

People are not born winners and people are never born losers. We -- Lance and I -- we are no different than anybody else. I think that everybody has the potential to be a winner. But the difficult part is that we need to be willing to learn something -- and this is what my book is about. And Lance and I, we learned a lot together. And we took the experiences and all the lessons we learned and we won over and over again. Every single year. The curious part is that all the lessons we learned, I learned them afterwards not while we were doing them. It didn't really have anything to do with real sports, because I don't think it was the training of Lance or my tactics that made the difference. It was much more about the human experience and all the lessons we learned had certain key elements that were present throughout all those years. And I think that those key elements can really be useful for everybody -- whether you're riding a bike or not.

So I'm going to tell you a few stories that reflect what we learned and to start with I'd like to go back ten years when I got a phone call from Lance in the fall of 1998. And back then I was just retired from cycling. I was 34 years old. And, um, I didn't know Lance really well. We had been racing together, but we were not really close at that point. But he was coming back from cancer to professional cycling and it was something really remarkable. If only the fact that he was starting to come back that was something that was really impressive. And I found out that he was not only trying to come back as a cyclist, but he was obsessed with winning. And I felt also that I was obsessed about winning. And that's probably why I'm here today -- because of our obsession about winning.

So, I'm going to try to recall a little of this conversation because it's important to what happened afterwards. So, I was sitting at home and I was retired from cycling, and I didn't really know what I was going to do next. And all of a sudden my phone rings and it was Lance Armstrong on the phone and of course I was very surprised. As I said we were not really close. So I pick up the phone and it's Lance on the phone and he says, "Hey Johan. It's Lance Armstrong." And I said,

"Lance? Why are you calling? How's things going?" And he said, "I'm good, I'm good. I can't complain. I've won some races lately. But that's not the reason why I'm calling. I'm calling you because I think that my team, US Postal, that we need some help. I don't exactly know what kind of help. Things have not really finishing out as I want, so would it be OK if Mark Gorski (the general manager of the team) gives you a call?" And I said, "Of course," I knew Gorski because I had been racing with him on the track before. I said, "OK, tell him to give me a call." And Lance said, "OK, great. Listen, I have to go." Usually conversations with Lance are very short and he always has to go when he's on the phone. "Um, but he'll call you tomorrow. So, bye."

As I said, I was freshly retired from cycling and it was the middle of the season and I decided to stop my career from one minute -- over night rather than wait for the end of the season and I had no idea what I was going to do. So the next day I received a call from Gorski. And the first thing he said to me was, "Lance would like you to be the team director of US Postal. Are you interested?" And I thought by myself, team director, does that mean I'd be directeur sportif as we call it in Europe? And he said, "Yeah sure. That's it." "Well," I said, "you know that's something I never had even considered. You know, I thought about something else. I thought about, I have a marketing degree so I thought about some PR work, some marketing work or whatever. But not directeur sportif. And he said, "Well, are you interested? And I said well I do need to think about it. And while I was on the phone I thought about four seconds about the question. And the moment I said, "I'm interested, I want to do it," it was like everything else, all the doubts I had, I had confusion, I didn't know what to do. All of those things disappeared. And I think that Lance had seen something in me and for some reason he called me and that job and that moment really came to me. But the most important thing is that it really felt right -- what I was doing-- even if I hadn't been thinking about it. And, it was a quick decision that I made, but it was not something really irrational. Because, Years back, when I was a little boy, I

learned something from my father. My father always told me, "Whatever decision you need to make in life, you need to follow your heart. You need to feel right and then start to think about it." That's what I did. So, as I said, I was really surprised to get the call. My instincts just said yes and all of a sudden at the age of 34 I was there. The new directeur of US Postal and it was something very, very unusual for me, because I had no idea what the job was. I just said, "Yes, I'm going to do it, and I never thought about exactly what the job of directeur is. I said, "That's it, I'm gonna do it." And more importantly, even if I had no idea what the job was, that I had a plan. And in one of the first emails after I accepted the job through Gorski, I sent an email to Lance and I talked about my goals and what I believed. And my email basically said, "Lance, we can win the Tour de France." It was a very bold statement. And Lance at that moment he was a one-day racer, he was nothing special. And when I said we can win the Tour, he said, Yeah, of course, we can probably win some stages tell me which stages I should focus on. And I said, you know, I don't really think you got what I said. I said we can win the Tour de France, I mean, the overall, the yellow jersey in Paris.

Because I had seen something in him after he came back from cancer. I saw that it was a new Lance Armstrong. It was someone who his body had changed, his belief had changed, his whole – he was a different guy. And I said, this new Lance Armstrong, I think he can win the Tour. So, I said, if we're gonna race the Tour de France, which we have to do because we have an American sponsor and we have to race the Tour, that be might as well win.

And for some reason after some time, I think that maybe I had convinced him. Maybe because I was believing in him so strongly, that he said, OK, good. I believe. Let's win the Tour. And that was the most difficult part of my job. I know this now afterwards, but the fact that he believed so strongly in my belief, was the most difficult. It was a great big job of work. Now, don't get me wrong, it wasn't

like I inherited a winning team or something like that. Actually, I think it was just the opposite. US Postal was a small team back then and back then we called it the Bad News Bears of cycling. Because we were a second division team and we had a small budget and a very small staff. Our budget was probably only the size of what a top rider makes nowadays. So a very, very small budget. Even the equipment we were using ... was nothing you would call leading edge technology. But basically we had a group of riders and staff who believed and knew what the common goal was, and what everybody's role was, and what their jobs were. And I think that's very important. When you work with a team, there's really only one way to succeed – if everybody's working for the same objective. And that's what we did. Everybody knew what their role was. And, now in the United States everybody knows a little more about cycling, but I remember ten years ago I had to explain all the time that cycling's a team sport. And, most people don't think it's a team sport, but I think it really is a team sport.

And I want to insist on the fact that Lance, it's not like he was beating everybody – all the other riders – every single day. He had a big team around him, and all the other team members and teammates and staff, they really did what they had to do every single day. To house him and to protect him and to bring him water bottles. And we created something where everybody was really giving it all and everybody did whatever it takes to help Lance win.

And another thing I saw back then was teams were run a certain way and I wanted to change things a little bit, and make clear that everything that we would do from the beginning of the season was going to be exclusively in preparation for the Tour de France. As I said, teams didn't work that way. Luckily we had sponsors and management who were Americans and they didn't know, they didn't understand as much about European cycling. And they agreed and they believed in my crazy plan. And I think that through the years, since 1999, we have created something very special. I think we have built what I believe is the

strongest cycling team in the world. And next to Lance's seven Tour de France victories, we have a number of other victories in such things at the Tour of Spain, the Tour of Italy, Tour of Switzerland, Dauphine Libere, Tour of California, everything that they've raced, or almost everything that they've raced. And that's because we have a very special way of recruiting. The team was not only about Lance, it was lot of smart guys, and we had a lot of talent. And I think, if you want to create a team, for sports or something else, talent is very important. I think you can never recruit too much talent. But, of course, you need to make sure that everybody knows what the team goals are and what everybody's role is. And with that talent will only make you stronger. And I think that Lance could never have done what he did without all the riders he was around and also the staff, and in my case, for example, I was always the guy in the car and the guy on TV and I could never have done what I've done without my assistant directors. I had to rely on them for a lot of reasons. I knew very much what my weaknesses were and then I tried to rely on their strengths and abilities to fill in the gaps. And for example the mechanics, they were very important, and sometimes they were working very late into the night to make sure that everything was ready. All the bikes were ready. The things that no-one sees on TV and nobody reads in the press. Just an example, on the eve of Lance's first Tour de France victory in 1999 our head mechanic, he slept with Lance's bike in his room to make sure the safety of his bike. I think that's something very special, because I've never seen a group where people were caring so much, even if they were not in the picture and they were not on TV. I always felt that they had ownership in the team. Every single member of the team. That's very important.

And of course it's not easy to create a group like that. It takes a lot of time and and a lot of experiences and then you have to go through a lot of things. Things like that doesn't happen over night. In a global sport, like cycling is, where there's a lot of different nationalities, we had a difficult challenges. And in our case, we had sometimes we had fourteen or fifteen countries represented and then you

would see little groups forming. Same clothes, same languages, tried to look for each other, and groups and I've always tried to avoid that. I've always tried to mix up the various national groups. Sometimes Spaniards they were looking for Spaniards, Americans for the Americans, Russians for the Russians, and the Belgians for the Belgians. And I always made it a rule that two nationalities could never room together. For an American might make a room with a Russian guy or a Spanish guy, and a young guy with his mentor, and I've seen some very, very incredible things happen like that. On the bus, for example, you could see the Americans were trying to explain the meaning of songs by ZZ Top to the Spanish guys. I won't go into details which songs, but anyway, what I want to say is that we have tried to create certain circumstances where people are like family, where they might live together and they share so many moments – good and bad – and they struggle and suffer together and at the end the day they trust each other. And I think that's the most important thing in a team that they trust each other.

And it's very important that every member of the team has a role and that you acknowledge that role and you encourage them and you give them that ownership. And so we had all those Lance years, from 1999 to 2005, we won the Tour over and over again. Most of the time it was a routine, except for 2003 when it was very, very difficult for us but we still won. But after Lance retired, after the 7th Tour de France, I knew that the ... moment was going to come and that there was going to be a time when we were not winning. And after he retired in 05, we had 06, which is what I called a rebuilding year. We had to go win but at the same time not the way that we used to. But at the same time, knew again that I had a new dream. That was to create a new dream team to try to win the Tour one more time without Lance. So 06 for me has been probably the lowest year in terms of results, and probably, for me, the year I learned the most. Because I could see everything from a different angle. I could see all the mistakes that my rivals had been making, because I was not under pressure and I did not have to win. And other people were there and they had to win the Tour and they made a

lot of mistakes. And at the same time I was trying to regroup and rebuild for a new team. And in 2006, at the end of 2006 I exactly knew what I needed to do, and what I needed to do in terms of the group and we had two interesting people coming to the team after 06. That was Levi Leipheimer and Alberto Contador. And I discovered while we were doing this with Lance we were really so immersed in what we were doing that we really didn't know how we were doing it. But in 06 I really found out everything we had been doing. And I think that I couldn't do it in 06 but I wanted to do it again in 07. All the things we were doing with Lance were working again with a whole new team. And in 07 Contador he won his first Tour de France. And it was number 8 for the team. And Levi finished third on the podium and the team, we had the best team finish ever. Even after all those successful Lance Armstrong years, 07 was the highlight of all those years. And for me it was really the time, it was the moment to say, after 8 Tour de Frances it's time for something else. And I tried to change focus a little bit and I retired again.

And the same thing happened like ten years before. My retirement lasted for three weeks. And I got a call from another team and right now I'm not the guy whose out on the road anymore, driving the car but I'm still trying to implement everything I learned and everything I know which works for this new group. And for those who know a little bit about cycling, and have been following the sport of cycling for the last six months, I think it's safe to say that – I don't know if I want to call it the Postal Formula or the Discovery Formula or the Bruyneel Formula – but it works again. And no matter which obstacles have been put in front of us, by certain organizations, but we have a very, very successful team. No matter what. And so, I'm very proud of that. The thing, for me, what I discovered is that you don't have to be or you don't have to have Lance Armstrong to be special. And I think that regardless of what you do or who you are, that the ingredients of winning are universal.

And a lot of people have a lot of different ideas about that, and there are a lot of different strategies. But I think that the two most important things are that it starts with a belief. I believed that we can win the Tour. And I think that Lance believed it. And ... it's all in your mind. And the rest is easy.

And then one very important thing is also that loss will tell you how to win. I learned more in 06 than in all the years before. I learned that loss really will show you how you have to win. So, I said in 98, ten years ago, to Lance, "We might as well win." And today, I still believe that. That's still what I live by and everybody can see that it still works. And even if it doesn't happen directly, if you think like that it will train you for later, and it will make you better and when the circumstances and the opportunity are there you'll be ready and you'll also be ready to say, "We might as well win."

Do you think that Armstrong's fourth place in the Vuelta in 98 or his fourth place in the World TT Championships was the most significant thing, and how does that fit into this timetable you're talking about about him contacting you?

It was just right around that time. The uh, you know, you did your homework. It was definitely Lance's fourth place in the Vuelta, which for me was the time for me to say, "This guy can win the Tour." Because it was his comeback year, 98 was his first year back in competition after 96. He got diagnosed with cancer and in 97 he was out of competition. And 98 was a year of ups and downs. And I met Lance during the Vuelta. During that ... Vuelta of 98. And it was there where he really realized that he ... til the end of the season. For me, the fourth place was something incredible. It's really a stage race, and I thought by myself, "This guy is a different guy. Before the Tour of Spain, ... he was coming back from something incredible. So if we focus on the Tour and we do everything right and he ... strongly and we prepare and create a strong team around him. If you can finish fourth in the Tour of Spain without any proper preparation, and the fourth place

really just happened to him. He didn't start the Tour of Spain to become fourth, he had no aspirations at all. And that's really what showed me that if we really did things right, he had a shot at winning the Tour.

And it's around that time, I think it was the fall and between the Vuelta and the World Championships where he also finished fourth, that's when we had the first serious conversation about winning the Tour.

How well suited are Alberto Contador's skills for the Vuelta this year?

I think they're good. It's a very hard Tour of Spain. A lot of big mountains, good time trial courses, of course he's become pretty good in the time trials, For him it's going to be the most difficult race to win. Because he's the favorite. It's in his own country. Everyone's expecting him to win. The team will have to be really, really ready to control the race. So, I think he has a good chance.

I got a chance to see an interview with the author of Lance Armstrong's war, and he was asked the question, What is the biggest misconception that people have about Lance Armstrong? And I was curious what your answer would be to that question.

What did he answer?

(laughter)

I can tell you that he said ..

I know the author by the way. He's actually the reason why I did this book.

You want me to tell you what he said?

Actually, it doesn't matter. (laughter from audience) I think Lance ... there are two different things ... the ideas that people have about Lance in the United States, and then there's the idea of Lance in Europe, and more specifically in France. I think what people have to realize is that first of all he became a big bike rider, he was a very good bike rider in his early twenties, he was the youngest world champion ever at 21. Then he got sick, and then he came back and won the

Tour. But at the same time, because of his story as a cancer survivor he became a lot more than a bike rider. And it's been very difficult to manage that situation. It's been very difficult to be a bike rider under normal circumstances and then live the life of a star ... And what happened to Lance in the Tour de France he was not only winning the Tour, but he became bigger than the Tour de France. And all the consequences of that, you know, that it wasn't safe anymore, that we had to hire certain people to protect him, and yet it was impossible to go from the team bus to the start of the race without maybe some crazy fan hitting him. So we really had to cover every single aspect. We had to create a bubble around him. And then we had to really focus on what we had to do was win the Tour. And we had to allow ... I always say we because I always feel as a team, I never talk about Lance, I always say we, if you read Lance's comments or interviews, he always talks about we.

So we haven't always been the most popular guys, that's for sure. And we were forced to do that. We had to create a certain sense around us to be able to focus on what we had to do and it was with the journalists, and the fans, and with the media and with the Tour organization. But I can tell you that no matter if we were thought loyal teammates of Lance, and people who have been working a long time with him. It's a totally different guy. If you know him really well, than what everybody's thinking. So what was it that Dan Coyle said about Lance?

Dan said that the public has a perception of Lance as a very nice teddy bear, when in reality he's a stone-cold killer.

I can tell you that it's a big book he wrote, and it seems like he was with the team all the time, but I think that he had one hour with Lance. One hour interview. And all the rest was just from being around the team.

I take it you didn't care for Lance Armstrong's War.

No, I mean, he was just another journalist, you know. He needed something for his ... , he didn't ... anybody.

I thoroughly agree with you on the team aspect, I was hoping you would expand a little but more upon the blue train, and some of the roles of other riders – George Hincapie had for example, during the Tours. What you did to motivate other riders, and then also with Levi and Contador in the last Tour and trying to distinguish who was going to take the lead role and what you did to motivate them.

It starts with the recruiting. There's a lot of good athletes out there, and one of my first conditions was I had to be absolutely sure that they fit into our club. Back in the Lance days, it was clear to everybody that winning the Tour was the most important goal. And everything next was ... We have seen people leave from our team because they had their own ambitions. Where I absolutely supported those things. We had a young rider, back in the day, he was Tom Boonen, and he was one year on our team and he turned out to be a great classics specialist and he also saw that in the next five years he would have a lot less support from the team because we focused on Lance. So it starts, really, with the personality and the way we recruit. Of course, all these guys are great athletes and they want their own glory. For guys, I'll name a few, George and Ekimov and To name three. They're probably the three best teammates in the world. And the three top class athletes. But none of them could win the tour. The Tour is such a big event and any other race in cycling is so much smaller, that even if you win that other race if you have to choose between winning the smaller race or being a part of the winning team in the tour and doing the lap on honor on the Champs Elysees that's an incredible thing.

And you can ask George what he prefers the seven Tour de France victories or the one victory in Gent Wevegem and I'm pretty sure what he will tell you. As you say, it's not easy to manage an entire team, and you have to accept certain facts and somebody who's can compete and will work at it and gets better and better and then they have their own ambition and they left, I think that's the way you have to play and that's good for the sport and the love of competition.

What I did see was certain people learned how the team was run, and then they left at a certain moment and there was the other teams trying to imitate what we had been doing. And it never worked at the other teams. So it was definitely because there were other things missing. I think that it was because something else that we had created to be successful. What was the second part of your question?

Um, just the motivation...

You know, the race, itself, always dictates who's the strongest guy. And Levi had the ambition to be the leader of the team, and it was definitely not in the plan that Contador would be the leader of the team. And it was on the first mountain stage already Contador showed that he was the best climber, and Levi came to me and said, "You know what, I think this guy can win the Tour." And so Levi was very, very professional about it, and he had of course he had his own ambition and he managed to finish third. But at that certain moment, I had to ask when Rasmussen was still leading the race and he had the leader's jersey and we tried to crack Rasmussen on stage 15, and I had to ask Levi to give up his own chances to try and make the race hard and then Contador would try to to attack. And they both put everything at risk, their third place and their fourth place back then, because Contador was in third and Levi was in fourth and they were both ready to lose everything in order to try to win.

And that day, that specific day, it didn't work and afterwards after what happened, ... Levi was really professional, and he knows his capabilities and in the end in the Tour of Italy, where he was completely in the service of Alberto once we were in the situation to win the race.

Two part question. Since you guys weren't the most popular team on the block in the Disco/Postal days, there was a lot of jealousy on the part of other teams and there were a lot of rumors about how your team managed to win – implying that it was not just the training you guys did. How would you respond to those kinds of rumors?

Very good question. Well, I have a very, very good answer. And the answer is, you can never prove your innocence if there's no proof of your guilt. But this year, for example, we have a very clear proof, not only for this year's team for Astana, but I still see this team as a continuation of Discovery. Because they're basically the same staff and the same key riders. So we were very dominant as Postal, and dominant as Discovery, and it's also because we had the best riders. And I think we have again the best riders and team around their leader, also performs very well ... And this year, because we were forced first of all because of what happened at Astana last year, this year we have subscribed to an internal anti-doping system, which is in my opinion the strictest there is, because I've studied them all. There are about three or four systems in place that can subscribe to and we pay a lot of money to test our own riders, and I can tell you that our internal system plus the system of the UCI which is called the biological passport ... it's really hard on the riders. I can tell you that some of our riders have been tested this year already a total of 20 times. And those tests are really as good it can get. And I see that our team is still the most dominant team. So, if there would be something, I think our team would perform a lot less. Then, the people would have a reason to say, "You know what, there's something there, you know we don't like the way they were doing." But all I can see is that we're still winning.

For all the testing, more than any other team we are tested. And we're still the best team around. And even with this year's Giro, when we were called the one week before, and we had no time to prepare, ... and nobody was at 100 percent, and it was more difficult for us, because we had to be a little bit inventive the first week and a little bit conservative, but ultimately won that race. Not only because we had a strong leader, but because we had a strong team. So that's my answer to all the rumors. Look at this year.

Second part of the question. Do you think the Astana team is paying the price this year, not for what the Astana team did in previous years, but because of the jealousy of your winning ways.

Umm ... are there any journalists in the room?

That would be me...

I see your recorder. I asked that question to the ASO ... there's not a very good relationship right now and there are strained lines of communication ... I asked that question to the ASO and they said "No, it's not about Contador, it's not about me, it's not about Lance." ... But I, I'm not convinced. I think there's something there. If I was them, and you know, I looked at ... the seven times with Lance, I thought it was nice, but for them it was boring. And then in 2006, we had an off year and I've never been more popular in the peloton. And in 2007, you know, we won again, and then I retired and I think the Tour were happy, because, you know ... So now we're back, and we have the same riders on our team, so I can see their thinking. "Oh, there he is again, and he's gonna win again, and he's just winning the race." So clearly, this [banning Astana] is not necessarily a bad thing for them. But this year is going to be an odd year, and next year ... this year they don't have to compete against our team ... So we are past that stage

already and we are not angry anymore and not disappointed anymore. We have been through that stage and we have focused on other things. When I took on the job as the general manager of Astana, I had two big challenges. And it had nothing to do with getting results. It was not my driving motivation, winning eight Tours or nine or ten or eleven – it's not going to change anything. But my biggest challenge was to restructure the team, which was struggling, and make it a healthy team, and then a good team, and a good organization, and I think that's worked out and more importantly work on the image. Because the image no doubt was very, very bad. And I see that now, all of a sudden we are ... six months ago everybody hated us, and everybody said, "Astana, it is bad." And now everybody loves us. And I think that the ASO may have helped us tremendously improve our image. And for some reason, even in France, I just got back from the Dauphine, and I could see what at this time, [there's] another approach to our team and towards myself, from the French press than in other years. And this is because, you know, people like a little bit the victim, and we are the victim now. The decision of the ASO, they helped me with my job.

Two questions: How did you convince Alberto to leave his vacation and go to the Giro, and in next year, what kinds of challenges are going to be facing the managers and the sports directors so far as the organizations trying to go their separate ways?

Well, I'm ... [I told] Alberto to leave his vacation; I didn't give him a choice. I told him, "Well you know, we are invited to the Giro for this year, and it's not negotiable, you have to be there." Initially it was ... that was the only condition. I didn't even want him to finish. Our plan was we will do one week in the Giro to get the rhythm back, and then we would focus on the Dauphine Libere which is a little bit the general warmup for the Tour. And I wanted to make a statement there in France by winning the Dauphine. But ultimately he [Contador] decided that he

wanted to stay, and he won the Giro. I didn't negotiate very hard to get him off the beach. And the second part of your question?

Well, as these two organizations are splitting ways, what kind of challenges are the team managers going to be facing – I mean, can they set up their schedule for the whole year, are they gonna have to, like with two weeks' notice, OK you're going to ride in the Tour of Italy.

Things are going to change. Change is going on right now even as we speak. And I think one of the things is going to be an agreement ... definitely be between the big organizers and the teams. But, it's clear that the organization of the Tour de France is very powerful and they are becoming more and more powerful. They just bought 49 percent of the Tour of Spain and they're working together with the Tour of California and they own a lot of other races so we cannot live without them. But also they cannot live without us. You cannot have a circus without the clowns. And so I think there's going to be an agreement between the UCI – in my opinion they will continue to exist and they will organize ... after this is over ... and I'm a big defender of the Tour simply because generally it's this year is different, because in a lot of ways we have no certainty to participate but at least all the UCI ProTour races we were again a UCI ProTour organization and we could go to them and that we could still do exactly what we need. But as I know there's now stuff going on and the big organizers are going to get together with the UCI and we will know where we will be for the next two or three years.

I just want to compliment you and your team for this year when you weren't invited to the Tour it was like, it's their race, they can do what they want. It wasn't whining, you accepted it and I think you told your riders let's show them through our racing what we can do. And I compliment you on that.

Thank you. Now, it's definitely true when we got the news we were a little bit thinking it was an opportunity. We were hoping that with the winner of last year's Tour would not get invited, and it was something that we didn't believe it ... When it happened, we had no other choice ... I think that the team has really been able to use this bad news to their advantage because you saw almost immediately with the Tour of California, and I can feel really within the team that every single race they wanted to prove that it wasn't the right decision. And if you ask me, I think that almost everybody – I said almost everybody – has seen that it was not the right decision. And I'm pretty sure that right now also they know that it's not the right thing to do, but they're not ready to change their decision. They won't. They're too proud and they're not going to change it.

And in it saddens me. But they're going to see after the race this year that it wasn't the right decision so it's not going to be as interesting a race. I think that best athletes deserve to be in the best events, but that's not going to be the case this year.

What will you be doing during the Tour this year?

I'm going to try to sell books. The first week of the Tour I have another book Tour in the United States, and then the last week of the Tour I recommend that you watch the race, because I'm going to be commentating on Versus.

What about Floyd Landis, can we hear your thoughts on that? What is the decision going to be? Is it going to be a fair decision?

You know, I don't know. I don't know. Is this is the second time or the third time they're going to decide on that? I'm pretty sure that if it would be a clear-cut case there would already be a decision. And the fact that it's not clear ... after the debate on that there must be something there. I don't have enough information to

know what happened. But all I know is that I don't know if Floyd is guilty or not. But one thing I know is if, when he was in the situation to win the Tour and he knew he won that stage and he definitely knew before the stage that he was going to do something to take that jersey back, he also knew he was going to be tested. And, to me, it just doesn't make sense to do something stupid like that if you know you're going to be trying to win the race, and in a way like that. That's all I can say about it. So I don't know afterwards what happened with the testing or with the procedure, I don't know. But it's certainly something that doesn't make sense.

Is Lance going to win the Leadville 100?

He's going to participate, but he's not going for the win. That's inside information.

Call Las Vegas...

Within the contemporary team structure. ... are there staff people who evaluate the performances of the other teams and all that, or is this all by trial and error?

The team, right now, our team has 72 people involved.

How many?

Seventy two. That's a lot. And you know, you only see eight riders on the road. But picture, we have 30 riders and we have 42 staff people. You know, we have five directors and it's a thought level that we try to have for our directors to know about young talent. It's really a combination of ... and people if you're scouting talent. And we always have a relationship with one or two development teams. Because I think that's really the way you should recruit young riders. We have to

know their background to be able to ... them yourself. And we have to get ... that cooperation from the young team. And to analyze the performance of the other riders it's something that I think, that we have been very, very good always. Because we knew, more or less, what Lance was going to want to do for the Tour, and there are certain things we can learn we can measure the performance of Ullrich or Beloki ... We almost knew before the race ... and I think it helped ... we always knew exactly what the level of the competition was. And you can do that based on what you see on TV. It's a very simple formula. You time the climb, and you calculate the difference in altitude and a simple formula you can see how fast they're going. It's a matter of circumstances. So, we still do that ...

Inaudible question ... something about Lance and their first phone call...

We talked about it. It was also basically a gut feeling. There were certain things during our careers ... different moments where we connected for different reasons, and if you read the book ... I won't give you everything here. The main reason [why Lance called] was because I was available at the right moment. If I would have waited to retire until the end of the season, maybe somebody else would have been there already. And Lance was a bit frightened back then because he felt like the team needed some bit of direction and for different reasons we saw each other at a couple of things, and he found out that I was looking to build a rider's union. The first rider I was talking to was Lance. And then he found out that I was retired and the day after he called me to see if I was really ... to build the rider's union or if I had other alternatives. So it was a lot of different factors. There's some interesting information in the book about that.

Are you Belgian or Flemish?

I am both. I'm Belgian and Flemish. Belgium has Flemish people and French people. The Flemish part is in the north of Belgium. But basically I feel European. It's been some time since I lived in the country ... probably 15 years ago since I lived in Belgium any more.

OK? So I'm going to sign some books and I'm happy to personalize anything ...