

Victor Martinez embodied what we wanted the Cleveland Indians to be; productive, fun, proud of the city's name on the jersey and willing to go to hell and back for his organization, his teammates and his town. So can you imagine how the emotions ran when Peeks followed the Victor trade rumors on Friday through to their conclusion and watched as #41 was sent off to the same Red Sox who ripped his and our hearts out less than two years ago? You can't. Because he felt nothing. Peeks explains. And also hits on the latest from Braylon Edwards in an epic Weekend Wrap.



Dead Inside

In my forty two years on earth I've had the pleasure of working for one of Cleveland's sports teams and meeting athletes from all of them. I came to find that I really didn't like being around athletes. They were as human and flawed as you or I and their distasteful traits were quite pronounced. There wasn't usually a 'hint' of arrogance; there was an overwhelming stench of it. Many weren't slightly anti-social but rather borderline psychotic.

So despite having ample opportunity to seek treasures many fans would pay dearly for, **I never asked for or collected signed memorabilia from most of them.** The pursuit of such things struck me as distasteful and hypocritical given what I thought of most of them.

There are two exceptions; two pieces of memorabilia that mean a great deal to me after probably 35 years of watching every player and most plays from three teams.

One of the two pieces is a football signed by some members of the '86 Browns. Guys I really liked, guys I respected for one reason or another, whether it was how they approached practice and games or how they treated people when the lights and cameras weren't turned on. That ball was signed by Bernie Kosar, Ozzie Newsome, Clay Matthews and Hanford Dixon to name a few. Those guys could play a little bit. Some of them could get it done at a Hall of Fame level.

But that ball was also signed by Mark Harper, DD Hoggard, Cody Risien, Brian Brennan and Eddie Johnson. I sought them out for signatures not so much because of how well they played (and they did play well in various roles) but because of how they treated me and other people. How they approached practice like it was a gift and a joy to be one of the few people in the world afforded the opportunity and ability to be where they were that day.

The other item that is proudly displayed in the Casa di McPeek is the signed #41 jersey of the recently departed Victor Martinez. Victor is the symbol Cleveland Indians baseball for many fans, especially in this decade. Martinez appealed to the every day fan because he was a gifted hitter and a huge contributor. Martinez appealed to the hard-core Tribe fanatics because he wore his heart on his sleeve and showed us how much he loved wearing the Indians uniform and how much his teammates and winning meant to him every day. The individual handshakes, the still vivid picture of Victor crying in the visitor's dugout after the game seven loss in the 2007 ALCS, all of it endeared him to us

and placed him above most others in our hearts.

Victor Martinez embodied what we wanted the Cleveland Indians to be; productive, fun, proud of the city's name on the jersey and willing to go to hell and back for his organization, his teammates and his town.

So can you imagine how the emotions ran when I followed the Victor trade rumors on Friday through to their conclusion and watched as #41 was sent off to the same Red Sox who ripped his and our hearts out less than two years ago?

You can't.

Because I felt nothing.

There was nothing other than emptiness and there has been nothing other than nothing in regard to emotion from the moment the deal became official to today. Nothing when they erased Martinez's picture from the walls at Progressive Field, nothing when his name and number were photo-shopped out of the highlight packages.

Nothing.

I'm not sure I'm capable of it any more with this Indians team and

organization. I'm not sure that it's not just a natural immunity built up by the way baseball is operated and the way the Indians are currently run.

You know the drill and I know the drill. I'm not bitching about it. I get the fact that small to mid-market teams are essentially the AAAA farm teams for the Yankees, Red Sox, Phillies, Chicagos and Dodgers. That regardless of how good a job you do drafting, acquiring and developing players like CC Sabathia and Grady Sizemore and Victor Martinez, Cliff Lee, Manny Ramirez and Jim Thome that **they are dead men walking to you from the time their major league service clocks start running if they can really play.**

I get it. That's why I can't cry about it. That's why I can't emote. There's nothing left but the fact that this is the way it goes and it just doesn't pay to look at the name on the back of the uniform.

And it's getting worse.

Okay, so maybe this era of Indians baseball is as much of a special case as 1994 through 1999 were, just in opposite directions. 1994 saw the Jake open, no Browns in town, a young, talented Tribe team ready to take off and the stands were packed as a result. The team and the Jake oozed money.

Today it's a bit different.

There are no sellouts, the economy is in the tank and everything but the dugout suite sink is available for a price.

It used to be that we knew guys who were free agents were going to go elsewhere. Take care Albert Belle, Thome and Ramirez.

Then we got used to the fact that guys who were playing out there their final season here were likely to be dealt for something younger. Good bye CC and Bartolo Colon, et al.

But now? Now things are bad enough and the Dolan's check book is so beat to shit that we're making deals and sending away the heart and soul of this team as well as the reigning CY Young winner a ***year and a half away*** from when they can walk?

It's like that?

How's that taste Tribe fans? How's it go down when the Dolans tell you that you can help by going to the game, buying tickets, buying refreshments and merchandise and watching Wyatt Toregas get his feet wet at catcher while Trevor Crowe patrols left field?

Have you figured it out yet that you're watching watered down baseball? Have you figured it out that **even if you do go down there and watch Trevor Crowe and Wyatt Toregas play, learn and develop at the major league level that those guys are already gone should they**

make anything of themselves?

Do you understand that Grady Sizemore is already the centerfielder for a big market team in 2012? Hell, maybe even next year if things go the way they did this season with Victor and Lee.

But he is gone. Undoubtedly and for sure, **Grady Sizemore is already gone**

So I guess the reason I just can't get worked up about watching Victor go to the Red Sox is that I have a tendency to not let people run me over. Might happen once, maybe twice, but I'm not dumb enough to have it occur too many more times before the defenses go up and it stops. My heart was broken years ago when Buddy Bell was dealt to the Texas Rangers. I realized then that there was danger in getting too attached and scar tissue was added pretty much every year after that when the Tribe shipped off players for prospects.

Quit taking it so personally and dispense with all the tears. That's baseball in Cleveland.

Are you in the Tribe?

Well, What About the Haul?

Ah yes, what did we get for the reigning Cy Young winner and the club's most productive hitter and popular player?

Who the hell knows?

ESPN ranked 4 of the players the Indians got back in the ESPN list of top ten prospects traded during the trade deadline week but that doesn't mean much to me. It shouldn't mean much to you either. Maybe we should wait to judge these guys until the time comes when any of us can pick any of them out of a police lineup.

Until that time just understand the philosophy around the Indians is changing. They collected a number of power arms in the deals for Vic, Lee, Betancourt, et al, and if they can develop a couple of them into front-of-the-rotation type pitchers the Indians will surely benefit from that for a year or two before having to trade those guys too.

Yeah, I'm a bit salty today. Even after the Tribe took two of three from the Tigers this weekend.

While I'm Raging

Here's a nice single-finger salute to all the humps, tools and idiots who whined and cried a year and a half ago when the Indians traded Sean Smith to the Colorado Rockies for Jamey Carroll.

You know who you are.

While Smith is now with his fourth organization in that time period (all of it spent at the minor league level) all Carroll has done is play well at every opportunity. And he's done that at the major league level. Professional at bats, solid approach and production are what he gives you every single day. His game winning single Friday night was indicative of what Carroll brings to the squad on a daily basis and how helps a club.

Jhonny Peralta led off the bottom half of the 13th inning with a double to left bringing Carroll to the plate. This was a perfect opportunity for Eric Wedge to have Carroll

move Peralta to third base with a bunt. And Carroll can bunt. But he can also handle the bat and hit the ball to the right side. Wedge had confidence that Carroll would move the runner without the bunt and that he could also find a hole and potentially score Peralta with a base hit. Carroll took a pitch for a ball and then fouled a ball off to the right side before staying back on a breaking ball and shooting it down the right field line for the game winner.

Carroll did it again Saturday night. He took two straight strikes from Tiger reliever Zach Miner before fouling off a pitch and working the count to 3-2. Carroll then singled to right-center and came around to score on a Toregas ground out before Sizemore popped out to end the game.

Say what you will about Carroll. But if a guy like Andy Marte had Carroll's approach he'd be a solid, every day major league hitter.

I'm going to miss that guy when he's dealt to a team that can use him sometime in the next month.

Accountability? Braylon?

Braylon Edwards reported to Browns camp with a "non-football injury" and has been relegated to riding a stationary bike, running sprints and stretching while his teammates are put through the normal paces of training camp.

While you have to take anything Edwards says with a grain of salt, he seems ready to put last season's disappointments behind him and gear up for a big 2009.

Edwards had this to say, according to Newsnet5.com:

Edwards said he began thinking about the upcoming season as soon as last year ended.

*"We got into a downward spiral and never really came out of the spiral and things got worse. **And attitudes, in terms of approaches, became monotone, definitely mine,"** he said. **"I think the big thing for me this year is approaching it with a solid attitude. It's a fresh start, a new regime, and even myself, just going out there and just having fun with the game.***
"

Performance speaks louder than words for

sure, but until BE gets on the field and we see what he has to offer in terms of effort and production, you have to be buoyed by the fact that at least he's saying the right things.

That hasn't always been the case in the past. Edwards has blamed everyone from his quarterbacks to Ohio State fans for his issues and it's heartening to see him publicly at least take some responsibility for his troubles in 2008.

The Browns need Edwards to stretch the field and be their home run threat. If Edwards can do that he'll open things up for the receivers underneath as well as the running game. He's shown he's capable of being that threat. Hopefully he's matured enough for his words to manifest themselves on the field.

The Browns (and the fans) need Braylon far more than he needs them if they hope to put a nightmarish 2008 behind them.