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Antonio Pacheco in U.S: News or Home Run?

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Since last July 18 the information started to circulate in Internet and many journalists, baseball players, officials, people from Santiago de Cuba, all Cubans, wonder the same thing: Antonio Pacheco asked for political asylum in the United States? Is he undergoing refuge procedures?

Between uncertainty and reality the only real, proven fact was that he indeed was in U.S. territory. The so-called Captain of Captains was in Tampa, accompanied by his wife, he had been there for several weeks actually. A homemade video shot by baseball player Yobal Dueñas was uploaded in youtube. ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=liMymTM01m8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liMymTM01m8) )

The piece of news started to spread from there as generally happens, with a certain political smell, without checking with migratory authorities or others sources the terms of "asylum or refuge", without statements of the main character of the event. The player was just showed and judged over and over as the ultimate defeat of the sport system and, of course, the failure of the social system built in Cuba since 1959.

And it is true Pacheco was not only an idol of baseball, but an icon of a country. He was one of the greatest examples and role-model of sportsmen for more than two decades. Among his unique achievements can be found the inclusion in all Cuba baseball teams since the infantile categories until the big team. He coached Santiago de Cuba team winning three times the national championship and in 2008 he coached the national team in the Olympic Games of Beijing, where he ended second.

However, let's return to the news at hand and not to the media homerun that a few aggressive websites have wanted to show. These websites multiplied the report from the point of view they saw more suited not to demoralize Pacheco, but the Cuban Revolution.

The former second base player decided to travel from Canada, where he had a legal and public work contract, to the United States to visit or start a work project next to Yobal Dueñas and catcher Angel Lopez. This information

was clearly not included in the video, that much can be checked. Is perhaps a crime if we abide the laws established in the northern country or the most recent migratory politics approved in our country?

Many of us may not share in a moral, affective, even in a political way Pacheco's decision regarding the workplace he chose if finally it's true he will work there. But that doesn't mean he is going to stop being Cuban all of a sudden neither that he is an enemy for his people, provided he doesn't begin the traffic or piracy of our baseball talents. Let's also hope he doesn't scorn what he learned in his sport career, exaggerate lies and past stories or flirt with those terrorists who really want to make Cuba collapse.

He has done none of this until today July 29. No statement, interview or public appearance can be consulted in North American media, social networks, blogs, etc., and the very websites aforementioned—at least one did it—acknowledge that could not establish contact with Pacheco or that he didn't want to make a statement.

He doesn't speak in the video mentioned earlier which proves that we are witnessing something as normal as working in another place that is not his country and that's the bottom line.

It's true that for many colleagues and the people from Santiago de Cuba is sad and we are not used to separating passions, politics and Cuban identity in events like these. It is truly difficult to tell them apart when they are our icons who walk on the neighbor's sidewalk. A neighbor, who has tried to choke us for more than five decades.

Contrary to what the media has not said, this journalist does have a statement (recorded) from Pacheco, after an interview granted at Guillermon Moncada Stadium in 2009. One of the questions was about his decision of staying in Cuba despite the many offers he received to play in the Major League Baseball. To recall his answer today is not like defending him, it's just a reminder on how consequent the Cuban people expect him to be no matter where he lives.

"Pacheco didn't stay because, honestly, I come from a very humble family, with a father who sacrificed many things for his education where the main thing he was taught was to love his homeland always, love for his family, his friends, his people. I was raised that way and afterwards I have had the chance, the opportunity of growing, of seeing and of thinking, I saw that the world is not sometimes as someone says it is or try to sell us.

It never crossed my mind to leave my team or the country. I always followed a path I had to keep. I thank my parents for the education they gave me, to my family, my friends whom share with me and spoke to me, the leaders who spoke with me, to our Commander in Chief who is a man of principles and taught me that this was a single path.

I am happy, maybe I don't have all I needed to have, but I have many things, I have a lot, the people's love and don't worry I will die rich with that."

Let's hope he never forgets to die rich with their people.

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