Paulie C is the king of the nicknames. He has a moniker for every guy on the team, and at times, it can get confusing. Some, like The Ben Francisco Treat, Big League Choo, and Super Sizemore are self explanatory. But what about The Babyfaced Bulldog, The Scarecrow, and El Capitan? Thus, as we do each year before the start of the season, Paul lays out his 2009 nicknames for all of the 2009 Inidians, and how he derived each of them.

In the process of rambling and prattling on about all things related to the Indians, the use of nicknames is prevalent in this space, often to keep things light and to humor...well, mainly myself. However, to people not "in on the joke", I understand that this can be a little confusing, based on some of the e-mails that I get that start with, "Who in the world is...?"

Thus, to clarify the players to whom I refer when "The BLC", "Stomp" or "Les Beaux Moulins" is used without any other indication as to which player is the subject of the thought, I present a quick (well, not really quick) reference guide to nicknames for current Indians players, with some explanation of said nicknames.

To be fair (and with the lesson learned from last year's exercise when proper attribution for some of these nicknames was debated), I should note that these nicknames are not even close to being my creations, but are instead a conglomeration of ideas that have come from me and others to bestow terms of endearment on these players. Ideas and names have come from Jay Levin of Let's Go Tribe and his merry band of posters (notably Tyler Chirdon, Scott Bricker, Adam Van Arsdale, and Andrew Humphries, among many others), TCF's own Steve Buffum, serial posters at The DiaTribe like Cy Slapnicka, other posters on TCF's message boards, Anthony Castrovince's reporting, and from various

sources and crevasses in my head too numerous to mention. Just to reiterate and to clear up any notion that I'm taking credit for creating all of these names, these names are the ones that I like the best, regardless of their origin.

Taking my lawyer pants off (and what a nice feeling to be free of the restrictions of pants), let's get this going with a few ground rules and comments on players you may not see here. First off, there will be NO hyphenated names, made infamously popular by A-Rod, that lack both creativity and soul. So if you're looking for "V-Mart" or "B-Fran" or "A-Laff"...you've come to the wrong place. Baseball's history is full of great nicknames and none of them have ever relied on the absurdly uncreative process of taking the first letter of a person's first name and matching it with the first syllable of their last name, then putting a hyphen between them. No, the nicknames here tend to be a little more off-the-wall, where an explanation is generally necessary, but usually makes the process a little more fun and giving those aware of the explanation a feeling of being "in on the joke".

Interestingly, there are a number of players who have played for the Indians for more than a few seasons that don't really have staple nicknames. For as much as people bring up the misspelling of Jhonny Peralta's name, most still refer to him as just "Jhonny" (sometimes pronouncing it Ja-Honny, if that counts), much as Jake Westbrook is pretty much just called "Jake", despite the fact that he's been in the rotation for more than a few years. Similarly, players like Anthony Reyes, Masa Kobayashi, and Jamey Carroll are usually just referred to by either their first or last names, with no widely accepted nickname for any of them taking hold the way that they have for other players. Maybe those are still coming (particularly for Reyes), but nothing has ever really jumped out at me for any of them.

Beyond that layer, there are a couple of players who are still a little too new to have a nickname in Joe Smith, Carl Pavano, and Mark DeRosa. Sure, it seems that any adjective with the "g" being replaced by an apostrophe should fit at the front of Smith's name (like Sidearmin' Joe Smith or Flingin' Joe Smith), but it seems a little premature to roll anything out there, seeing as how I really have yet to see Smith pitch. Regarding Pavano, yes...I have been using the "Hot Carl" tag for the time being, but I'll give the guy the benefit of the doubt and even refrain from using "American Idle" for him until his body of work reveals itself in Cleveland. For DeRosa, he comes from Chicago with a bevy of nicknames, ranging from the wildly unimaginative (but strangely

accepted) DeRo to "The Pulse", a reference to an irregular heartbeat that took him to the ER last Spring. While "The Pulse" isn't bad, I'm holding out hope that something better emerges once he starts taking his cuts in the 2 hole.

Finally, before we get into the list (I know, I know...its coming), let's bid a fond farewell to the players no longer on this list as they are no longer on the team. To the players who have left us and taken the nicknames that I loved with them - whether it be Brodzoski (The Close), The Big Borowski, JoeBlo, Frank the Tank, Franklin Delano Gutierrez, Gutz, aCCe, The Crooked Cap, The Hefty Lefty, Lacey Cake, Kasey LOBlake, Byrdie, Nasty Boy Tom Mastny, AAAAndy MAAAArte (that's 4A), Goldilocks, Dellichaels, or Smoke 'Em Brian Slocum - let us say adieu and segue that into this year's version:

Grady Sizemore - SuperSizemore

Seeing as how the Indians ran a promotion last year on the basis of this one, I would venture to say that the inference that Grady is some sort of superhero is on its way to wider acceptance. Of course, an MVP trophy on the mantle (and not just a "trophy" of another kind on his arm) would help. **AKA - St. Grady**

Shin-Soo Choo - The BLC

What began as in earnest as Big League Choo quickly evolved into "The BLC", if only because it was easier to type, and it remains a kind of inside joke that either people get or are completely lost by when "The BLC" is referenced. Granted, it sounds like something you would have for lunch, or what **McDonald's spin on said sandwich** would be, but I like it.
AKA - SS Choo, CHOOOOOOOOOO!

Ben Francisco - The Ben Francisco Treat

For the player whose name sounds oddly like the 13th most populous city in America, we harken back to those old Rice-A-Roni commercials, with a moniker that ekes out "The Frisco Kid". **AKA- Frisco, Sisqo**

David Dellucci - The Looch

Enjoy it while you can folks, as "The Looch" (not to be confused with **the bully that haunted Arnold in "Diff'rent Strokes**) is not likely to haunt us with his contract and his fielding for too much longer. **AKA - Double D**

Victor Martinez - El Capitán

While he may not wear a "C" on his chest like his brother-in-the-tools-of-ignorance in New England, I don't think there's any doubt that Victor is the leader of this team and would wear that "C" if anyone on the team would. Ah capitán, mi capitán... **AKA - Vic the Stick**

Kelly Shoppach - Show Pack

While the easier-to-explain "ShopVac" has been more popular, I'll always go with "Show Pack" as the origin comes from a trip I took last summer to visit my sister and brother-in-law in California (which happened to coincide with when the Tribe faced off with the Dodgers). While we baby-sat for our newborn niece on Friday night, my sister and brother-in-law went out to dinner to get out of the house for the first time in months, while we stayed back and watched the Indians-Dodgers game. During the game, Kelly Shoppach hit a HR while they were out and, upon the return of my sister and brother-in-law, my brother-in-law excitedly asked me if I had seen the HR by "Show Pack", which he caught on the TV at the bar while waiting to be seated. As I worked my way through who, exactly, "Show Pack" was, I bit my tongue (with an elbow in my side from my wife to keep my mouth shut) and added the name to the rolodex of names for the Indians' backstop. **AKA - ShopVac**

Ryan Garko - Garko...Polo

Since his 2008 prevented any legitimate use of the old "Ryan Garko-my-God-did-you-see-how-far-he-hit-that", I'm going with this one (which makes more sense if you imagine the two words being spoken alternately by two groups...preferably in a pool) as it reminds me of a game involving searching for someone. Let's hope that Garko's searching for his pre-2008 self. **AKA - Gark the Shark, Gonnie Garko**

Asdrubal Cabrera - Droobs

Admittedly, I'm not real high on this one as I almost prefer just

"Asdrubal" in the way that simply "Omar" worked for all of those years; but after a stellar defensive play or a shot to the gap, we need something to yell and "DROOOOOOBS" is as good as any. **AKA - AstroCab**

Travis Hafner - TAFKAP (The Artist Formerly Known as Pronk)

As much as I'd like to simply put "Pronk" up there, I just can't do it in good conscience after the last 18 or so months. Perhaps Hafner turns back into the monster known as Pronk that terrorized MLB pitching in 2005 and 2006, but he's going to have to earn that one back...and this from a guy whose season tickets are in Pronkville. **AKA - Le Pronque, Half-Ner, That Travis Guy Wearing #48**

Matt LaPorta - The GateKeeper

Loosely translated, **LaPorta does mean "The GateKeeper" in Italian** and anything that allows me to link **Rick Moranis in "Ghostbusters"**
(or casually type the name "Pete Venkman") is going to have some pretty long legs in these parts.
Not sure who "The KeyMaster" is yet... **AKA - Prime Time, Matt the Hopple**

Beau Mills - Les Moulins Beaux

Remaining "Lost in Translation", I'm not sure why the spelling of Mills' first name intrigues me so or why it harkens me back to French class in high school. If you don't speak French (and with **the Frank Drebin classic line** in mind), here's a little culture for you in regards to the young 1B/DH to impress your friends with.

Cliff Lee - C.P. Lee

Prompted by the fact that Cliff Lee's full first name is NOT Clifford (a mistake that seems to be made far too often), but is instead Clifton, the initials of his tremendous full first and middle name (that would be Clifton Phifer) give just enough mystery for the reigning Cy Young Award Winner. **AKA - Five and (f)Lee (ed. note - this moniker was shed in 2008)**

Fausto Carmona - Faustastic

The superlatives that described the young sinkerballer's 2007 season are what I'm trying to recapture here as, after having watched the Indians' episode of the MLB Network's "30 Clubs in 30 Days" which included footage of an unfazed-by-midges Carmona whiffing Alex Rodriguez in the 2007 ALDS, because getting Carmona to build on his 2007 (not 2008) goes a long way in 2009. **AKA - Our Focused Fausto,**
El Diablo
, ¡FAUSTO!

Aaron Laffey - The Babyfaced Bulldog

There's no question that Laffey looks like a 12-year-old choir boy (though the revelation that he's covered in tattoos not visible when wearing his uniform, a la Brian Anderson, threw me for a whirl), but his approach in pitching is more like a hardened veteran as he attacks hitters and induces contact to render groundball outs. **AKA - Laffey Taffey**

Jeremy Sowers - Sweet ‘n Sowers

Given that we've seen two different versions of Jeremy Sowers in his brief MLB career, this one is pretty appropriate as his 2006 was pretty sweet; but what has followed has been nothing but sourness. **AKA - The Vandy Dandy, Whisky Sowers**

Scott Lewis - SLewis

About as close as I'm going to the abomination of simply shortening a player's name, but this one makes it because "SLewis" actually just sounds like one word, instead of the hyphenated atrocities that aren't really "short" for anything. **AKA - Scotty Lew**

Dave Huff - The Huffstache

If you haven't yet picked up your IA2K9 (and, really, why haven't you), you're not aware of the picture on page 46 that shows Dave Huff, in his Buffalo jersey last year...sporting a full-blown mustache. It's a phenomenal picture, complete with the caption, "Huff and his mustache mowed down minor league hitters in ‘08". The fact that he rolls with a mustache (and apparently, **may do so**

again) furthers the argument that Dave Huff is my favorite-player-in-waiting.
AKA - Huff 'n Stuff

Adam Miller - Atom

Not quite sure what to say here as "Atomic" in the good sense (dynamic, energetic, etc.) is very close to being replaced by "Atomic" in the bad sense (infinitesimally small, like the chances he may ever contribute) or the very bad sense (catastrophic) as the finger injury lingers...and lingers...and lingers...

John Meloan - Mayday Meloan

The spelling on the last name may be different, but there was another reliever (albeit fictional) with this last name... **went by the name of "Mayday"** . Hopefully, the performance of the hard-throwing reliever netted in the Lacey Cake deal doesn't call to mind Sammy Malone's (fictional) career or Sammy's old "Slider of Death". **AKA - Bones Meloan**

Juan Salas - Johnny Living Rooms

Knowing absolutely nothing about the late addition to the 40-man roster off of waivers from the Rays, he gets the "Joe Table" treatment as the translation books get opened again, only to find out that **"Salas" means "Living Rooms" in Spanish** ...or thereabouts.

Zach Jackson - The Zach Attack

Playing off the name of the fictional band in the "Saved by the Bell" episode when VH1's "Behind the Music" was all the rage, the southpaw from the CC deal gets to forever be linked with a fake band from a live-action Saturday morning show. **AKA - Zachson**

Rafael Betancourt - Senor Slo-Mo

Not much to explain on this one, assuming that you've ever seen a game grind to a halt when Betancourt enters a game. While I'll still reserve use of the "Fist of Steel" (to be used in tandem with Rafael Perez's "Fist of Iron" because "if the left one doesn't get you, then the right one will") in the chance that Betancourt rediscovers his 2007 success, it's still out there. **AKA - Rocky**

Rafael Perez - The Scarecrow

With his tall, slender build, long arms and legs always akimbo, and his hat pulled down low, it always remind me of a Scarecrow on the mound when Perez goes into his wind-up as Perez guards a Tribe lead like any good Scarecrow guards a field. **AKA - Fist of Iron (see Betancourt, Rafael)**

Jensen Lewis - Stomp

His funky, deceptive delivery ends with a violent plant by his left foot as it hammers into the pitcher's mound...hence the "Stomp" as he hurls the ball towards the plate. **AKA - Jenny Lew**

Kerry Wood - The K-Man

Yes, it nearly goes against the cardinal rule of the list, but for the pitcher known as "Kid K" after his rookie season, incorporating a Seinfeld reference into his predilection for strikeouts is where I'm going with it. Ultimately, it's an attempt to incorporate Kerry's favorite letter (or what I believe it to be) into something a little more intimidating than "Kid K". **AKA - "K is for Kerry"**

Hopefully this little exercise helps out in the clarification of who I'm talking about when names like "The Scarecrow" or "Mayday" are thrown out there. Obviously, these names will evolve as new and better ones are created and adopted for wider use, but to keep myself sane to and feel like the creative juices are still flowing, these names will continue to appear for YOUR 2009 Cleveland Indians.