Any chance we could petition the league to play the A's in all of our 80 remaining games? Didn't think so. Anyway, it's time once again for another Lazy Sunday here on the site, and Paulie touches on a couple interesting topics this holiday weekend. First and foremost, he talks about the peculiar trade the Tribe made this past week when they sent Columbus relief prospect John Meloan (and cash) to Tampa for 32 year old AAA reliever Winston Abreu. Precursor to another deal with Tampa? Paulie thinks so.

After watching the fireworks burst over Lake Chautauqua last evening and seeing that the Indians' ails seem to be fixed by merely playing the Athletics (OK, maybe not ALL of the ails are remedied), let's roll right into a Lazy Sunday:

While moving the 24-year-old John Meloan for the 32-year-old Winston Abreu cer tainly doesn't make a lot of sense at first blush as the Indians essentially traded a AAA reliever for a AAA reliever, netting the OLDER player at a time when all young bullpen options should be getting looks, let's take a different look at this with the assumption that this is simply a precursor to another move.

It's something that Tony Lastoria and I hit on during this week's "Smoke Signals", but let's create a scenario for a moment that the Indians are in negotiations for another deal (larger in scope than the Meloan deal) with a playoff contender...let's call them Team A.

Follow me on this:

The Indians, immersed in trade talks with Team A for players that Team A is interested in, is trying to make a deal come through as while the acknowledgement that the 2009 season is not quite being publicly admitted, it is a foregone conclusion.

Winston Abreu is DFA'd by the Rays and is exposed to waivers, with the teams possessing the worst records in MLB getting the first crack at making a waiver

claim on him.

Team A, further back in the waiver claim hierarchy due to their record, informs the Indians that they have an interest in Abreu, but will have no chance at seeing him fall to them in the waiver order as a claim will surely be made before they get their chance.

The Indians make a waiver claim on Abreu, essentially to add him as a trading chip for the larger deal that they are in discussions in with Team A.

With the waiver claim made, the Indians and Rays have to work out a trade to get Abreu to the Indians, with the Rays asking for (and ultimately) receiving John Meloan, whose standing in the Indians' organization as a relief option has been diminished to the point that he has yet to be called to the parent club despite an obvious need in the bullpen.

Meloan joins the Rays while Abreu joins the Indians until the particulars of the greater deal with Team A (which now includes Abreu as a piece going from the Tribe to Team A) are finalized.

If that's the way it's going to go down (and that would be my guess because the trade doesn't make sense in a vacuum), don't get too attached to Winston Abreu and get ready for him to be moved in another deal that is forthcoming.

What sort of deal?

Who knows (though I don't see it being a earth-shattering one as Winston Abreu is not going to be some "final piece" to a deal involving CP Lee or El Capitan), but short of that scenario playing out, the Meloan-for-Abreu deal doesn't make much sense for the Indians, despite their obvious strategy of trying to find "lightning in a bottle" among these relievers.

On said trade front, there are a couple of hot spots to hit in terms of relating it to Indians' news starting with SI's Jon Heymann , who adds the "Will the Indians trade Victor Martinez" to what must be his already full "Will the Indians trade CP Lee" basket, mentioning the Red Sox and the Giants as potential suitors but only by reading the first two paragraphs, you get the sense that this is simply idle speculation by Heymann:

Indians higher-ups say they aren't likely to trade hitting star Victor Martinez. Not only is Martinez one of the better hitters in baseball, with 14 home runs, 57 RBIs and .313 batting average, but the Indians hold a bargain 2010 club option on Martinez for $7 million.

A trade for Martinez still has to be considered something of a long shot. Yet, within the past day or two the Indians dispatched a scout to check out the progress of Boston's best prospects, according to a league source. The Indians, a realistic early seller, may only be covering their bases. But of course, it could develop into something more, as Boston's interest in Martinez is well known.

Wait..."aren't likely to trade"..."something of a long shot" and "may only be covering their bases", all in the first two paragraphs?

Yes, the Red Sox have young pitching and, yes, the Indians have catching and 1B options behind Martinez, but the whole piece (if you read it carefully) actually sounds like something ISN'T going to happen between the two teams...you just have to get past the article's title.

Jayson Stark has some Tribe nuggets pertaining to trades that have happened and trades that look unlikely to happen:

Run for DeRosa: Turned out the duel for Mark DeRosa was an all-NL Central extravaganza by the time the Indians' trade talks approached the finish line. In the end, the Cardinals went from a team that was not even willing to discuss Chris Perez to a club willing to offer Perez plus a prospect to be named by Sept. 1, plus the Cardinals took on all of the $2.9 million remaining on DeRosa's contract. And that's what it took for them to outbid the two runners-up, the Reds and Cubs. So what about the Mets, who have been portrayed as having been in the DeRosa sweepstakes to the end? They were one of 10 teams that checked in. But they were never willing to move Bobby Parnell or any of their best young arms. So it appears they were never much of a factor. The Phillies, meanwhile, have now lost out on bids for DeRosa twice in six months: once at the winter meetings, a second time in this derby. The Marlins and Giants were also in this mix.

Knock on Wood: Another Indian whose name continues to float is Kerry Wood. But the Indians seem much more interested in moving Rafael Betancourt if he gets his act together after he comes off the disabled list. And Wood's two-year, $20 million contract almost makes him unmovable anyway. "It was two and 20, so now it's down to, what -- 1½ and 15 [million]?" laughed an executive of one club. "I just don't see anybody taking on that kind of cash. And much as I love [Wood's] stuff, I don't know that he has the command to make the pitches he has to make. With his stuff, it's unbelievable he doesn't get out of more jams. But he just doesn't get ahead enough."

Doesn't that DeRosa thing sound about right...that the Indians DID in fact pit the NL suitors for DeRosa against each other and, seeing that Parnell wasn't coming, pushed the Cardinals to give up more than they likely wanted to?

On the other relievers, I mentioned earlier in the week that Betancourt might be a name that could be moved, assuming he proves that he's healthy and effective for a prolonged stretch before July 31st. As I said, the Indians hold a $5.4M club option on him for next year, one that I can't see them picking up as it's presently constructed. Maybe they guarantee the year at a lower number and add a club option for 2010 to guarantee Betancourt some money (who knows what he'd get in the open market considering his last 2 years), but the other option is obviously to move him for a younger arm that will join the "throw against the wall and see what sticks" group of young, power arms that the Indians (rightfully) seem to be accumulating or targeting.

Speaking of one such power arm, Stark quotes a scout later in the piece regarding Chris Perez:

"We like Chris Perez. We don't love Chris Perez. We've questioned his command going all the way back to college. I can see him becoming a decent seventh- or eighth-inning guy. I don't see him as a closer.""

A decent seventh- or eighth-inning guy?"

After this year...tell me where to sign up for a 7th or 8th inning guy for the next five to six years out of C. Perez.

On the topic of another power arm, Terry Pluto has this little bit regarding Indians' (as-yet-unsigned) 1st Round Pick RHP Alex White

:

From Bruce Winkworth: "I'm the baseball sports information director at North Carolina State and have seen plenty of [North Carolina pitcher] Alex White. If I was younger and had any coordination, I'd have done cartwheels when he fell all the way to the Indians with the 15th pick in the draft. Alex is a horse -- great arm, tremendous competitor. I'm not sure I agree with the idea of putting him in the bullpen. I know [the Indians] need relievers, but he doesn't figure to pitch in the big leagues before 2011. Who knows what the bullpen will look like by then? Not that White wouldn't be a stud reliever. UNC used him out of the pen at the 2008 College World Series, and he was extraordinary."

This is something that was brought up to me via e-mail from Richard Scheir after the bit on who the PTBNL from the Cards might be, but if the Indians' strategy of stockpiling these young power arms for the rest of the season through various channels, the pressure to move Alex White (to, in effect, fast track him) may become less of a priority and the Indians can give White some time in 2010 (assuming he's signed) to perhaps show his worth as a rotational option.

White was purported by some to be the best RHP in the draft not named Strasburg, so maybe the trickle-down effect of netting relievers like Hurricane Perez (Chris did go to "The U") and a guy like Jess Todd allows them to use some patience with White's talent. When it's all said and done, maybe he does end up in the bullpen, but giving him at least a window of opportunity in the rotation (given what we've seen in terms of rotational depth) may not be such a bad idea either.

Finally, finishing up with some lighter fare (because don't we all need some in the midst of this season), Andrew Humphries of the LGT presents a brilliant short play that puts the Indians' season in hilarious perspective with the Jhonny Peralta "character" absolutely stealing the show.