

half, and that's when it really matters.

IS: We can't avoid talking about your personality and the controversies you stir up. First of all, during the playoffs, you could have enhanced your image, yet you chose to worsen it. Why?

AB: It all started because during the season the media couldn't go certain places at certain times, then we get into the playoffs and suddenly they can go everywhere. We were trying to do soft-toss drills near the screen before a *playoff* game, and we couldn't because the media were there, interfering with our preparation.

There are certain things I like to do before the game, but I couldn't because media were everywhere. Before I take BP, I like to sit in the dugout and talk about the opposing pitcher, the way he's been going, what we did in the past to beat him, or what he did in the past to beat us. We talk about defensive alignment, things like that. Next thing you know, I'm coming off the field and going into the dugout—and there's nowhere to sit because there's all the media there. That pissed me off because they weren't interviewing anyone. There are some reporters who are responsible, talking to coaches or players for stories, but it's the ones who are just there doing nothing that bother me.

IS: What prompted you to go off on NBC's Hannah Storm in such a vicious manner?

AB: There was a group of reporters in our dugout not doing any interviews, including Hannah Storm, and I just lost it. I said, "This has got to stop! Get out of our dugout! Stand out on the grass, but get out of the dugout. This is our dugout, our ballpark. I don't care what the league says. You go by our rules. We dictate what goes on." Some people left. She didn't, and I got rude. I had it up to here.

I talked to league officials until I was blue in the face about roping off the media, and when nothing was done I just took it upon myself to do it. When we're in the playoffs this year, things will be different.

IS: Did this media problem contribute to the Indians losing the World Series?

AB: No, we can't blame it on anyone but ourselves. But the fact is, [pregame] preparation is extremely important because one run can be the difference between winning or losing a playoff game.

IS: Your behavior in the playoffs prompted reporters to ask Indians GM John Hart if he was going to ask you to see a psychiatrist. What was your reaction to that?

AB: I didn't know anything about that. I don't read newspapers and I don't listen to talk shows. And anyway, I've seen a shrink before, for my drinking problem, so that kind of talk is no big deal to me. Anyway, I hit 50 homers, so what do I need to see a shrink for? Because I didn't hit 60?

IS: Controversy continued after the Series

were there. After all the things I do in the community, that was a slap in the face.

IS: Didn't the whole thing start because you didn't give out candy on Halloween?

AB: Yeah, but that's no reason to egg my house.

IS: Why don't you give out candy?

AB: I never have, never wanted to. I'm not patient enough to do it. But here I am trying to be a positive influence on kids in the community, and that's what they do? If my parents weren't there I probably wouldn't

have done anything, but my dad answered the door, and as soon as he closed the door they bombarded the house with eggs. It was embarrassing. Reporters told me it was embarrassing they had to report that.

IS: Did your parents try to stop you from chasing the kids?

AB: Yeah. They said, "Don't worry about it." But I refused to be treated that way after having basically killed myself trying to help us get to the World Series.

IS: What would you have done if you had caught one of those kids?

AB: I had a chance to run two of them over. Hell, if I wanted to I could've run every one of them over. In order for them to get home they've got to walk by my condo, because they live down the street. I could've just sat there and waited for them and gotten all of them. Anyway, I scared the shit out of them. They were screaming and running. I did what I wanted to do.

IS: If someone had gotten hurt, how would you have felt?

AB: I probably would've felt bad. But people go out of their way to instigate stuff with professional athletes—egging you on, harassing you—and you can only take so much. People deliberately screw around with you, and when you retaliate they throw a lawsuit on you.

IS: What was the reaction to you in Cleveland after the Halloween incident?

AB: Actually, the people in my condominium section had a big banner for me that said, EUCLID LOVES ALBERT. I didn't know they were going to do anything like that. That made me feel good.

IS: Why are you so accommodating in this interview, yet so difficult during the season and in the playoffs?

AB: Because in the offseason I don't have



STEVE LEVIN

"I hit 50 homers, so what do I need to see a shrink for? Because I didn't hit 60?"

with the Halloween incident. What happened that night?

AB: Those kids had no business messing around my house. The reason I got so upset is because here I am doing things for the community that the media don't know and I don't want them to find out about, but I'm out there helping to make Cleveland a better city, doing positive things for kids, and all of a sudden, that's how I'm treated? That's what pissed me off. Plus my parents