The promotion of RHP Jensen Lewis to the Indians and the transference of David Dellucci to the 60-Day DL represents two hints at what the Indians may try to do as they approach the trade deadline in a little over two weeks. Paulie Cous thinks he knows what these moves represent. And puts together a list of likely targets by the team at the trading deadline. Kenny Lofton anyone?

The promotion of RHP Jensen Lewis to the Indians and the transference of David Dellucci to the 60-Day DL represents two hints at what the Indians may try to do as they approach the trade deadline in a little over two weeks.

The promotion of Lewis (who, incidentally, was selected with a pick acquired as compensation for losing Omar Vizquel) means that the Indians are going to give their young arms a chance to emerge as the cavalry for an unsettled bullpen. Lewis thrived in his first full season in the bullpen in Akron, then Buffalo and his trip to Cleveland, ahead of Matt Miller or Mike Koplove, gives the impression that the Indians are trying to ride the hot hand or find another Rafael Perez to emerge to fortify the bullpen.

Wedge has been quoted that he will attempt to work Lewis into the mix in a similar manner to the way that Perez was worked in, slowly and in non-crucial game situations at first, with the possibility to graduate to a more meaningful role if he finds success. This strategy does not bode well for Fernando Cabrera, who seems to be falling further and further down the ladder in the bullpen, regardless of past success and promise shown.

Basically, the move shows that the Indians are aware what they have in Matt Miller, Mike Koplove, and Edward Mujica and don't feel that the troika is going to be able to contribute many meaningful innings going forward. In promoting Lewis over those three, the Indians are showing that they're willing to take a look at EVERY possibility within the organization before conceding to the fact that help is needed from the outside.

The next promotions to the bullpen could be Atom Miller or even Bubbie Buzachero as the Tribe needs to find out if they have internal options that can help (they can always toss some of the dead weight on the 40-man overboard to do so) stabilize the 5th, 6th, and 7th innings before they make any trades for relievers (which I think will have to eventually happen unless Jensen Lewis and 1 or 2 other youngsters turn out to be MORE than effective).

The bigger move, though, is the fact that David Dellucci has been transferred to the 60-day DL, meaning that in a best-case-scenario, he's eligible to come off the DL at the end of August. That best-case-scenario, to me, is a pipe dream and the Indians are going to have to start looking for a LH OF, unless they think that the Trotter is good for anything more than a post-game pie in the face (which, frankly, he is not).

The need arises because Michaels is best as a platoon player in LF, facing only LHP and both Francisco and Gutierrez are RH. While The Ben Francisco Treat has nice numbers against RHP this season in Buffalo, there's some trepidation to allowing him to be ½ of the LF platoon.

While some could argue (and I certainly could) that the Indians could

go with Michaels and Francisco in LF, give Gutierrez the full-time gig in RF and allow Nixon to remain the LH bat off of the bench, you have to think that the Indians (now with Dellucci possibly not coming back at all this year) are making their list of available LH OF to either take over RF full-time or serve as ½ of the LF platoon.

Well, if the Indians can make their list, why can't I?

The criteria would be either a LH or Switch-Hitting OF that would currently reside on a roster out of contention that has good splits against RHP.

First, the list of LH OF, ranked by OPS .

Here they are, ranked by OPS vs. RHP (with more than 25 plate appearances).

Not exactly a list of "Who's Who", is it?

How about Switch-Hitting OF, ranked by OPS?

And the Switch-Hitting OF vs. RHP (again, with more than 25 plate appearances).

Without including Ken Griffey, Jr. or Adam Dunn (for whom the asking price would START with Atom Miller and probably include more) or any players obviously on a contending team, the players that jump (relatively speaking) out of the list are:

Chris Duncan – STL

Total - .293 BA / .385 OBP / .552 SLG / .937 OPS / 16 HR / 47 RBI

Vs. RHP - .302 BA / .398 OBP / .599 SLG / .997 OPS / 15 HR / 37 RBI

Duncan certainly has crushed RHP and it's debatable whether the Cardinals are in "Sell" mode right now, but he could certainly step in as part of the platoon in LF and possibly even project as the everyday RF. He's only 26 and he's eminently affordable ($400K this year), so the Cardinals probably aren't that eager to move him unless they can get some GREAT young pitching in return.

He would cost a lot, but if David Dellucci's injury is as serious as some think it is and Big League Choo could be headed for Tommy John surgery on his elbow (as is the rumor), the Indians could be interested in making a move for someone that doesn't represent just a one-year rental.

Kenny Lofton – TEX

Total - .304 BA / .387 OBP / .436 SLG / .823 OPS / 6 HR / 20 RBI

Vs. RHP - .321 BA / .400 OBP / .469 SLG / .869 OPS / 6 HR / 17 RBI

Speaking of one-year rentals, how about K-Love? I'm all for this if only to see that giant gold medallion that Lofton wears (a K surrounded by a gold diamond) flop around as he wails away at a pitch, or see him drop his bat on home plate after Ball 4, just like the good old days. Seriously, without including sentimentality in the conversation, Lofton would be a pretty good complement to Michaels in LF in a platoon and the pair forming a productive platoon is not without precedent. In 2005, the 2 split time in the Phillies CF as Kenny logged a .818 OPS vs. RH and Michaels posted a .853 OPS against LH.

There's no question that the Rangers are "sellers" on the market and Lofton could be had for the right price. Although he's not going to light up the box score as he once did, he can still prove to be an effective part of the LF platoon with Michaels and offer the team increased speed and athleticism (which Nixon offers very little…actually, none of).

Ryan Doumit – PIT

Total - .305 BA / .381 OBP / .509 SLG / .7890 OPS / 6 HR / 21 RBI

Vs. RHP - .308 BA / .381 OBP / .546 SLG / .927 OPS / 6 HR / 17 RBI

Doumit has mainly played as a platoon RF for the Pirates, though his splits against LHP (.297 / .381 / .378 / .759) in his limited time could project to the possibility of playing RF full-time. Doumit is truly more of a super-utility player, in the Casey Blake mold (as he plays OF, C, and 1B), and you have to wonder if the Pirates have them in their long-term plans.

On second thought, what are the Pirates' long-term plans? They'd move a part-time player for some prospects in a second as they've shown for the last 10 years.

Ryan Church – WAS

Total - .261 BA / .347 OBP / .422 SLG / .769 OPS / 7 HR / 37 RBI

Vs. RHP - .274 BA / .350 OBP / .453 SLG / .803 OPS / 7 HR / 24 RBI

If the name sounds familiar, it's because Church was an Indians' farmhand who was traded (along with Maicer Izturis) to the Expos for Scott Stewart. After muscling back down the throw-up that just came up in my mouth a little bit while remembering THAT trade, I looked at

the fact that Church is essentially playing in a platoon in Washington, with 88 plate appearances against LHP versus 237 PA against RHP.

His numbers aren't great, but he would fit the bill of ½ of a LF platoon. Whether he would offer much of an improvement over Francisco remains to be seen, but he at least has more of a track record. He is 28 and would rank somewhere above "meh" on the excitement chart if acquired, but he hits from the right side of the plate and with some success enough to be considered one of the targets.

Luke Scott – HOU

Total - .223 BA / .320 OBP / .441 SLG / .761 OPS / 10 HR / 38 RBI

Vs. RHP - .212 BA / .318 OBP / .423 SLG / .741 OPS / 8 HR / 28 RBI

Another ex-Tribesman dealt away in the Jeriome Robertson deal, his inclusion on the list is only cursory once you see his numbers against RHP. While he has decent power against RHP, his OBP (.318) is something the team would never consider in place of giving The Frisco Kid a chance.

Interestingly, Scott has better overall numbers against LHP as a LH hitter, but most of his power numbers come against RHP. Really, it

doesn't matter, though because (unless he's coming with Brad Lidge or Chad Qualls) he's not on his way to the North Coast.

That's about the best there is to offer, so those looking for a blockbuster move to happen, there's just too many teams that are still in contention this late in the season and GM's conducting fire sales ask for the moon and the stars, even for marginal parts (remember that the Reds gave up TWO position players for middle relievers last year). The fact that there just aren't that many real options out there also plays a part of it.

The last line, though, regarding Scott possibly being part of a package with Lidge or Qualls is what is so interesting about these five players. All would come from teams that also have bullpen help to offer:

STL

Jason Isringhausen

Ryan Franklin (though he did just agree to a 2-year contract extension on July 5th)

Russ Springer

PIT

Salomon Torres (should come off of the DL on Monday)

Matt Capps

Damaso Marte

TEX

Eric Gagne

Akinori Otsuka

Joaquin Benoit

Frank Francisco

WAS

Chad Cordero

Jon Rauch

Saul Rivera

Jesus Colome

HOU

Brad Lidge

Chad Qualls

It's possible that the Indians could fill a few of their needs from one of these teams and, while the "name factor" isn't going to cause the switchboard at the Jake to light up like a Christmas tree, these are the players that are available.

Most contenders are going to be shopping for similar needs, so the bidding could get intense and the price could get steep. But the Indians need to determine if Jensen Lewis (or any other internal option) can help shore up the bullpen, if Ben Francisco and Franklin Gutierrez are able to contribute in MLB, and if Trot Nixon will become the Alvaro Espinoza of this team – comic relief in lieu of actual contributions.

If any of the answers to the above questions turn out to be bigger question marks before July 31st, the list is there, the players and the teams are identified, "Let's Make a Deal"!