The Indians took another series, this time from the woeful Royals, and Buff recaps something odd about the relationship between David Huff words and deeds, looks at how Grady Sizemore's season has rebounded, cringes at the idea of Kerry Wood finishing games, and writes what might be the first-ever sympathetic view of utility man Chris Gimenez.

				FINAL
Indians (56-70)	1	0	1	0
Royals (48-78)	1	0	1	0

W: Huff (8-7) L: Hochevar (6-7) S: K. Wood (16)

Virtually everything about that screamed, "Getaway game."

1) Cognitive dissonance

My wife studied psychology, so I got to learn terms like this: it boils down to the coping mechanism that allows you to have a self-concept ("I am a responsible person") that is at direct odds with your actual behavior ("Watch me pop a wheelie on this motorcycle!"). I mean, that's not exactly what cognitive dissonance is, but it is how I tend to think of its effects.

So I read David Huff say this:

"I'm not going to go out and strike out a bunch of guys," said Huff, 6-3 on the road. "I'm going to be the guy who tries to get groundball outs, a bunch of double plays. For me, strikeouts are boring. I like a quick ballgame. I like guys to ground out in one pitch, two pitches."

And then I see this:

GO:FO ratio: 3:13 (GB:FB ratio, 6:17)

Well ... um ... yeah.

Look, in an abstract way, I'm sure David Huff really DOES like guys to ground out in one pitch. Who doesn't? I think it was Greg Maddux who said his idea of a perfect game wasn't the 81-pitch 27-K affair, but rather the 27-pitch, 27-weak groundout type. I give Huff credit for the self-realization that he isn't going to strike out a lot of guys, because ... well ... David Huff isn't going to strike out a lot of guys (season high: 5, last attained in June). And he's gotten far enough along in the process, past "denial" and "anger," to have some degree of acceptance. But he seems more in the "bargaining" stage, trying to convince the cosmos that he'll be fine as a non-strikeout pitcher as long as he can be a groundball specialist instead. Dude. Keep moving along the track. Don't bargain with the universe. You're not a strikeout pitcher, but **you're not a groundball pitcher, either**
. You have a preposterous 0.63 GB/FB ratio. Accept the absence of strikeouts and move on with your life.

Because the fact is, Huff pitched a fine-enough game, yielding 7 hits (6 singles) and only 1 walk to give up 2 runs in 6 complete innings. Yes, Kansas City doesn't hit well and yes, Kansas City generally played like they'd rather have been somewhere (or even some*one*) else, but you do what you can and evaluate the results, and the results were pretty good.

2) Port smash!

Yes, Luke Hochevar threw an execrable hanging curveball to Matt LaPorta in the 6th inning, but the fact is, Matt LaPorta hit the ball over the wall for a homer and it still counts. Much like Andy Marte the day before, even if punishing mistakes is not a sufficient skill to be a successful major-league hitter, it is a necessary one, so thumbs up all around.

LaPorta has lifted himself to a .250 AVG, which isn't bad for a rookie with sporadic playing time overcoming a terrible start. As important to me, he now sports a nice .176 ISO (isolated power, SLG-AVG), which makes him look like an Actual Corner Outfielder, if perhaps his actual corner *outfielding* does to a lesser extent.

3) Expectation revisitation

This is certainly a terrible season for leadoff hitter and expected All-Star Grady Sizemore: hitting .246/.342/.442 on the season isn't very good, and way short of what we expect from St. Grady.

Still, after all the calls to shut Sizemore down and go ahead and get him his elbow surgery (he will have a procedure done in the off-season, but sources like Will Carroll write that this is a relatively routine procedure with a 6-8 WEEK recovery time, so performing it early has no real benefit), it bears a look at what Sizemore has done recently. After a nigh-inconceivably bad May in which Sizemore hit .211/.283/.360, Sizemore sat much of June. Since then, he hit .247/.366/.471 in July (.837 OPS) and .303/.398/.472 in August (.870 OPS). The August numbers are actually in line with his typical seasons, and a bit better than his career line of .275/.367/.485. The slugging is a little bit down, but an .870 Grady Sizemore is a lot better than a .776 Grady Sizemore (his OPS before the All-Star Break). And a .398 OPS leadoff guy is ... well, a legitimate leadoff guy.

Yesterday Sizemore drew a pair of walks, reached on a error, laced a double, and scored three runs, including two that didn't involve a batter

getting a hit. He also stole his 12th base on the season.

Letting Grady Sizemore play five times a week is not a problem.

4) A moment of pure seriousness

Let me be perfectly serious for an item. No snark allowed.

It is worth remembering that every player in the major leagues is supremely talented. To reach this point, you have to have a lot more skill than just about anyone else in the world. Even the worst performer has a great deal more skill than anyone you're likely to ever know personally.

I remember when I got driven crazy by Jason Davis, and subsequently the Indians drove Jason Davis crazy. The Indians didn't have a slot for Davis to do either of the things for which his skill set was best-suited: he wasn't one of the five best starters on the roster, so he couldn't start, and he was nothing like the best choice for being an air-it-out setup guy. The role that was available was long-man-slash-spot-starter: if Davis was going to contribute, it was going to have to be in that role.

Davis could NOT contribute in that role, and was subsequently released. The fact that he hasn't resurfaced suggests that he just wasn't quite talented enough, but he was put in a tough situation and wasn't up to it. No character attributions, it just didn't work out.

In many ways, Chris Gimenez has kind of a tough gig. I mean, he gets to play professional baseball and get paid a good salary, but in terms of professional development, Gimenez is in a tough position: he doesn't know where he's going to play, he doesn't know IF he's going to play, he can't string together enough outings to build any sort of rhythm, it's hard to build chemistry with the pitching staff as a hybrid sometimes-catcher ... it's not something that anyone's been trained for. Some players can't handle this gig: consider Andy Marte's 7-game hit streak, which is, in my opinion, at least partially attributable to him being an everyday player. Marte is a player who is not suited to being a backup. I could be reading too much into limited data, but that's what they seem to suggest.

There are people who CAN handle this gig: Jamey Carroll plays a bunch of different positions and has somewhat sporadic playing time and performs admirably. He's hitting .290 with a .373 OBP and is a tremendously valuable player. But there are two things to remember here:

a) He is tremendously valuable because this ability is *rare*
b) He is 35 years old with 7 years of experience

While it's true that Gimenez has performed poorly overall (hitting .155 with a .252 OBP), the flip side is that he seems to be an adequate defensive catcher ... and an adequate defensive first baseman ... and an adequate defensive corner outfielder (although this is not an organizational strength and the standards are low) ... and can draw a walk and has a little pop (3 HR). And what the team is trying to determine is not so much if Chris Gimenez can be an everyday player, or even a primary super-utility guy (how many guys in the majors play all of C, 1B, LF, and RF?), but in my opinion, to see if he can handle the role and be an adequate option for emergency depth callup at some point in the future.

Look, let's face facts: Chris Gimenez at age 26 in 2009 is not good enough to be a real contributor to a good baseball team. He's not. But I can see him having a legitimate major-league career. Right now, he has been assigned a very tough job and is not doing it well. It is worth keeping in mind that there aren't a lot of rookies who WOULD handle this job well. So, yes, Gimenez struck out three times yesterday and generally looked overmatched, but it's worth resting the starting catcher, and it's arguably worth seeing if he can potentially play multiple roles in the future. I certainly don't want him taking regular plate appearances from Marte or LaPorta, but I'm not going to be

screaming for Chris Gimenez' head any time soon.

5) That's enough of that

Because the last item was snark-free, I was unable to refer to Jason Flintstone, Choonian Motion, Lumbering Ryan Garko, Noodles Dellucci, or Wickets Fungusco in the discussion about corner outfield defense. I mean, really now: you're telling me Chris Gimenez can't live up to THOSE lofty standards? What, he plays blindfolded?

6) Nicely done

Joe Smiff-Perez pitched another perfect inning with a strikeout. His August ERA is 1.86 and he is holding hitters to a .176 batting average. Since the All-Star Break, Smiff-Perez has a 1.32 ERA with 8 Ks and 0 BBs.

Chris Perez-Smythe-Perez gave up a single, but erased him on a double play and struck out his final hitter to extend his scoreless streak.

Kerry Not-Perez got his 16th save and made children weep by finishing another game. Think of the children!

7) Of note

Andy Marte extended his modest hitting streak to 7 games with a single.

From the bottom of the second to the bottom of the sixth, exactly two players for EITHER team swung at the first pitch. (Both were Cleveland Indians, but ... I mean NO ONE was swinging at the first pitch.)

Jamey Carroll rapped out three hits. His month-by-month batting averages:

May: .290
June: .280
July: .295

August: .304

I mean, that's just really good. I can't believe this guy is a Cleveland Indian on August 27th.

8) Dept. of Envy

Mitch Maier has gunned down a runner at the plate in consecutive games. Sadly, he continues to hit like Mitch Maier.

9) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Eric Wedge has not actually grown a beard, but rather speckles his face with pencil shavings and "Wite-Out." I'm pretty sure that's real

grey hair: I know the Indians have given ME some. Do not let Kerry Wood finish games to vest his third-year option.