There's so much going on with this team lately, that it's beginning to get difficult to fit everything in a conscice matter.

Not that you expect me to ever be brief, but I guess the good thing is? No more fluff stories. Man, everyone is mentioned and I don't have to ramble on and on about Austin Kearns.

Man, I love picking on Austin Kearns.

[BAUER RHYMES]

Didn't think I'd be touching the **Trevor Bauer**-Miguel Montero feud again, until a day after Montero made his comments, the rap song that Bauer produced over the winter "dropped". If you didn't hear it yet, you can do so here .

It's incredibly bad. Like, it's horrible. I don't really like rap music, but this is not even close to being good. It's okay though, because Bauer knows he is a terrible rap artist and he's certainly

not doing it because he's good. It's just a hobby, so that's cool.

Bauer did note that it was recorded in December and that it is directed at people on Twitter, not Montero. Even though there are some "lyrics" that sound as if he's talking about Montero.

I think it really is much-to-do about nothing. It's time for everyone to move on. Bauer is with a new team, Montero is still with the Diamondbacks, it is no longer something either has to go through and it was probably very much not as "heated" as some would think. It really does seem like it is a young guy who was trying to do things his way and a veteran catcher who was trying to genuinely help.

What really should be in focus is the fact that Bauer is competing for a rotation spot . And this is a real opportunity that he is going to get. The Indians seem like they aren't going to put him at a disadvantage and send him to Columbus just because they think he's too young or their is service time that could be involved.

"We're not really predisposed either way," Antonetti said. "We want to go with the starters who feel give us the best chance to win. If Trevor is one of those guys, then that will be a big part of our decision. But, in the end, if he ends up starting the season in the Minor Leagues, he can benefit from additional development."

It probably will work against him though. Don't fool yourself. If he's not developed to the point the Indians think he needs to be where he needs something done in Triple A, or that he's not better than five other guys quite yet and would benefit starting there, I think the Indians are more likely to do it.

But if he does come in and lights it up, the Indians won't have a choice. They'll give him the spot.

The Montero stuff is dying down and it shouldn't be an issue moving forward. It was probably the first thing everyone wanted to talk about, and then the rap song escalated it all, but Bauer can probably settle down now and focus on what he has to do, and that's win a rotation spot.

[FINDING A WAY TO START]

One thing that has come up recently is the idea of signing Kyle Lohse. A lot of people are getting excited with the Indians spending money on Bourn at the last second, but please, don't fool yourself into thinking that going for Lohse is a good idea.

There's several things. One, Lohse is probably looking for a multi-year deal, which is kind of dangerous at his age. The other, is that Lohse is not that good of a pitcher. He's serviceable, some team will get someone who can pitch well for them this year. But let's stop this. The free agent pool of starters was incredibly weak this offseason . That's why the Indians did not make any sort of signing other than Myers that would help the biggest problem on their squad.

After Greinke, the second best pitcher was Anibal Sanchez. Um, okay? There wasn't a lot to be had and the Indians played it right by not really making a move on anyone else. It would have been nice to pair Myers up with Shaun Marcum, but it wasn't to be. Going out now and getting Lohse would be a bad move, so don't go screaming "Let's go for it all!!!" like a crazy Jose Canseco, who suddenly is either Lohse's agent or an Indians fan.

Wacko Wahoo.

The spots on this team can be filled by the internal candidates and the move for Matsuzaka was very cunning if he does come back and shows he's far away from his Tommy John surgery at some point. And if the Indians are in contention and need another arm, this new approach shows that they'd probably be willing to go out and get someone.

Make no mistake about it though. If this team is going to contend, they've got the offense, the bullpen, and some good defense. They need the two guys at the top do something. Or at least, one of them and someone else to come out of nowhere. If it makes us feel any better, both
Justin Masterson
and
Ubaldo Jimenez
are

well aware of what is expected of them
.

Or at least, what isn't expected of them, in one person's case.

"I'd have two or three good ones and one really bad one," said Masterson, 6-5 and 250 pounds. "I have some good ideas why and I think I will be able to make the adjustment and do a whole heckuva a lot better this year."

Masterson went on to add that he threw too hard last year, a product of not having a real restricted work out regime. That may be a first.

Ubaldo meanwhile noted he has mechanic issues, but otherwise it's more of the "finding a way" stuff he started saying last year.

"As a pitcher, the thing that you put in your mind, is that you have to be part of the team and do everything possible to help the team win every five days," said Jimenez. "That's something I didn't do last year. I have to find a way to do that this year."

At this point, I really don't care. We heard that last year. That same "I don't really know what's wrong, but I have to fix it" or "I just have to figure things out and win". If he can figure it out, great. If not, the Indians will most definitely be moving on.

The other guy that plays into this equation? **Carlos Carrasco** of course. Francona says there is limit to Carrasco, he's with everyone else, and that
he looks really good
well over more than a year removed from Tommy John surgery.

"He looks like the hard work has paid off," Francona said on Saturday. "The ball is just live out of his arm. You try not to get overly excited when you watch guys throw, but it's hard not to."

Carrasco is probably a bigger key than we realize. If he comes in and can be the Indians third starter, at some point in the season, the starting rotation looks much better than one thinks. It's like adding an arm in the offseason because Carrasco was not around last year and when he went down, he was well on his way to establishing himself as a key cog to the rotation plan.

If at some point though, the Indians can look at a Masterson-Carrasco-Bauer like trio at the top, that's a huge start to figuring out this rotation. Masterson right now has to be the one, but if ever ends up as a complimentary guy, he fits that best.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Good to know **Asdrubal Cabrera** is in camp in better shape than last year . If there's one thing that is a problem with Cabs, it has been his conditioning and his shape, ever since he debuted. It was something that put him in Eric Wedge's doghouse and it was something that the Indians worked really hard on (including sending him down to Buffalo) to get right and instill in him.

That ideal may be a little lost with his success, but this year, Cabs has reportedly come into camp in great shape with a little bit of lost weight.

"I know I've lost some weight, but I'm not sure how much," said Cabrera. "I'm not worried about it. My body feels really good right now."

Cabrera will be on the Venezuelan team for the WBC, he leaves on March 2nd to join the team, where they'll play in Puerto Rico for their initial round.

Speaking of the WBC and staying in shape, Terry Francona is hopeful that Joe Torre will be ac commodating in a request
for the Indians two best relievers,
Vinnie Pestano
and

Chris Perez

.

The Indians would like it if both Perez and Pestano return to camp to pitch for the Indians a few days before the tournament begins. The duo leaves the same day as Cabrera, with team USA's pool starting play on the 8th. Francona would like it if the two could keep in game shape.

Jerry Crasnick of ESPN is stirring the pot a little bit. None of the Cleveland media really touched up on this, so I question where this is coming from and why, but Crasnick has quotes from Perez on Acta . And really, they are kind of stinging. It is evident there was a strained relationship there and perhaps the Indians, by firing Acta, took the "player's side".

"I was wondering where we were going," Perez said. "Stuff wasn't getting better with Manny as our manager. I didn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. He's very stubborn and he doesn't really use input well, so I was getting frustrated. I thought, 'If we have the same guy next year, it's going to be the same stuff.'"

I love Acta. I think he's a good manager and could win a World Series if given the right resources. He was dealt two hard hands in his stints with Washington and Cleveland. Many managers have that fate, many get lucky, and few are just too good for that to be an issue. Francona is one of those guys that could be so good that the resources might not matter. But then again, with his arrival, the Indians certainly have stepped it up a bit.

Whatever happened between Acta and Perez is unfortunate. It's probably just two personalities that did not mesh and that stinks, because Perez is a good reliever and Acta is a good manager and the two are very "real" guys. There's not a lot of BS there, and that's perhaps why things didn't work between the two.

I just would wish this would die though. Perez is still here, the Indians have moved on, do we have to ask him these questions? It's a new day, time to forget about the old manager and any bitter taste.

I feel really really good about the year **Lonnie Chisenhall** is going to have and it has a lot to do with the tone set last year towards the end of the season. Chisenhall is in camp though with a really clear objective and it has nothing to do with winning a roster spot or a job. And that's just it, he can now focus on what matters .

"I can just focus on doing the work," Chisenhall said on Saturday. "In the past, I put too much pressure on myself to try to impress the people that made the decisions. This year, I'm coming in with a little different look at it."

Chiz went on to say that he feels as if it is a normal spring, restriction wise, roster spot wise, anything. He's ready to go and a ball player is really at his best when he feels normal and comfortable. So this could be an exciting year for Chisenhall.

I joked a lot about **Ben Francisco** when he re-signed with the Indians after a exodus that took him from Philadelphia in the Cliff Lee trade to the mess that was Houston last year. But really, when you see the guy back in an Indians uniform and in camp, it's really nice. Benny Fresh was one of the cooler dudes when he was with the Tribe.

It really is nice to see him back, and it is interesting to learn his story since he left the Indians a few years ago. He spent most of that time with Philadelphia, but last year, starting with Toronto, was certainly a wild ride. We saw him in the opener last year, and it turns out it was there that his season started to downfall with a hamstring tweak. He tore the hamstring, was traded in that horrible Houston team and then to the Rays.

"It was challenging for me and my wife," said Francisco, the Indians' fifth-round pick in 2009. "She packed up a lot. I was living out of a suitcase pretty much the whole year."

With guys like Giambi and what not in camp, a guy like Francisco is overshadowed a bit. He's very much a major league piece. He may not be a starter, but he carved out a nice little niche as a reserve outfielder for the Phillies those few years. It'll be interesting to see how he plays into the Indians season. He may not make the squad, but I think he'll definitely be around and could be called upon. You just never know.

Speaking of **Jason Giambi**, I think the Indians are going to give him every chance in the world to win a roster spot. Especially since they could pair him up with Reynolds to be their DH, but not actually commit to him being the full-time DH. That and because their flexibility is rather good with Bourn now in the mix. But Francona really likes what Giambi brings as a veteran presence, something I think the Indians need. They've got themselves a leader in Swisher, but with Giambi, he can help in many ways
.

"I don't think it was probably too far from being reality," Francona said. "He's everything you want in a player. He's a good teammate. He respects the game. He plays hard. He wants to win. Even when he's on the other team, you always respected him. You just didn't want to see him up at the plate. This guy might be one of the most respected guys in the game."

He's very much in the "pass the game along" stage of his career and even though I joked about it in the offseason, there's a reason the Rockies looked at him to be their manager. It would have been a rather odd and potentially wrong move to make that transition quickly, but Giambi could eventually be that type of guy in the game.

Michael Bourn was officially introduced last week on Friday and his agent Scott Boras was present. Bourn passed his physical and was already on the field working out with the team. What I find hilarious is Scott Boras, not because he said Bourn was the "steak" of the offseason, but because he's so smarmy and he makes me shudder .

"He goes, 'You know what? This team has a lot of young talent,'" Boras said. "'They're very good.'"

Boras went on to say that "middle-market teams" can now sign players like Bourn because of the success of the game. He just oozes in grossness. I'm sorry. I'm done.. Gross.. Onto a new part, called random bits, no quotes, little bits, in a bit sized form.

Random Bits

- Josh Tomlin was placed on the 60-day disabled list to make room for Michael Bourn. The Indians have one more '40-man' bullet in their gun with Blake Wood probably needing the 60-day list. CC Lee could also qualify, so if the Indians need some space, they can create it. After that, people are going to start getting cut.
- Bourn took the number 24, which has belonged to Grady Sizemore the past few years. Not that Grady is some legend, but Clubhouse manager Tony Amato called him to let him know out of respect. Ehhh.
- Condolences to Nick Swisher and his family as left the team for Columbus after the death of his mother . She was battling leukemia, so that's never an easy thing for a son to have to deal with. He returned to the team on Sunday and seemed very business like . Has to be tough dealing with that and trying to act the way he is. Much respect there.

- Kenny Lofton and Carlos Baerga are with the squad early on in camp as guest instructors. Lofton has had a really similar looking player to work with in Michael Bourn. That was probably a treat for Bourn, as someone who earned that contract he got based off the skill set that Lofton helps with.
- Indians say ticket sales are good. The offseason has no doubt helped that, but a fast start would really make a good impression and help ticket sales. Sure, the past few years were fast starts and some awful attendance numbers, but with the new "buzz" and "attitude" about this team, it could be a little different.
- Joe Smith resumed his throwing program on Friday, threw distances on Saturday and Sunday and by the end of this week, could be on the mound.

And finally, I was joking around with the whole Albert Belle bobblehead should immortalize one of those cool moments where he pointed to his bicep or ran over a dude. But the Indians are actually serious . It's going to honor Belle and that night in 1995 when he showed his bicep to the Boston Red Sox and said "here's your cork". Boom. Cannot wait for that.

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Nino is in full baseball mode here and on The Tribe Daily , his own Indians blog. Don't miss all the fun, photoshopped Indians players, and LOLTribe ridiciulousness.

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