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So Floyd Landis owes me $$$ 'cuz I'm stupid?

Floyd Landis immediately after winning the 2006 Tour de France. Yes, I was fooled. For a while.

It's a rare thing indeed to find the government actually watching your back, but it looks like there's a chance I'll actually be repaid the money I sent to the Floyd Fairness Fund back in... 2006? Yes I was one of 1765 people duped into believing that Landis was innocent. I did have a connection to his TdF win, having been at the right place at the right time when the race ended and he left the tarmac to be embraced by his trainer and closest friends.

And of course I was there on the mountain during that awesomely-fatal stage where he gained 10 minutes on the field, only later to find out that he'd failed a test for testosterone doping. We saw Floyd riding up the hill, alone, and waited, and waited, and waited for the pack to follow. It was unreal. And Floyd was right; what happened was unfair. To the sport, to the very concept on integrity and what it means to be honest.

But back then, I didn't know anything beyond what I saw, and I wanted to believe that I saw something great. When it came out that the winner of the TdF had failed a doping control, I was shocked. Not shocked that someone could have doped, but shocked by the sudden reversal of emotions, 3 or 4 days of flying high on the US winning the TdF, then suddenly wondering "was that real?"

So first I'm thinking Floyd's a superman, then thinking wow, unbelievable, sounds like he was caught doping? Until Floyd's posse came out with all sorts of scientific reasons the tests were flawed and couldn't be believed. I wanted to believe Floyd had won fair & square, so I got sucked in. I sent some money, I paid for Floyd to sign the photo I took of him at the end (and in retrospect should have thought it funny that he wouldn't sign anything without being paid). I even sent him a Christmas Card. No way the government can extract a suitable price for that.

In the end, Floyd turned out to be a seriously-bad egg. He hit bottom and lost any and all shreds of credibility when he stood by while an associate (within earshot) made a bogus call to Greg LeMond, claiming to be an uncle who had abused him earlier in life. All in an attempt to scare him (LeMond) away.

The latest revelations on Lance? Not nearly as big a deal to me. I went from passionate supporter to detached observer some time ago, and have found villains on both sides of the fence. It certainly is ironic that these things seem to happen only when I'm in France though!Â --Mike--