In the 17 months we've been up and running, there have been a handful of columns that have developed strong followings ... really helping put us on the map. The B-List. The Good, The Bad, & The Summary. Minor Happenings. The Crystal Ball. And Moot Points has clearly evolved to that status. This week's column is one of Hiko's best efforts yet as he ponders poor decisions he's made in life, and hits on the Cavs/Pistons series.

OR

Choose Your Own Indifference

For the longest of times, my friend Blue had been touting to me a certain popular drama series which plays on one of the major networks. I'd never seen it, so he brought over Season One on DVD.

And as I sat watching the pilot episode, I saw a name. I won't get into this person's real name - I'll just call him Ferris.

Ferris is a Writer and Executive Producer on this series. He also graduated from Film School with me.

Lots of people graduated from Film School with me, but him I knew well. He was in the same dorm as me the first two years. We worked on some student films together. He frequently had parties, and I smoked a shitload of his... I drank a lot of his wine. I once passed out and vomited all over his floor.

But even though we hung in the same circle for several years, I was really only friends with him on a cursory basis, mainly because I never really liked the guy. He was more than a bit of a slimebag - the kind of guy that would screw his friends at the drop of a hat if there were any advantage to him, the kind of guy that wouldn't show up to work on a shoot for which he promised his help, the kind of guy that gives *himself* a nickname (Ferris, since he claimed he looked like Ferris Buehler, which he didn't).

He was Hollywood - in the bad connotation of the word.

After graduation, he moved directly out to LA. One of his first acts was to royally screw my roommate and one of my closest friends, who was also in transit to the West Coast and was supposed to crash at Ferris' place. I wasn't a big fan of the guy before that, but now I had a valid excuse to stand outside his apartment at 4 am wasted on tequila yelling for him to come down and fight me. Which he didn't do.

(It would've been interesting - I had a decided size advantage, but found standing highly challenging at that moment and would've probably made a fine punching bag.)

Anyway, I never heard of the guy again - until Wednesday. There was his name in bold letters on my television screen - Writer and Executive Producer. Talk about a buzz kill.

I looked him up online. He's won 2 Emmy's. That's just fantastic. I'm so very happy for him. Really.

Although... Ferris, gotta admit that I'm very much enjoying your show. Good stuff, you moldy dildo.

Of course, it's probably unfair for me to assume that he's still a slimebag. All the time, you hear about people going out to Hollywood and getting rich and famous and becoming really humble and down to earth. There's so many examples that I can't think of any right now.

Now, I know what you're thinking - *I don't need to hear this guy cry about the failures in his life*. I agree. That's not what I'm doing. I do not regret the choices I did or did not make, and I do not begrudge Ferris his success. People like him are the people that always succeed in The Wood. You have to sell a certain amount of your soul, and he was certainly willing to do that, and he obviously has some talent to boot. The only reason I rag on him is that he's such a maggot and I can't resist.

Nay, the reason I decided to bring up this topic is that seeing Ferris' name got me to wondering - idly - what my life would be like had I made a couple of key decisions differently.

Do you remember the *Choose Your Own Adventure* Books from the '80's? They were kids' adventure books that had the reader as the main character. It would go on for a couple pages - maybe you're a gladiator looking for a way home for Arbor Day, maybe you're a space scientist that has been kidnapped by alien hillbillies, maybe you're a paranormal investigator that discovered clues to the whereabouts of an epileptic vampire - and after about 5 pages or so the book gives you a choice:

If you open the coffin and confront the vampire, turn to Page 22.

If you decide to call it a day and head to the nearest inn for some mead and a toothless prostitute, turn to Page 31.

Life is like a *Choose Your Own Adventure* Book, except for the fact that, in life, you don't get to turn back and read what would've happened to you had you made the other choice. Wouldn't be interesting if you could? You don't live the life, but you at least get to see what would've happened to you had you made the choice.

Let's see... I think I'll start with:

You are 22 years old and just graduated from Film School. Sitting in an Italian restaurant in Greenwich Village, you are facing an ex-girlfriend who has flown into town to visit you. There were certainly reasons that you broke up with her, but she seems to have turned over a new leaf, and, hey, she's your only source for sex right now. You are tempted to start dating her again, but you are moving to Los Angeles, and she is not willing to get her own place in LA just for the opportunity to date you.

If you ask her to move to Los Angeles with you and live together, turn to Page 12.

If you decide that you are a 22 year old moving to a new city and you don't need to be living with some girl that you're not even sure you like that much, turn to Page 24.

Well, I already know what happens on Page

12, so I'm gonna check out Page 24.

You tell the girl that she will always have a place in your heart, but you don't see a future in your relationship. She grows angry and throws veal piccata at your head.

You move to the West Coast, become fantastically successful, and currently live in a house in Malibu with Scarlett Johansson.

Ah, but am I happy? Just because I'm wealthy and dating a beautiful

intelligent woman doesn't mean I'm not miserable. I turn the page.

And you are deliriously happy. The end.

D'oh! Well, delirious happiness breeds complacency, or at least that's what I tell myself, since I only know delirious happiness 3 or 4 times a week, and that only lasts a couple seconds before I realize I've got to pee.

All right, let's try this thing again:

You are 30 years old, on vacation in Prague with your girlfriend for 9 days. Most days, you don't really like her. Hell, you stopped liking her shortly after moving in with her. But she seemed to get pregnant every time you resolved to break up with her, and now you have two children together.

You've been drinking delicious

Czech beer for a week straight, and maybe sampling some of the Vicodin that your girlfriend got for her recent oral surgery, when it occurs to you that if you were ever to ask this girl to marry you, you'd be hard pressed to find a more romantic spot than this.

If you decide "What the hell - I'm stuck with the broad anyway" and propose even though you don't really want to and you don't have a

ring, turn to Page 35.

If you sober up a little and tell your girlfriend "Hey baby, we had some laughs, but when we get back to California, I'm getting the spork out of this dead-end relationship," turn to Page 63.

Once again, I know what Page 35 is like. Expensive. So to Page 63...

You get your own apartment in Los Angeles, and after reaching a suitable shared parenting arrangement with your ex, you get a big break in software development, become fantastically successful, and currently

live in a house in London with Beyonce.

Shit. I'm afraid to look at the next page...

And you are deliriously happy. The end.

Well, this is as fun as gargling boiling snot. One more shot...

You are 32 years old, married, with two kids, and you recently moved from California back to Ohio. Your office is in Independence, but your

house is in Canton. And that house has become your Hell. Previously, whenever your relationship made you miserable, you would move. But you feel like you can't run anymore, and coming home each day to a stressed-out moody stupid petty shallow violent wife is

finally finally becoming too much to bear.

If you leave her, giving her everything but the children, and move into your own apartment and start a new life, turn to Page 96.

If you decide to stay together for the kids, bury your personal feelings deep down, and suck it up and stick it out, turn to Page 112.

Did Page 96, but I'm almost afraid to look at

Page 112. The way my other decisions have backfired, I probably would've ended up as Prince of New Zealand deliriously happily married to Jessica Alba.

*You stay with her a few more years until she really loses it one day and stabs you in the head with a fork.
The resulting nerve damage causes you to be very sensitive to light, and computer monitors give you a blinding headache.*

You lose your job, get addicted to monkey tranquilizers, contract genital warts, and end up unemployed in Greenland. Your children hate you, no one you used to know acknowledges your existence, and you finally end it all by

harpooning yourself in the heart.

Too bad it takes you 4 painful days to die.
The end.

See? *Life: It Could Always Be Worse.*

*****5/29 - Cavs vs. Pistons Game 4 "Thoughts":** I did not have the girls this

night, and thusly concluded that there might be a slight possibility that I might over-imbibe whilst watching this sporting competition, so I decided to video tape my thoughts of this game as it

happened.

Here is a sampling of the transcript of my real-time thoughts as Game 4 occurred:

Pass the ball! Move! Pass the ball! No.... Yes! Yes! What? No! WHY??!! You gotta be kidding me! God Dammit! OK, fine... D! D! D! Get it.... NO!!! No no no! How can you let him

get that??!! Damn! Get it... Good. OK - now pass the ball! Move the ball! Get to the hoop! Boobie! Bend your knees! Yes! Shooting's all in the knees! I love Boobie! Yes!

What...? T HIM UP! T HIM UP! Yeah, baby, yeah you! That's one, Sheeeeed! Would you like another??!!

There is no reason

for you to read other descriptions of how this game transpired, as the above analysis clearly lays out an insightful Cliff 's Notes version of the Cavs' excellent Game 4 victory - a victory

which makes this a series again.

They blew Games 1 and 2, but by tying this series up, I actually am starting to feel like they *MIG*

HT

have a chance in this thing.

Game 5 will be the key to the whole thing. Quoth Confucius - *He who*

wins the next game wins the series.

*****5/31 - Cavs vs. Pistons Game 5 "Thoughts":** Normally, I shy away from

massive superlatives for one single player.

Normally, I shy away from proclaiming certain situations or performances as

"*All Time Greats* " without the proper clinical advantage of passed time.

This just happened, and it's obviously

forefront in my mind. Also, well, I might be a bit biased. Regardless...

The Greatest Individual Performance Ever In

The Playoffs? It's the best one I've ever seen.

The only one that I can think of that would be close would be Jordan's

performance in the Finals against Utah, the game where he was sick and dehydrated and still managed to score 38 and hit the game winner.

I will tell you why I think this is better: That was also a Game 5, and that series was also tied at 2, but the Bulls were considered the better team in that series, and Games 6 and 7 were to be

played in Chicago, so even had they lost, they weren't dead.

Despite the fact that they're on the cusp of the NBA Finals

themselves, there's little doubt this Cavs team is not as good as the 1997 Bulls. The Cavs are not considered the better team in this series, and if they would've lost this game, they *were*

dead.

It was the most amazing thing I've ever seen. Every shot, easy or contested, was going in. At a certain point

it went from comical to just flat-out awe-inspiring.

Even Chupacabra (aka Chanucey Billups) thought so. "We threw

everything we had at him," El Chupacabra said. "We just couldn't stop him."

Right now, David

Stern is finishing off what can only be described as a 30 minute orgasm. I wish I could have a 30 minute orgasm - but, shit, this game was close.

(That's actually a lie, since orgasms aren't usually so stressful. Unless you're really drunk and your companion is starting to complain about chafing.)

I am now assaulted by a feeling that I rarely have - *optimism*. I want to say that I actually feel fairly confident that we'll win Game 6 and advance on to the... hack! Cough! Sorry,

something caught in my throat. Oh, yes, it's my words. I should know better than to get excited about a Game 6 win until the clock reads 0:00 left in the 4th, and the Cavs have

more points than the Pistons.

For now, I'll just enjoy one of the best games I've ever seen.

***6/02 - Cavs vs. Pistons Game 6 "Thoughts":

A friend of mine, who, yes, does live here in Ohio, and who, yes, does know I write for a Cleveland

sports website, called me on Sunday and asked me if I had watched the game.

Game? What game? Did the

Cavs play this weekend? Who won?

I think I'm still hung over.

My girlfriend and I and some of her friends went to Put-In-Bay for the weekend, so we saw the game on the island. I was excited to be amongst a big party

crowd for the game, but we went to several bars trying to find one that had a big screen TV and good seats, and we ended up getting stuck at some bar that only had 25

inch TV's. Oh well, we thought, we'll sit right here at the bar, right in front of the TV's, and enjoy the game and the crowd regardless.

Then the bartender informed us that he couldn't turn on the sound, so we'd have to listen to the jukebox while the game was on. Then some guy who could only be

described as a mild to lukewarm Pistons fan sat next to me, and I just can't abide fans of other teams being right around me when I'm watching a game that I really care

about. They are a blight on my happiness.

The game began at the same time as some fair lady's bachelorette party,

which apparently consisted of some "crazy" drinking game involving blowing a ref's whistle every 36 seconds, which, as you can imagine, isn't *at all annoying*

while you're trying to figure out what happened to the clock in the game and you can't hear a thing and hardly anyone around you is even paying attention to the

game anyway.
And if you blow that sporking whistle one more sporking time I'm gonna shove it up your sporking ass!

No, no, my Spaz level had peaked, and I was outta there. Hopped in a cab, went back to the house we rented (which was stocked with the lots of beer and tequila and food

that we brought), cranked the volume on the TV up to where I couldn't hear a space shuttle take off from the backyard, and watched the game by myself.

The rest of the gang came back to the house at the start of the 4th quarter. After I had left, they had apparently found a good sports bar at which to watch the game -

proving yet again that *I am too impatient*. I had no time for regret. The 4th quarter was about to begin, and this game - like all the

rest - was bound to come down to the last second. Right?

No. We kicked their ass. Boobie was nailing 3's like

Free Throws, and Sheed wigged out and got tossed.

I don't know about you, but the last 7 or 8 minutes of that

game wouldn't tick off fast enough. The Cavs had a consistently comfortable lead for the latter half of the 4th, *but that friggin' clock was taking* ***forev***

er .

I was all over the place, pacing, yelling at the TV, jumping, flashing smiles to everyone

else with us (who, I believe, were more entertained by me than the game). Got a couple text messages... to which I had to respond: *NO!*

Don't Say It's Over Until The Clock Reads 0:00.

And then it did. Holy shit - they did it. This is

happening. This is really happening.

TNT showed the shot of the crowd outside the Q, a writhing

celebratory mass, and I pointed at the TV and said, "***That's*** *where we should be.* *Screw Put-In-Bay - that's where the party is!* "

I was gonna go briefly into the Finals and the match-up with the Spurs, but I think that I'll just leave it here. Like the Indians at the end of *Major League*,

the Cavs have won something significant, but they still have work left to do. However, as in *Major League*, we'll leave them, for now, with this

moment of accomplishment, celebration, and joy.

Remember it: This doesn't happen

around these parts too often.

***Quote of the Week: "*We're in shape.* *We're (basketball*

players) the best athletes in the world, along with other sports. " - Chris Webber, when asked at halftime of Game 5 if the Pistons were going

to be tired.