Life's no picnic for the "player to be named later."

Since the Indians acquired him four summers ago, Michael Brantley has been the oft-overlooked Jan Brady of the CC Sabathia trade— the dutiful youngster cast in the shadow of a more glamorous (or at least more publicized) sibling. "No matter what I do, it's always MaTola, MaTola, MaTola!" This season-- even with Matt LaPorta mostly "away at school" in Columbus— Brantley has garnered relatively little praise for his stellar efforts; be it his 19-game hit streak or increasingly flashy leather in center field. Do we simply doubt the man's legitimacy (he did get off to a very similar start last season before fading), or is Michael Brantley an unfortunate victim of the PTBNL Effect—the uphill struggle that comes with having once been, quite literally, an afterthought?

Back on October 3, 2008, Milwaukee sent a then 21 year-old Brantley to Cleveland to complete a deal from three months earlier, when the Tribe held its first-annual Cy Young Award rummage sale. In the original trade, the Brew Crew got itself a postseason Sabathia cameo in exchange for Rob Bryson, Zach Jackson, and the supposedly "can't miss" Matt LaPorta. From the outside, Brantley may have looked like a belated throw-in--- the bonus book-light with your Snuggie purchase. But in truth, he was the reward for several months of careful research, as Shapiro and company opted for the speedy Double-A outfielder over the slugging A-ball third baseman Taylor Green. In the years since, Green has disappointed in limited duty with the Brewers, hitting .255 with 2 homers across 47 games, while Brantley has emerged as a steady everyday player for the Tribe.

Of course, just sticking in the Majors helped Brantley separate himself from the vast majority of Cleveland's "players who were named later"-- a graveyard of career minor leaguers that's

recently included the likes of Jeff Stevens (Brandon Phillips trade), Mickey Hall (Paul Byrd trade), and Yohan Pino (Carl Pavano trade). But while PTBNL expectations are clearly low for a reason, there have still certainly been a handful of players who've walked in Brantley's shoes before—overcoming those scarlet letters to earn the respect of the Cleveland faithful. Few of them were superstars, mind you. But none of them settled for anonymity.

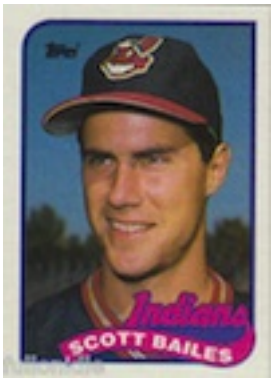
**The Top 10 "Players To Be Named Later" in Indians History**

**10. Enrique Wilson** *(Infielder, 1997-2000)*

In February of 1994, the Indians sent Double-A pitching prospect Shawn Bryant to Minnesota for a bucket of nothing. A few weeks later, the blockbuster deal was finalized when the Twins identified the bucket as 19 year-old Dominican shortstop Enrique Wilson. Bryant quickly puttered out in Triple-A and never made it to the Show, but Enrique matured into a solid prospect and went on to a decade-long career as a serviceable-- if not particularly electrifying-- utility man. He was hitting .325 for the Tribe in 2000 when they recycled him at the trade deadline to get the loveable Wil Cordero.

**9. Felix Fermin** *(Shortstop, 1989-1993)*

If El Gato isn't one of the more celebrated PTBNLs in Tribe lore, it's only because of the PTBNL that Cleveland gave up to acquire him. On November 28, 1988, the Indians made a seemingly innocuous holiday season deal with Pittsburgh, sending "somebody" to the Pirates for utility man Denny Gonzalez and "somebody else." The following March, the mystery men were revealed. The Tribe got 25 year-old shortstop Felix Fermin, and the Pirates received former 1st round draft pick Jay Bell, who'd hit just .218 in 70 games for Cleveland in 1988. In a Brandon Phillips-like twist, Bell became an all-star in the NL, but Fermin served his purpose—first as the Tribe's banjo-hitting everyday shortstop for FIVE years, then as a piece in the 1993 trade that brought Omar Vizquel to Cleveland.




**8. Scott Bailes** *(Pitcher, 1986-1989)*

A year after drafting Jay Bell as their supposed shortstop of the future, the Indians unloaded their veteran backup shortstop Johnnie LeMaster as part of another low profile exchange with the Bucs. The trade was hatched on May 30, 1985, and concluded on July 3, when Cleveland got Double-A southpaw and Chillicothe native Scott Bailes as the PTBNL. Soon, Scottie had found a niche as a spot starter / long reliever with the Wahoos, winning 31 games across four seasons. But by 1990, he'd relocated to Anaheim, dealt for the first incarnation of the mighty Jeff Manto.

MICHAEL
BRANTLEY

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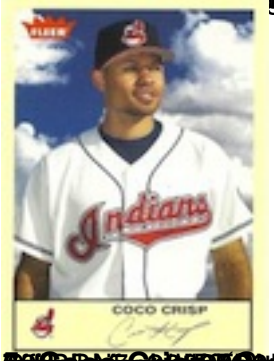
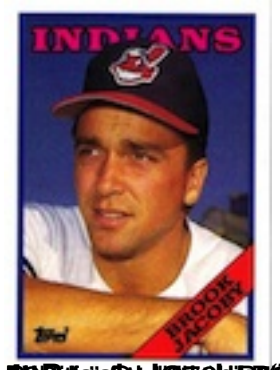
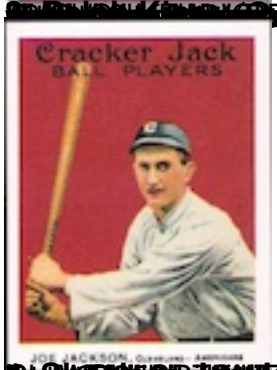

Indians
COCO CRISP


INDIANS
BROOK JACOBY

BRETT BUTLER

Ralph Kiner
OUTFIELDER


Cracker Jack
BALL PLAYERS