Papa Cass's latest column makes the case that some of the warning signs are now evident with the Indians of a team coming apart at the seams. A lack of hustle, players hiding in the bushes with stray women, and players fighting after games. My advice to you is to start drinking heavily.

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The Indians are foundering. All that's missing from this sinking ship is an on-screen romance between Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet.

Usually, you can tell a team is crumbling when they start misbehaving outside the white lines. It's a sign that the team's chemistry and professionalism are falling apart.

For the Indians, it began when recently-ditched Scott Sauerbeck was caught hiding in a stranger's bushes with a drunk woman.

Following Saturday's extra-inning loss to the White Sox, pitchers Paul Byrd and Bob Wickman reportedly confronted each other in the clubhouse.

The Plain Dealer reported that the two went nose-to-nose for a couple of minutes. Byrd reportedly told Wickman to "take it off your arm," an apparent reference to the ice pack he was wearing after blowing his first save since last August.

Reporters overheard Wickman respond "We can take this outside."

If something like that happens, it's usually a series of events that have finally come to a head. One source told The Plain Dealer that Wickman and Byrd, in general, do not get along.

It might finally be happening: burdened by what has been a disappointing season so far, and faced with a palpable lack of clubhouse leadership, players might be starting to faction. In the world of the clubhouse, that is like placing explosive charges on the supports of a condemned building and pushing the button.

If players start dividing the clubhouse between friends and foes, kiss any hope of a salvageable season goodbye. In the end, to save what is left of team chemistry and prevent a 100-loss season, GM Mark Shapiro might be forced to lop more than Sauerbeck from the roster.

The Indians are committed to Byrd for another year at more than $7 million. Wickman, a free agent at season's end, has proven his worth as a serviceable reliever so far. If issues like this continue between Byrd and Wickman, the larger of the two might be gone before season's end, traded off to a big-market contender.

If Byrd and Wickman reached the point where they couldn't hold their anger in any longer, it makes you wonder what other feuds are simmering in that clubhouse, who is blaming whom for the failures of this season. You know finger-pointing is going around behind people's backs. It's human nature to blame others when things aren't going right.

Manager Eric Wedge has publicly blamed Jhonny Peralta and Ronnie Belliard for lack of hustle. Jason Johnson has blamed the media for his struggles, claiming he has been placed "under a microscope."

It's hard to believe a team that won 93 games a year ago could freefall like this. But it shows how much the Indians miss the stabilizing veteran presences of Kevin Millwood and Bob Howry. It shows how much chemistry means to a team that needs every advantage it can get to counteract the deficiencies of a $55 million payroll. And it shows that the Indians, in all honesty, overachieved last year and probably overestimated themselves at the outset of this season.

This could all end with Wickman and Belliard traded to other teams. This could also end with Wedge losing his job.

Is Wedge to blame for the sinking season? Partly. Will firing him solve anything? No. But as the old adage goes, it's far easier to replace one manager than 25 players.

But if this season continues on its current track, there will be plenty of players who warrant replacing.