

## The B-List: 8/8

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, August 08 2006 7:00 PM -

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If you are one of the thousands out there that already make "The B-List" part of your daily reading, you are well aware of Buff's sick sense of humor and also his high level of frustration with the 2006 Indians. If you aren't, today's version of The B-List puts both on full display. Buff goes in a little different direction with today's column, and the result is a side-splitting tale of good and evil (mostly evil) that caused me to wet myself the first time I read it.



(with apologies to Jay Ward and Edward Everett Horton)

Once upon a time, there was a lonely old woodcutter-slash-bullpen-builder named Shapetto. Shapetto was very poor, but possessed rare skill with his tools, and everyone in Statsbourg spoke highly of him. They did not buy any of his carvings, but spoke highly of him nonetheless.

Now, Shapetto's one great goal in life was to own a real bullpen, but try as he might, there was no way to do this. Desperate and bored, he stayed up night after night, long after his regular chores were done, and meticulously carved a bullpen out of balsa wood. His customers commended his skill and the figures looked almost lifelike. Behind his back, of course, they chuckled: why would anyone carve a bullpen out of balsa wood? This was foolishness of the highest order. Yet Shapetto persisted, and by the end of the spring, his little wooden bullpen was finished. He carefully stained and painted each piece, and the little figures sparkled like jewels in the sun. How proud Shapetto was of his craftsmanship! Still, it was a poor substitute for a real bullpen, and he went to bed, exhausted and despondent, knowing it would never be real.

That night, a magical fairy came. Since Shapetto was poor, he did not get the high-class fairy with a diamond-encrusted crown and beautiful gossamer wings. Instead, he got Milt, the bus-driving fairy, who had three-day stubble and smoked the stub of a very smelly cigar. Instead of gossamer wings, Milt used an oil-burning Vespa, and instead of a magic wand, had a magic 8-ball. Still, magic is magic, and the little wooden bullpen was excited to see him.

"You've been a very good little bullpen," Milt rasped. "So I've come to grant you one wish."

"Oh, Milt," the little wooden bullpen cried. "More than anything, we would like to be a *real* bullpen! It would make Shapetto so happy, and we would be, too!"

"Okay," coughed Milt through a cloud of cigar smoke. "You've got one

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condition: you must always try your best to throw strikes.&quot;

&quot;Oh, we promise!&quot; cried the little wooden bullpen.

&quot;Sure ya's do,&quot; Milt snickered. &quot;So I'll put ya's on the installment plan: first, ya's get ta move on yer own, and den, if yer good, I'll makes ya a real bullpen.&quot;

That next morning, Shapetto was thrilled to see his little wooden bullpen moving around on their own, life-size and life-like. They did everything the best they could, although, admittedly, being made of balsa wood, this was not as good as Shapetto had hoped. Still, it was the best everyone could do.

The little (well, now big) wooden bullpen worked hard, ate their vegetables, said their prayers, and helped little old ladies across the street. They delivered for Meals on Wheels, signed petitions to ban telemarketing, and read books to little blind orphans. Shapetto's heart swelled with pride each time they did something wonderful, and they did many wonderful things.

However, throwing strikes was not one of them.

Alas, as hard as they tried, Shapetto had not calibrated their shoulder and elbow joints properly, and their tiny balsa-filled heads would not allow them to see the error of their ways or pitching motions. Each day, the formerly-little wooden bullpen would rise, eats breakfast, brush their teeth, and begin peppering the town with off-target pitches until Shapetto was threatened with multiple lawsuits.

Shapetto cried bitter tears. &quot;What can I do?&quot; he wailed, gnashing his teeth, as tragic heroes are wont to do in stories such as these. &quot;Is there no one that can help me?&quot;

&quot;Pipe down, fer crine out loud!&quot; wheezed Milt. &quot;Geez, what's with the tsimmis?&quot;

&quot;Oh, magical fairy,&quot; cried Shapetto. &quot;Will you not turn my somewhat-large-and-out-of-shape wooven bullpen into a real bullpen?&quot;

Milt looked over Shapetto's creation. He was moved by how hard they had worked. His heart was tugged by the public services they had performed, and by Shapetto's obviously-pure desire for a real bullpen. A tear formed in the corner of the hardened old fairy's eye as he raised his magic 8-ball.

&quot;Shapetto, youse are my very favorite client,&quot; Milt sniffed. &quot;Yer craftsmanship is impeccable, and your heart is pure. Of course I will make youse a real bullpen.&quot;

&quot;Really?&quot; cried Shapetto, his heart soaring out of his chest.

&quot;Nah!&quot; laughed Milt. &quot;Fuck you!&quot; And with a wave of his magic 8-ball, he immolated the entire bullpen in less than a second, replacing them with cheap replicas made entirely of bear feces. &quot;Ha ha! Better luck next time, chumpus!&quot;

The moral of the story is, not all stories have morals.