to go before he gets beyond his defensiveness, makes a truly graceful confession and begins to receive the compassion he needs. He could start by trying again and releasing a statement like this:

"I am in fact guilty of everything described in the Mitchell report. I used human growth hormone and I did so knowing that it was against the law and against the spirit if not the technical rules of baseball at the time. I was cheating. I did so to rebound more quickly from an injury and gain an unfair advantage over other teams whose injured players did not use HGH. I did it so I could pitch in more games and bring more glory to myself and my team. It was cheating and it was wrong.

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"I am not being courageous by admitting this. I have been caught red-handed, so to speak. I could not sue my accusers in a court of law because I knew they were speaking the truth. I don't deserve any credit for admitting what has become obvious to the world: I cheated. My word doesn't count for much right now, but I hope you will believe me when I say that this incident was the only time I cheated in my entire career. I never used steroids, I never used HGH at any other time except to recover from this injury and I never cheated in any other way either the rules or the spirit of fair play that is so important in sports.

"I cheated and I will have to live with that forever. Cheating only a little still makes you a cheater. No game, no personal achievement, no salary, no pennant, and no World Series ring is worth losing your reputation and honor over. I forgot that. I have let down my teammates at the time, my current teammates, my fans and the game of baseball both by cheating and by not stepping forward sooner and accepting responsibility for my actions, which have no justification.

"Most of all, I've let down my family and friends and I've set a poor example for my children. Cheating is always wrong. It's a very simple concept and I know it and yet I did it. I expect to be punished for breaking the rules of the game and look forward to accepting that punishment as the first step in rehabilitating my reputation. I have been blessed to play this game I love and become a very rich man in the process. I will feel blessed if I am allowed to play it in the future and if other younger players learn from my mistakes and realize that cheating in any way shape or form will punish you, whether you're caught or not. I hope you will all bless me with your forgiveness. And someday I hope I will have earned that forgiveness. Thank you."

Try it, Andy. A real act of contrition is the first step.

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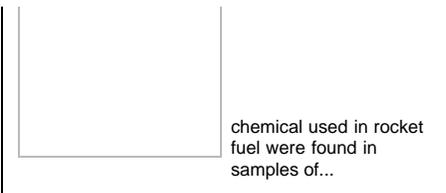
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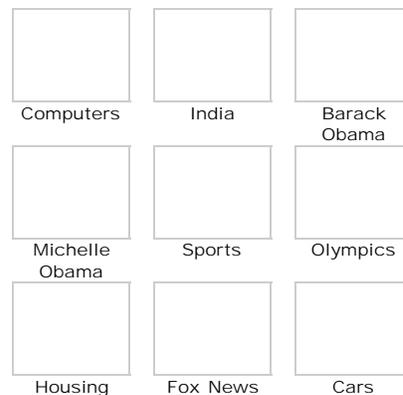
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**huffnpuffn** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of huffnpuffn](#) [permalink](#)

His comments and his Christian background match perfectly. Judge others but not me.

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**CowgirlAmy** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of CowgirlAmy](#) [permalink](#)

Andy Pettite is a cheat and will forever be marked as such.

He is a well-known fanatical Christian nutjob. Isn't it so ironic that so many of these right wing Christians turn out to be liars and cheats? ( Haggard, Craig, Gannon, Foley, I could go on all day).

Andy is also all about money. After leaving the Yankees to return home to Houston, what does he do? Promptly turn around for NY again when the cash is flowin'.

Andy Pettite- just another everyday Conservative Hypocrite.

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**Tony Sachs** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Tony Sachs](#) [permalink](#)

Michael, one thing the Republican Party has taught us is that it's not wise to look at the world in black and white. Andy Pettitte with his two HGH injections and lame apology is not the same as, say, Jose Canseco's years of steroid abuse and reputation-damaging book.

I assume that at some point Andy will come around and at least act more contrite than he did the other day. But at the same time, I just can't bring myself to see this as a huge deal.

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**DHeil** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of DHeil](#) [permalink](#)

Michael,

As others have pointed out, your perspective on Andy Pettite is a tad out of proportion - IF Andy Pettite is telling the truth about the two times he used HGH. Let us consider that his confession DID sound a bit like the teen who was just caught drunk at the high school dance. "I only had two beers, Mom!" When the teen really had ten beers.

If Pettite is telling the truth about the quantities he consumed, then your essay is a criticism of confession styles and I think you may have misrepresented the point of your article. His confession certainly failed against the yardstick of humble and direct apologies we expect, but never get, from celebs.

But if he is telling the truth, then he deserves less harsh treatment, and more forgiveness, than you have afforded him in your article, Michael.

If, on the other hand, Pettite was lying about his amount of HGH use, he deserves to be nailed to the wall as a cheater and liar.

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**rwe** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of rwe](#) [permalink](#)

not really thrilled , especially since frank Thomas who did not use lost to Giambi for an MVP....BUT, then every hollywood,media, office type who ever had their bodies enhanced by plastic surgery to get an edge is every bit as despicable...Boob jobs, nose jobs, liposuction, et al

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**RobertCC** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of RobertCC](#) [permalink](#)

Mr. Giltz is going way overboard in his condemnation of Andy Pettite, who even Giltz admits is one of the good guys in pro-baseball. Pettite made a small mistake, small because he did it only twice in one

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year of a 12 year career. This is not abusive, and most probably had a microscopic effect on his career athletic performance. It's a venial sin, in the vernacular of Catholicism.

Giltz' raising Pettite's minor transgression to the level of a capital crime shows a complete lack of proportionality. Evidently Mr. Giltz has lived such a perfect life, he cannot fathom how another human being could make a mistake. Take a deep breath, Mr. Giltz. Pettite's sin is not that big of a deal.

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 **mediamarv** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of mediamarv](#) [permalink](#)

Why would you love him for being a "prominent Christian" when everyone knows religion does not belong in baseball, talent does??

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 **SkimaskBob** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of SkimaskBob](#) [permalink](#)

oh relax ... all this about "the honor" of the game and blah blah blah ... it is entertainment ... the bottomline went up when players started whacking the ball out of the park more and more and farther and farther ... the bottom line went up when big name pitchers would face these godlike ball whacker guys out ... the fact is that this is so tiny in the grand scheme I'm shocked that Andy Peti's apology warrants this kind of tongue lashing - lay off the entertainers, they're as dumb as the rest of us. Pick on someone who's supposed to be better - those elected to lead the free world.

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At least he fessed up to it. I'm a Red Sox fan, but have always liked Pettite. While this is disappointing, I didn't have the same reaction you did to his statement.

Assuming what he says is true, and I currently have no reason to think it isn't, I understand his reasons for trying it. I'm not saying it's acceptable, but I understand why he'd consider using HGH under baseball's "don't use steroids or HGH, wink, wink" policy under Bud "Lite" Selig.

Yes, as you say, HGH is AGAINST THE LAW. Speeding is AGAINST THE LAW. Cheating on your income taxes is AGAINST THE LAW. But people do these things all the time. Again, doesn't make it OK, but let's give this a little bit of perspective.

One final thought, by dumping all over Pettite, the first guy named in the report to admit he did do something, you seem to be sending a subtle message to other players who have used HGH or steroids: You're better off lying or keeping it to yourself.

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 **BMSstudy** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of BMSstudy](#) [permalink](#)

Anyone votying for the Hall has a decision to make; is the evdience strong enough (in my opinion,) to believe this person cheated.

1. Pettitte - yes
2. Bonds - yes
3. Clemens - not yet, but I assume we will be there shortly
4. Armstrong - no
5. Jones (and a lot of other track / cycling stars) - yes

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 **InofTouch** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of InofTouch](#) [permalink](#)

do you know he cheated and was using HGH during his time on the pitchers mount. Amazing how many of us here now became scientist and figure out the corrlation between the Dosage and the effects when injected.

I'm not giving him a free pass on his actions because it against the law nor the speech but I'm certainly giving him the benefit of the doubt that it didn't some way effect the way he play.

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 **tompoe** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of tompoe](#) [permalink](#)

To all the children, please support Pettit, and start taking steroids, today. As he said, you have a responsibility to yourself and your team to be the best you can be. And always question authority by pushing every legal tactic to its limits. Never admit to wrongdoing, ever. Keep the burden on others to

prove and reprove again and again, but never admit you're wrong. This works great for causing parental strife in your home.

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**charlietuna11** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of charlietuna11](#) [permalink](#)

andy is one of my favorite yankees.like mr. giltz,i cant buy into his alibi..andys fast ballthat used to run between 88 and 91 m.p.r. before hgh was topping off at 95 m.p.r. i was never a big clemens supporter and really became suspicious of him when he started praising bonds as an all time great.that to me was a red flag.i'm surprised at andy.although i feel he was influenced by clemens,the responsibility is his and his alone..i can feel sorry for him but i cant yrust him again any more than i can trust joe torre.to me it would be impossible to have 24 members of your team on steriods and be completely oblivious to these facts.i was truly sad to see him leave the yankees,now i couldn;t be happier.as for brian cashman,it just doesn't seem possible as there general mgr. his dug out could be filled with so many juiced players without his compliance..apparently theres no such thing as vetting when productive players become available.i'm tempted to say that fans deserve better,but i;m reading articles that say that fans are not that upset about the cheaters especially if there from the home team..i guess i shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the word fan is derived from the word FANATIC..

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**AnotherunhappyDemocrat** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of AnotherunhappyDemocrat](#) [permalink](#)

In my line of work, I periodically have to bust people for cheating. I don't mean cutting corners; I mean blatantly cheating. It is the most unpleasant part of my job, by far, and is often made even worse when those I catch lie to my face or, at the very least, try to weasel their ways out of whatever fate awaits them. (I never go after anyone without having overwhelming evidence) While I don't know about Pettitte's case, because I haven't seen the evidence, regarding Clemons and Bonds, I say make examples of them. Punish them. Ban them from the Hall for at least a certain period of time. (I think the writers will kindly oblige here) Make them confess. Heck, make them perform some sort of national penance to discourage younger people from following their examples. Try to do something to make the Mitchell Report be received as nothing more than a big yawn.

Oh, and we fans - and I am one - can also have an impact here. We can put our money where our mouths are. We can refuse to go to or watch/listen to games until MLB cleans up its act. We can refuse to buy any MLB products until they act on this report. We can use our money to force Selig and friends to actually do something right for once!

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**Quaoar** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Quaoar](#) [permalink](#)

Andy Pettitte being a prominent Christian has nothing to do with the story. It doesn't make Pettitte special or a better person than anyone else and it certainly didn't stop him from cheating.

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