

The Cubs were less talkative, and no wonder. Dallas Green had recently suggested that he was prepared to dispense with almost anyone on his roster of well-paid underachievers (anyone but all-league second baseman Ryne Sandberg, one must assume, or the brilliant young shortstop Shawon Dunston, or perhaps Lee Smith), although there are cynics who claim he wouldn't find many takers, because of the lavish contracts that were given to the stars of '84. In any case, I had very little relish at the prospect of worming out losers' confessions in the Chicago clubhouse. Ron Cey, who had been riding the bench in recent weeks, probably because of his Rodinesque responses to hard-hit ground balls around third base, was polite but distant. Now thirty-eight years old, he had played nineteen hundred and fifty-three games at third base and hit three hundred and six home runs over ten full seasons with the Dodgers and three-plus with the Cubs, and he was not prepared to be forthcoming about unsuccess. "You'd have to ask players who have been on teams that have been out of it a lot of years," he said stiffly. "It's not a situation I'm familiar with—I don't qualify. I'm used to being up there in the midst of things. When you're in contention, you *contest*. It's what you're here for—why you exist as a professional. Now—well, not playing much and being with a team that's out of it, the way we ate, is not an enviable position. I'm in a different place than I'm used to."*

*Before my visit to Wrigley Field, the Chicago *Sun-Times* ran a story about Ron Cey that mentioned his age and declining mobility afield—and his insistence that he was still as good as ever out there. The headline went: "WASHED UP? CEY: IT AIN'T SO."