Don’t do it.

Hear me, Chris Antonetti – don’t do it.

Put the phone down, flush your Blackberry down the toilet.

Do not make a single trade.

I know you will be tempted by teams holding up proven hitters like sexy black negligees. Resist.

Under no circumstances are you to trade any players from the Indians roster or any of its minor-league affiliates.

I say this not because the Indians are good enough as they are. Of course they aren't.

There are holes in this lineup from which nothing, not even light, can escape. While the bullpen is abundant and the starting rotation is generally solid, there are far too many days in which Casey Anthony could knock in four runs on us.

Point being – this isn't a bona fide playoff team. Not yet.

Which isn't to say it won't make the playoffs. In this division, anything is possible. Except Kansas City.

"But we're in the hunt," someone will say. "We've got a chance to win this division and get into the playoffs. And when you get into the playoffs, anything can happen. We just need one more bat."

You had me until the last part.

For as dyspeptic as the Indians have been over the last two months, they're still in the running primarily because the Tigers and White Sox have just as many problems (and are paying more for them) and the Twins have decided to play this season blindfolded with one arm tied behind their backs.

Thus, if the Indians can level off and just play steady .500 ball for more than a couple weeks (in other words, if Fausto Carmona and Mitch Talbot are taken out of the rotation), they'll be in it until the end. And anything indeed can happen in October, particularly with a kick-ass bullpen and a couple of nasty starting pitchers.

But thinking the Indians are one (drumroll, please) Veteran Bat - and by translation, one trade - away from fixing all their problems is like thinking a subscription to *Newsweek* will turn Sarah Palin into a viable presidential candidate.

I'm as frustrated as anybody with the lineups the Indians have been throwing out there for the majority of the season. And while it would be great to suddenly add somebody capable of hitting – oh, I don't know, let's say .260 – it's not going to make a huge difference.

You could add Carl Yastrzemski to this lineup right now and it wouldn't make a huge difference. He'd still have Travis Buck hitting ahead of him and Austin Kearns hitting behind him. With Jack Hannahan in the hole and Luis Valbuena available to pinch-hit.

You see what I mean.

"But when Choo and Sizemore come back, that'll fill in two of those holes," someone will say. "If only we had one more Veteran Bat…"

Indeed, the lineup can't help but improve when Choo returns. But that's assuming that he's able to pick up where he left off when he was healthy and can maintain his torrid .244 batting average.

In all honesty, we need to face the reality that Choo is simply having a down year and – injury or not – is not going to suddenly turn things around. Hopefully he can return to normal in 2012.

Grady Sizemore, on the other hand…

Much as I hate to say it, but you'd have to be optimistic to the point of believing that Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny are living in a timeshare in Sarasota if you think Grady Sizemore

isn't in the twilight of his career.

The durable, exciting, game-changing player we fell in love with once upon a time is gone. We've still got a guy with a great attitude capable of contributing in sporadic flashes, but no longer do we have a perennial all-star who can either take over a game or play every day.

While his latest knee injury is truly unfortunate, will the Indians really miss him that much for the three weeks or nine months he's on the DL? For the year, Sizemore is hitting .237. Take away his torrid first week when he debuted and that average drops to the Mendoza line.

So do you honestly think that Choo (if healthy), Sizemore (if healthy), and this faceless Veteran Bat are going to lead this team to the Central Division title?

Silly rabbit.

I've been scolded for being too negative, for being too hard on the Tribe over the last few weeks. I'm reminded that they weren't even supposed to contend this season, that this season is an unexpected gift from the baseball gods.

So now, with this franchise's future on the line, I volley the comment back across the net: *the Indians weren't supposed to contend this season*
.

And yet here they are, winning games with a whip and a chair, continually defying expectations and refusing to go away. If they do win the division, it will be one of the most remarkable chapters in team history. If they don't, they're still going to win a minimum of 10-15 more games than they did a year ago.

If it's the latter, let's take it, be happy with it, and look to next year.

To trade away any future building blocks for a mediocre rent-a-hitter that won't factor into the final standings would be ultimate disaster.

It would revert the Indians back to a franchise that has no plan, no patience, and thereby no possibility of becoming a year-in, year-out small-market contender akin to Tampa Bay. By making just one trade with a "win-now" mentality, it would obliterate the suffering and patience the true fans have endured for the past four seasons to reward the quick-fix mania of the fringe fan base for one afternoon. And almost certainly still not deliver the division title.

I'm certainly not giving up on the Indians by encouraging them to stand pat. Considering the environment of this city and the way we've been jerked around by the misadventures of our other teams over the past 24 months, a division title would be like a cold beer after a day of tarring the roof of the license plate factory.

Quite frankly, I'd cut off one of my toes to win the division this year. But I wouldn't part with Jeanmar Gomez or Vinnie Pestano.

So please, in the name of all that is decent, Mr. Antonetti, don't talk trade with anybody. It's time for the Indians to take a deep breath and stick with the girl who brung 'em. That mousy chick next door may still have pigtails and scabby knees, but she's not far away from turning into a centerfold.

If it starts to happen in 2011, against all odds and common sense, fan-fucking-tastic. If not, you've kept the band together for a much brighter 2012.

And '13.

And '14.

Just keep dancing and quit eyeing the other girls by the punch bowl. Squeeze the one you've got a little tighter and let's wait for the song to end.