Normally calm, reserved, and analytical ... Erik Cassano is fired up this morning, and it shows in his latest piece for us. Erik reflects on the series win, says that the best is yet to come, and has some neener neeners for Bill Simmons and LeBron James. Like most Indians fans, Erik is very happy for Paul Byrd, one of the true good guys in the game. And he actually feels a little bad for Joe Torre.

The Indians beat the Yankees. Paul Byrd beat the Yankees. Joe Borowski nailed down a save against the Yankees. Everything we thought could never happen did happen in last night's 6-4 series-clinching win. And now the Indians will play the Red So
x
for the American League pennant.

1. I need to get this out of the way first to ESPN's resident overreactor and Cleveland knife-turner Bill Simmons, who predicted a
Borowski
series-losing meltdown and told us to bet on another "Red
Sox
-Yankees Armageddon" in the
ALCS
: Kiss my ass. That is all.

2. Two guys I am really happy for today: Byrd and Borowski. Were there two guys in more pivotal roles that we as a fan base had less confidence in? I know I was basically chalking Game 4 up to a throwaway game, figuring that Eric Wedge was using Byrd as a
sacrificial
lamb so he could pitch C.C.

Sabathia
on normal rest in Game 5.

It was a warranted mindset based on Byrd's recent history against the Yankees. But Byrd was baffling Yankee hitters for just about all of his five innings. He had the type of outing Byrd usually has when he's on, allowing the opposition a bunch of hits (eight) but not allowing them to translate into a bunch of runs (two).

Borowski, of course, had to make stomach acid well into our collective esophagus twice, allowing a towering homer to Bobby Abreu, followed by a towering near miss down the right field line off the bat of Jorge
Posada
. But he induced Derek
Jeter
to pop up to get that critical first out, and he retired Alex Rodriguez on a fly ball to right for the second out.

He came close to needing every inch of the 6-3 lead he was handed to get the save, but he got it, and in Yankee Stadium in October, beggars can't be choosers.

3. One guy I'm kind of feeling bad for today: Joe Torre. That's right, the manager of the evil, soulless Yankees.

I'm not feeling bad that he lost. I'm feeling bad because it appears the Yankees, and possibly all of New York, are going to dump this third-straight division series loss in his lap. And it might (probably will) cost him his job.

Ever since becoming the Yankees' manager in 1996, Torre has been nothing but class. He's handled the inevitable George Steinbrenner blow-ups, intense media scrutiny and a merry-go-round of a roster by never changing his attitude, and never forgetting his position as the manager of baseball's flagship franchise.

With four World Series titles, he has (or should have) written his name alongside Miller Huggins and Casey Stengel as one of the greatest Yankee managers of all time. But in New York more than any other city, the daily phrase is "What have you done for me lately?" And for Torre, it's been no playoff series wins since 2004 and no World Series appearances since 2003.

The Yankees were an also-ran when Torre took over. He helped restore the

Yankees not just to championship status, but to classy winners, the antithesis of the brawling, bickering Yankees of Billy Martin as depicted in "The Bronx is Burning."

Steinbrenner and Yankees GM Brian Cashman deserve most of the blame in New York for handing Torre a pitching staff of aging ex-all stars and expecting him to win with it. But excrement rolls downhill, and it looks like Torre is going to take the fall for the Yankees' roster shortcomings. And I will have an entirely new reason to loathe them.

4. This series win was the best kind: Not only did the Indians win, they beat the team it seemed would pose the worst possible series
matchup
for them, a team that outscored them 49-17 in a six-game regular season sweep. If the Indians can beat the Yankees, and close them out in Yankee Stadium, they shouldn't have a reason to fear any other team.

5. The Indians now have an all-time winning record against the Yankees in the postseason, both in series (2-1) and games (8-7).

6. Blatant "Good Will Hunting" ripoff follows....

LeBron.... Do you like apples?

Well, the Yankees are going home! How do you like THEM apples?