

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

STATEMENT OF
WILLIAM ROGER CLEMENS

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Chairman Waxman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to be here today. Before I begin, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Representative Tom Lantos. I did not know Congressman Lantos, but I have learned about him in preparation for my appearance before this Committee. I understand that he was a Holocaust survivor and that he lived a life full of courage, conviction and accomplishment. I know that his passing is a heartfelt loss to this Committee and our country.

I appreciate the opportunity to tell this Committee and the public—under oath—what I have been saying all along: I have never used steroids, human growth hormone, or any other type of illegal performance enhancing drugs. I think these types of drugs should play no role in athletics at any level, and I fully support Senator Mitchell's conclusions that steroids have no place in baseball. However, I take great issue with the report's allegation that I used these substances. Let me be clear again: I did not.

I have tried to model my baseball career, and indeed my entire life, on the premise that "your body is your temple." The suggestion that I would use steroids or other illegal drugs is totally incompatible with who I am and what I stand for. I have

worked hard to succeed at every level. I have given speeches to young people all over the country about the dangers of taking shortcuts to reach your goals. Steroids are a dangerous shortcut. I have made no secret about my feelings on this subject, and I practice what I preach.

I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. My step-father died when I was a young boy. I was raised by a hard-working mother and grandmother who took care of and provided for six children. My mother was a wonderful woman who sacrificed her own needs for the needs of her children. My mother worked several jobs to make sure that I always had new sporting equipment, even though she often went without new clothes. My mother insisted that I attend college, despite that fact that professional baseball teams approached me after high school.

My mother nurtured my interest in sports, including baseball, from a very young age. She taught me through her example that hard work and determination were the only ways to be successful and reach goals. Shortcuts were never an option. It probably comes as no surprise that I firmly believe that much of what I have accomplished would not have been possible without the valuable lessons instilled in me by my mother and grandmother.

I have not gotten to where I am today by accident. My hard work and dedication were instrumental to me achieving many career goals. The awards, accomplishments, and milestones I have achieved during my career have been fully documented by the media and I will not repeat them here. I will say, however, that none of these

accomplishments came easily and none of them came in a bottle of steroids or human growth hormone.

I cherish my major league baseball experience, but I have always said that baseball is what I do; it is not who I am. Anyone who has spent time around me knows that my family is and has always been my top priority. My wife, Debbie, and my sons—Koby, Kory, Kacy, and Kody—mean more to me than anything in this world. Having said that, baseball has definitely provided me with significant opportunities off the field.

I have had the privilege and honor to visit our troops in Kuwait, Qatar, and Afghanistan and salute them as our nation's true role models. Through the work of my foundation, I have had many chances to influence special needs youngsters. I have had many chances to influence young athletes who have just begun to experience the value and challenges of working with a team to achieve a common goal. These experiences mean as much to me, if not more, than anything I ever accomplished on the field.

Over the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to work with many trainers, chiropractors, physical therapists and other professionals to try to educate myself and to use the knowledge they had to keep my body in the best shape it could possibly be. Brian McNamee was one of the many people I met and worked with during my career.

I met McNamee while playing for the Toronto Blue Jays in 1998. I trusted him, put my faith in him, and brought him around my family and my children. I treated him just like I have done others I have met in my life; like family. There were times over the years in which I wondered about what kind of person he was and what he was doing

when he was not around me. I questioned McNamee about these things, and at the end of the day, I was willing to take him at his word and give him the benefit of the doubt. McNamee was good at what he did—helping me exercise, diet, and stay in shape. We shared an interest in grueling, military-style workouts, but I never asked him nor did he ever give me steroids or human growth hormone. I had no idea that this man would exploit the trust I gave him to try to save his own skin by making up lies that have devastated me and my family.

I am a positive person and enjoy doing things for others. I am not just a ballplayer; I am a human being. As I said before, baseball is what I do; it is not who I am. I played the game because of my love and respect for it, and I pride myself as an example for kids, my own as well as others. I have always tried to help anyone who crossed my path who was in need.

But here we are now, with me being accused of using steroids and cheating the game of baseball. If I am guilty of anything, it is of being too trusting of others; wanting to see the best in everyone; and being nice to everyone. If I am considered to be ignorant because of that, then so be it.

I have chosen to live my life with a positive attitude. Yet I am accused of being a criminal and I am not supposed to be angry about that?

If I keep my emotions in check, then I am accused of not caring.

When I kept quiet at the advice of my attorney until he could find out why in the world I was being accused of these things, I was accused of having something to hide, so I am guilty.

When I did speak out, I was accused of protesting too much, so I am guilty.

People who make false accusations should not be allowed to define another person's life. I have freely and without question shared the talents God gave me with children, young and old, and will continue to do so. I have been blessed with a will and heart that carry me on in life. I have had thousands of calls and emails from friends, working partners, teammates, fans, and men that have held the highest office in our country telling me to stand strong. These words are very welcomed during some very tough times for my family and me.

Do I think steroids are good for helping someone's performance? No. In fact, I think they are detrimental. Should there be more extensive testing? Yes. I think whatever is necessary for everyone involved to satisfy themselves that it is not going on, should be done.

At the end of the day, I have been accused of doing something that I did not do. I have been asked to prove that I did not do it. How in the world can I prove a negative? No matter what we discuss here today, I am never going to have my name restored. I know that a lot of people want me to say that I have taken steroids and be done with it. But I cannot in good conscience admit to doing something that I did not do; even if it would be easier to do so. That is not the type of person I am. Instead, I will try to set the record straight, and I will do so directly to Congress and under oath. I have been told that by doing this, I am subjecting myself to possible criminal prosecution. I know that some people will still think I am lying no matter what I say or do. And I know that because I've said that I didn't take steroids, it will look like an attack on Senator Mitchell's report. I am not saying Senator Mitchell's report is entirely wrong and I am not trying to convince those who have already made up their minds based only on an

allegation. For those with an open mind, however, I am saying that Brian McNamee's statements about me are wrong. Once again, I never took steroids or human growth hormone.