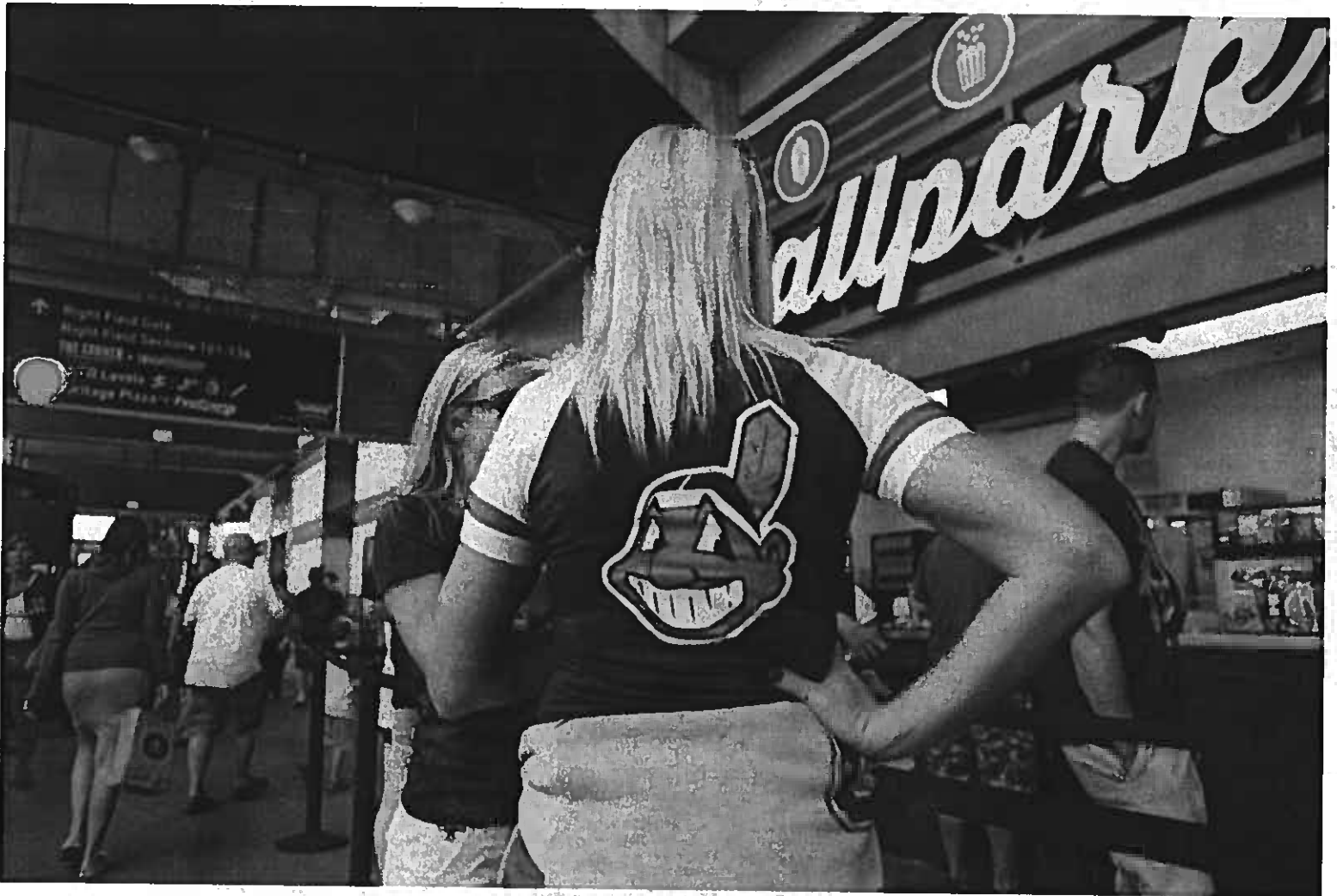




Jerry Howarth refuses to say Cleveland team name

Don't expect to hear the word "Indian" when Jerry Howarth calls the play-by-play in the Blue Jays' ALCS vs. Cleveland.



A fan in a Chief Wahoo shirt waits in a line for concessions at Progressive Field in Cleveland last month. (DUSTIN FRANZ / FOR THE WASHINGTON POST)

By **PETER EDWARDS** Star Reporter

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Don't expect to hear the word "Indian" when Jerry Howarth calls the play-by-play in the Blue Jays' American League Championship Series against Cleveland starting Friday.

The longtime Blue Jays announcer said on The Jeff Blair radio show Tuesday that he made a decision more than two decades ago never to use the term because it is found offensive by many First Nations people.

Howarth told Blair that he has also made it a practice to not use "Braves" for the Atlanta baseball team, or phrases like "a powwow on the mound" for talks between coaches and pitchers.

Howarth said he made the decision back after the 1992 series, when the Blue Jays won their first World Series against Atlanta.

Howarth told Blair he was touched deeply by an off-season letter that year from a listener in Northern Ontario.

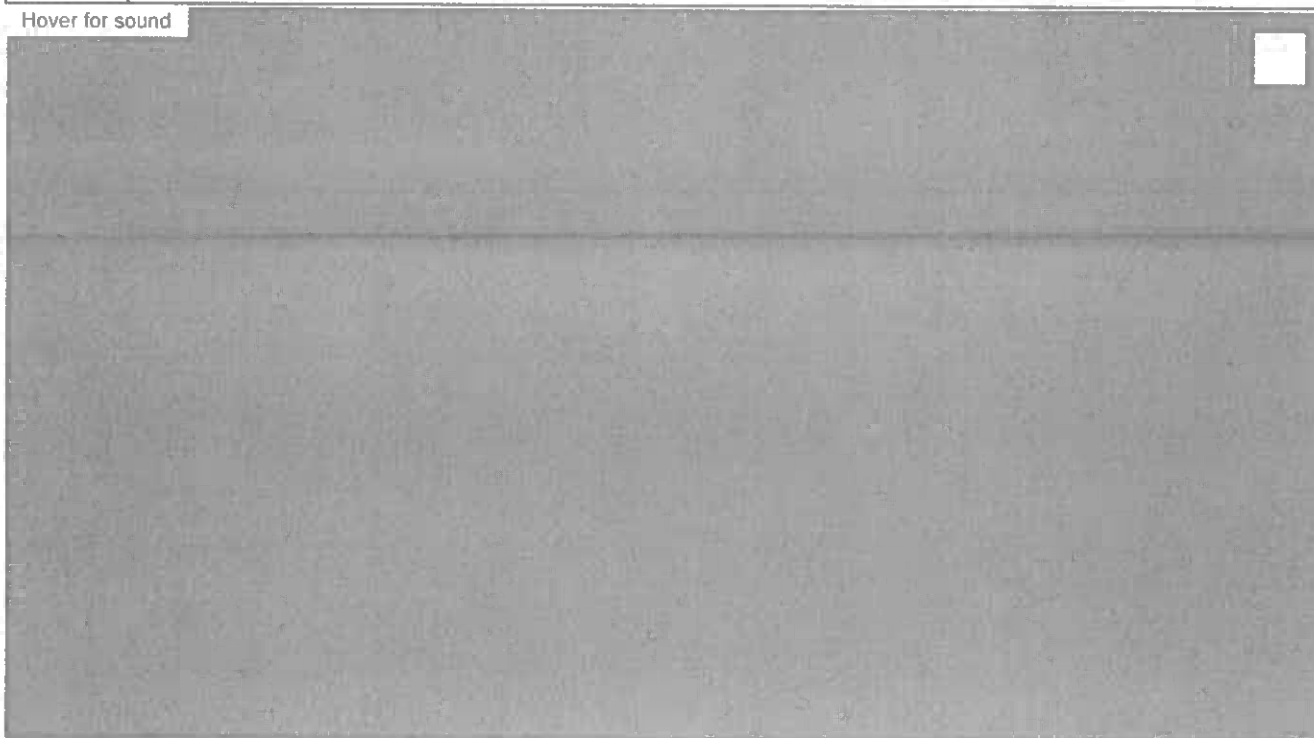
"In the off-season, I received one of the best fan letters I have ever received," Howarth said.

The listener was a member of a First Nation and politely told Howarth that he found such terms deeply offensive.

"He just wrote it in such a loving, kind way," Howarth said.

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“He touched my heart,” Howarth said.

Howarth said he made his decision to honour that fan and his culture.

“For the rest of my career I will not say ‘Indian’ or ‘Brave’ and if I was in the NFL I would not say Redskins,” Howarth said, referring to the Washington football team

His comments come just before the two minute mark of [this link](#).

Howarth and his bosses at Rogers Media have been praised on the Internet. Some has come with the hashtag #NotYourMascot.

A T-shirt that’s worn in protest reads, “My culture is not a costume.”

Toronto radio listener Diego Mendez tweeted, “not from a First Nation but very much appreciate Jerry’s stance on racist use of team nicknames / logos. Even bigger fan now.”

Over the past few years, a hot fashion item on Ontario First Nations’ reserves has been a T-shirt with the lettering “Caucasians” and the grinning logo of Chief Wahoo, the much-derided mascot of the Cleveland Indians major league baseball team.

Supporters of the shirt have said it’s a humorous statement about what many consider degrading and derogatory team names and logos.