For a while there, it looked like the B-List would have to be about how Jon Lieber got lucky when C.C. Sabathia lost his concentration on a couple bad pitches, but an 8-run sixth scotched any such notion. In today's recap, Buff touches on relief pitches named Raffy, the return of Squander Ball, and brings you an update from Bizarro Cleveland, a place where Trot Nixon and Casey Blake come through in the clutch. There's also a contest announcement, so don't skip the B-List today (or any other day, for that matter)!

FINAL SCORE				
Phillies (37-35)	0	0	2	0
Indians (42-29)	0	0	1	1

W: Sabathia (10-2) L: Lieber (3-6)

It's time for the Second Annual Walt Svirsky Commemorative Haiku Contest! Submit your entries to me via email (buff@swerbsblurbs.com) in 5-7-5 form, as many as you want, as often as you want. Last year's contest drew over several entries, including last year's winner, Jon Cooper. The prize will be whatever I can talk Rich into: last year it was a coffee cup, this year it will probably be a trinket plus a copy of last year's book. All judging will done by our expert panel of me's, meaning that everyone is elligible to win except my Dad, who already has a book anyway.

Last year's topic was Eric Wedge: this year, in honor of his getting the wazoo yesterday, your topic is Oldberto Hernandez. (For those of you unfamiliar with

haiku, it is a poem that need not rhyme, but has 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third (last).)

Example:

Time: it stops for none.
Especially for Oldberto,
It hit like a truck

I'll accept entries until I stop, but certainly until at least June 28.

1) Dateline: Bizarro Cleveland

The Cleveland Indians had terrible win last night, failing to lose to Philadelphia 10-6. Cleveland tried hard to blow game, but just could not fail against beautifully terrible Phillies pitching. Me very upset, it a great travesty.

Offensive hero of game was Trot Nixon, who had long streak of fungal games broken. A heartbroken Nixon said after game, "It was horrible, me did so well, me feel terrible." Nixon had 3 hits, more than any other Indian, including two singles and double, scoring run and getting forced to accept 2 RBI. "Me really let team down tonight," said Nixon, who had two-out double to finish off horrific 8-run outburst. "Me try harder to fail tomorrow." Nixon failed to fail tomorrow, since off day.

Also in 6th inning, Casey Blake came to plate with bases loaded. Philadelphia walked Grady Sizemore to load bases for Blake, who hit two-run single to finish Jon Lieber's courageous loss. "Me always like hitting with runners in scoring position," Blake said after game. "Always makes me panic. Feels just

terrible. Me apologize to Cleveland fans for awful hit."

Starter C.C. Sabathia came through in clutch, giving up two runs in top of sixth to fall behind. "Me do worst I could," Sabathia said. "It just not enough." Sabathia give up 4 runs in 6 innings, but was saddled with win. "Me throw giant meatball to worst hitter in world," Sabathia said. "And he hit home run, me not know what else me can do." Rod Barajas, hitting .217 on the season, hit two-run homer plus a single and scored second run, but Phillies Chase Utley (0-for-3) and Ryan Howard (3 strikeouts) were able to create more slack to overcome Barajas' terrible success. "Me only part-time player," Barajas said. "Me not experienced failure like Pat Burrell. He awful. Is my hero."

Indians bullpen try to blow game in honor of Oldberto Hernandez, who get wazoo. "Me happy for him," Tom Mastny said after the game. "Me try pitch just like him. He tremendously bad. He say, ‘Tom, me hate you. Get lost.' Me try live down to his low standards." However, Rafael Betancourt was unable to maintain successful badness, pitching two perfect inning with 2 Ks to finish game. Not even walk anyone, throw 19 strikes and 7 balls. "I throw strikes," Betancourt said. "I don't get why this is difficult to understand. You talk in a ridiculous manner. We are trying to win ballgames here."

With that attitude, Betancourt not be in Bizarro Cleveland much more. "Me talk with him about it," Eric Wedge said. "He was great. Me very disappointed." As are we all. Drop dead.

2) Roll through Quantum Mechanics, fail "Rocks for Jocks"

C.C. Sabathia's start had an auspicious beginning, retiring the first seven batters in order with a strikeout and four mundane ground balls to middle infielders. Wes Helms then singled to center, ruining the perfect game, and Barajas homered on a 1-2 pitch, ruining the spacetime continuum. Rod Barajas? Really? He's still alive? Rod Barajas? Great Scott.

Anyway, Sabathia settled back down, retiring the next two hitters, then getting big boppers Utley and Howard to whiff swinging. He walked Aaron Rowand after having him 1-2, but got Burrell to pop up and sawed through a perfect fifth.

At this point, Sabathia had pitched 5 innings, giving up two hits and a walk, and struck out four. Without a terrible pitch to Barajas, he'd have been rolling through a dominant shutout. Then the wheels fell off in the sixth, giving up a pair of runs on two doubles and a single. Most annoying about this was that both runs came with two outs: Sabathia had retired Utley on a 3-0 popup, but allowed Howard to double to right on the next pitch and gave up a 2-2 single to Rowand.

On the night, Sabathia threw 104 pitches in 6 innings, mostly because Shane Victorino fouled off an aggregate 12 balls off. In all, the Phillies fouled off 25 of Sabathia's pitches, suggesting that he wasn't his sharpest.

3) We have a winner!

There was a lot of concern that Jason Stanford would be designated for assignment after his second start because Jake Westbrook is due to start this weekend against Washington and Stanford is out of options. However, Oldberto Hernandez was DFW'd instead, and Stanford will slot back into the pen for now. It's not a foregone conclusion that Westbrook will be ready and effective (he certainly hasn't looked very sharp in rehab starts), and having another long arm (with Rafael Perez) is probably not a bad thing, especially with Paul Byrd looking very hittable lately. Edward Mujica was summoned from Beefalo to replace Hernandez until Westbrook's start on Sunday.

However, I have a proposal: when Westbrook comes up, instead of putting Eddie Moo on the yo-yo plan, give Tom Mastny an all-expense trip to beautiful downtown Beefalo instead. In fact, don't make it all-expense: make him pay for some of it. Mastny threw 2/3 of an inning, giving up two hits and a walk, throwing 11 strikes in 19 pitches. Basically, this is a guy who made his living last season (and early this one) by pounding the strike zone, and for weeks now, he's been doing no such thing. Whether it's mechanical or mental, it doesn't matter: it's real, and it blows. Mastny needs some time to get his stuff back together, and he has an option left: whether you want to "burn" that option is immaterial. He has what I consider to be the potential to be a valuable bullpen arm, but the fact is, right now that is not the case. With Ferd Cabrera already standing in for the role of Least Reliable Reliever, Mastny needs to stop auditioning for the part, so I think he should be declared the winner of the "Who goes to Beefalo?" Sweepstakes.

(Of course, I thought this a week ago when they sent Matt Miller down. I'm still confused by that.)

4) A simple dichotomy

Relief pitchers named Raffy: good.
Relief pitchers not named Raffy: not good.

Now, Rafael Perez' line last night certainly doesn't look very good: 4 strikes and 9 balls in 13 pitches, including two walks. However, the first walk was to lefty-killer Chase Utley, to face lefty-mortalizer Ryan Howard, whom Perez struck out on a nasty slider. The second walk was simple badness, IMO, but it was the right-handed Rowand with the right-handed Burrell on deck, so Wedge simply brought in Rafael Betancourt and that was enough of that.

In the statistical community, there is the concept of measuring relief pitchers by something called "leverage," which basically tries to measure how valuable outs are. Joe Borowski may get the save by recording three outs with a three-run lead, but if Rafael Betancourt retires the heart of the order with two guys on in the 8th inning of a 1-run game, whose contribution is more "valuable?" Is there a Cleveland pitcher you'd rather see on the mound to record an out than Rafael Betancourt? If there is, you are simply insane. That's just not true.

Anyway, Betancourt was great. I'm glad he got the second inning, especially given that Thursday is a day off. I have Absolutely No Doubt that had the score been 10-7 instead of 10-6, Joe Borowski would have pitched the ninth. He wouldn't have done better than Betancourt did, since that would have been impossible.

Reports that Mastny, Fultz, Cabrera, Borowski, and Mujica have filed paperwork to legally change their names to "Rafael" have been disputed, but I'm telling you, the idea shouldn't be dismissed out of hand.

5) Round and round she goes

Bizarro Steve made an allusion to the 8-run sixth, but here was the final damage:

Trot Nixon got the first hit (a single) and the last hit (a two-run double)
Ryan Garko reached on an infield single

Let us pause here for a moment to contemplate Ryan Garko beating out an infield single. This is not unlike reading about

Prince Fielder hitting an inside-the-park home run. Like that one, there was a mitigating circumstance: in Fielder's case, Lew Ford lost the ball in the Metrodome roof, and in this one, a poor throw by Jon Lieber (and a charitable official scorer) gave Garko the chance to be safe.

Josh Barfield doubled.

Let us pause here to pay tribute to an extra-base hit by the non-slugging second baseman.

Sizemore was walked.
Blake hit a two-run single.
Martinez singled on the first pitch.
Hafner walked, his league-leading three thousandth.
Jhonny Peralta fell behind 0-2 before doubling to right, another opposite-field shot for Peralta.

In all, seven of the Indians' thirteen hits came in this stretch. Every Indian who started got a hit and every one scored a run as well.

The one Indian not to reach base in the inning was Jason

Michaels, who made the first and second outs of the inning. We boo him, but kind of half-heartedly, not wanting to appear greedy.

6) Game Log Follies

In the first inning, Grady Sizemore singled to center and advanced to second when Casey Blake beat out an infield roller. Victor Martinez then hit the ball so hard to left field that ...

... Sizemore was forced out at third by left fielder Jayson Werth.

I would bet that the number of 7-5 forceouts in any given season is low, especially to runners of Sizemore's ilk.

7) Ducks on the pond!

The ducks did a fair job of flying around the pond in the sixth, but for a while it looked like the Indians would play a particularly

painful version of Squander Ball: after three "singly things" (Martinez' shot to left was technically a fielder's choice, but it would have been a hit under other circumstances) in the first, we simply left runners at first and second. In the third, Barfield singled, Sizemore was hit by a pitch, and Barfield scored on two productive outs. And in the fourth, Peralta walked, Michaels singled, and Nixon beat out an infield single (just short of the wonder of Garko doing the same) before a force at home and a sac fly resulted in a single run.

For those keeping score, we had first and second with no outs twice and bases loaded with no outs once ... all in the first four innings ... and scored two runs.

Ptui.

8) Schadenfreude Dept.

The White Sox have blown 10 games in the last month in which they've had a lead. They now have 29 wins, the same number as the Kansas City Royals.

I am very, very, very, very ... not sorry. Hee hee!