This just in ... Fausto Carmona can pitch. Yesterday afternoon, Fausto beat the Orioles for the second time this season, going to 3-1 on the season (2.97 ERA) in the process. In today's *B-List*, in addition to taking a closer look at Carmona's start, Buff fawns over Pronk, and lets us know exactly just how hot Trot Nixon is right now. Off to LA for three with the Halos ...

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**R**	**H**	**E**
Indians (19-10)					0						0	1
Orioles (14-18)					0						0	0

W: Carmona (3-1) L: Bradford (0-1)

I knew that once Steve Trachsel started the game, Rafael Betancourt would not be called out of the 'pen. I believe having each of them pitch in the same game violates the Geneva Convention with respect to watching … paint … dry … between … deliveries …

1) Proof by induction

I worked my way through grad school as a Teaching Assistant and Assistant Instructor, which eventually involved teaching Business Calculus. (My first assignment was teaching Analytic Geometry to architecture students: when the students insisted they did not need to understand vectors, I made sure to get their names and addresses so that I could avoid all bridges subsequently built where they live.) Business Calculus students, as a group, do not want to be Business Calculus students. (Happily,as it turns out, most of them aren't!) Frankly, I would rather have my financial advisor or economic forecaster understand something about rates of change, but I held some pretty stupid views as an 18-year-old, too. Later I taught at the local community college to earn a few extra bucks, and those students DID want to be Business Calculus students, because they understood why they were there. They were there to *get a better job*
. It's funny how that works out.

Anyway, one of the concepts that seems to slip past Business Calculus students is the idea of Proof by Induction. In this concept, you test a hypothesis by proving, brute force (by just plugging in the numbers), that an assertion is true for N = 1. Now, assume the theorem is true up to some (arbitrary) number N. If you can use this to prove that this implies the theorem is true for N+1, it will be true for all N. (After all, 1 will imply 2, 2 will imply 3, etc.)

The Business Calculus Method of proof by induction is different: students would show me that the theorem is true for N = 1, and is true for N = 2, thus it is true for all N. This is not the same thing. (Consider the theorem "The square root of N is always less than 10.") But it is a subtle point, so we would spend quite a bit of time going over it again. The concept of N. The concept

of implication. Here are fifty thousand examples. Really, it's not that hard. Let's try it again.

On the next quiz, I was rewarded handsomely for my efforts: it is true for N = 1, it is true for N = 2, AND *it is true for N = 3*! Therefore it MUST be true for all N now, surely!

There are a number of graduates of the University of Texas I would not trust with my investment portfolio.

In any event, my students would say that Fausto Carmona has proven himself to be an excellent starting pitcher. Actually, he had already had three very good starts before yesterday's but Carmona actually earned his third consecutive win with a seven-inning outing in which he gave up seven hits, but only one walk and no earned runs (one unearned). Carmona only struck out two, but I think we're going to have to accept that Fausto Carmona simply does not miss bats. Instead, he tends to hit their underside: with a 19:7 GB:FB ratio, this marks the first time in three starts his ratio has been under 3.0, but 19:7 is still Real Good. With an ERA of 2.97 on the season, Carmona's first start is looking like an outlier: extra credit to Carmona for doing this on an irregular turn during which he was skipped, sent to Beefalo, and called back.

Interesting stat: Carmona has a significant reverse platoon split, where left-handed batters hit .229 (.614 OPS) against him, while right-handers hit .289 (.768). I … I have no plausible explanation for this. It probably has something to do with vectors.

2) Mendoza, eat your heart out!

Second baseman Josh Barfield has had a tough time adjusting to AL pitching, but yesterday, Barfield came through with a pair of singles and a walk to score three runs. The 2-for-4 performance raises his average to .202. I know that sounds snide, but Barfield really is swinging the bat a whole lot better, and over his last ten games (only one of which was hitless)

he is hitting .333.

I am not going to point to the walk as any great harbinger of plate discipline: left-hander Jamie Walker simply threw four straight pitches nowhere particularly near the strike zone, pitching around the mighty extra-Mendozan Barfield to face the lefty Grady Sizemore. His first single came as a result of swinging at the first pitch, then he made an out on the second pitch, then he singled on the third pitch (after swinging at the first two as well), so this is not exactly Wade Boggs waiting for his pitch here. Still, it's working for Barfield right now, and he is the nine-hole hitter … I think this just may temper any expectations we should have for a ceiling on Barfield's future hitting.

I will say this, though: Barfield played a major role in Travis Hafner's grand slam in the 8th inning. With two outs, Peralta on second, and Barfield on first, Casey Blake hit a routinish ground ball to short that Miguel Tejada played a bit nonchalantly (one should always be chalant with two outs) and tossed lightly to second base. Because Barfield was running hard, he beat the throw to second, extending the inning and bringing Hafner to the plate with the bases loaded.

That worked out okay.

3) Pronk smash!

Because then Hafner hit a 2-2 pitch over the right-center field wall for a grand slam that extended a comfortable 5-1 lead into a 9-1 laugher. Hafner has been in a bit of a mini-slump, dropping his average about 45 points in his past 10 games and only gathering two hits in his past five. I'm not sure any one hit gets Hafner "on track," but a two-out grand slam on the road against a left-handed reliever is one of the higher degree-of-difficulty blows you'll see.

4) Welcome to the bigs!

Eddie Mujica was called up with Fausto Carmona to help man the bullpen, especially with the additional wazooification of Jason Davis (see below). However, the tight ballgame (9-1 after 8, 10-1 after 9) precluded entrusting it to someone as young and inexperienced as Eddie Moo. Mujica will now be used in the Jason Davis role, pitching exclusively when we are behind by at least eight runs or ahead by no fewer than thirty-seven.

(This is all pointless conjecture on my part, but great spiny pufferfish, why do we call these guys up? Is there a more advantageous position to give a guy his first 2007 innings than 10-1 in the bottom of the ninth?)

5) Caution: contents will be warm to the touch

Or, in the case of Trot Nixon, will completely sear the flesh off your body.

Trot Nixon went 3-for-5 yesterday, driving in two runs, to raise his average to a team-high .338. (Victor Martinez, piker that he is, only went 1-for-4 and is hitting a feeble .333.)

I'm not sure what else to say about this guy, except that I like him very much in the five hole. I would also like him in the two hole, since the majority of his hits are singles, but I'm loathe to change anything right now. I don't mind Victor seeing a few more fastballs, and Peralta is hitting well out of the seven hole as well. Blake at two still runs counter to my intuition, but he did seem to perk up there earlier while struggling mightily lower in the order (okay, he was 0-for-4, he wasn't exactly Tony Gwynn in the two slot, either) … aw, hell, I dunno. But Trot Nixon is hot.

6) Time to use a little stragedy

Gifted with an eight-run lead, Tom Mastny, shocked that he was not Eddie Mujica, decided that throwing pitches out of the strike zone was a waste of everyone's time. He threw nine strikes in 11 pitches, retiring the side in order and recording at least two strikes on every hitter (three on Aubrey Huff, for whom a 14-18 record is an exciting experience of pseudo-success).

Gifted with a bonus run to lead by NINE runs, Oldberto Hernandez, completely flabbergasted that *he* was not Eddie Mujica, either, decided that strikes that people miss are still inefficient, so threw six strikes in NINE pitches to retire the side in order.

Eddie Mujica, almost incapacitated by the realization that he was not on the mound, did manage to capture some of the strike-throwing on video, which he then placed in Jeremy Sowers' locker. Sowers, by all reports, furrowed his eyebrows, although, admittedly, it is hard to tell the difference.

7) Bad Idea Dept.

Travis Hafner is a wonderful hitter. He is also an interesting interview. He is kind and gentle yet fiercely competetive. He works hard at his craft and is a credit to the entire state of North Dakota.

What Travis Hafner is NOT is a good baserunner. (I don't know if it's true slowness or bad acceleration or non-quick reactions, but … let's say, for sake of argument, that the term "zippy" is not going to be used.)

Tagging up on a foul ball to medium right may have seemed like a good idea at the time, but Hafner was so very, very out that I hope this scotches the idea for some length of time. Boy, was he out.

8) Credit Where Credit Is Due

Josh Barfield not only got two hits, but he stole a base off Steve "The Snail" Trachsel. (I would say he stole it off Paul Bako, but I do not believe it.) Grady Sizemore also stole second, his 10th steal of the season.

David Dellucci came in to pinch-hit for Jason Michaels, who had gone 1-for-2, and promptly singled. The platoon of Michaels and Dellucci is now … well, still awful, hitting .241 and .247 respectively, but they both got a hit yesterday, so huzzah!

Jhonny Peralta continued his surgence with two hits, including the most meaningless solo home run in recent memory. (It was a nice hit, though.)

Casey Blake did not hurt himself while dropping the foul ball immediately before Brian Roberts' triple.

9) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro is, in fact, the Teletubby “Tinky Winky.” Yes, the one with the purse. Since the Teletubbies are both British and Completely Psychotic, this statement is not true. Fire Eric Wedge.