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| Patrik Jonsson | Aug 24, 2012 Travis Tygart, the chief US antidoping executive, has followed Lance Armstrong for years, spurred on by what he saw as steadily building evidence that the greatest American cyclist ever had cheated his way to seven Tour de France titles.On Friday, Tygart's efforts paid off. Armstrong, who for more than a decade had pushed past doping allegations as though they were hapless bike riders, said Thursday he would not seek to judge the United States Anti-Doping Agency’s charges against him, allowing USADA to claim victory by banning the 40-year-old rider for life from involvement in any sport that follows the World Anti-Doping Code. It also vowed to have Armstrong stripped of his historic seven Tour de France titles.While Armstrong did not admit guilt, World Anti-Doping Agency president John Fahey said the ex-cyclist's decision to stop fighting the allegations prove that they "have substance to them."For Armstrong, the prospect of hashing out testimony about alleged blood transfusions and discarded hypodermic needles was not only distasteful, but the process may have done more damage to his stature than if he simply quit the fight, and it may have doomed current and future endorsements.Tygart had amassed a list of famous and infamous bikers who have testified to USADA that Armstrong had used performance-enhancing drugs as far back as his first Tour de France win in 1999. Two of those accusers, Americans Tyler Hamilton and Floyd Landis, were also stripped of titles and gold medals after testing positive for steroids. If the Tour titles are stripped from Armstrong, only one American Tour champion will remain: Greg LeMond.But one difference divides the Armstrong case from those of other discredited cyclists. Armstrong never tested positive for illegal substances during his racing career, despite being tested hundreds of times. Suspicions about his illegal doping have centered on skepticism about anyone's ability to achieve such incredible feats without the help of illegal substances, knowledge that doping was rampant in cycling during that time, and accusations from other cyclists.Armstrong has lived in the zone of suspicion for years, but a two-year federal probe in the US ended without charges in February. USADA, a taxpayer-funded federal agency created in 2000 to safeguard “true sport,” said in June it had new evidence, including drug-test results, from the past couple of years that suggest Armstrong has dabbled in illegal substances since ending his professional cycling career to become a triathlete.Armstrong said Thursday that relentless pursuit by USADA, which he characterized as playing by its own arbitrary rules, led to his decision to drop his defense after a US court decided on Monday it would not intervene on his behalf to block the arbitration. “Enough is enough,” Armstrong said.US District Judge Sam Sparks this week raised several concerns about USADA’s conduct, including its failure to show Armstrong the evidence against him. But he decided that the matter was basically a dispute between Armstrong and USADA that needed to be resolved without the involvement of the United States courts.Armstrong, who prefaced his comments by saying, “It’s time to turn the page,” railed against what he called an “unconstitutional witch hunt” by an investigator who was bent on stopping at nothing to bring him down."At every turn, USADA has played the role of a bully, threatening everyone in its way and challenging the good faith of anyone who questions its motives or its methods, all at U.S. taxpayers’ expense,” Armstrong wrote on his website from his home base in Austin, Texas.Sparks wrote that he was sympathetic to Armstrong’s complaints about the agency. "USADA's conduct raises serious questions about whether its real interest in charging Armstrong is to combat doping, or if it is acting according to less noble motives," such as politics or publicity, Sparks wrote.Doubts about USADA's motives are likely to continue to color its case against Armstrong. Peter Flax, editor of Bicycling magazine, told “CBS This Morning” on Friday that he’s “absolutely convinced” that Armstrong doped, but said he is equally convinced that “he is the victim of a witch hunt.”In giving up his claim, Armstrong nevertheless took a swipe at his chief tormentor, Tygart. In recalling his Tour wins, he wrote, “There were no short cuts, there was no special treatment…. The toughest event in the world where the strongest man wins. Nobody can ever change that. Especially not Travis Tygart." |

Who is the victim of this “witch hunt”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What emotions caused or contributed to the “witch hunt”?

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