Fausto Freaking Carmona. Man, this guy has been money in the bank for the 2007 Indians, and he continues to look sharp as the playoffs approach and The Magic Number (13) shrinks. In today's B-List, Buff breaks down Carmona's latest performance and talks about him "finding his inner Fausto". Buff also uses today's column to hit on the White Sox mailing in the season, and Honny Peralta's inability to hit sliders down and away.

FINAL SCORE				
Indians (84-60)	0	0	0	0
White Sox (61-83)	2	0	0	0

W: Carmona (16-8) L: Floyd (1-3)

Did anyone tell the White Sox that the game started back up after the rain delay?

1) Balloon-like sharpness

"Boy's as sharp as a bowlin' ball."

-- Foghorn Leghorn

To accommodate television, the "travel day" game that finished the Anaheimish series was really a night game, meaning that to get to Chicago in time for Monday's game, the Tribe had to arrive at about 4:30 AM. From a selfish

perspective, it was nice to see the Indians play on Sunday night: from a team health perspective, it sucked rocks.

The first inning certainly didn't start auspiciously: as the Indians went 1-2-3 with a pair of strikeouts against ex-ex-wunderkind Gavin Floyd, Fausto Carmona started each of the first four hitters with two balls (the fifth batter, A.J. Pierzynski, hit the second pitch after taking a ball). The first batter walked, the second batter grounded out, the third singled, and the fourth was hit on a 2-0 count. Now, the sleep couldn't have been adequate, and the weather was abysmal (it was a bit amusing to have a "rain delay" in that it rained more or less constantly through the game, enough to cause standing water on the field), but to say that Carmona wasn't sharp is to say that Telly Savalas was bald, or that Britney Spears has questionable parenting skills. He wasn't just "not sharp," he virtually lacked the ability to *pitch*.

On the other hand, his pitching kicked butt on the Cleveland defense: with the bases loaded, Carmona induced an inning-ending double play to first that Ryan Garko threw to second, then Jhonny Peralta threw to Where Fausto Carmona Was Not. Now, Fausto overran the play a little, and the throw wasn't utterly terrible, but the combination of the two was, putting Chicago up 2-0 in the bottom of the first and making this look very much like a long night for everyone involved.

A funny thing happened after that, though: Carmona found his inner Fausto!™. Two 1-2-3 innings followed, and after stranding runners on 2nd and 3rd in the 4th inning, Carmona allowed only two other baserunners, one of whom was erased on a double play. In all, Carmona gave up 3 hits and 3 walks in 7 full innings before the 2 hour 23-minute rain delay, ending his night with 102 pitches and lowering his ERA to 3.20 (one of the two runs was unearned). Only 55 pitches were for strikes, but he threw 14 balls alone in the first inning and put up what turned out to be a terrific performance, made that much more impressive by the conditions

(pitching from behind most of the night in a steady rain on a wet mound on an altered sleep schedule). Carmona is not Cleveland's Ace, because that position is already filled, but he has morphed from Bob Wickman's David Riske into Greg Maddux' John Smoltz.

2) A contrast in styles

The rain delay was brutal, and in my opinion, senseless. There was no reason to continue playing that game: had the situations been reversed (Cleveland well out of the race playing at home against first-place Chicago leading 4-2 after 7), I wouldn't have objected to considering the game over right then and there. I might have groused a little, but really, two hours and twenty-three minutes? Do you know how many people were in the stands for the last pitch? A generous count would have been two hundred. (An accurate count would have been more like fifty-seven.) It was awful.

Twenty-five of the people who clearly did NOT want to be there were the Chicago White Sox. After a leadoff double in the 8th, Ryan Bukvich induced a runner-advancing groundout and walked Jhonny Peralta, leading to Kenny Lofton grounding to Darin Erstad. Martinez took a liberal lead off third, waited Erstad out, and got back to the back when Erstad finally shook the cobwebs from his head and threw too late. If you're keeping score at home, the number of outs recorded on the play was "zero." Chris Gomez hit a sac fly, and Cleveland led 5-2.

In the bottom of the frame, I would like to tell you that Rafael

Betancourt was overpowering and dominant, but the Sox did not appear very excited about batting in that inning and let a leadoff single go to waste on two swinging Ks and a groundout.

Grady Sizemore led off the next inning with a single to center ... except he kept running ... and center fielder Jerry Owens wandered over to the ball and tossed it insouciantly toward the infield, giving Sizemore a double. Sizemore then took third on a passed ball that A.J. Pierzynski appeared to attempt to corral by using the Jedi Mind Trick that worked so well for Kevin Smith in "Mallrats." Finally, Sizemore scored on a sacrifice fly by Asdrubal Cabrera.

In the bottom of THAT frame, the only surprise was that two White Sox took strikes. Aaron Fultz struck out the first two (left-handed) hitters swinging before getting Juan Uribe to pop out. Again, I would like to infer some degree of superiority from Fultz' performance, but given the Sox' generally desultory play to that point, I'm not sure that's warranted.

Now, I'm not sure a lot of rational, sympathetic observers would have blamed the Tribe had they phoned in the last two innings as well. After all, they had the lead, Chicago has stopped trying, and they had to be dog tired. Instead, they scratched out two more runs, each involving hustle plays, and generally kept their collective foot on the throttle. Whatever else I or anyone

else has said about Eric Wedge this season, this kind of "this game is not over" attitude, effort, and attempted execution is a real, tangible positive result of what can only be attributed to a manager-influenced team culture.

I like it. A lot.

3) This Cabrera guy might end up helping after all

Although I would like to claim credit for the team's improved play since re-implementing the Completely False Statement in the way you might believe in your lucky socks or rally cap, it's probably less of a coincidence that the team's record has been greatly improved since the insertion of Asdrubal Cabrera as an everyday player. Cabrera's .316 average is not super-spectacular or anything, but the young man seems unflappable, is capable of batting second (and switch-hits as well), and is playing better defense than his predecessor.

Cabrera only had one hit last night, although he did walk once and hit the aforementioned sacrifice fly. However, the one hit was a line-drive two-out two-run homer that snuck in minutes before the rain delay and gave Cleveland a 4-2 lead it would never relinquish.

4) Welcome back!

Actually, Ben Francisco has been with the club since the beginning of September, but given the start last night, he too contributed to the three-run 7th by singling in Kenny Lofton from second base. The hit tied the score at 2-2 and prevented a called game from ruining Cleveland's chance at gaining a half-game on the Tigers.

5) And to think, we had to give up on Mike Rouse for this

Chris Gomez started at third to give Casey Blake the night off. He contributed a diving stop to begin a 5-4-3 double play, scored the team's first run after reaching on an error by counterpart Andy Gonzalez, laid down a quality bunt to advance Lofton to second before Francisco drove him in, and hit the sacrifice fly that scored Martinez in the 8th. In terms of utility infielder quality, one Gomez is worth approximately 1,500 TeraRouses, because I don't know what metric prefix comes after Tera.

6) On the less sunny side

The Indians, still scoreless through three innings, loaded the bases against Floyd in the 4th on a walk, a single, and Ryan Garko's team-leading 19th HBP. (For comparison, Garko has walked 28 times.)

Jhonny Peralta then watched ball one before grounding into an inning-ending double play.

Peralta also struck out swinging at his nine hundred fifty-three thousandth missed slider low and away. I do not understand why a pitcher would throw him any other pitch.

7) I am Pronk, hear me roar!

(chirp, chirp)

8) The Heisenberg Strike Zone in action

I am not 100% sure of the proper attribution, but the first time I heard the term was from Baseball Prospectus' Rany Jazayerli. It is a variation of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, which states that one can measure either the position of a particle or it's momentum, but not both with complete accuracy at the same time.

If the umpire was using a fixed-point coordinate system, I am not sure how many dimensions it

had. The balls-and-strikes last night were not quite random, but hard to distinguish from pure chance.

(It was bad.)

9) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro convinced the umpires to force the team to play the final two innings, then went to bed. The umpires were clearly not using logical processing, so this statement is untrue. Fire Eric Wedge.