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2. Justin Kelly. *Yet as a negative perfect marker in English.*
7.

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A partial antecedent
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Normally, we think of deletion as targeting an entire phrase (as in VP Ellipsis) or a single word (as in simple Gapping examples). The following, though, give examples of what we might call a “partial antecedent”:

(1) The food at Burger King is pretty unspectacular. But then again, it isn’t supposed to be
spectacular / *unspectacular
(2) Fans of The Three Stooges are unsophisticated. But then again, they never claimed to be sophisticated / *unsophisticated
(3) Dana’s promotion is unlikely. But then again, no one thinks it should be likely / *unlikely

Note that only parts of the antecedents unspectacular, unsophisticated, and unlikely seem to “copy and delete” in the second clause. This requires a polarity contrast of sorts between the two clauses; loosely put, the negative markers not, never, and no one appear to take the place of the negative prefix un-. Without a polarity contrast, we do not find partial antecedents of this type:

(4) The food at Burger King is pretty unspectacular, though admittedly one expects it to be
unspectacular / *spectacular
(5) Fans of The Three Stooges are unsophisticated, and they claim to be unsophisticated / *sophisticated

Even with a polarity contrast across clauses, though, neither various Class I negative prefixes nor the Class II morpheme non-pattern with un- in this way:

(6) The puzzles in this book are impossible, but they’re really not supposed to be
*possible / impossible
(7) That juggler was particularly maladroit, but nobody thought that he would be *adroit / maladroit
(8) My syntax students are disenchanted, but I never expected them to be *enchanted / disenchanted
(9) The workers are noncompliant, but the boss didn’t expect them to be
*compliant / noncompliant
So only un- appears to allow for a partial antecedent. However, it does not seem to occur when material in addition to the affected adjective attempts to delete (thanks to a Snippets reviewer for this observation):

(10) Some say the food at Burger King has become unspectacular, and it really hasn’t become unspectacular / *become spectacular

In sum, then, we have an interesting observation: “copy and delete” can apparently target part of an antecedent. We also have at least two puzzles: why such a phenomenon should require the prefix un- rather than any other negative prefix, and why it does not occur when material in addition to the affective adjective deletes.