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### **10- Russell Branyan for Ben Broussard**

This trade always seemed a bit unusual. The Reds gave up on a prospect who had won a minor league batting title for a player who had passed prospect status and had more holes in his swing than perhaps any other player in baseball. Broussard never emerged into a top-level first baseman, but he did proceed to become an everyday player for several years in a Tribe uniform. Then, in 2006, he thrived in a platoon role that would have continued to reap benefits had the organization done enough elsewhere to keep the team in the race. Branyan, on the other hand, played part time in Cincinnati before jumping around the league in mostly pinch hitting roles.

## **9-Signing Casey Blake**

I could have easily left this one off of the list and protected myself from poster insults across Tribe message boards. This signing, though, has proved to pay dividends for the Indians. After all, Casey won his first big league starting job by beating out Greg LaRocca and Bill Selby in 2002. Could you imagine one of those two playing everyday at third? Blake was solid, posting 17 homers and 67 RBI in his first campaign. Increasing his importance since then has been his ability to play multiple positions. He has played third, first, right field, and even dabbled at second base until Ronnie Belliard was brought on board. What is more impressive is that he plays each position much better than whatever regular player at that position does.

## **8-Acquiring Coco Crisp**

This may be giving Shapiro a little too much credit, because the more coveted player in this deal was Luis Garcia. He was a tall, right-handed hitting "power" bat who was very raw. He never panned out, but Coco Crisp hit everywhere he played. He got his big break when Milton Bradley was injured (shocker), and solidified himself in the Tribe lineup for three years. Although he never was able to establish himself as a leadoff hitter, Crisp was surprisingly powerful for his size and added speed to a stagnant Indian lineup. He left in the infamous Andy Marte trade, a deal right around the time of Crisp's arbitration. This trade left a sour taste in the mouths of many Tribe fans, but his acquisition was very sweet. To get a starting outfielder for a three month rental is significant. Look what Mark Shapiro was able to fetch for Bob Wickman and Ronnie Belliard last year. Very little.

## **7- Signing Ronnie Belliard**

After being shunned by Todd Walker, who chose the Cubs over the Indians, Shapiro turned his attention to Ronnie Belliard. The robust second baseman scared the daylights out of most Tribe fans when they got their first look at him in spring training. Despite his portly appearance, Belliard was very solid defensively, turning one of the quickest double plays in baseball. He also provided some nice offensive punch to complement his play in the field. He was brought on in 2004 to be a bridge to the Brandon Phillips era, which unfortunately arrived elsewhere. He re-signed two more one-year deals before being dealt in an odd move last summer.

### **6-Re-signing Bob Wickman**

Despite rumors persisting of a possible retirement for Wickman in late 2004, Shapiro was able to bring back the closer for a one-year deal in 2005. He had an all-star year, and was brought back in a similar deal the following season. After seeing Jose Jimenez and the like try to close games during Wickman's injury, who knows who the Indians would have turned to had he not come back to the club. With a stingy budget, Wickman was the best option. He turned out to be a saving grace for the organization- not once, but twice.

### **5- Signing Bob Howry to Minor-League Contract**

After spending time on the 60-day DL and going through elbow surgery in 2003, many felt Bob Howry was damaged goods. The Indians inked him to a minor league contract, though, and let him spend all of 2004 getting back on track. He was a stalwart in the back end of the bullpen in 2005, leading the American League in appearances. There has been much debate about his exit after the year and the Indians efforts (of lack there of) to keep him, but the acquisition of Howry was a great one.

### **4- Signing Kevin Millwood**

It seemed as though every pitcher on the free agent market had passed on Cleveland's offers when Shapiro was able to close an incentive laden deal for former Atlanta Brave starter Kevin

Millwood. The results were more than even Shapiro admitted he expected, as Millwood anchored a strong staff both on and off the field. He was able to work deep into games, and eventually earn himself a huge free agent deal at year's end. His one-year in Cleveland, though, was a big reason for the only real postseason threat the team has made since the rebuild.

### **3- Locking up the Youngsters**

Being close by to see it work the first time around under then-GM John Hart, Shapiro committed money to several "core" players in an attempt to essentially "buy" arbitration eligible years for a group of special pieces of the puzzle. The benefits are had when a player explodes on the scene (Grady Sizemore). The drawbacks are when players fizzle (Jhonny Peralta). Either way, the extensions were necessary in this market, and should prove beneficial for years to come.

### **2-Trading for Travis Hafner**

Shapiro took advantage of the Texas Rangers' plethora of hitting by acquiring Hafner during the winter of 2002. The cost was Ryan Drese and Einar Diaz, who both did not have a lasting effect on the Ranger system. Hafner was stuck in a logjam in Texas, and was really without a position defensively. He still does not have one here, but he has become one of the most feared hitters in the American League. The only regret Shapiro may have is not extending him initially passed 2008 as he did with the others.

### **1-The Bartolo Colon Trade**

Shapiro's golden moment as general manager came in June of 2002, when he pulled the

trigger on what was an unpopular move at the time. He dealt his ace, the first one we had seen here in a while, to Montreal for Lee Stevens “and three prospects.” While the Indians had already traded Robbie Alomar in spring training, they made other moves to show the fan base that they were not rebuilding. This move, however, ended all doubt. Luckily for Tribe fans, the prospects turned out to be Grady Sizemore, Cliff Lee, and Brandon Phillips. All three are going to have solid, perhaps spectacular major league careers.