



RON DARLING IS STILL FULL OF SHIT

Another Original & Exclusive Column From The Mind of DINO COSTA

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Lenny Dykstra is an ex-convict.

Lenny Dykstra is a one-man trainwreck on virtually every level you may wish to consider.

Lenny Dykstra has been embroiled in myriad situations and circumstances since his exciting playing days ended that has resulted in his name becoming a punchline, a bad joke, a perception by which he may never recover from.

The latest Lenny Dykstra humiliation was to see him boxing some pint-sized maniac from Long Island who received his 15-minutes of fame for acting like a deranged jerk in some bagel store a few months ago.

This “fight” (or *freak show*) was supposed to have taken place in Atlantic City where Dykstra was to have received some money for taking part in it – while also doing his cratering reputation no favors with the exception of allowing others to look at Dykstra as the sad and pathetic man he’s unfortunately become over the years.

Thankfully, for Dykstra’s sake, he pulled out of this carnival act to, he says, concentrate on upcoming litigation.

It hurts me to write the things I have about Lenny Dykstra because truthfully, I not only like Lenny Dykstra, but I also want to see him finally escape the self-defeating cycle of degradation he's made out of his life before it becomes too late for him to do so.

A couple of years ago I had Dykstra on my radio show in New York, in-studio for all 3-hours.

My intention heading into our discussion was to hopefully have Lenny reflecting in serious ways about the last few decades of his life and to see if there was any chance that he wanted to express contrition concerning a variety of issues and items he's been involved with – while also hoping that he wished to turn his life around by taking the necessary steps to do so.

What I had no interest in was to do what so many others had done when Lenny had appeared on other radio programs.

I had no desire to indulge him with talk about his sexual exploits or to lead Lenny into areas where people would continue to hold such negative thoughts about a person who, on his own, through his own words and actions – has driven such a woeful narrative for himself over the years that see people, unfortunately, laugh at Lenny – and not with Lenny.

However, it took me less than 5-minutes to find out that my best-laid plans for our discussion wouldn't be happening – and despite my attempts to reel him in and turn the direction of the dialog into something more productive, it became obvious to me that Lenny wanted no part of this, and predictably, the discussion turned into a circus along the lines of most Lenny Dykstra radio appearances.

Where others wanted and hoped for an on-air discussion with Lenny that coalesced into a bizarre circus, I was in search of something much different with Lenny, but unfortunately, I failed in my efforts to materialize such a confabulation that evening.

What I found was that Lenny wanted nothing to do with any serious discussion – and that Lenny is reluctant to seek out paths which could lead him to a level of normality and respect for himself – this is something that Lenny either has zero interest in – or – he feels that his life has become such a lost cause that he simply doesn't give two fucks about how people choose to view him...or how he views himself.

All of this is tragic, of course, because Lenny Dykstra should be living a post-baseball career life where in New York, he's viewed as a hero for his exploits with the Mets, and in Philadelphia, his name should be honored because of the ways he was so instrumental in the Phillies march to the World Series back in 1993.

However, neither of the two organizations that Lenny played with want anything to do with him right now – and most people it seems – want nothing to do with Dykstra unless they can find a way to profit off of his absurd and crazy shenanigans.

I've had numerous phone conversations with Lenny over the last few years, spent an evening getting to know him better when we had dinner together, and of course, spent 3-hours with him in a radio studio.

After each and every encounter I've had with Lenny I always come away with a few thoughts; *I wonder if that will be the last time I ever hear from Lenny, I wonder if Lenny will finally see the light and seek to turn his life around...I wonder if something really bad will happen to Lenny.*

And so, I think I've established a few thoughts that I have about Lenny Dykstra, but I will always remain hopeful that Lenny will reach a point where he tires of the life he's made for himself and makes a legitimate effort to re-direct himself into positive areas because it's never too late for him – or anyone else – to do this.

The one thing that Lenny Dykstra is not – is a racist as claimed by his former Mets teammate and now Mets broadcaster, Ron Darling.

By the way, allow me to get this out of the way right now, if I was convinced that Lenny Dykstra was the person that Ron Darling accuses him of being, I'd join the party and let people know that Darling was more than correct.

It's now been 5-months since Darling's book came out where he claimed that Lenny Dykstra stood in the Mets on-deck circle before Game 3 of the 1986 World Series and screamed some of the vilest and despicable things at Red Sox pitcher Dennis "Oil Can" Boyd, and now, 5-months later, Ron Darling is not only being sued by Dykstra – but in addition – Ron Darling remains as full of shit today about this accusation as he was when he decided to include such a self-serving fabrication in the pages of his book.

Why do I bring all of this up today, 5-months down the line?

Three reasons, actually.

Firstly, because I've never written about this situation previously.

Secondly, because I spoke with someone just this past weekend who was at Fenway Park that night working as a producer for the game for NBC Sports.

And lastly, because the official reaction in most quarters when these absurd claims were made by Darling was predictably met with people who simply assumed, based on Lenny Dykstra's well-earned reputation, that because it was Lenny Dykstra who Darling had fingered for such a

disreputable act, that it must be true, it had to be true what Darling was claiming...because after all, it was only Lenny Dykstra he was talking about.

Listen, folks, the day we all arrive at such knee-jerk reactions – when the day comes where we automatically connect people with allegations being made simply based on past reputation and assume guilt without anything other than someone saying someone did something or said something, this is the day we've all become looney beyond imagination and we might as well begin to start burning people at the stake again if someone claims they know that someone else worships the devil.

I first became aware of Darling's accusations against Dykstra in the sports pages of the New York Post.

I remember my first thought was; *"oh, jeez, you've got to be kidding me...what has Lenny gotten himself into now?"*

However, unlike many others who simply believed Darling without any proof and because of Dykstra's reputation – I needed some verifiable and concrete proof that what Darling was claiming was true before I too signed off on believing this story.

Darling wasn't claiming that Dykstra took a steaming pile of shit in the middle of the clubhouse, no, Ron Darling was accusing Dykstra of some horrible things, things that could make Dykstra's name much worse than it already is.

Darling's claims were stunning.

After all, the 1986 World Series was 33-years ago, and up until these claims by Ron Darling, nary a peep was made by anyone concerning something that I figured would have made some kind of news over the years since then, right?

I mean, someone would have said something over the years since that World Series in relation to such reprehensible words being screamed by one of the Mets most recognized and popular players at the Red Sox starting pitcher that night, right?

I also immediately began to wonder, that if Lenny Dykstra had been wildly screaming out at Dennis Boyd that evening, how come the pitcher himself has been quiet for the last 33-years and said nothing?

Then I remembered that I had the tape of the 1986 World Series, every game, including every game's pre-game show on NBC.

But instead of going into my garage to retrieve the dusty VCR tape, I instead looked for Game 3 of the 86' World Series on YouTube – which I

found, which is available for you to watch, from before the first pitch thrown that evening 33-years ago to the very last out of the night, a game played on October 21, 1986, a game won by the New York Mets 7-1, a game where Lenny Dykstra led off that game with a home run off of Oil Can Boyd.

There is much to consider if one truly wishes to get to the bottom of these Ron Darling claims, and unfortunately for Darling, the evidence contradicts his assertions.

The tape of that third game of the 1986 World Series clearly shows Lenny Dykstra in the Mets on-deck circle waiting for his turn at-bat to lead off the game.

But when I saw Dykstra in that on-deck circle I saw nothing that would indicate that Dykstra was in any kind of full-throated rage, nothing that indicated to me that he was directing his actions toward the pitcher's mound where Boyd was throwing his warm-up pitches, nothing indicating that Dykstra was doing anything other than preparing for his turn at-bat as he had done many times before.

What the tape *does show* is Dykstra adjusting his batting gloves, Dykstra adjusting his batting helmet, it also shows the Mets second-hitter in the order that night, Wally Backman, standing about 6-7 feet to the left of Dykstra, paying no mind to Dykstra at all, instead, Backman is looking out at the field.

Additionally, I found it odd, that not only does Dykstra appear to be doing nothing other than getting ready for his trip to the plate, but also, as Dykstra is allegedly screaming things at Oil Can Boyd, things that Ron Darling said were worse than anything Jackie Robinson may have heard, I found it funny that as Red Sox catcher Rich Gedman was taking warm-up pitches from Boyd, he never once turned his head in the direction of a maniac in the on-deck circle who was threatening to start a race-war before the first pitch was thrown that night – and also – that night's home plate umpire, Harry Wendlestadt, he didn't seem to be hearing this racist tirade either as Wendlestadt was getting into position and crouching behind Gedman to take in a few Boyd warm-up tosses.

Okay, so Dykstra screamed all these things at Boyd, and if you're aware of Fenway Park's dimensions you're aware that it is one of the most intimate and cozy ballparks in the game. The crowd is right on top of the action, foul territory is pretty restricted, and Dykstra was allegedly screaming these words out at Boyd from a distance of about no more than 90-feet away from him – and no more than 30-feet away from home plate.

Oh, by the way, check the tape out for yourself, Boyd is warming up and seems not to have a care in the world other than thinking about how he'd be attacking Mets hitters that night.

Not once does Boyd even for a half-second look in the direction of the Mets on-deck circle or over at the Mets dugout.

You say *“well, his concentration level was probably such that he simply focused on the game that night.”*

And my response to such a retort would be to tell you to try again – but harder.

So you’re suggesting that Lenny Dykstra is screaming the most disgusting kinds of racial epithets at Oil Can Boyd (*according to Ron Darling*) and Boyd not even for a second takes a look at Dykstra, never once stops his warm-up pitches and comes off the mound to wonder what the fuck is wrong with Dykstra, doesn’t react at all in any way?

Dykstra wasn’t telling Boyd that his mother wears Army boots, he was supposedly calling Boyd vicious and unprintable names, after all.

Now Dykstra approaches home plate, and if Boyd heard all of this racial garbage coming out of Dykstra’s mouth, then it only stands to reason that Red Sox catcher Rich Gedman heard it too (*probably better than Boyd did*), as well as home plate umpire Harry Wendelstadt.

Yet as Dykstra steps into the batter’s box, Gedman says nothing to him, Wendelstadt says nothing to him, the image of Boyd appears on the screen, he seems unaware of any racial bombs that Dykstra allegedly hurled his way. No, nothing seems out of place, nothing seems askew in the least.

Rich Gedman doesn’t ask for time to head out to the mound to calm his pitcher down and to pay no attention to the racist twerp in the batter’s box

Nothing out of the ordinary appears to be going on at all.

Instead, Dykstra steps into the box and proceeds to hit Boyd’s third-pitch of the game down the right-field line and out of the park for a lead-off home run giving the Mets an early 1-0 lead.

This, you would think, should have incensed Oil Can Boyd even more, right?

I mean, not only does Dykstra call him some of the worst and most inhuman words imaginable before the game starts – but then – Dykstra has the balls to homer off of Boyd to start the game?

Next, we see Dykstra rounding the bases, here he comes around third-base where he gets a hand slap from Mets third-base coach Buddy Harrelson.

Does Dykstra, full of both toxic masculinity as well as off the charts adrenaline, does he turn his head to look at Boyd as he comes down the 3rd base-line toward home, gesturing as if to tell Boyd that his previous words

surely rattled Boyd and that this was only the beginning of the Mets assault on the Red Sox pitcher?

No.

Also, as Dykstra rounds third and heads home, does Boyd walk off the mound and toward Dykstra as Lenny is now within easy earshot of the pitcher and where Boyd can fire back a few choice words of his own at Dykstra? This never happens either.

A catcher is always protective of their pitchers, and if Rich Gedman let Dykstra's horrendous actions in the on-deck circle slide before, not turning his head once in Dykstra's direction before he approached home plate, not saying a word to Dykstra as he settled into the batter's box, well, here was Gedman's chance to tell Dykstra to go and fuck himself as his foot touched home plate, right?

But Gedman doesn't react to Dykstra at all. He only watches as Dykstra hits home and makes his way back to the dugout.

So, here is Lenny Dykstra, who just hit a leadoff home run off of a pitcher he degraded before he went to the plate, here is Lenny Dykstra now approaching the Mets dugout, a Mets dugout with non-white players which included, Darryl Strawberry, Dwight Gooden, Rafael Santana, and Kevin Mitchell, all who along with the rest of the Mets dugout warmly greet Dykstra as he goes back into the dugout...as if nothing ever happened.

That's because nothing ever did happen.

I mentioned before that just this past weekend I spoke with someone who was producing that game for NBC Sports, and this individual who was in Boston said he never heard a peep from anyone about this alleged racial tirade from Dykstra, and while acknowledging that the on-field microphones were less advanced back then as compared to now, that if Dykstra had been unhinged as Darling suggested, that his words would have been picked up and people would have heard...something.

Further, the Mets officials, most of their front-office, was seated in the first row just to the left of the Mets dugout that evening...only a few feet behind Dykstra as he took his place in the on-deck circle.

So if Ron Darling, the rest of the Mets dugout, along with Rich Gedman, Harry Wendlestadt, and Oil Can Boyd, if all of these people were aware of Dykstra's racist outburst, then so too were Mets owners Nelson Doubleday, Fred Wilpon, general manager Frank Cashen, assistant GM Joe McIlvaine, as well as then Mets VP Al Harazin.

Fred Wilpon, in specific, has adorned the entrance of the Mets current ballpark, Citi Field, with a homage to the great Jackie Robinson. You could even say that Jackie Robinson is Fred Wilpon's lifelong hero.

So, Fred Wilpon, hearing this ugly tirade from Lenny Dykstra, not only decided not to say anything in the immediate aftermath of Game 3, but Wilpon also had no problem keeping this racist rat on his team for the next 3-years afterward?

I don't care if it was Game-3 of the World Series or if it had been game-3 of the Mets pre-season down in spring training – if Dykstra had taken to such a racist act you can take it to the bank that guys like Kevin Mitchell (*a former gang member*) and Darryl Strawberry (*from Crenshaw high-school in Los Angeles*), would have taken Dykstra and turned him into a pretzel the moment he got back to the dugout.

Also, let's not forget that just 2-months prior to this alleged incident, the Mets were accused of playing a racist game with outfielder George Foster who the Mets had released in favor of re-acquiring Lee Mazzilli.

If Dykstra had done what Darling claims he did, does anyone think that the Mets would not have taken some kind of action with the Foster scenario still kind of fresh in people's minds and running the risk that people might feel that Foster's own words about the Mets might possibly be true?

The game ends, the Mets won by the score of 7-1, the press enters the Mets clubhouse...and nothing?

Not a word?

Not a single player pulling any writer or columnist aside to clue them in about what had happened before the first pitch?

In the Red Sox clubhouse, it was the same thing.

Not one player, not Boyd, not Gedman, not any other player on the Red Sox felt compelled to tell anyone that the Mets centerfielder was a racist who someone in baseball needed to deal with?

Surely other Red Sox players, most notably, black Sox players like Dave Henderson, Don Baylor, Jim Rice, one would think that none of these players would just stand by and not take issue with what Dykstra had done and said without getting their two-cents in, right?

Yet...nothing.

Nothing from the Red Sox players then and nothing from a single member of the Red Sox entire organization...for 33-years.

Odd?

Dykstra left the Mets after he was traded to the Phillies back in June of 1989.

As Dykstra was turning himself into an MVP candidate in 1993, playing such a big role in the Phillies winning the National League pennant and then tearing it up in the World Series that year, would this not have been an opportune time for someone on the Red Sox to put the word out that Lenny Dykstra got away with reprehensible actions only a few years before and that the world needs to know that Lenny Dykstra is a pure racist with a malevolent heart?

Again, nothing.

So then Darling's book comes out in May of this year, and I was the first one to inform Dykstra that Darling had accused him of such abhorrent actions.

On Twitter Dykstra immediately refuted Darling's claims – but then he did it one better.

Dykstra reached out to some people who would be able to speak to Darling's claims – his former teammates on those 1986 Mets.

Players who were in the dugout that evening just like Ron Darling was.

First, it was Dwight Gooden who denied that what Darling was claiming was true.

Then, Darryl Strawberry said the same thing.

Then, Kevin Mitchell followed suit.

Then, Wally Backman said that what Darling claimed was ridiculous.

Four players refuted Darling's claims – three of those players black men.

Dykstra pissed off a lot of people when he played the game, both for his relentless take-no-shit approach to baseball – and for his ability to get under the skin of others, opposing players as well as former teammates.

I'll ask yet another question which sits there like a hanging curveball waiting to be crushed: *How come not a single individual around Dykstra throughout his minor and major league playing days has come forward to back up Ron Darling or to submit other instances of the racist Lenny Dykstra?*

This past August, Dykstra sued Darling and St. Martin's Press and the Macmillan Publishing Group – and I for one – hope Dykstra takes all of

these people to the cleaners and wins an appreciable amount of compensation in return for his name being tarnished with such a bogus claim.

Darling claims that Dykstra's lawsuit is without merit because he contends that Dykstra's reputation can't get any worse than it already is.

What the fuck does this even mean?

That because someone has a disreputable reputation that they're fair game to pile on with one accusation after another no matter what, no matter if the allegations and insinuations are true or not?

That if someone is down and out that they can be kicked and punched around without penalty...because they're down and out so it doesn't matter?

My instincts tell me that Darling and Dykstra never got along too well (*in fact Lenny has told me he never much cared for Darling and vice-versa*) and that Darling, in an effort to spice up his book, decided to pick at the lowest hanging fruit available to him.

My instincts tell me that Darling decided to accuse Lenny Dykstra of the things he alleges, because after all, it's Lenny Dykstra, he of the awful image and reputation, and after all, since it's Lenny Dykstra, with all of the trouble he's been in, who are people going to believe, Ron Darling, or the awful Lenny Dykstra?

My instincts tell me that Ron Darling thought to himself; *"I'm an Ivy League-educated man who has the respect of many, I'm a Mets television voice and I also do commentary on national baseball games. I mean, who in the hell is going to stand up and vouch for such a scumbag like Lenny Dykstra?"*

Dwight Gooden.

Kevin Mitchell.

Darryl Strawberry.

Wally Backman.

The television tape of Game-3 of the 86' World Series.

DINO COSTA.

Darling is a smart guy, he's aware of the mob-rule that exists today, he understands that people are suckers for any kind of a juicy story, especially if the story involves someone who others feel is an all-time miscreant.

Darling is also aware of the racial dissension that exists in America today and he decided to take advantage of that hostility, especially when he could claim that it was a white man who was degrading a black man. That kind of a story sells – and big time.

However, in the end, when pressed to prove that his malicious attack on Dykstra is authentic – when anyone of sound mind considers all of the angles, all of the refutation that has since come in Dykstra's defense, when anyone objectively views the tape of Game-3 of the 86' World Series, when someone takes into account all of the information and inarguable and verifiable proof, which shows that Lenny Dykstra did not do, did not even come close to doing what Ron Darling accuses him of doing...it should be concluded by one and all that Ron Darling remains as full of shit about all of this today as he was when he decided to include such pernicious and spiteful passages about Dykstra in his book.

Lenny Dykstra is a lot of things.

One thing he is not is what Ron Darling suggested in the pages of his recently released book.

Lastly, if you're reading this, there's still time to turn it all around, Lenny, and I'm praying for you.