The second domino has been felled as the Indians' continued purging of veterans who do not figure into their plans in 2011 and beyond rolls on as Jhonny Peralta has been traded to Detroit for Low-A LHP Geovanni Soto, who is obviously not the Cubs' current catcher. The move, which includes the Indians covering the remainder of Peralta's 2010 contract, comes as neither a surprise nor as a disappointment as there is enough disappointment to go around from Peralta's regression from a 23-year-old SS who hit 24 HR and posted an OPS of .885 to the defensively-challenged 3B who has posted a cumulative .693 OPS with 18 HR in 242 games since the start of the 2009 season, a regression that has been illustrative of the unrealized potential that seemed so limitless for the Indians just three to five years ago.

Peralta departs as a player who was never able to take the next step that seemed so obvious when he burst on the scene to replace Omar Vizquel (and justifiably so, I might add) as the Indians' SS, done in by inconsistency and by an inability to make adjustments to a league that had obviously adjusted to him. His departure represents another step away from that 2005 to 2007 team that once seemed so full of promise, which now looks empty. He will go to Detroit as a pure rental player, with the Tigers obtaining him to replace the injured Brandon Inge in the lineup and with the Tigers perhaps hoping that "Hot Jhonny" makes an appearance in Motown as they attempt to vault past the White Sox and Twins in the race for the AL Central.

From the Indians' perspective, this opens the door for an extended audition among Andy Marte, Jayson Nix, and Louie V (to begin with) as they all attempt to stake some sort of claim to the hot corner before Jared Goedert presumably emerges (assuming his defense is deemed satisfactory) to serve as the eventual bridge to Lonnie Chisenhall, the 21-year-old "3B of the Future", currently plying his craft in Akron and who may be further away than a presumed 2011 mid-season call-up.

For now, Marte, Nix, and Valbuena will vie for plate appearances at 3B as the idea that Goedert could come up in a September call-up is complicated by the fact that he's not on the 40-man roster. That complication isn't too profound as there is certainly flotsam and jetsam on the 40-man that can be trimmed, but I wouldn't be surprised to see that MarteNixValbuena 3-headed monster handling 3B, with each limited player offering a different skill set for Manny Acta to utilize in the lineup and on the field.

As for the player coming to Cleveland for Peralta, it bears mentioning again that the Indians are covering Peralta's 2010 salary and, while the skeptics would say that the only way that the Tribe was going to move Peralta and get more than the requisite bag of balls would be by paying that money, it represents a positive development in the way that the Indians (and I'm talking about the Dolans here) have been willing to cover money remaining on a contract in the interest of receiving a better prospect. The famous example is the Casey Blake and cash to the Dodgers for Carlos Santana (and, just to be clear, nobody's purporting that Soto is in Santana's class here), but in light of all of the financial criticism that the Indians and the Dolans take for the manner in which the Indians are operated, this practice of "buying prospects" (this one costing about $2M when they could have simply dumped that money with little to no public objection) is a new wrinkle in all of these trades involving veterans for lottery tickets…I mean, prospects. While it is often ignored and while the average fan could care less about the money changing hands in a deal like this, the presence of Santana in the Indians' lineup for the next 6 years (at least) is a testament that this practice does have some merit, in terms of acquiring better talent.

In terms of that talent, that "lottery ticket" idea is wildly applicable here as Soto is a 19-year-old LHP who has been pitching in the same league that the Lake County Captains play in. His measurables say that he's 6' 3" and 155 pounds (that would likely be soaking wet) and his raw numbers show that he's 6-6 this year with a 2.61 ERA and 76 K to 25 BB in 82 2/3 innings over 16 starts.

Soto's left-handedness (remember how the Indians are lacking in a depth of legitimate LHP prospects) and his projection are what make him attractive as one scout told Baseball Prospectus' Kevin Goldstein ,
"He has got a nice delivery, he's super loose, and super skinny... we're talking rail-thin. He's at 85-88 mph [on his fastball] and throwing four pitches with a curve, slider, and change—none of them are really good right now, but you can't eliminate any of them, either. I hate projecting velocity, but this is the kind of guy you look for when doing it."

What does that mean?
It means wait for two to four years and come back to Soto to see if that velocity has arrived and if the results are there because of that increased velocity. While that may not quicken anyone's pulses, it falls in line with what the Indians have been stockpiling (young, projectable arms) as they have moved the veteran pieces and parts of their recent rosters.

With Peralta however, the addition of Soto is the subtext as the Indians have made a further attempt to clear the decks of players that don't figure in past this year and have made room for players that could potentially contribute in 2011 and beyond to assert themselves with their newfound opportunities.

The trade of Peralta – who, by the way, leaves with the 36th most plate appearances as an Indian in the organization's history and is 21st on the club's all-time HR list…seriously – is another turn of the page for the Indians' organization as the Tribe attempts to find meaningful spots for players that project to contribute in their next "window of contention" and don't serve as sad reminders of the now closed windows.

Jhonny is gone and the Indians continue their evolution into a new team, with a new group of players lining up to do what Peralta and his mates were ultimately unable to accomplish.