In today's *B-List*, Buff asks the question: Who are you? And what have you done with Paul Byrd? Byrd was very good once again last night in a 3-2 loss in Anaheim, and has become a key cog with Westbrook out. Buff also hits on the slump his boy Ferd Cabrera is and the Indians impotence with the bases loaded. The rubber match is today, 3:35 PM. GO TRIBE!!!

| **FINAL** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | **R** | **H** | **E** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indians (20-11)** | | | | 2 | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| **Angels (18-16)** | | | | 0 | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |

*W: Moseley (3-0)  L: F. Cabrera (1-2)  S: F. Rodriguez (11)*

Cleveland pitchers threw 113 pitches last night, and only two were dreadful. Had only one been dreadful, we could have won. I suppose here is the place in which I can request fewer dreadful pitches.

**1) Who are you, and what have you done with Paul Byrd?**

On April 21st, Paul Byrd pitched a terrible game. He gave up 6 runs in 6 innings, although only 4 of the runs were earned. Still, it's hard to argue that giving up 10 hits and a homer in 6 innings is Good Pitching. It was a pretty crummy game, and he (and the Indians) took the loss on the road in Tampa Bay.

I bring this up because it is the only time Paul Byrd hasn't looked Really Good this season.

Yes, it's a small sample, and yes, last night's game marked the first time he made it through the 7th inning, but in Byrd's other four starts, he has gone 6, 6, 6 2/3, and 7 innings, giving up 0, 3, 1, and 2 runs. His ERA stands at 2.84, and he sports a respectable 1.29 WHIP, notably on the strength of having walked only 3 batters in 31 2/3 innings. (He has only struck out 16, but we are not asking Paul Byrd to be Randy Johnson here.)

Anyway, last night's game was pretty typical Paul Byrd Fare: he gave up a hit every inning, including 3 doubles. A man reached second base in 5 of the first 6 innings. And nothing else

happened. Byrd didn't so much "cruise" through six scoreless innings as … I dunno, "wandered?" "Wafted?" The Angels are not a patient team, but nor are they a lousy one: holding them scoreless and throwing quality pitches with runners in scoring position virtually all the time is a skillful skill.

Unfortunately, Byrd threw one really, really, really, really terrible pitch to Kendry Morales: it wasn't a bad decision, simply rotten execution. Because it was inside instead of outside, Morales deposited the offering over the wall, and a tenuous 2-0 lead became a stressful 2-2 tie. Byrd got through the rest of the inning, but without that one lapse, we'd be talking about Byrd following Lee's example instead of how inept we were at the plate.

**2) On a scale from one to dreadful**

Ferd Cabrera made a mistake last night: he threw a pitch.

Cabrera's first pitch of the eighth inning was hit over the right-field wall by Gary Matthews, Jr., and essentially ended the game. (Francisco Rodriguez is considered pretty good.) Look, he's Ferd Cabrera. It was Gary Matthews. Of course you challenge the guy. And he hit it out. What can you say?

Well, one thing you can say is that since starting the season basically unconscious, Cabrera has given up runs in three of his last four outings. Although this was the first homer allowed by Cabrera this season, Ferd simply hasn't pitched very well recently. Such is the life in the world of Miniscule Samples and Statistically Non-significant Streaks, but it is what it is. Hopefully Cabrera can get it back together: it's not like he's totally lost his mojo, inducing two more swinging strikeouts last night to bring his total to 24 in 16 2/3 innings, but it bears mentioning.

By the way, ESPN lists his weight as 170. If he weighs 170, then so do I. And I don't.

**3) The return of Squanderball**

The Indians' offense has been pretty efficient this young season: although the team batting average is not very high, the team has been drawing a lot of walks and doing a pretty good job of turning opportunities into runs.

The one glaring exception to this is when the bases are loaded: the Indians started the year batting 1-for-18 with the bases loaded, and although there have been a few successes since then (a couple by since-optioned Shin-Soo Choo, the grand slam by Hafner, and even a couple by illogical suspects Casey Blake and Jhonny Peralta), the overall average remains dismal. Last night was more of the same: the Tribe loaded the bases with one out in the sixth on two singles, a runner-advancing groundout, and an intentional walk to David Dellucci. Now, this is one of those "pick your poison" options for manager Mike Scioscia: gamble on the very high rate of success of pitching to Dellucci with runners in scoring position, or gamble on the very, very, absurdly high rate of success of pitching to Any Random Cleveland Indian with the bases loaded. Being a keen observer of base rate tendencies, Scioscia chose the latter, and was rewarded with a highly Cleveland Indianny performance: Kelly Shoppach struck out swinging, and Josh Barfield heroically fouled off five pitches in order to dramatically watch strike three zip by him.

Of course, the Indians set the tone for this future performance right away in the first, when Scioscia made the exact opposite decision and Dellucci stranded runners on second and third. So, perhaps rather than being a keen observer, Scioscia figured he'd just try each method once. (It wasn't exactly the same: there were two outs there, whereas there was only one in the sixth.) The third possibility is that the Indians were just shitty, but that doesn't have as much statistical heft.

**4) Small Sample Size Theatre**

Although having nothing resembling statistical significance, Casey Blake had another nice evening batting second in the order, going 2-for-3 with a walk. One of the hits was a double and he scored a run. On the season, Blake is hitting .288/.378/.410 in the two hole in 45 plate appearances. He has batted second more often than any other slot.

(It should be noted that his best position thus far is cleanup, hitting .500/.500/1.250 … but this is in 4 plate appearances and asking Eric Wedge to move Blake to cleanup on a regular basis would be laughable. Ha ha! See? It made me laugh. Don't do that, Eric.)

I don't know if there is something about how Casey approaches his plate appearances in the two hole: maybe batting behind Sizemore or in front of Hafner makes a difference. I have read a bunch of studies that basically conclude that batting order is a pretty arcane art of no real statistical significance. But Blake looks comfy in the two hole, and I'd advocate riding that train until the track runs out.

**5) Adventures in simple badness**

Do you wonder why Victor Martinez catches so often? I wonder why Victor Martinez catches so often. Doesn't it make him tired? Doesn't it make him sore? It certainly seems to make him slow. But he does it a lot, and it makes me cringe.

Kelly Shoppach does not SEEM like a terrible hitter. He hits .265/.375/.441 in extremely limiting playing time. Sure, he's lousy with runners in scoring position, but that just makes him a Cleveland Indian, not a terrible eyesore. However, last night he struck out twice in three plate appearances, including the aforementioned adventure with the bases loaded. More telling, when asked to get a rally going against closer Francisco Rodriguez, Shoppach was called back to the bench so that *Jason Michaels* could pinch-hit for him. Jason Michaels! That pretty much tells you you're having a bad night, yes?

**6) Double your pleasure, double your root canal**

Cleveland turned a nice 1-6-3 double play last night. We seem to have had more of those this season: I wonder if the pitchers worked on their defense in the off-season or spring training in response to Detroit's performance in the World Series. (And it was a "performance," as in Performance Art: completely unwatchable and only theoretically "art.")

Not to be outdone, the Angels turned two more double plays last night to bring their league-leading total to 40 on the season. That's more than one a game, which is pretty impressive. They don't have a particularly ground-ball staff, so it's probably just the case that their infield is That Good (notably shortstop Orlando Cabrera).

**7) Ho Hum Dept.**

Victor Martinez had two hits, one of which drove in a run. He leads the team with a .347 batting average and 27 RBI.

Grady Sizemore stole his 12th base of the season.

**8) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine**

Mark Shapiro was the driving force behind the development of Microsoft Bob. Since I believe all responsible for this product have been eliminated by Bill Gates, it is clearly untrue. Fire Eric

Wedge.