I guess I just don't get it...

I tried to figure out what it is the Toronto Blue Jays are doing this offseason. I really have. I get the trade. Who wouldn't want to acquire all that talent? That's fantastic for them.

But they did it all without a manager and then proceed to say they had a few guys they were going to hire, any of which were rumored to be Manny Acta or Mike Hargrove.

Look I like Grover as much as the next guy, and I'm still a Manny Acta guy, but what are you doing Toronto? They also threw around names like Jim Tracy and John Riggleman. Recycling names that have been around is cool. I get it. You have a lot of developed talent and expecting to compete, you want someone with experience.

So I can understand not getting a guy like Sandy Alomar Jr., that's cool. But not just recycling

an old name, but one of your old own names?
John Gibbons will return as the Blue Jays manager with a two-year contract, four years after he was let go. Even Gibbons said that he was surprised by the move.

Of course, a lot of the things that led to Gibbons getting canned the first time around, Ted Lilly, and Shea Hillenbrand, are both long gone, but it is just, interesting. On one hand, I give the Jays credit for grabbing the guy they want, regardless of the circumstances, but on the other hand, it's just strange.

And hey, disagree with me, but I don't understand signing a guy like Jeremy Guthrie to a three year deal. But that's just me. Or maybe that's just the Royals.

In years past, I tried predicting what the Indians would do in the offseason. From signing specific people, all the way to who they'd add onto the 40-man roster.

Yeah I'm over that. It just ends in me being wrong, so why complete that exercise in futility? As you can see by the Gibbons hire, anything is unpredictable

Instead, I'm here for you to recap and ask the big questions of this offseason. That's why I've been conducting the Piece-By-Piece series, to examine each position and where the Indians need to go and what the situation is calling for.

We've had significant step towards conducting more of those examinations as the roster picture is a lot more clearer today with the Indians making some significant roster moves.

[FOUR TO 40]

With the Rule 5 Draft quickly approaching at the beginning of next month, the roster deadline has come and went and that means the annual dump and add that many teams have to go through to get players they want to protect onto their roster and subtraction of others. It usually

provides a lot of tough decisions, but this year, I don't think the Indians had very many hard choices to make.

The Indians subtracted a few names, and we will get to that later, but they added four names of the future who figure to be in the mix sooner rather than later.

The only position player was **Tim Fedroff**, a name many felt should have received an opportunity in the waning months of 2012. Fedroff lit the Triple-A and Double-A levels on fire the past two seasons with this bat and has put himself on the major league radar because of it. If the Indians need a solution in left field, it could come in the form of Fedroff.

He may be ready to compete for a job in spring, provided the Indians don't make an addition that takes that spot undoubtedly.

The other three players were all pitchers and of significance to the Indians lack of left-handers, two are left-handed.

Let's start with **CC Lee**, though, the bullpen arm that missed most of 2012 due to Tommy John surgery. It may take some time next year for Lee to get back into the swing of things, but it wouldn't surprise me to see him in the major league mix at some point down the road. He would have been in a position that Cody Allen was had he not been hurt because he had all but proved everything he needed to prove at the Triple-A level.

The surgery is a setback, but hopefully no more than that. Lee's addition might also help make up for the loss of Rogers and potential loss of a guy like Chris Perez, as Lee is just another one of those high-impact arms the Tribe has in their system ready to step up.

Then you have the left handers, **Trey Haley** and **T.J. House**. The pair of lefties actually joined the Indians organization in the same year, in the same draft. Back in 2008 after the Indians selected Lonnie Chisenhall in the first round, at the end of the second they selected Trey Haley. So Haley comes with some high-promise as a second rounder.

He also comes with some issues as it has not been an easy road to this point. If anything, he's made it this far based off his potential and not the results. Haley has struggled through injuries and lack of production as a starter. He's shown brilliant flashes, most recently at the end of this last season in Akron's bullpen during their championship run, but still has a lot to prove.

It may be a few more years, if any, before we see him near the major league roster, but he's still 22 and growing. Whether or not that is as a starter or a reliever remains to be seen, but he first needs to conquer pitching before the Indians can think of him as a starter.

Perhaps one of the more bright spots of the 2008 draft was T.J. House, the fellow left-hander that has turned out to be one of the better upcoming arms in the system. House is just a few months older than Haley, but also came out of high school when drafted. House's rise has been based solely on production as he's gone through each level and really come around as a left-handed starter with a high ceiling of potential.

Last year he perhaps had his best season splitting between Carolina and Akron, with a 3.56 ERA in 27 starts. He spent a few years at Kinston developing and now can probably shoot through the upper-levels and perhaps be an option in the next year to year-and-a-half.

So there you have it, four names the Indians added. There really are no shocking names to me, all four make sense given the space. Of course names like Austin Adams and Jesus Aguilar are not present and therefore eligible to be selected, however Adams is coming off a completely lost season and I'm not sure a team would take that risk.

Some might be spooked about Aguilar, but someone as versatile as Aguilar, who is also a year or two away from being polished, will almost never get selected. First baseman can clog up a roster and usually when a team takes a guy, it is someone who can fill in at multiple positions, just in case, because he has to be on the roster all year.

[GONE BUT NOT GONE]

To me, it is more interesting to talk about who was taken off the roster, and in this matter, not taken off the roster. No one is safe because if the Indians make a free agent signing, they'll still need to create space, but there are plenty of names on the chopping block in my estimation.

First, who the Indians actually took off the roster. I guess the first name that everyone will talk about is **Matt LaPorta**. Of course because they designated him for the first time, LaPorta has no choice but to accept his demotion to Triple-A and is still under club control. But he is certainly now on the outside looking in and doesn't seem to be a plan for the Indians in 2013. They may invite him to spring training, but being on the Triple-A roster, with no 40-man status has to be the most vulnerable position for a former major leaguer like LaPorta. He can't get claimed by a team, or have a hope to. And if he gets a shot at the majors, the Indians really have to be ravaged by injuries or he has to make it impossible for the Indians to deny him an opportunity.

Then there is **Brent Lillibridge** and Fabio Martinez, who may not make it to spring with the Indians. Lillibridge has the option to become a free agent and you have to imagine he'll do just that. If he doesn't get any hooks anywhere else, you could potentially see him returning as a minor league signing with an invite to spring training, but I would doubt that. Martinez on the other hand has 10 days to be traded, released, or sent to the minors if he clears waivers.

So, those three didn't survive the first roster purge and color me a little surprise as to who the Indians picked. I figured with three pitchers being added, the Indians would jettison a few of their pitchers, like Chris Seddon? Remember, there are many moves to still be made, but it is rather interesting they chose LaPorta as their first victim.

If anything, Seddon's time will come to an end when the Indians decide to re-add Nick Hagadone, who is not a count towards the 40-man total due to his restricted list status.

Then there are your names like Thomas Neal, who survived, but for how long? Many were shocked to see him added in September in the first place, but maybe Neal has some staying power, especially if the Indians do end up dealing Choo.

Let's not forget guys like Jeanmar Gomez and David Huff, who may not be in any danger of losing their roster spots, but could be completely given up on at some point if the Indians do go out and get themselves a starting pitcher of sorts. It seems like the Indians have now moved

onto McAllister and Kluber as their guys to give shots to, so if anything Gomez and Huff are depth that is expendable.

Then you have your Jack Hannahan, who could be a free agent if he's non-tendered. So there's wiggle-room, and of course if the Indians trade anyone, that opens another spot or spots.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

As a result of the 40-man decisions around the league there are several notable former Indians who have found themselves on the outside looking in, and it is worth a mention.

Remember **Cory Burns**? You may or may not, but he was one of the nice back-end arms that the Indians had coming through the system that they used to get some sort of outfield depth last year. Of course trading ANYTHING for Aaron Cunningham looks like a stupid move today, but it was Burns who the Indians dealt, and it was Burns who was designated for assignment by the Padres.

Surely you remember the fourth and most sparest part of the Ubaldo Jimenez trade, **Matt McBride**? No? Maybe? Well, McBride, who was the fourth player the Indians sent, and only positional player, over to Colorado in the Jimenez deal, was out-righted off the 40-man roster. He's still property of the Rockies, but he's lost his 40-man spot and is definitely on the outside looking in. If anything, it answers our question of what could have McBride done if he received the chance.

I guess it is important to note that beyond the players the Indians used to have that have been axed, are the players the Indians now have. Over the weekend the Indians finalized some minor league deals with outfielders **Matt Carson** and **Cedric Hunter**. Both will be invited to Spring Training.

Carson is older, 31, and has been around for some time with different teams. Carson can play all spots, but is primarily a right fielder and was with the Twins big league club at one time last

year.

Hunter is a little younger at 24 and was in the St. Louis system at the Triple-A level last year. He's left-handed and can play all over the outfield, but is more of a center fielder, which is good in talking about depth options.

I don't think signing either is a sign that the Indians are hell-bent on trading Choo, but it certainly looks a precautionary move to have depth options in the minor leagues just in case they do and whatever Option A they go with to replace Choo, ends up failing or getting hurt.

Perhaps an option can be the newly acquired **Yan Gomes**, who has that versatility to play the corner outfield spots. There's quite a story going on over at the World Baseball Classic qualifiers with Brazil. The team with just one major leaguer, Gomes, knocked off a Panama team with the likes of players like Carlos Lee, Carlos Ruiz, and Ruben Tejada. And they did it in Panama, which, is crazy for the Barry Larkin-managed Brazil squad.

Gomes knocked in the lone run in the 1-0 victory and the win qualified the team for the tournament. It's nice to see an underdog like that come through, but it is also nice to see a guy the Indians have got their hands on leading the charge. Hopefully it is a sign of things to come.

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Nino can be found with glue and scissors and pictures of Vinnie Pestano and himself on The Tribe Daily, his own Indians blog. Hearts may or may not be invovled.

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