Indians win! In related news, hell froze over and the earth stopped spinning on its axis yesterday. In today's B-List, Buff take a closer look at another good performance from Pretty Good Paul, and comes out and admits that Joe Inglett is growing on him. He also analyzes the risk/reward of Casey Blake's amazing catch yesterday, and manages to come up with yet another couple Ramon Vasquez jokes. I'm fully expecting Vasquez to file a defamation suit against Buffum before this season ends.

It's always fun to be able to watch a game cast of a day game from my office, because it spawns such a stimulating variety of superstitious behavior. I want to know what's going on, but I know that the act of me watching will jinx the team, so I have to change windows a lot to avoid inducing poor results. (You're welcome.)

1) Further Categorization of the Byrd Phenomenon

In the continuing saga of differentiating the various Paul Byrds (Good, Bad, Mediocre, Annoying, Obsequious, Purple, Clairvoyant), Byrd threw 68% strikes and had a Quality Start (3 runs in 6 innings). He wasn't particularly efficient about it, though, "scattering" 10 hits and striking out exactly one. So it's kind of Pretty Good Paul.

Breaking it down into small, pointless units of no statistical significance, Byrd was scattershot in the first inning (13 strikes, 11 balls) and gave up a run. In fact, gunning down Vlad Guerrero stealing second may have been the only thing preventing a catastrophically bad inning. Byrd's 2nd was pinpoint (9:1) and shutout. The 3rd was accurate (8:2) and shutout. The 4th was decent (10:6) with a run. Basically, if Byrd ever went 2 balls to a batter in an inning, he gave up a run.

This is incredibly analytical analysis, proving without a shadow of a doubt that I can't explain Paul Byrd any more than the popularity of "Fear Factor." However, I am good at counting to two. My recommendation to Paul Byrd: strikes are good.

2) Mighty Joe Not Young

Joe Inglett is growing on me. After a slow start, Inglett went 3-for-4 with 2 walks to raise his average to .286. He also stole his first base, although pointlessly, as John Lackey struck out the side in the first. Still, Inglett's pseudo-emergence as a valid player couldn't have come at a better time ... no, wait, that's not true. It could have come the day before Mark Shapiro considered signing Ramon Vazquez to a contract.

Anyone got a time machine?

By the way, the fact that Inglett can play a credible center field double-underlines the fact that he should be the utility guy instead of the sphagnum moss we are using now.

3) Casey Blake, defensive stalwart!

Wow.

4) The cold eye of logic emerges

Now, I'm not taking anything away from Blake's catch in the sixth, where he dove to grab Chone Figgins' ball down the line with two out and two on to end the (scoreless) inning. As Byrd said, miss that ball and you probably watch Figgins circle the bases to take the lead.

I understand that Blake is a professional ath-a-lete and decisions like this are made in a split second. And, after all, he made the catch, so well done and huzzahs all around. However, what's the worst that could happen if you circle back and let that ball drop? Figgins is fast and the ball's in right, so he probably ends up on second. It wasn't hit that deep, so I figure the guy on second scores easily, but the guy on first (Jose Molina, the non-fast catcher) likely stops at third. And now with two outs, you get to face Izturis when you still have to lead; walking him leads to Cabrera with two outs.

I dunno: it's one of those Risk Analysis problems. If you play it safe, you likely end up with the lead but need another good pitch to get out of the inning (and it's no guarantee that Byrd had that pitch in him, but he'd only thrown 94 and hadn't gone two-balls to anyone in the sixth yet, spelling Sure Shutout Inning according to the baseless theory above). Most likely case, you give up one run. If you gamble on the dive, the worst case is giving up three runs and the best is zero. So if you're even only 50% likely to catch that ball, you probably shouldn't try. And watching the replay, I would have said Blake had about a negative four percent chance to catch it until he did.

Blake's been a real asset this year, and I'm happy for him, but that was a risky move.

5) This having been said

Wow.

6) My affinity for Raffy Betancourt wanes

Yes, he still throws strikes, but strikes people miss are a lot more valuable than those they use to traipse onto the basepaths. Two hits and one out is no way to make a living. Is he gassed? Is he still hurt? Did he suddenly realize that he is still Rafael Betancourt? Whatever the reason, I think you have to go into the off-season with the expectation that Betancourt is Just Some Guy rather than Valuable Setup Man or Crucial Bullpen Asset.

Yeah, the run was given up because Carmona gave up a sac fly, but again, hit-to-out ratio has to be less than 1. Certainly less than 2. Feh.

7) Welcome back!

Ben Broussard, 1-for-14 against John Lackey to that point, smacked the two-run homer that ended Lackey's scorless inning streak and began the five-run fifth that won the game. Broussard now has 12 homers on the season, which for a platooned player isn't bad. (For a first baseman, it's still pretty bad.) Broussard now has two home runs in his last ten games, suggesting that ... well, it suggests I grasp at straws, that's what it suggests.

It was good, though.

8) Trade asset progress report

Broussard had the home run. Aaron Boone went 3-for-5 including a homer. Todd

Hollandsworth had a double in five trips to the plate. And Really Big Bob polished off his 15th save giving up only one extra-base hit.

Blake, on the other hand, despite the spectacular catch, managed to strand 4 runners in scoring position, strike out three times, and come to the plate with a total of 8 men on base without scoring any of them. Ron Belliard hurt himself. Ramon Vazquez remained fungal.

9) "Pretty good" interpreted as "very encouraging"

Although two runners did steal second off Victor Martinez (one being Chone Figgins: since it was his THIRTY-SEVENTH, I have to say I don't feel too bad about that one), he caught Vlad Guerrero to end the inning. At a 33% success rate, this represents roughly "break even" to statheads, but something along the lines of "super extra fantastic" with respect to Victor Martinez. Keep it up, V-man!

10) Ducks on the pond!

We left 14 on base, and Casey Blake can absorb only so much blame. We didn't ground into any double plays ... but that's not really a big improvement. (The Angels stranded nine, but I find this acceptible, largely because I do not give a Rolling O about the Angels.)