The limping Indians addressed their limping by sawing off their collective legs, dropping all three games thus far in New Yankee Stadium in desultory manner. In today's B-List, Buff addresses the issue of Yankees getting plunked, awards a new title to each of Fausto Carmona and Mitch Talbot, fondly remembers 2007, less fondly remembers 2007, and disavows the existence of a player who does not exist. Oh, you may say he exists.

You may have tangible evidence.

Buff denies it sight unseen.

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W: F. Garcia (5-5) L: Tomlin (7-4)

That, my friends, is what a desperate offense looks like.

1) Powers of Observation

I don't follow the Yankees closely, being that I hate them and all, but I got the subtext that a goodly number of Yankees hitters had been struck with pitches in recent weeks. To this, I say, well, "Good."
No, no, I'm just kidding, I don't want to advocate needless hitting of batters, but great Lisa Simpson's saxophone, by how many HBP have Indians hitters outdistanced Indians pitchers in recent years?

It ALWAYS seemed like the Indians had SIGNIFICANTLY more batters hit than their opponents,

perhaps a side-effect of Eric Wedge's managerial style.

From C.J. Wilson breaking Travis Hafner's hand to Mark Buehrle whacking Hafner upside the head to Grady Sizemore being plunked on a regular basis, I just have precious little sympathy for other teams complaining about the same predicament.

So I can understand a bit of frustration coming to the fore, especially at home, where the Yankees can afford a bit of safe extra belligerence, but let's take a look at the chances that Fausto Carmona's plunking of Mark Teixeira was an act of malice:

Derek Jeter: Ball, ball, ball, ball
Curtis Granderson: Ball, strike, ball, strike, ball, strike
Mark Teixeira: Ball, ball, ball, ball
Alex Rodriguez: Strike, ball, ball, ball, foul, ball

So, for those of you counting at home, Carmona has now loaded the bases, throwing a brisk 5 strikes in TWENTY pitches. Five in TWENTY. This is not a man with pinpoint control. This is not a man with poor control.

This is a sleep-deprived blindfolded man with vertigo … on mushrooms. Carmona could not have had less influence on where the ball was going if he was using the same technique used by Olympic hammer thrower, except sleep-deprived, blindfolded, and with vertigo.

(Olympic athletes are routinely tested for mushrooms, which might be performance-enhancing if the performance is, say, "slam poetry" or "script-writing for Yo Gabba Gabba!")

Look, you might claim that Carmona settled down after that, and that by the second inning, he was well on his way to commanding the plate. Fine. You'd be ridiculous to say this (went 3-2 to Frank Cervelli, gave up homer to Granderson on World's Fattest Pitch), but you might make this claim. And sure, hitting a guy on the pitch immediately following the homer seems more purposeful, but let me ask you this: if Fausto Carmona truly had that degree of command to be able to drill the next hitter, wouldn't he have probably used maybe a TENTH of this command to THROW SOME FUCKING STRIKES before that point? Or, even, in the act of throwing one of these strikes, thrown one to Granderson that was not lasered in as fatly as it was? I mean, come on now.

I'm not absolving Fausto from all blame here: for all I know, he did try to hit Teixeira.

For all I know, he just wanted to pitch inside.

My point is, based on the first fifty pitches he threw, we can't say with any degree of certainty that Fausto Carmona knew where the FUCK the ball was going to go.

WE sure as hell didn't.

Footnote: of the last 8 batters Carmona faced, 4 of them started with a 2-0 count. So clearly he was "locked in," all right.

Oh, yeah.

2) A new award

Speaking of Fausto Carmona, I would like to award him an award that is not coveted, nor usually awarded to a right-hander or a pitcher with excellent stuff. It usually goes to David Huff or Jeremy Sowers. No, in 2011, while I don't care to see either of those gentleman again (and won't see Sowers: he's out with UCL replacement), Fausto Carmona is The Most Infuriating Pitcher in the World.

I no longer expect to win a baseball game started by Fausto Carmona. I will not analyze his outing so much as attempt to wash its memory from my retinas.

Expletive Fausto Carmona.

3) Wait, THE Most Infuriating?

Yes. No question. Let's move on.

4) What about Chad Durbin?

I do not recognize the existence of this “Chad Durbin” of whom you speak. He sounds terrible, though.

5) You know, the guy who coughed up four runs on Friday?

No, I tell you, there is no Chad Durbin. He does not exist. We will move on.

6) And then three more runs on Sunday?

La la la la! I can’t hear you! La la la! No Chad Durbin! There is no Chad Durbin! Billy lick a lolly, lick a lolly, lick a lolly!

Go away or I will taunt you a second time!

Also, shut up.

7) Shades of 2007

Remember when Raffy Perez used to come into games in the magical 2007 season with the bases loaded an nobody out, and then would let no one score and maybe would induce a triple play in the bargain? Yeah, that was awesome.

So when he horked up a similar feat on Friday (there was one out, but still no one scored), I thought that was awesome, too.

His doppelganger (@NotRafaelPerez) is a more entertaining Tweeter than the real thing (@Raffyperez53), but this is to be expected, in that words are interesting.

8) More Shades of 2007

I will give Josh Tomlin this: when he has an Inning of Crap™, he really has an Inning of Crap™.

Through 4 innings, Tomlin allowed 1 run on 6 hits, which isn't very good.

In the 5th inning, he allowed FIVE runs on 6 hits, which is plainly horrifying.

Paul. Byrd. Plonk.

9) Ladies and Gentlemen, your … #2 starter?

Coming into the season, I think the fair and reasonable expectation was that Fausto Carmona was the nomimal Ace of the staff: he isn't a real #1 starter in league-wide standards, but he was objectively the single pitcher on the Cleveland roster with the greatest chance to have the best overall season-long performance.

Over the first month or so, Justin Masterson showed that he had made sufficient adjustments to his game such that he (combined with Carmona's infuriositude) surpassed Carmona for the mantle: despite a couple of mediocre offerings, I think you'd have to say that Masterson is still the overall leader in the clubhouse with a 3.18 ERA, a 1.29 WHIP and 10 Quality Starts out of 13.

Josh Tomlin has apparently broken his mirror and is running low on smoke. He came into the season as nothing more than a fifth starter, and appears headed on his way back to such a designation, although his overall stats are clearly better than those of Carmona and fellow youngster Carlos Carrasco.

Carrasco, for his part, has shown flashes of brilliance combine with flashes of AAA, and can't really be considered in the front half of the rotation yet.

The potential is there, but he's still got some growing to do.

(In fairness, so does Tomlin.)

Meanwhile, in his first start fresh from the disabled list, Mitch Talbot was hammered for 8 runs on 12 hits in 3 innings of work, a terrifying performance if ever there was one. However, in his other five starts, Talbot has launched the following lines:

4 1/3 IP, 5 H, 2 R
8 IP, 5 H, 0 R
6 2/3 IP, 6 H, 1 R
6 IP, 8 H, 2 R
5 2/3 IP, 4 H, 2 R

If there is a concern over the past two starts, it has been that all 4 of his runs were the result of 4 solo homers. On the other hand, he has given up 4 homers over two starts … and only 4 runs.

Now, of course, this is exactly the kind of talk I would not accept as a valid justification for Josh Tomlin's early-season numbers, and frankly, Tomlin had a longer stretch of even more success.

But here's the thing: while I cheerfully admit bias as both a human being and a fan, I at least understand how Mitch Talbot gets guys out.

His ball moves like a motherfucker.

Look, is a WHIP of 1.63 any good? No, that's awful. It doesn't help that Talbot doesn't have a single start this season in which he's walked fewer than 2 guys.

(To his credit, he hasn't walked more than 3, either, but that's still not good.)

And while I understand that you're not allowed to remove one data point from a small dataset and make any grand statistically-significnat pronouncements, it's worth noting that if you remove his first start from the DL return, Talbot's H/9 drops from 1.40 to 1.09.

The problem for his WHIP is going to remain those walks: removing that start changes his WHIP from 1.63 to … 1.60.

I find it mildly amazing that you can remove 14 baserunners in 3 innings and change one's WHIP by a baserunner every two months.

So here's the thing: I don't think Mitch Talbot is truly excellent. I'm not sure he actually has the POTENTIAL to be excellent. B
ut he has an inspirational weapon against left-handed hitters in a changeup that moves more from left to right (as Talbot faces the plate) than any single breaking pitch thrown by a left-handed starter for Cleveland since … C.C. Sabathia?

(Cliff Lee's slider didn't break a lot, and his curve was more vertical.)

Certainly more than Laffey, Huff, or Sowers.

And his other pitches have a lot of late movement as well, which probably goes toward explaining the 2-3 walks per game.

I believe that Talbot literally doesn't know in which six-inch segment his pitch will end up.

Can this pitcher win in the majors? Sure. So the question becomes, is this something Talbot learns to harness with greater consistency as he throws more bulk innings against major-leaguers (it's worth remembering he's only 27), or would such harnessing require Talbot to cut back on the movement and make him less effective?

Right now, I'm willing to look in a glass-half-full manner.

The unspoken concern about Talbot, of course, is durability. In this way, I skirt the issue.

Anyway, he pitched well against the Yanks: giving up a homer to Alex Rodriguez puts Talbot in no interesting company whatsoever, and as with Carmona, if anyone ever bothered to actually WATCH TALBOT PITCH, that person would have to understand that when your stock in trade is large movement, especially when your best pitch is one that moves in to right-handers, then hitting a batter is not entirely blue moon territory, especially in a light mist. Sheesh.

10) Terror on the basepaths!

The Indians stole 5 bases on Sunday off Fred Garcia and Russ Martin. It made no difference whatsoever.

11) Nice hose!

While I applauded Mike Brantley's throw to second to blorp down Jorge Posada, I would like this

heading to be somewhat less than an outright lie. Sadly, it is not.

12) Musings on an Offense in Despair

Asdrubal Cabrera had a nice 3-for-5 day.

Matt LaPorta drilled a two-run single off Mariano Rivera, in which he should take justified pride.

Carlos Santana hit a home run.

Bob Phelps got his first major-league RBI, with two outs, no less. By walking.

Jack Hannahan reached base 5 times this weekend, second only to Grady Sizemore, who reached 7 times. Each player used a multi-walk game to propel them.

The Indians left double-digit numbers of runners on base in only two of the three games. They went 3-for-10 with runners in scoring position in one game, and a combined 0-for-16 in the other two.
Guess in which game they scored 7 runs.

13) Hey, we had one of those!

As much as it pains me that he's doing it for the Yankees, it's pretty neat to see Bartolo Colon pitch effectively.