

JERRY COLEMAN

This conversation between Jerry Coleman and Walter Langford is being taped on Tuesday, May 10, 1988 In Adam's Mark Hotel in St. Louis.

WL: Okay, Jerry, tell me how you got going in baseball, what you did in the minors, and everything.

JC: Well, I was very young ~~when I was~~ ^{when} in San Francisco growing up, ~~there~~ it was quite a baseball hotbed. I played on a team called the Kennaelly Yankess, which was a minor league team. That team, believe it or not, had on it the current American League president, Bobby Brown, and Charlie Silvera, who later went to the Yankees, and Bill Wight, who played for the Yankees and other teams, and a pitcher named Karl Drews, and yours truly. And a lot of top prospects in the area, all gathered together by a scout named Joe Devine.

He was a very fatherly type and as much interested in the background of the player as he was in his playing skills. In those days the Yankees had this certain ~~type~~ ^{the Yankee} tradition that only a certain type of people put on ~~their~~ uniform. I'm not so sure that's totally true, but whatever.... And the role at that time for their scout out there was to get into the home, find out about the parents and the background. And I know that Joe passed up some pretty good ball players who went to the big leagues, because he didn't like their attitude or background or didn't think they were the right people. That's how it all started, and then the Yankee theory and image kept getting preached to me, and of course it didn't take too much, because Joe DiMaggio was then the big Yankee star, and I was growing up through his days. And my goal at that time was to become a Yankee, that was the one great desire I had in life. And in June of 1942 I graduated from high school. Just prior to that, as you know, we got into World War II.

Consequently, at that time I had a scholarship to USC to play baseball and basketball. My high school coach had me all set up. But when the war started, we all wanted to be heroes. And we couldn't wait to be 18, so I could go into the program I wanted - V-5 or Victor-5, which was Naval aviation. It was three months before I would be 18, so I thought, 'Well, I'll go out and play baseball.'

I signed a contract with the Mankees, and I went and played three months in Wellsville, New York. The season was over on September 6 and I would turn 18 on the 14th. And on the 14th or 15th I was standing in the Ferry Building in San Francisco, waiting to go into the service. That's how I got started in baseball. Then, when~~t~~ the war ended I went in 1946 with Kansas City^{in spring training,} where I had my first brush with one of the great men in this game that not many people know much about - Billy Meyer, who managed in the minors for the Yankees for years and then became the Pittsburgh Pirate manager, where he had Kiner and other stars. But he died young. ^{He} went from Kansas City to Binghamton and then the next year I was sent to Binghamton and played for Billy. In ~~Newark~~ 1948 I was sent to Newark, where I played under a guy named Bill Skiff. Late in that season I went up and joined the Yankee ball club under Bucky Harris. I finished the year there and then was with the Yankees on a full-time basis in 1949 under Casey Stengel, one of the classic characters in the game but a brilliant manager. The perfect manager. What Casey understood, and few managers - maybe LaSorda - understand today is that there's more to managing than just the game. It's the people, the front^{office,} the press. It's all these little things that are out there that many managers don't know how to deal with. Today Billy Martin is, though maybe at this point he's used up a lot, maybe one of the great minds of baseball. He creates attention. But the thing I would want in my manager, if I owned a ball club, is someone who would put that club or his name or his players in the press, because that's your natural advertising. Doesn't cost a nickel. And Casey could do this. That's why George Weiss, when he went to the Mets, hired Casey immediately.

Casey made the Mets famous. He made them more famous being bad than most people can make their clubs being good.

So I was with the Yankees for nine years and then I retired and went into the front office as personnel director. After a while I soured a little bit because I wasn't doing what I wanted to do. So I went into private business and then into broadcasting. When I left the Yankees I went with the Van Heusen Shirt Co. as their national sales manager in charge of sportswear. Carl Erskine, Andy Robustelli, and Jim Hearn were in there with me, and we developed in-store displays in major department stores. We'd hold clinics within the store that would attract attention. And we also opened up pro shops. Van Heusen at that time was a white shirt company, and they wanted to get into the sports shirt, like the Munsingwear's little penguin. They had a torch. We came up with a knit shirt and a golf sweater which was very popular in those days. All moderately priced. And we opened up hundreds of pro shops all over the country. What we really did was to develop a new line for them and a new resource in their marketing.

I wanted to get back to the West coast, and they told me I could headquarter in San Francisco and work that entire ll state area, and Carl Erskine was going to come into New York and set up the program, while Jim Hearn was going to Atlanta, and Andy had New England. They were going to get a couple more people for Texas and the midwest. This wasn't a gimmick. They trained us for six months.

Carl was looking for a place in New York. I lived in New Jersey at the time. I told him there was new place just going up right next door to my place. He went out and looked at it and was thinking about it. But his wife had a baby and it had Down's syndrome. They were destroyed by that, and when it happened Carl just picked up everything and went back to his roots in Anderson, Indiana. Then Van Heusen was looking for someone to head up the program. I was all set and on my way to California and when I came home and told my wife that Van Heusen wanted me to stay in New York, it didn't set too well with her.

But we stayed on from '58 through '69 before we finally went back west.

Then I got out of the shirt business and went into broadcasting, which was ²montarily more attractive and was in sports, which I loved.

WL: Remember your⁷ first game in the majors?

JC: Yeah. I think I went 0 for 4. It was against the Philadelphia Athletics. The next day I got a base hit, a 47-hopper that went between third and short. And in my third game I went 4 for 4 against Alex Kellner and won the game with a home run. That really got me started.

WL: What about some of your teammates at that time?

JC: When I joined the Yankees Joe DiMaggio was the peerless center fielder, Charlie Keller ~~was~~ Tommy Henrich were in the outfield with him. But a new group was coming in - Hank Bauer and Gene Woodling, Cliff Mapes and Johnny Lindell. On the infield, George McQuinn at first and in late August Johnny Mize was acquired from the Giants. George Stirnweiss was at second, Phil Rizzuto at shortstop, Bobby Brown and Billy Johnson at third. Yogi Berra and Charlie Silvera and Gus Niarhos as catchers. The pitching staff was a bunch of guys that were pretty good but really hadn't found their way yet. But they became great. maybe the best ever in the matter and winning and losing - Vic Raschi, Allie Reynolds, Eddie Lopat, Tommy Byrne, and Joe Page from California. We had others, ~~like~~ including Fred Sanford and Spec Shea.

I remember sitting in the clubhouse in St. Louis in late August, and Stengel was talking to those five pitchers. Stengel told them, 'I want you five to be ready every day. Nobody else is going to pitch unless we're out of the game. Be ready every day.' Casey had the ability to understand when he had to do things. And he knew that he could win it with those men, but not with the other five. They were ready, and we beat the Red Sox the last two days of the season to win. We had to beat Ellis Kinder and Mel Parnell. The amazing part of it was a game that nobody remembers. The Senators with Ray Scarborough wefe playing Boston in Washington and if the Red Sox won that

game they would come into New York assured of a tie. But Washington beat Boston when somebody made a wild pitch. And the Red Sox came into New York with two to play and needing one win.

X The first game, on Saturday, was maybe the most dismally (?) exciting game ever played, because in the fifth inning we were behind, 4-0. What happened was that Reynolds started that game and then blew sky high, and Page came in with the bases loaded and the Sox leading 2-0. Page walked in the third run and then the fourth run. I thought, 'My God, our great relief pitcher who had won 16 games, now we're done.' Well, the son of a gun steadied and shut 'em out from there on in. In the 7th or 8th Johnny Lindell hit a home run and we won, 5-4. The next day we were ahead 5-0 in the 9th inning. We figured we had it all wrapped up, and then they rallied and had the tying run on first base when Birdie Tebbetts popped up to end it. Raschi won that game, going all the way, and one of the classic stories in that game was that Raschi was ~~fl~~flattering in the 9th inning. He was tired and it had been a long year, and this was it. Henrich was playing first and he went over to talk with Raschi. But Raschi said, 'Give me that goddamned ball!' and then he got Tebbetts to pop up. That was probably the highlight of my baseball career, winning the pennant that way in my first year.

WL: And that was Casey's first year with the Yankees.

X JC: It was, and then he went on to win 10 out of 12 pennants. I remember that we had been picked to finish from third to last. People didn't know Casey Stengel. They knew only that he had bad clubs in Brooklyn and Boston and he appeared to be a clown, which he really wasn't. He was probably one of the keenest baseball minds I've ever known in my life.

WL: Okay, the first game of the '49 ~~season~~ ^{series} was really something too, going 0-0 into the bottom of the ninth inning.

JC: I can't tell you much about Tommy Henrich's home run that won it. I had got something in my eye and I was back in the clubhouse having it looked at when I heard that he had hit it. And the next day was another 1-0 game,

but the other way around. Preacher Roe.

WL: Whether the Yankees established an all-time jinx on Newcombe in that first game or not, I don't know. But he never could win a World Series game.

JC: Well, he openend up in Brooklyn in one of the games, and Berra nailed him for a couple of home runs. There was only one writer who picked up on that - Milton Gross of the NY Post, ~~Dispatch~~ That was a real story. The failure of a guy who won 27 games not to win one in the Series. And ~~Bro~~ is a super guy. I'm sure it doesn't sit well with him when he looks back on it.

WL: In the '50 Series, first of all, I recall that you were the AP Rookie of the Year in '49. Then, in the '50 Series, you were voted the MVP.

JC: That's right. I was faced with a lot of game situations, and I could have played a lifetime without having that happen, and I was fortunate enough to be able to come through a number of times.

X WL: Yes, in the first game of the '50 Series you drove in the only run of the game as Raschi beat Konstanty. Then, in the ^{third} ~~fourth~~ game, which the Yankees won, 3-2, ~~to sweep the Series~~ you drove in two of the three runs and scored the other one. You had two GWRBIs in the four games and handled 23 chances at second without a miscue. It was interesting to me that in '49 Joe DiMaggio was the only Yankee regular to hit over .300.

JC: Yes, and in 1950 everybody had a good year.

WL: 1950 was Page's last season. He was like most the great relievers - a few terrific seasons and then they're done. They seem to burn out or something.

JC: Yep. I don't know what it is. I believe they begin to feel they're supermen and that's there is no tomorrow and they can do it forever, and the manager relies on them so much because he knows that's how he can win, and he just burns them out.

X WL: Okay, 1951 was DiMaggio's last season, and you beat the Giants in 6 games in the Series.

JC: A day of rain saved us.

WL: Is that right?

X JC: Yeah, the Giants had us down two games to one, as I recall, and we had to pitch Sain, who was not one of our starters, because none of the others was ready. Then it rained, and we brought Reynolds back and we beat them and then went on to take the Series. I remember the rain as very instrumental in our win, although Sain might have shut them down too, I don't know.

WL: Well, after that you went into the service.

XX JC: I played until May 1. Then I was in the Marine Air Corps. What happened is that in June or July of 1950, when the North Koreans came south, the Marines had committed a wing and a division. Everybody thought it would be a 6-month war, but suddenly this thing kept growing and growing. The Marines hadn't trained a pilot from '45 to '50, because they had an abundance of pilots and didn't need them. Now, they had a war on their hands and they had to come up with some pilots in a hurry. People don't realize that if you're an officer in the service and you go out of the service, you're not separated, you're just put on an inactive status. The Marines picked about 1200 pilots. Ted Williams and I were junior captains and we were called. So we went back for a 17 or 18 month recall. The funny part of it was they called me in January of the year before and asked me if I wanted to volunteer, and I said, 'Well, not all that much.' But they said, 'Well, we're going to get you.' I said, 'Will you do me a favor and take me in October, so I'll only miss one year?' What they did was take us in May and let us out in September of the following year, so that we missed almost two whole seasons. And it came at the wrong time.

WL: In World War II where were you stationed?

JC: Overseas I was stationed in the Philippines and New Guinea.

WL: In the Pacific.

JC: Yeah, the South Pacific. I first landed in Guadalcanal, which was secure by that time. Then I went up to a little place called Green Island. We ran missions in _____ and Rabaul (?). They were the strongholds in the Southwest ~~South~~ Pacific at that time. We were the first group, under McArthur in the Philippines, to use close air support. It was really our Marine Air Group 24,

and we were trained specifically to bomb ahead of the troops - 100 yards, really close stuff. We went in with McArthur's troops in the Philippines and supported them, all through the Lingayen (? Gulf and Mindanao and into Borneo and places like that.

WL: And in Korea you were operating out of South Korea?

JC: Yeah. I was at what they called K-6. Every airfield in Korea had a K attached to it, from 1 to 55 or whatever. And we were just south of Seoul by about 70 or 80 miles and maybe 100 miles south of the DMZ. We would go on what they called deep interdiction strikes or close air work. If ~~things were~~^{there} ~~was~~ movement and things were hot we would go ~~out~~ on a round-the-clock alert to help the troops.

WL: Now, you might not want to admit it, but you were a hero in

JC: How about survivor?

WL: No, hero too. Survivor is a good term, for sure,.....

JC: I like survivor.

WL: I read somewhere that you flew 120 missions or so.

JC: That doesn't make you a hero.

WL: Well, it makes you showing up. You've got to have something going for you. And you have Distinguished Flying Crosses and Air Medals and Navy Citations, and everything else. By the time you came out of the service, Ford had returned and McDougald and Billy Martin had arrived.

JC: Billy came in '50 and McDougald came in '51. When I went in the service, Martin took my job, and when I came back he got drafted. And I never played as well thereafter. You see, I was nearly 30 years old. I could have some good spurts, but I didn't have the sustaining power. I lost those years at the wrong time.

WL: Yes, World War II caused you to arrive later in the majors than you might have. Anyway, the Yanks had 103 wins in '54 but still finished eight games behind Cleveland.

JC: You know, we went into Cleveland in mid-September. We were 4-1/2 back and

we had a doubleheader with them. And we lost both games like 3-2 and 4-3. That put them 6-1/2 ahead and we never really came back again.

WL: Their four-man rotation was the only one that could match the one the Yankees had.

JC: They had the best pitching staff I've ever seen. They had Feller, Wynn, Lemon, and Garcia. They had Narleski and Mossi in the bullpen. And they also had Houtteman and Newhouser just on the side. For eight men, I never saw anything like that in my life. These were all superior to great pitchers. Half of them are now in the Hall of Fame.

WL: And still they got wiped out in the Series.

JC: Yeah. I guess Dusty Rhodes really beat 'em.

WL: Al Lopez says that if the Series had started in Cleveland the Indians would have won the first game. Because Wertz' drive would never have been caught and Rhodes' little dinky fly would have been an out even in he ever got a chance to hit it. In 1955 the Dodgers finally broke the Yankees' spell over them, with Johnny Podres having quite a Series.

JC: Johnny Podres with his changeups. We were a good fastball hitting club, and the changeup was a trick pitch for us and a lot of guys couldn't handle it. I didn't play much in that '55 Series. Which is not why we lost. But Podres just simply outpitched us. He won two games, Labine was sharp. That was the one where Amoros made his miracle catch, reaching out and there it was in the glove.

WL: Then in '56 you got back at them. Tell me what you remember about Larsen's perfect game.

JC: Only that it kind of sneaked up on you. It was about the seventh inning before it really dawned on us. I would have loved to have played in that game. I did play in a perfect game in the minor leagues. Of course, this was a classic of all times. When it got down to the ninth inning everybody on the bench became a manager. _____, the biggest guy on the club, was running up and down the dugout trying to position people. Stengel yelled at him, "Shut up!"

Goddamn it, I'm the manager on this club!" _____ just sat down and
 We were
 watched after that. ~~Max~~ giving Casey a lot of help. And of course,
 when it came down to that last pitch, you knew it was going to be called a
 strike, no matter what.

WL: Yeah, Dale Mitchell should have known not to take it. In '57 you lost to Milwaukee

JC: That was disappointing to me, for it was the worst Series I ever played.

I did things there that I have often recalled. We lost the fourth game in
 extra innings. Howard hit a home run in the 9th inning to tie it up, and
 then Mathews won it with a homer in the 10th. In that game I had a runner
 at second base, and I could hit to the right side, but it was late in the
 game and we were down by three runs, so I said I'm not going to sacrifice
 in this situation. But as it turned out, I hit a ball to the shortstop and
 the runner froze. It was Andy Carey, who wasn't a very good base runner.

Then Lumpe got a single and of course Carey didn't score. If I had sacrificed,
 he would have been on third and would have scored, so that Howard's homer run would have
 won it.

WL: Was that the Series when Burdette won three?

JCL Yeah. In ~~the~~ ^{his} first game he was unhittable, in ~~the~~ ^{his} second game he shut
 us out, and in the final game we still don't know how he beat us. You know,
 just one of those things. He didn't have much stuff but he beat us anyhow." (5-0)

WL: He seems to have had a lot of luck at times. Remember the game when
 Harvey pitched 12 perfect innings and Burdtee gave up about 13 hits, but finally
 wins, 1-0.

X JC: You know, Lou was a Yankee and was traded to Milwaukee for Sain.

WL: And it didn't turn out.

WC: Well, we got a lot from Sain at the time, but over the long haul Burdtee
 was more valuable at that stage of their careers.

~~the~~ WL: So, what do you remember as your best game in the majors?

Any
 JC: ~~The first~~ time I got a hit, I guess. I don't know.

WL: Your average was very respectable.

JC: Early on, yes. The first three years it was okay. I was in the .270s, but in the last three or so I didn't play much and I didn't hit much.

WL: You were .263 lifetime.

JC: In 1954, my first year back, I hit just .217. That was the year I had my eye problems. In '55 I broke my collar bone and got beamed and was out 3-1/2 months. Then I started to come back a little bit and they finally offered me a job in the front office and I ~~thought I'd~~ ^{said, "I'll} take it."

WL: Your biggest thrill?

JC: My first season. Winning the World Series was anti-climactic. I was glad to get the extra money, but the thrill of that first season was exciting.

WL: That money looked big in those days, but it would be peanuts today.

JC: I got a check for \$4400 and I thought it was four million. (\$5627) The winner's share, I think, was \$5500 or \$5600, but the actual check was \$4400. And I thought, "My God, I'll never spend this if I live to be 100. And it was gone in about three weeks.

WL: At the moment do you think of any funny incidents, amusing, unusual during your active years?

JC: Oh, they're endless and they've been told before. I really have trouble remembering things like that. I can sit with old-time players and I'm amazed at all the things they recall. I can remember them when I hear them but I can't pull them out of my head, they're so far submerged. What I remember is that I came along at the perfect time and I was surrounded by a lot of good players who were dedicated and were team players. Even DiMaggio and the rest of them were all part of a unit. And we were lucky to believe in something. The dollars were important, of course, for we wanted to get rich and famous. But everything was always subservient to the unit. I think that was such an important thing, to have something you believe in. People who don't have that don't know what they're missing. I hate to see the players these days who don't have that unit feeling and they don't go for anything that's a group activity.

WL: After being in the Yankee front office and working with them, then what?

JC: Well, Roy Hamey was brought in and I suddenly found myself as a glorified scout, which I didn't want. Howard Cosell, of all people, introduced me to the Van Heusen outfit, who were looking for people like me, you know, sports people that would promote their sports wear. And while I was in that, Bill McPhail, a dear friend of mine who grew up with me in the Yankee organization, was then president of CBS Sports. He offered me a job as pre- and post-game host ~~mm~~ with Dean and Reese on the Game of the Week. So I'm selling shirts and broadcasting at the same time, and after the season ended they offered me a job on weekends. that you hear so often, Ten Spots, on CBS Radio Network. I had a writer and I just read this stuff, and then from that it led to the Yankee play-by-play, which I enjoyed. I wasn't unhappy doing the shirt business, but I wanted to be in baseball.

WL: You were with Mel Allen and Red Barber for a time.

X (JC: Mel Allen, Red Barber, Phil Rizzuto; Garagiola came in when Mel left. I started in '62.

WL: Between '70 and '72 you went out to L.A.?

X (JC: My home was on the West coast, and my first wife (whom I love dearly) hated the East coast because of the weather. She wanted to get home to San Francisco. So I started looking about two years in advance for a job on the West coast. And there were no jobs open. The Giants were loaded with Hodges and Simmons. And there was nothing in L.A. and there was just no job. So, finally I told my wife that when our kids got out of high school we would head west. When that happened it was a question of how I would get out there. So I ended up in Los Angeles at KTLA doing their early and late news. And I still had the ABC Radio Network show on the weekends. From that, well, I had seen Buzzie Bavasi in '68. So I saw Buzzie and said to him, "Buzzie, I know you're going to San Diego, and I'd love to work with you." He said, "I'll let you know." Well, he hired three other people. Then I saw him in June or July of '71 in

Chicago and he said, "I want to talk to you." I said, "I want to talk to you
X too." And that's how the Padre thing developed. And I've never been happier.

WL: I guess no expansion team has ever done much in the first few years.

The California Angels got up to second place early

JC: Early on, yeah. Dean Chance and a few others.

WL: The Padres just didn't have it in those first years.

JC: They didn't have any economic resources. C. Arnholt Smith wasn't putting any money into the club and Buzzie couldn't sign players,

WL: They're lucky that Ray Kroc came along.

X JC: Ray Kroc. You know, I was there when they sold the club. It was announced in May '73. We had a lame duck season, basically. We waded through to the end. I recall vividly that the club was on its way to Washington, and I didn't even have a job. I was just waiting to see what would happen. And then the news started to filter down that the _____ thing didn't connect, and it looked like the National League was going to run the team. Then, suddenly, in January of that year Kroc made the phone call and bought the club. And literally change the lives of hundreds - maybe tens of thousands - of people by the club staying there. It just changed the world for us.

WL: From then on things were looking up, at least, and they kept improving until they finally came to 1984.

JC: The miracle of '84.

WL: And it's a dirty shame that Ray wasn't still alive to see that.

JC: He died that January.

WL: How is Joan Kroc as an owner?

0 JC: To me, Joan Kroc is the perfect owner. From this standpoint: She has unlimited resources, and any franchise if weak economically it suffers up and down the line. Joan does have the money and she's a delightful person, she agreed to sell the club once because primarily because the press in San Diego blamed her for the problems of the ball club. She said, "I don't need this." Since that time Chub Feeney has come in and he's been a buffer between her

and the press, and it's working and she seems to be happy as a clam. And I hope she stays that way, because if you have a major league franchise of any nature, you must be able to sustain the franchise in down years, and she can do that. I think she has fun with it and if we win I think it will be heaven for her. But right now there are some stormy days, because we're not winning.

WL: Whose idea was it to bring Chub in?

JC: I don't know. I think Ballard Smith did that. Ballard was in a position where the PR situation had gotten to the point where he had to move on. I never asked but I think that Ballard probably said to ~~Joan~~ ^{Joan}, "Look, ~~you're~~ ^{Club's} a good man, and ~~you're~~ just retired as National League president and can be the buffer you need against the press. You don't need to be involved in that stuff." And she's a lovely lady, and if she's not going to have fun dealing with everybody, why should she do it? Chub is signed through 1990, that's two more years anyway. I think he'd like to stay as long as it's pleasant for him. I don't think it's an economic thing for him. I think he wanted to be involved.

WL: Do I read that Jack McKeon's contract ends after this season?

JC: No, I think it's next year. You know, a lot of people have worked things into that, and I don't know where it stands, but I don't see why Chub and Jack McKeon can't work together perfectly. Chub actually has got the final decision.

Jack's in the baseball end of it. Jack has done a lot of wonderful things out there. He's put this club together. You look at Santiago, at Kruk, at Alomar, at Gwynn, these are all McKeon's people. He's done a lot out there.

WL: Is the other Alomar a great a catcher as they say he is?

JC: Yes. Well, I don't really know about it. I know he can throw with Benito ~~Santiago~~ ^{Santiago}. This spring we had the three best throwing young catchers I've ever seen in my life. Parent can throw, not with these two, he's just a shade less, but you know you don't find three catchers like that in one camp. Santiago and Alomar are A plus in throwing.

WL: Can either of them play another position?

JC: I don't know. I have the idea that one of them, probably Sandy Alomar, Jr.,

will be traded for whatever value we can get, and it should be a lot.

He can catch, well, I don't know too much about that, but he can definitely throw, and if you've got a good arm on a catcher you've got a good, valuable item.

WL: But they don't have any great pitching prospects coming up in the farm system. ~~xjcx~~

JC: Nothing outstanding. There are no Clemens ~~x~~ out there, not right now, if that's what you mean.

WL: Jimmy Jones doesn't look like he's going to make it very big.

JC: Well, there are some who still think he will, but as things stand today, the best pitcher on our club is Show. He's got the most stuff. And Eric, I think, in his last three outings has been marvelous. What happens with our pitching is that they have an inning that gets out of control and they don't know how to curb it. Gaylord Perry, for example, could have the bases loaded and none out, and he ~~would~~ would work it so that he'd give up one run and get out of the inning. We don't have pitchers that have that kind of control. When we get the bases ~~loaded~~ loaded and one out, they're apt to get four runs.

WL: It looks like Roberto Alomar is going to be quite a second baseman.

JC: I think he's going to be an excellent major league player, just marvelous. He can turn the double play. Few people can do it. There are more pretty good second basemen around now than ever before, with a lot of good ones coming up this year, like Lind and Alicea and Alomar. Turning the double play for a second baseman is a backward play and maybe the most difficult thing to find.

WL: That was a knock they used to put on Nellie Fox in Chicago - that he wasn't able to turn the double play in style.

JC: He was away below par. He was a hitter. But not a good defensive player. He used to backhand balls he should have been in front of.

WL: Have you seen the book called Voices of the Game?

JC: I got it, but I didn't read it. But I should read. In fact, I had a nice lunch with Curt Smith. He came up from Washington to Philadelphia and we spent three hours talking. He embarrassed me, for he knew more about me than I know

about myself. And the same about everybody else.

WL: His research is fantastic. I haven't read much of his book, either.

JC: I should read that, because it has a lot ~~to~~ to do with my business, right from the beginning. His book is different from all these biographies (as told to somebody else). I feel that they are all self-fulfilling more than anything else.

WL: What do you think about how Smith spends a page or more on slips of the tongue that you've made?

X JC: Well, those kinds of things don't bother me, because I'm comfortable about what I know~~ed~~ about the game. But I get excited and I probably say ~~some~~ ^{a lot} of those things. You can make out of it whatever you want to. But we have a man in our town who sits and writes them down. That's all he does. I must have got his attention early on. Frankly, I've never met the man, he's never said hello to me, and I don't know who he is nor do I really care.

WL: Naw. The one I like best is when you said "Rich Folkers is throwing up in the bullpen."

JC: When I said that they missed an "'em." What I said was "Rich Folkers is throwing 'em up in the bullpen." I know what I said.

WL: Now I'd like to talk with you about baseball today. What about free agency?

JC: It's changed the game. No question about it. The only bothersome thing I have about baseball today is that the players are really controlling the game.

WL: Yeah, it's gone from one extreme to the other.

X JC: The thing that bothers me - and I've said this over and over - is that we ~~have~~ ^{need} restrictions for players. If you make a million dollars and have a bad year (like you win 2 games instead of 20), they can cut your salary 20% and only 30% over two years or release you. In most cases with a pitcher you don't want to do this. My approach is very basic: Okay, you're going to go from \$200,000 to a million and a half, that's fine, but if you make that jump after a 20-game year and then only win about three the next year, we should be able to take you back to any figure we want. See, the owners are restricted. The players have no

capital outlay, no expense outlay. They get paid regardless, no matter what the club does in a down year.

WL: And even if they are released, they generally have a guaranteed contract.

JC: In many cases it is. But you see, in my approach it's basic. Okay, you guys want all this money, and we'll give it to you, for you earned it. Last year the Twins earned it. Now this year, if you're playing badly and we're going to lose three million, ~~and~~ there should be a reversal. Now, admittedly, if you go back to years past, the owners just stepped all over the players. And that was wrong. There's got to be a middle ground in here. But to me, when you as an owner have 30, 40, 50, 100 millions dollars in capital outlay, invested in something and controlled by the workers, that's like unions. I'm not against unions, but there has to be a middle ground. So that the guy who is putting all this money up has a chance to get some rewards. That's part of our country's capitalistic approach to life. I really think that free agency has changed the approach of the player, and it's a proven fact that ~~fact that~~ long-term contracts in most cases destroy the player's capability and motivation. There's a player up in Boston right now who has not hit a home run this season and is getting two million or more and is a laughingstock. He's never been able to play. He's been a hitter, period. There are players of this type, and baseball made the mistake of giving them these long-term contracts. In fact, in San Diego, when they signed Garvey and Gossage, they knew that this would happen in the last two years of the 5-year contracts. But they did it anyway, for the benefits they would get in the first three years. Let's face it. Players perform better when they have the uncertainty of the future facing them.

WL: And arbitration is an extension of the thing.

JC: Well, arbitration. The problem I have with that is that the people who are doing the arbitrating don't know a thing about baseball. Well, they do, but they're looking at numbers. As for numbers, I've seen .280 hitters who are more valuable to the team than a .400 hitter. You can't measure such things by numbers, and that's all they do. They sit down and chart it. It's stupid. Numbers don't mean that much.

WL: What about artificial turf?

JC: I don't like it personally, but I guess it saves you from rainouts.~~xxx~~
 Let me tell you something. Artificial surfaces came in for football to reduce knee injuries and it has created more. It's like playing on concrete. The players hate it. Of course, if you have an indoor arena, you have to use artificial surface. Basically, to me it has no value in the game, except that it changes the game. Not for the better, in my opinion.

WL: What about the strike zone?

JC: Well, they're now back to the high strike, or so they say they are. You know, when I quit playing the strike zone was up at the letters, and last year it was at the belt. Pitches at belt level were called balls. And no wonder they were all those home runs. Now they've raised it a little bit and a lot of times the batter will pop up instead of hitting a home run.

Each umpire is going to do it his way. You're not going to get the low-ball umpires to raise their strike zone because they're down low. Part of the reason why the strike zone was so high in the American League was that in the old days they worked behind that little mattress and they stood over the top. It was harder to see down. The National League umpires always had a low strike zone because they worked down in a crouch.

WL: What about the balk rule?

JC: I was in the game in 1950 when Vic Raschi set the record for balks. They said then they were going to enforce the balk rule. Then they rewrote it so the pitcher had to pause, then they put it at a moment. I don't mind the balk rule if it's uniformly enforced. But right today, there are six teams in the National League. One team had 30 balks, one had 27, and the others had 11, 10, 9, and 6. There's no continuity there. The American League was more uniform. The balk rule is intended to keep the runner from being deceived. Now, when Nolan Ryan gets balked home from third base, who are you deceiving? Do you think Nolan Ryan is going to steal home? That's stupid. And that play cost the other team the game. One guy even was called for a balk on an intentional walk. Umpires are people: some are very smart and some are just of dumb and

have no concept of the logic of things. The balk rule is all right, but let's use a little judgment like in everything else.

WL: What effect do you see in the expansion from 16 to 26 teams?

JC: You know, people say that the talent is diluted. But let me tell you, when I played there were eight teams in the American League. There were really two divisions. You had the Yankees, Detroit, Cleveland, and the Red Sox when I first came into the league. Then there was Washington, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Chicago, and they were terrible. We'd play them 22 times and if we didn't win 18 or 19 we were really upset. At that time there were about 160,000,000 people in this country. Now there are about 70 million more people to draw from in the talent pool. And the big influx of blacks and Hispanics added to the pool.

WL: But there's another side to the coin. Even when you came up, baseball had a near monopoly on professional sports. Now there are an awful lot of athletes who could have made it in baseball but who opt instead for football, basketball, and other sports.

JC: Well, I don't see the talent diminishing that much. I see a lot of pretty good players out there. And the blacks and Hispanics have changed the picture. They are all over the place and they're great athletes.

WL: What if they expand to 32 teams?

JC: Well, you've got the same thing. In the first few seasons there will be something of a drop in overall ability and then it will level off. We have a big country here. I remember those days when even great football players like Jim Thorpe went into baseball, for that was the only good chance to make money as a professional athlete.

WL: Another aspect. In those days every town and village had its town baseball team, while nowadays do to some extent, but nothing like formerly.

JC: People today are so much more sophisticated than I was when growing up. Kids 18-20 years old are light years ahead of where I was. They know more, they've seen more, they've done more, they've been more, and all of those things.

WL: You mentioned your dear first wife. Did you have children?

JC: I have a daughter, 38, who is a teacher and a marvelous one. She has two children, 8 and 5. And I have a son who is chasing rainbows; I don't know what he's doing. He's in Palm Springs and he's a bartender. He's 35 and never grown up. My first wife died, and then I remarried and have a little daughter 3 years old. She's a knockout. At my age it's a miracle.

WL: You plan to go on at your work indefinitely?

X JC: I'm going on until they throw me out. I can't afford to quit. I'm not that rich, you know. I wasn't one of those million-dollar-a-year ball players. And, besides, what would I do just doing nothing? I have more fun now. I get to enjoy what I'm doing. I get to do my CBS Game of the Week. I'll be 64 in September.

WL: You could back to scouting.

JC: Well, I don't know what I would do, frankly.

WL: From my experience, Jerry, you have to have something to keep you busy.

X JC: I would do that. I would go to a front office and ask if they wanted me to scout around for them. I'd do something. But the traveling does get to be a trial.

WL: When you were playing, and your kids were young, was that pretty hard on your wife?

JC: Well, I didn't know it. I was young and I was climbing mountains. I didn't look around enough. Now I look around and I realize what I missed.

WL: All old-timers tell me the wives are the unsung heroes of baseball.

X JC: I recall vividly in '49, the year we won the pennant in my first year, and Casey was euphoric and we were happy as lambs. He got up in the Biltmore at a big party for us with every celebrity within a 100 miles was has there. Casey got up and talked for 20 minutes about the wives. He understood, you see, and we didn't. He understood what they did and what they meant. Boy, you get into a domestic trap with a/situation and it affects you. We were lucky. In fact, the people on my team all stayed married. Every one of them is still married to the same

wife, except in the few cases where the wife died.

WL: In situations like that, you have to live through it and later realize how it was. As children grow up, they begin to realize what parents went through with them.

WL: Your career has kept you in touch off and on with Bobby Brown.

JC: Yeah, Bobby and I grew up together in high school, well, in different high schools, but we played on the same semi-pro teams and with the Yankees. Then he and Sarah took off for Texas and he became a doctor. I'd see him from time to time, and now he's the American League president. I asked him, "Bobby, how long you going to keep this job?" And he said, "As long as it's fun."