A thing of beauty is a joy forever, which made Carl Pavano's start last night a joy for about thirty-seven seconds. The Jays ripped the Tribe 10-6 on the power (!!!) of ex-Tribesman Marco Scutaro, and Buff laments that the Bran Trust's (tm) handling of Pavano, the Trade Asset, has cost itself pretty much any return. Buff also wonders why Luis Valbuena has more isolated power than either Ryan Garko or Ben Francisco, wonders if Garko might be better-placed on another roster, and has a prescription for success for bullpen pitchers like Jose Veras (leave), Chris Perez (throw strikes), and Mike Gosling (psych! There is no prescription for success for Mike Gosling).

FINAL	1	2	3
Indians (37-58) 1	0	0	0
Blue Jays (47-48) 0	1	0	1

W: Romero (8-4) L: Pavano (8-8)

Really, is it too much to ask to keep Marco F*#&ing Scutaro in the yard?

1) Remedial Marketing

This is not a lesson. It is a description.

Okay, look: I fell down on the job trying to pimp Carl Pavano in the same way I got Mark DeRosa delivered out of town. And really, any Cleveland player who emails me at steve.buffum@gmail.com can start the ball rolling on getting your ass the hell out of town. I can think of like five players who wouldn't take advantage of this at this point: either *you* want out of this morass, or *I* want you off my damn team. Jose Veras, you need not send email. Mike Gosling, I don't even know who the hell you are. I won't even tell anyone you initiated the contact. We'll just pretend I'm driving the DeRosa Joke that much further into the ground. No one has to know.

But I meant to start giving Pavano the Super Product Hype Package, especially after his 6/29 start against the White Sox. On 6/29 he gave up 2 runs on 5 hits and 0 walks in 7 innings. On 7/4, he gave up 2 runs in 6 2/3 innings, and on 7/11

he gave up 2 runs in 8 full innings, striking out 6 and walking no one. Those are three very fine starts, and show that Carl Pavano has some talent. All bullshit aside, I think Pavano could be a real low-cost alternative to the Roy Halladays of the world, a guy who a contender could get to replace their fifth starter and win a couple extra games. I mean, he's not going to win you the Series: in all likelihood, he's the guy you skip in the playoff rotation entirely. But tell me a team that employs, for example, Brian Moehler, the ghost of Mike Hampton, and Russ Ortiz (Russ Ortiz!) couldn't use another arm. And I'm not asking for the Clay Bucholzes or J.A. Happs of the world here. Give me a guy who can walk and chew gum at the same time. I am not looking for a blockbuster here. I would accept a block.

Now, there's no denying that Pavano pitched craptastically last night. Into the fifth inning, I had a whole spiel planned touting the fact that he had not given up any singles, doubles, or triples last night, sloughing off the minor inconvenience that the "four well-struck balls" were, in fact, f*@&ing solo HOME RUNS. Really, now. Four home runs in one game is pretty bloody hard to do. That's plainly shit. And the fact is, Pavano is a helluva lot more effective when he's inducing some ground balls: in the Chicago game he got 11 ground ball outs to 3 fly outs, and had an 11:6 ratio against the Tigs. In this game, not so much. Pavano recorded 14 outs, and TWO of them came on ground balls. When people get the ball in the air against Pavano, the ball tends to find its way to parts unknown: even Kansas City belted three homers off him last month. (In retrospect, maybe Houston isn't the best fit. But ... Russ Ortiz? Brian Moehler? This is a contender? Would someone like to make an argument about how the NL has turned the corner on the AL? I would like to see that argument. Also, flying pigs and free beer.)

So with the admission that Carl Pavano is the primary person responsible for the now-demolished trade value of Carl Pavano, because Being Carl Pavano is still the single biggest negative characteristic in terms of being able to trade Carl Pavano, I have to say this:

What the F&#^ were you thinking giving Pavano THIS start?

Consider this: the Toronto Blue Jays have scored 458 runs in 95 games, an average of 4.82 runs per game. They are 28-20 at home (most teams are better at home, even the stupid Indians, who are piss-poor at home, to contrast with their diseased-bird-like road futility). In contrast, the Seattle Mariners have a two-man offense and have scored 372 runs this season, an average of 3.96 runs per game. They don't even score 4 runs per game. This is 2009. They can't score. David Huff kept them at bay. Aaron Laffey held them down. Tomo Ohka, bless his curse-laden little heart, virtually throttled them. Seattle has a very, very bad offense, and would be the worst in the American League if not for the Kansas City Royals, who believe Yuniesky Betancourt and Tony Pena, Jr. are major-league shortstops. They have outscored Kansas City by ... one run.

(From where did they get Betancourt? From the Seattle Mariners.)

So, although I understand the desire to get Carl Pavano more rest ... and really, now, about two-and-a-half-months more is sounding pretty f&#*ing good right about now ... it just seems really unconscionable if you are going to market Carl Pavano as a Net Asset to the rest of the league to skip him against the feeblest collection of Mookity Mooks (which, I should add, swept the Cleveland Indians: I harbor no illusions at this point in the season) available (he had already failed against the Ultra Mook Squad, since familiarity with Carl Pavano has now bred contempt in Kansas City ... and in Cleveland), in order to toss him into the Land of Deep-Fried Cheese Curds.

(Why does no one speak of "Shallow-frying" anything? These are the kinds of questions I would rather address than the Cleveland Indians at this point. I am this close to sending myself an email demanding a campaign for me to be traded.)

Now, look: I will admit that I probably missed some announcement about how they were going to give Pavano's shoulder another week off or that there was some team blurb about strategy, strategery, and stragedy, and how blah blah blah-blah f&#*ing blah. I missed it. I don't care. You caught me. Curse you, Mark Shapiro

and your magical media circus tricks! Woe to fake journalists everywhere! I ...

... I'm getting a little off track here. It's hard to stay focused on an eye chart this hideously ugly. First row, Bella Abzug. Second row, Marty Feldman. Third row, naked mole rat. Anyway, the point is, the job of a team that is trying to market marketable assets is to f*&#ing market them, and the best way to do this is to arrange them just so so that their good side is to the camera and put a little Vaseline on the lens and maybe set the lighting so that no one notices that blemish on his nose. You put Carl Pavano out against the sad-sack offense that is the Seattle Fraudulence and HIDE him from a team that can whack five pitches out of the yard in their crib. I mean, isn't that just common sense? And if this hurts Carl Pavano, you know what? Tough f*@&ing shit. Break him in half for all I care. Pavano was a worthy gamble: I will come out and say it. It was worth a shot. If you think he was holding someone back, have you seen Sowers, Laffey, Carmona, Huff, and T.W. Lizard pitch this season? Exactly who was he blocking? Someone worse? Who the f&*(cares? We got some good starts out of Pavano: heck, he leads the team in wins! He's 4th in the AL in wins! He has 10 Quality Starts this season: the next-best (I mean, Lee is clearly #1 here with 17) has THREE! Three! Carl Pavano was not the difference between Anything and Anything Else for this particular team, but as a risk-reward signing, it was actually a pretty good one.

This isn't even CLOSE to being coherent any more, so I'll stop, but goddam: pitch Pavano against poor offensive teams and/or in big f*#&ing ballparks and take the first offer you get for him. Use your brain! Man!

2) Val Smash!

With the obvious spectre of Kenny Lofton Disease noted, is it time to start thinking of Luis Valbuena as a guy with some pop? He can't

actually HIT, but a guy with .176 ISO (which is SLG-AVG for the unitiated) looks like a guy with some power. I mean, Ryan Garko has a .182 ISO. Ben Francisco has less power (.147). Victor Martinez has a .184 ISO. Asdrubal Cabrera looks like a feeble middle infielder next to Valbuena. Is he really strong enough to sustain a .176 ISO? Probably not. His minor-league numbers do not suggest a Rollins-type middle infield bat. But the fact is, Luis Valbuena has 19 extra-base hits, including 5 homers, in 180 PA, and more than half his hits are for extra bases. That's pretty astounding.

Anyway, Valbuena's three-run shot off left-hander Ricky Romero (with one out, no less) gave the Indians a glimmer of hope last night. His .279 OBP is still ghastly, but the guy's a 23-year-old rookie middle infielder, and if he could post something more like .250/.320/.430, he'd be a net asset if he gets his defense back to where I'm told it ought to be. Heck, get him to .250/.320/.430, and he's ... Jhonny Peralta. But thinner, a better baserunner, a superior fielder, and with a more elliptical head.

3) Don't look now

With 3 hits and a HBP in 4 trips to the plate, Ryan Garko is on a ten-game stretch in which he has gone 13-for-33 with a pair of doubles and a homer, raising his average from .266 to .284 in the process.

After a poor May in which he hit only .226, Garko has gone .269/.367/.500 in June, which is acceptible for a corner man, and .358/.382/.453 in July, which is ... still acceptible for a corner man. And

against left-handed pitching this season, Garko has hit .339/.400/.542, which qualifies as "lefty-smashing" in some circles. At age 28, I'm not sure Garko has a huge future role for a franchise that is likely to see guys like Matt LaPorta and Nick Weglarz taking the Flintstonian Roles in the long term (1B, LF, DH, baserunning amusement), but Garko is a major-league player and has value. I would investigate checking with teams who wanted a cheap lefty-masher with some versatility, because I wouldn't be surprised if there weren't some smug know-it-all in another team's front office who was checking out a guy like Gark as a good, cheap "professional hitter."

(And before you ask, no: Ryan Garko has not sent me email. I'd be thrilled if he did, but the Marketing Announcement is only being posted for the first time today.)

By reaching base four times, Garko was able to score one run. Huz.

4) Fungus Alert!

Jose Veras must die.

5) Note to the Literal

I do not literally want Jose Veras to die.

I literally want Jose Veras to stop pitching for the Cleveland Indians.

6) Dept. of Blunderbussery

Chris Perez pumped 11 strikes in 21 pitches, meaning that well over 50 percent of his pitches were in the strike zone, as long as "well over" means "two point four percent."

He did strike out a batter, which is good: I like power arms, and the reason I like them is that they produce strikeouts. Relief Ks are good. But he also walked a batter, and these are terrible, horrible, no good, and very bad. Case in point: Veras gave up only one hit. It was worth three runs. Because he walked two hitters before the hit.

Mike Gosling threw 8 strikes in 19 pitches and walked two guys in one scoreless inning. The very topic of Mike Gosling throws me off my game. Who? What? Why? Mike Gosling? Why is there a Mike Gosling on my roster? Mike Gosling? I ... I can't even think of something substantive to say here. Mike Gosling? What? Did I fall asleep? Too much amyl nitrate? What the f*@&?

Anyway, pitch better, you mook.

7) Everybody gets on base!

Each hitter reached base: the only two players who did not have a base hit (Chris Gimenez, Grady Sizemore) drew a walk. In all, the Indians pounded out 10 hits (4 XBH) and drew 5 walks: they hit a poor 2-for-11 with runners in scoring position, but one of the hits drove in three runs, so it all sort of comes out in the wash. They left 8 men on base, but really: six runs is a decent number of runs. No, this was a Pure Pitching Loss. The offense could have done better, but it did way better than in Lee's start, so I can't get really upset about it.

Notable notes: Garko and Victor Martinez were the only players with a second hit. Jhonny Peralta and Ben Fungusco each had a two-out RBI.