Erik Cassano has a confession to make. He only started really paying attention to the Indians about two weeks ago. As in, really following them day to day. Occupied by the Cavs, and apathetic to the Tribe's off-season moves and 2009 chances ... Erik made up his mind that his summer would probably be more fulfilling if he just kept them in the background. So why is he watching them again? Why is he hoping again? He tells us in his latest piece.

I have a confession to make.

I only started really paying attention to the Indians about two weeks ago. As in, really following them day to day.

True story. The Cavs took up that much of my sports-related attention for roughly eight months. I didn't start keeping daily tabs on the Tribe until the Cavs made their abrupt exit from the playoffs in the conference finals. Even then, I didn't focus on baseball until I made up my mind that the NBA Finals, no matter the winner, would just be too painful to watch.

Certainly, I paid passing attention to how the Indians were generally doing -- which is to say, poorly through April and May. But watching the Indians sag to the bottom of arguably the weakest division in baseball made me dread the end of the Cavs' season even more.

I had made up my mind about the Tribe's offseason moves over the winter. Signing Kerry Wood was a good move. Signing Carl Pavano to guaranteed money was a bad move. Mark DeRosa was another grinder who was going to be valued by Eric Wedge and Mark Shapiro for his supposed intangibles like hustle, heart and leadership -- and the ability to play five different positions. But at the end of the season, he'd present us with a .260 average and 12 homers.

Other than that, I was certain the Indians stirred nothing in me. They weren't all that good in '08, and I didn't really see anything that made me believe they were going to suddenly find the path to greatness in '09. Heading into this season, I

firmly believed that the 2007 season was a fluke, one of the few glimmers of success on an otherwise drab backdrop of mediocrity, and one of the only things on which Shapiro and Wedge could hang their collective hat.

If anything, once my suspicions were confirmed in early April, I was hoping for an absolute bust of a season. I was hoping for 100 losses. A season absolutely devoid of any straw within grasping distance of Shapiro or Wedge. A season that wouldn't allow anyone in the Tribe's brain trust to hide behind injuries, or a supposed fluke of a bad bullpen, or an off year by this player or that player.

Once I saw that another lousy start was inevitable, I wanted to see the Indians have a season so bad that the Dolans would be forced to examine the organization and perform what I have believed is a long-overdue shakeup, even to the point of replacing Shapiro. Too many excuses plus not enough wins equals failed rebuild. Harsh? Maybe. But from my perspective, it was better to come to the conclusion now than in 2012, when three more seasons had been wasted.

The Indians hardened my heart. On a trip to Florida in May, I watched them blow a 7-0 lead to the Rays at Tropicana Field, losing 8-7 on a B.J. Upton homer in the bottom of the ninth inning. As I left the stadium that night, I was openly relieved that I decided against wearing an Indians shirt to the game.

A lot of fans, in Cleveland and elsewhere, place a premium on representing your home team when attending a road game. But a bad experience at an Indians-Tigers game at Comerica Park in 2006 made me wise up. If representing one of the teams in this town is going to subject me to ridicule, persistent heckling or worse, why put myself through that? Just because they're going down doesn't mean they have to take me with them.

I was hoping every day that the Cavs would extend their season into mid-June. Even if a Finals loss delievered temporary numbness, it would mean only about five weeks until Browns training camp started. The Browns might still reek like a fish kill this year, but at least they offer the intrigue of a new coaching regime and the obligatory accompaniment of new players.

In the interim, I'd have the NBA draft and the start of the NBA trading and free agency season, which is certain to be an intriguing period for Cavs fans. So if the Indians were to continue losing with a long, still silence, I made up my mind that my summer would probably be more fulfilling if I just kept them in the background.

So why am I watching them again? Why am I hoping again?

The overwhelming apathy is disappearing. I'm looking at the standings again. I'm seeing the Indians hovering six-to-seven games back in the AL Central, and thinking "You know, if they could slice that lead in half by the all-star break..."

I'm actually having an opinion on this team again. While watching a win over the Cardinals this past weekend, I actually said "This is why you rely on healthy players. You don't keep plugging along with injured players in the lineup."

Did I say that? I meant to say "Who cares? They're still bound for 75 wins."

Am I really catching myself watching every at-bat of Victor Martinez? Liking Shin-Soo Choo more by the day? Making sure I'm in front of a TV for every Cliff Lee start? Even gaining some begrudging acceptance of Pavano and DeRosa?

This can't be happening. I had an air of indifference carefully constructed. I don't want to be sucked back in. This team is Nowheresville. The rebuild needs to be rebuilt, and quite possibly with a new GM and manager. Hope is a bad thing when your team is in last place.

And yet, not even 10 games out. And if they could just cut that deficit in half by the all-star break....

There is no getting out, is there? These guys had better make a season of it, or this could be a long summer.