

Buff's opening paragraph says it all: "You know, it's really great to see the Indians on primetime national TV, because it makes one's heart swell with pride to see the professionalism, concentration, effort, and precise execution we all love about this incarnation of the team. Hey, if anyone lives near Austin, Texas, would you do me a favor? The next time the Indians are on national TV, come on over to my house. I'll give you directions. Just come on over, make sure you get there before the first pitch, and **JAM TWO SHARPENED #2 PENCILS INTO MY EYES**. It'll hurt about the same, but take a whole lot less time."



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### 1) My Favorite Player doesn't totally suck!

Kind of a weird outing for Lee Saturday, in that he kept the ball on the ground (11:6 GB:FB) and didn't strike many out (4 in 7 IP). To this point in the season, he'd seemed more interested in taking Scott Elarton's place as Most Extreme Flyball Pitcher Without Actually Having The Stuff For It. Keeping the ball down in the zone (to most hitters: you have to bounce it to Vlad Guerrero) seems to have made a good one-game impact. He wasn't particularly accurate (only 2 walks, but a pretty bad 64.7% strike ratio), but giving up only 5 singles and a double is a nice surprise. Going seven was surprising as well: after the

double to Anderson, I figured The Banana had become soft and squishy, but he fought through another inning before handing the reins to Carmona. Since the double tied the game in the sixth, it was encouraging to see him keep the team in it until they could explode in the bottom half.

## **2) Channelling Judith Viorst**

It's pretty easy to chalk up C.C. Sabathia's performance to simply having a bad outing: he's earned that benefit of the doubt since he's been the only pitcher this season to string together good starts (depending on how you feel about Lee's early starts). It's also a bit misleading to consider the outing "bad," since there are so many other adjectives one can use, including terrible, horrible, no good, and very bad. There are more, trust me. (I did not know it was possible to give up a home run to Chone Figgins.)

## **3) Channelling Chevy Chase as Gerald Ford**

I suppose if you're going to embarrass yourself on national TV, there's no point in doing it halfway. Let's put it this way: combing the box score for positives about Sunday's game, I found that Victor Martinez game up only 17% as many stolen bases as

Tim Laker did Friday, and Scott Sauerbeck got an out.

Let us be serious for a moment: I read a lot of things written about the Indians.

People talk about the finances, and the trades, and the young players, and the bullpen, and the rotation, and the

coaching, and it's all very well and good to have discussions like this about the elements that make up a baseball team.

But join me in a balloon ride up to a high level to look down at this team to

determine if there are any overarching concerns that influence the outcomes they produce. From up here, we see:

This team **plays bad baseball.**

It's that simple. It does little good to talk about the role of this guy or replacing that guy or homina

homina homina: the fact is, the team **plays poorly**. Until that changes, I'm not sure changing cogs will amount to anything.

#### **4) Flabber, meet gast**

Jason Johnson was upset at reporters after his outing Friday.

Um ... Jason ... you're the fifth starter. You have an ERA of 5.92. You gave up more walks than hits, lasting just 5 innings ... again. You are, in the pecking order of major league pitchers, chum.

Dross. Flotsam. We're not  
&quot;putting you under the  
microscope.&quot;; We're  
casually observing you  
&quot;pitching like a  
dog.&quot;;

The strange thing is,  
Friday's outing wasn't truly  
awful. He was inducing  
ground balls as he needs to  
(7:4), and even struck out  
four guys. The problem is,  
without much, much, much,  
much better control, it's not

going to work. Jason Johnson is not a guy who can get away with sticking a couple extra guys on the basepaths. He's going to be hurt by extra baserunners, and by golly, that's what happened. Again, analysis is 10% deductive skill, 10% inferential ability, and 80% just plain WATCHING YOU SUCK.

**5) *A new cause celebre***

Danny Graves may be enjoying his time in Beefalo: I know I am enjoying his time there, because it is not time in Cleveland. (The "Beefalo" part is not as important as the "not Cleveland" part.) Guillermo Mota must join him. Again, focus on the

&quot;not  
Cleveland&quot; part  
instead of the  
&quot;Beefalo&quot;  
part.

He must go. He is  
awful. Go. Go, go, go.  
You can go by horse.  
You can go by cow.  
But Marvin K. Mota, will  
you PLEASE GO

# NOW?!

(apologies to Ted Geisel)

**6) An old *cause celebre***

Yeah, well, Davis isn't much better.

**7) Happy Birthday!**  
Travis Hafner his a

grand slam on his  
birthday to help the  
Indians bury the  
Angels for good on  
Saturday. Hooray  
for us.

**8) I will not buy  
this record, it is  
scratched**

Fausto Carmona came in with an 8-run lead. Sure, it's easier to challenge hitters with an 8-run lead. On the other hand, it's pretty easy to challenge

hitters down  
twelve, too.

Anyway, Carmona  
threw strikes  
(gasp!) and was  
effective (double  
gasp!). Why  
bother harping on  
this? Is this

surprising to  
anyone any more?

Oh, the exception  
to the rule: Jason  
Davis throws  
strikes, but sucks.

It doesn't matter  
where he throws

it.

**9) Clearly an  
ulterior motive**

Showing the

mettle the

distinguishes the

career backup

catcher from the

philodendron,  
Tim Laker came  
up to replace  
Kelly Shoppach  
because of his  
all-important  
ability to make  
Victor Martinez

feel good about  
himself. In a  
truly life-affirming  
performance,  
Laker managed  
to allow the  
Angels to steal  
six bases Friday

night, thus  
making Victor  
Martinez believe  
that he is, in fact,  
not clam-like at  
throwing out  
basestealers.  
I have heard

that he makes  
an excellent cup  
of coffee as well.  
(The secret is in  
the grind.)