You might think that Buff would be happy about a game in which the Indians scored 7 runs and banged out 15 hits, suggesting the end of the Comatose Offense Era in Cleveland. You'd be wrong and should read The B-List more often. In this game, Buff apologizes for claiming that Tom Mastny and Eddie Mujica don't exist, but he isn't as sorry as he is about the fact that they do, and wonders about the amount of Squander Ball one team can play.

FINAL SCORE				
Indians (26-32)	(3rd		5.5 GB CHW)	0
Rangers (29-30)	4	1	1	0

W: F. Francisco (1-1) L: Mastny (0-1)

Let's hear it for the Pu-Pu Platter!

(Short column today)

1) A distinctive approach

Tom Mastny took an interesting approach to his first spot start in the majors: he sucked rocks.

There really isn't a whole lot of analysis to be done here: of all the things you want a pitcher, starting or otherwise, to do, Mastny did virtually none of them. He elevated the ball in the strike zone, which resulted in giving up home runs to both Josh Hamilton and Milton Bradley. He threw the ball outside of the strike zone, resulting in three walks (albeit one, to Hamilton, was both intentional and prudent). He continually fell behind hitters so that he would have to throw hittable pitches, which were, in fact, quite hittable indeed (6 hits, 3 for extra bases, 4 outs recorded). He struck out two hitters, but so what?

Mastny finished his day having given up 4 runs in the first and recording a single out in the second, and took 56 pitches to do so. A mere 27 of his 56 pitches were in the strike zone, and he might have been more effective if even FEWER were there (because they would have been less likely to have flown over the fence). He left the game with the bases loaded after walking his final two hitters: he was charged with a fifth run when Jen Lewis gave up a first-pitch single (but otherwise escaped the inning without more of Mastny's runners scoring).

He is being sent back to Beefalo to work on something. My guess is a '77 Impala.

2) Department of Corrections Dept.

Tom Mastny does exist.

I'm sorry.

3) Department of Further Corrections Dept.

Eddie Mujica exists, too.

I'm sorry about that as well.

4) Almost like real pitching!

Jensen Lewis' line doesn't look so hot on the night: in 3 IP, he gave up two runs on three hits, including a home run by Jarrod Saltalamacchia. Still, this was one of those nights described as a "jet stream night" by the Rangers' radio announcers, and Arlington plays as a bit of a bandbox. Lewis was able to escape from Mastny's second-inning jam with minimal (admittedly not "no") damage, and Saltalamacchia's blast was the only hit he allowed in either the third or fourth inning. He struck out three and walked one, and the runner he walked was stranded in the 4th.

He did give up a run in the 5th, sort of: he allowed a single to Saltalamacchia and was relieved by Eddie Moo, who allowed enough hits to bring him home. In the grand scheme of things, he allowed a runner on third he'd inherited to score, and had a runner on first he bequeathed score out from under him, which is a pretty bad tradeoff.

Anyway, I'm certainly not able to tell you that Jensen Lewis was great last night, but I'm pretty comfortable telling you that he wasn't the reason we lost, either. And with the ability to put three innings on the board, he makes Scott Elarton that much less necessary.

5) Ducks on the pond, reeds, grass, yard, highway, roof, car, balalaika, fruit bat, breakfast cereal, Wankel rotary engine

It is one thing to score 7 runs.

It is a less-encouraging thing to score 7 runs on 15 hits.

It is less-encouraging still to score 7 runs on 15 hits, 3 walks, a hit batsman, and an error.

But to strand 11 men on base and have NINE of them in SCORING POSITION ... to end two innings with the

bases loaded ... to have four total plate appearances with the bases loaded and score two runs simply by virtue of having a callup hit a pinch-hit double, but have three other COMPLETELY WORTHLESS plate appearances ... well, that is something special indeed.

Look, on a night when your Z-Team of pitchers gives up 12 runs on 16 hits, it's easy to simply write off that game and accept your lumps, but when you strand nine guys in scoring position, that is some serious Squander Ball. And that doesn't even count two innings in which we hit into double plays! In the second and third innings, we had three men come to the plate with two runners in scoring position: one with one out, and two with two outs. And we struck out all three times! Casey Blake, the hero of the previous game, swung and missed THREE STRAIGHT PITCHES! Jamey Carroll struck out with only a runner on second to end the 4th.

That was truly infuriating.

6) Managerial Head-Scratchers

On paper, it looks completely mundane: with two outs in the 7th, Ryan Garko poked a terrible two-strike pitch into right for a single to put runners at first and second. Garko himself knew he had done a ridiculous thing, but it worked, so laughs all around. In trots Jamey Wright, a relief pitcher of tremendous mediocrity.

Jhonny Peralta worked the count to 3-1, then singled to left to load the bases. Casey Blake worked the count to 1-2 and was shrewdly hit by a pitch. And so, Eric Wedge dips into his bag of tricks and begins calling on pinch-hitters.

Pinch-hitter #1 was a fine, tactically sound move: the left-handed Shin-Soo Choo, who didn't start against the lefty Instantly Injured Johnson, replaced Franklin Gutierrez to face the right-handed Wright. He worked the count

to 3-1 (after having walked three times the night before), then smashed a two-run double over the center fielder's head. Huzzah! Two runs!

Pinch-hitter #2 was a reasonable-enough move, sending Victor Martinez to the plate instead of Kelly Shoppach, who had already whiffed once with runners in scoring position and two out. He also had a double off the previous right-handed reliever, but Victor is still Victor and drew a five-pitch walk to re-load the bases.

Now, a brief digression on the subject of Jamey Wright. Jamey Wright is a decent enough guy, a guy who suffered through starting in Colorado, a guy who has average stuff. He ERA is 4.32. He's a guy. But "guys" are prone to hot and cold stretches. And Jamey Wright is on a pretty

seriously cold stretch. In Wright's last outing, he faced 4 hitters: two of them got hits, and two of them walked. And now he has faced four hitters in this game: two of them got hits, one of them walked, and one got struck by a pitch. This means that of Wright's last eight hitters faced, he has retired exactly zero of them. None. Not one of them.

Here is my overarching philosophy of pinch-hitting: you want the guy you're sending to the plate to have a BETTER chance of getting on base than the guy you're replacing. This often means that you have to use FOUR pieces of information:

i) Original Batter
ii) Pitcher O.B. would face
iii) New Batter

iv) Pitcher N.B. would face

Now, if New Batter is very, very, very much better than Original Batter, well, shoot, the amount of information stored in the pitching side of the equation is pretty small. But if New Batter and Original Batter are separated by a reasonably-measured amount, then the difference between the PITCHERS becomes more important.

So, here's what it comes down to: you can have Andy Marte, who is admittedly hitting .163 BUT has a hit in this game and thus hits in 4 of his last 5 games, face THE VERY WORST ICE-COLDIST HORKING MASS OF QUIVERING GOO IN THE WORLD, or you can have David Dellucci, who is ... a guy ... face Eddie Guardado, who, although old and fat

(seriously, did Eddie eat Rich Garces in the off-season? Also, his beard is greyer than mine), is still reasonably-skilled, left-handed, and, most importantly, NOT JAMEY WRIGHT.

Here is the equation, as I see it:

The distance between ANY BATTER WITH CORTICAL WRINKLES versus Jamey Wright at this point in time DWARFS the distance between ANY HITTER ON CLEVELAND'S ROSTER facing ANY PITCHER WHO IS NOT JAMEY WRIGHT AT THIS POINT IN TIME. I mean, just *dwarfs* it. There is no way I would have done ANYTHING to jeopardize my team's chance of facing MORE JAMEY WRIGHT. Dellucci had hit a homer the night before ... but have I mentioned Jamey Wright?

Dellucci flew out. But that's almost beside the point. It wasn't a bad AB, albeit, it wasn't very good, either. The point is that it was asinine to FORCE Ron Washington to do something that IMPROVED RON WASHINGTON'S TEAM'S CHANCES OF WINNING THE GAME.

7) Dept. of Raffies

Raffy Perez wasn't good.

8) Dept. of Fungi

Neither was Scott Elarton, but so what?

9) Bears mentioning

Shin-Soo Choo not only had the two-run double, but he hit his first homer of the season.

Off closer C.J. Wilson.

Who is left-handed.

Ryan Garko had three hits. Franklin Gutierrez went 2-for-3 with a double. Grady Sizemore had a pair of hits and stole his 14th base of the season. Jamey Carroll drew a pair of walks and lined a single to left, although he did commit an error. Casey Blake did not spike himself.

10) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Larry Dolan's has hired Lenny Dykstra to manage his finances. However you feel about Dykstra, you have to know this statement has no veracity. Fire Mark Shapiro.