



# **Pedro, Carlos, and Omar: The Story of a Season in the Big Apple and the Pursuit of Baseball's Top Latino Stars**

*Adam Rubin*

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The two most heralded free agents after the 2004 Major League Baseball season, Pedro Martinez and Carlos Beltran, had two things in common: They both signed with the Mets (not the Yankees!) and, like Mets GM Omar Minaya, they are both Latino. Minaya openly said that he would use his heritage to attract top Latin American players, and his signing of both players brought instant credibility to a much-troubled franchise. Martinez, baseball's most colorful player, brought an excitement to the Shea Stadium mound not seen since the days of a young Dwight Gooden. Meanwhile, despite an injury-hampered first half, Beltran was voted by fans to the starting lineup of the 2005 National League All-Star team. Along the way, Minaya generated controversy by letting go respected veteran Al Leiter, hiring inexperienced manager Willie Randolph, and unsuccessfully pursuing free agent first baseman Carlos Delgado--who criticized Minaya's supposed attempts to "exploit" his ethnicity. "New York Daily News beat writer Adam Rubin brings you the inside stories of these men, as well as the breakout season of Cliff Floyd, the growing pains of star-in-the-making David Wright, the swan-song season of Mets catcher Mike Piazza, and the many other storylines of the team that sought to recapture the magic of the Amazin' Mets.

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