You don't necessarily have to be out of the country for a few weeks and basically cut off from the local sports scene to really appreciate the numbing sameness that is the Cleveland Indians, but it helps. Gary Benz just got back in town from a two week vacation in Italy, and was enjoying the lack of substantive updates on Project Shapiro V. 2009. Back in the country for mere hours though and it was quickly apparent to Gary that this version is more bug-ridden and faulty than Windows Vista.

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For the last few weeks I've been in Italy enjoying the views from Rome, Florence and Venice and enjoying the lack of substantive updates on Project Shapiro V. 2009. Back in the country for mere hours though and it's quickly apparent that this version is more bug-ridden and faulty than Windows Vista. And all Sheldon Ocker can tell us is that manager Eric Wedge isn't at fault.

Maybe none of this is Wedge's fault and maybe none of it ever will be, but it is interesting how a flawed team brings out his flaws as well. But this isn't about trying once again to bury Wedge. By this point the arguments and

counterarguments have been hashed and rehashed. You're either glass half full or, in the classic words of George W., half glass empty.

The one thing you can't be, however, is delusional. You can blame injuries, bad luck and bad decision making to explain away a season that looks far more inevitable than anomalous, but what you can't take away from any of this is that this organization is any closer to figuring any of its problems out than it ever was.

This team is stuck in the mud and the front office seems to be standing slack-jawed at the wreckage as if this outcome never even appeared on the numerous computer runs the interns made of the team back in February. At the moment, this is a team more than 20 games under .500 and heading for 30 and you don't have to look any further than one Andy Marte to understand why. So paralyzed have they become that they can't even decide whether to give Marte another chance, despite the impressive season he's having in Columbus.

It's not that Marte, personally, would have made a bit of difference to this season's outcome. He wouldn't have. It's what he stands for. Wedge and Shapiro shuffle pitchers in and out of Columbus with all the forethought of someone driving down the freeway at 100 mph while sending a text. But with Marte they wring their hands as if this very well could be the most important decision in the history of professional baseball. It isn't even the most important decision they'll make in the next hour.

It's true enough that Marte has had his opportunities and it's true enough that he's squandered them. But that only matters if you view player development in a straight-lined fashion instead of the amazingly jagged line that it really is.

According to a story by Paul Hoynes in Sunday's Plain Dealer, Marte's seemingly breakout season in Columbus has drawn the organization's attention but they remain reluctant to take another chance on him at the moment.

There are probably a number of reasons that Marte is still in Columbus but you get the feeling that when you sort through the organizational doublespeak, it boils down to one thing: Wedge. Marte just doesn't seem to be Wedge's kind of player. Either was Brandon Phillips. Now do you understand why the team seems to keep inserting new CDs into the player but the same song keeps playing? Marte would have had to have hit .271 at some point in his career and been "good in the clubhouse" for him to get on the right side of whatever ledger Wedge keeps.

You can almost hear the pain in his voice when he told Hoynes that "[Marte] doesn't seem to be the same guy who was here the last couple of years. We have to see if it translates up here at sometime." Yes, sometime. What's the hurry? It's only late July in a season that was effectively over months ago. Don't rush.

The issue, though, really isn't Marte. It's the organization. Marte is having a good season in AAA and the front office treats is like a mysterious rash on its arm. Beyond just the Wedge factor, which can't be underestimated or overstated, you had to almost smile at the Lewis Carroll meets Joseph Heller rationale offered by assistant general manager Chris Antonetti, when he explained, presumably straight-faced, that Marte remains in Columbus for the time being because he is out of options and thus he couldn't automatically be sent to the minors if he flames out again.

Let's stop and pause on that for a moment. The Indians were so dismayed with Marte that they sent him outright to Columbus earlier this year even though he was out of options. In doing that, they sent the message that they were completely indifferent to whether or not he remained in the organization at all. In fact, the only reason he's in Columbus is because no other team in the league claimed him, which is saying plenty. Factor in that the reason Marte's playing time increased only because of an injury to Wes Hodges and you can understand where he sat on the team's depth chart. If this was the Browns and Marte was a tight end, he'd be behind Martin Rucker.

But like a 12th alternate just lucky to get into the tournament, Marte has made the most of what is surely his absolute final chance and that seems to be the worst news the front office has heard since the Princeton men's tennis team finished 6th in the Ivy League this past season.

Now that Marte's playing well, for the first time, the Indians are suddenly managing around the potential of losing him. The question is, why? In the worst case scenario, Marte comes back up to the big leagues and fails, for the fourth time. If that happens, Shapiro can outright him again, just as he did a few months ago. Marte either gets claimed or he doesn't but either way his career is over in the Indians' organization anyway. In other words, what downside?

It may very well be that Marte is the second coming of Karl Pagel. Every team has had its share of players over the years that can't take that final step. But with the kind of year Jhonny Peralta is having you would have thought that Marte would have been in Cleveland the moment he hit his second home run, if only to light about the 83rd fire under Peralta this year.

As I said, Marte isn't really the issue, it's the organization. In context, the fact that it is even fretting over him is more a marker for everything that's wrong than it is a sign that everything is going as planned. Every day Wedge continues to pound the square peg that Peralta has become into the round hole that is the lineup is another day lost to actually trying to build a team for the future.

The Indians right now are a team without much of a plan. They can't decide if they have enough money to keep Cliff Lee and/or Victor Martinez and they can't decide if they will have any pitching and hitting if they don't. They refuse to commit to Asdrubal Cabrera but seem oddly fascinated with the car wreck that's become Peralta's career. The next player that Wedge develops will be his first all the while he and the front office continue to pin their hopes on an eventual return to form by players like Travis Hafner and Jake Westbrook.

This team, this organization is far more coulda than shoulda at the moment and the only ones that seem to notice are just about everyone who doesn't rely on the team for a paycheck.

Yes, it's late July, the season's lost but there is one saving grace. The Indians season is like a Spike Lee movie. You can leave for 20 minutes in the middle to get some popcorn and talk to a friend inSa the lobby and when you get back you will not have missed anything and it will make just as much sense as it did when you left.