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For 4 2/3 innings yesterday, Paul Byrd had a no-hitter. Through 5 innings, he had a shutout. Through 5 1/3 innings, he had absorbed a loss after his fifth run was allowed to score. Watching the Indians isn't much fun right now, but reading The B-List is as enjoyable as ever, although, frankly, we need more ranting.



FINAL				
Indians (22-24)	(3	rd	3.5 GB CHW)	0
White Sox (25-20)	0		0	0

W: Vazquez (5-3) L: Byrd (2-4)

Here's your first topic on the \$20,000 Pyramid: go!

Okay, a vacuum ... a guy with a straw ... a fan on reverse ... the Cleveland Indians ...

1) Who the f*#^ cares?

Well, I do, dammit. That's kind of the point.

I wish I could sign with the Cleveland Indians. That seems to take a lot of the stress of whether the Indians are playing well away.

(Look, this is borne of frustration, and I am not seriously telling you the Indians' players don't care. At the same time, the frustration is warranted and real. I am absolutely telling you that I hate watching poor at-bats, brain-dead baserunning, and grotesque defensive judgements, things that people normally associate with a level of engagement with one's craft.)

2) When the light comes on, you have 1 gallon left: do not attempt to travel 50 more miles

Through three innings, the only baserunner Paul Byrd had allowed got there because he was struck with a pitch. Byrd needed 8 pitches to retire the side in the 2nd, and one of those 8 hit Jermaine Dye. He only needed 10 pitches to get through the 4th inning, and four of them walked Jermaine Dye. By the time his 11-pitch 5th inning was done, Byrd had gotten through 5 innings in only 55 pitches.

Here's the thing: through 4 2/3 innings, Paul Byrd had allowed 0 runs on 0 hits.

Through 5 innings, he had allowed 0 runs on 1 hit.

Through 5 1/3 innings, he had allowed 5 runs on 5 hits.

I'll give Byrd this much: when the wheels come off, they don't just fall harmlessly to the side or roll into the gutter like my Dad's old Ford Pinto (*), they come off with the kind of explosive bolts used on the Apollo spacecraft. Boom goes the dynamite! (And the ballgame.)

Look, Byrd was wonderful through four innings or so. In fact, he was downright hilarious. The White Sox knew he was throwing rubbish and thought they could simply hammer it, and then it turned out, well, no they couldn't. It was like vintage Tim Wakefield or something. I'm not saying Byrd's pitches moved that much or went that slow, because he was humming it up in the mid-80s somewhere, a very credible pitcher, but he had some movement and some deception and you cringed a little bit as the ball approached the plate and then ... nothing happened. He even struck out Carlos Quentin swinging to end his perfect first. There were ground balls and fly balls and foul balls and pop ups, but really, through four innings, there wasn't a single pitch the White Sox hit really well, and, of course, no hits to boot.

Now, on paper, the fifth inning was more of the same: Paul Konerko grounded out, Joe Crede fouled off a couple pitches before flying out to left, Nick Swisher finally broke up the no-hitter with a single to right, and Kate Moss lined out to third to end the inning. But take a closer look, not just at the hit, but even at the *outs*: Crede's ball was pulled, and went to the wall

to be caught on a nice play by David Dellucci. Swisher's ball was *hammered* (again, pulled: the switch-hitter was batting lefty against Byrd): a different trajectory and we're talking about the lost shutout bid. And even Moss, a man with nine ounces of muscle mass, hit the ball on the nose right at Casey Blake.

Now, some of this is rank second-guessing. Byrd fell apart in the 6th, so it's easy to say, "Hey, look, he should have been pulled!" Should he? Eh, maybe so. It was the third time through the lineup, and he gave up three solid shots to end the fifth. And to quote Canada's Own TOTribeFan on the Game Thread: "Three hard hit balls off Byrd in the fifth. A shutout, yes, but the magic act may be coming to a close." But he also had a one-hitter through 5, and more to the point is a veteran starter with some talent. I mean, if he can't get a guy out three times in one game, it's gonna be pretty hard to sustain much success, right? And who's to say a series of relievers would have fared better? We scored two runs. Again.

The one thing I will pin on Byrd is the homer to Dye: yes, I agreed that the umpire made a bad call and there should have been a double play immediately before the home run to Dye that effectively ended the game. Yes, he might have pitched Dye differently, seeing as though

he had hit and walked him in the previous two trips. But this quote is disturbing: "Instead of letting Jermaine Dye hit a sacrifice fly or making my pitch, I tried to strike him out."

Really? Strike him out? You had one strikeout to that point. You have 23 in almost 53 innings. You are Paul Freaking Byrd! You don't strike people out! Just get him out with a regular pitch! If a run scores, you're still ahead! That's just asinine thinking there.

Anyway, he wasn't good after the homer, either, so who's to say the DP was the game-changing play. Byrd's gotta be smarter than that, though. *"I tried to strike him out."* Great googly moogly.

() this is true*

3) Jorge in a Nutshell

A.J. Pierzynski: Strike (swinging), Strike (foul), Ball, Strike (swinging)□

Carlos Qution: Ball, Strike (looking), Strike (swinging), Strike (swinging)

Jermaine Dye: Ball, homer to left

Julio can look really good.

Julio can look really bad.

He sure throws hard.

4) Career advice

If you are a left-handed reliever, don't fall behind 2-0 or 3-1 to Jim Freaking Thome.

Also, don't throw the Tater Ball. (Actually, it wasn't a bad

pitch. I just hate when Jim Thome homers against the Cleveland Indians.)

Craig Breslow has already made two appearances in May, so we'll revisit this topic during his next outing in June.

Breslow now sports a 1.80 WHIP. Cleveland has lost 6 of the 7 games in which he has pitched. The average score of one of these games is 8-3. He also pitched in the 12-0 blowout win. One gets the impression that Eric Wedge does not believe strongly in Mr. Breslow.

5) Questionable Approach: an open apology

I apologize to Travis Hafner for implying that his approach at the plate was The Worst In The World. I did not say this explicitly, but it was the subtext, and the thought certainly crossed my mind.

I was terribly wrong. Travis Hafner's approach is not The Worst In The World.

That would be Asdrubal Cabrera's.

Cabrera led off the 6th by taking the first two pitches from Javier Vazquez for balls. That's not a bad approach, that's a GOOD approach. Don't swing at balls out of the strike zone. That's excellent! Make him throw you something good to hit! Like a 2-0 fastball right down the pipe!

Yeah, he got that. He watched it for strike one.

Okay, well, now you've seen his Graved Meatball Surprise, pick your spot, young man. Cabrera took ball three. That, too, is a GOOD approach. Huzzah! Now at 3-1 he has to throw a strike! Maybe you'll get another fastball down the pipe!

Look for that, and don't swing if you get something else!

He got that.

He did not swing.

He did swing at the 3-2 pitch, a much harder pitch to hit. He did not make contact.

The box score will tell you that Asdrubal Cabrera drew a walk. I will tell you that Asdrubal Cabrera might as well bring a folding stool to the plate instead of a bat.

Can.

Not.

Hit.

I am making no grand pronouncements about how he should be replaced or that he is a talentless schmoe or we must call up Barfield or his defense isn't worth the effort or anything like that. I like Cabrera, he has great value, and is still very young. But he couldn't look worse at the plate right now if he were bound and gagged.

6) Dept. of Raffies

A guy who looked kind of like Raffy Betancourt came out and pitched kind of like Raffy Betancourt.

7) Belated welcome to the bigs!

I missed writing about Mike Aubrey's debut against the Reds this weekend due to illness (the series made me sick), but Aubrey was called up to play some first base and hit left-handed. Aubrey has always had a serious stick, but has taken health lessons from Nick Johnson over the course of his minor-league career. Anyway, Aubrey hit a homer against the Reds, and good for him.

Showing this was no fluke, or at least that he can hit home runs in bandboxes, Aubrey hit a second home run last night for what looked seriously like it might be the only scoring of the game for more than half the game. To this point, Aubrey has never gotten a hit in the major leagues that was not a home run. Combined with Victor Martinez, the pair have two home runs on the season.

8) A Modest Proposal

This is going to sound facetious, but really, it is not. I know I spend so much time in these columns with my tongue protruding through my facial flesh that it can be hard to tell that I'm being serious, but please, take a leap of faith with me as I announce my intent to be completely guileless here:

Take David Dellucci to the optometrist.

I don't know whether the doctor would find anything wrong. Dellucci can obviously see the ball well enough to strike it with a bat: remember, this item is free of spite and snideness, so we won't talk about the quality of the striking. Dellucci can do something I cannot, which is hit a major-league pitcher's pitches with a round wooden bat. That takes incredible hand-eye coordination, and specifically, a degree of visual acuity laymen like

you and I likely lack. He's not blind or suffering from some obvious malady.

But his depth perception in the outfield appears particularly poor this season. I've brought up the topic several times, where he has taken some bad angles and made some bad dives at balls. He's made some nice plays, too: reference the catch of Crede's drive in item (2). But in the 6th, after Byrd gave up the homer to Dye, he gave up two more singles to drive him from the game. Joe Crede followed with a drive off reliever Jorge Julio to left, and Dellucci went back ... went back ... and just plain didn't catch the ball. It went over his head for a double, but in the highlights, it looked eminently catchable. It couldn't have missed his head by more than three feet.

Listen, I don't know if the lights played a role, or if the ball had strange spin on it ... not only can I not hit major-league pitching, I couldn't play

major-league quality outfield either. But you have to wonder if Dellucci can really see the ball well out there, because it was simply an atrocious play, and it isn't his first.

9) Today's Guest Joke-Teller: Eric Wedge

"I don't think they're happy and I don't think they should be. But this is where the toughness has to stand out," Wedge said. "We can't feel sorry for ourselves. we can't drop our heads. You have to stand up and take it. Look in the mirror and face it head on and keep fighting. We've got to find a way to work through this and we will."

Hey now!

10) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

Ben Francisco and Travis Hafner each had well-hit doubles to score the second run of the game.

Ryan Garko pinch-hit for Aubrey in the 9th and laced a single to left.

Both runs scored with two outs.

Jhonny Peralta had one plate appearance in which he neither struck out nor grounded into a double play. (Out of four.)

11) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro is an accomplished accordian player. Not true! Fire me some more.