Sometime after finishing the Early Bird Special on Saturday and en route to the shuffleboard courts at **Del Boca Vista** (remember…I am "retired", according to some), news broke that the Indians would be picking up the $7M option on Fausto Carmona and declining the $9M option on Grady Sizemore, deciding to pay the $500K to decline Sizemore's 2012 option. The decision was made official on Monday, but the Indians weren't satisfied with just those two moves before the end of October as the Tribe added Derek Lowe from Atlanta for non-prospect LHP Chris Jones, assuming only $5M of the $15M left on Lowe's contract. And suddenly, before clocks were even turned back and with leaves still on the trees on the North Coast, the Hot Stove season was upon us, quite unexpectedly.

Thus, with a bit to get to, let's start to take some of these things in order, starting with the option decisions that faced the Tribe with Grady and Fausto. While this topic is something that I've already spilled too much e-ink on already (and I'm not going to provide the links…because you've already read them) and with the acknowledgement that Carmona's option was essentially guaranteed once news hit that Cookie Carrasco would get the Tommy John treatment, the big news here is that Grady Sizemore has likely played his last game as a Cleveland Indian. Sure, it's possible that Sizemore explores his options on the FA market and ends up returning to Cleveland, but it would seem that Sizemore would intrigue enough teams this off-season (and the teams with a bigger margin for error than the Tribe) that he's going to wind up elsewhere, particularly given the dearth of other OF options on the FA market.

While there was some thought (namely in this space) that the most desirable path to keeping Sizemore on The Reservation was a re-negotiation of that $9M option into an incentive-laden deal that would run over the course of multiple years, the old saying of that "it takes two to tango" stepped in and erased any thought of that as Sizemore's agent essentially told the

Indians that they could either pick up the $9M option or pay $500K to decline it with no middle ground to find. In a way, it's not difficult to understand Sizemore's angle on this as, though he's been playing in MLB since 2005, he's "only" earned about $24M, doing so by virtue of him signing the contract that bought out his arbitration (and a couple of FA years) lo those many years ago. While $24M is a LOT of money, it is worth providing some perspective here that TWO of Sizemore's former teammates will make more than that in 2012 alone and it's not hard to figure that Sizemore (being probably the best player on those teams of the mid-to-late-2000s…CC considered) figures that he's going to see what's out there to hopefully reclaim some of the money that he could have earned but forfeited with the deal that removed arbitration or FA as it would have been normally scheduled.

With Sizemore's Tribe career essentially (or is it probably) over, there is no doubt that the story is a sad one as the 2012 option always looked to be an absolute lock (up until probably mid-2010) as Sizemore's "club-friendly" contract was once seen the way that Evan Longoria's contract is referred to – a player choosing the security of guaranteed money early in his career at the expense of being eventually paid the "going rate" when Sizemore was unquestionably one of the game's elite talents. But the days of being considered an elite talent feel like they were a long time ago with Grady and the Indians were faced with the question of whether the $9M option represented a good deal to pay to a player that has only played in 104 games over the last two years, regardless of the pulls at the heart strings or the memories that Grady gave the team or the promise that he once so clearly represented. Of course, the answer from the organization came back with a negative and Grady will now hit the open market for the first time in his career as the Indians saved $8.5M (there was a $500K buyout on the $9M option) with one decision, which led to the obvious question of where (or if) the Tribe would use that money to improve the team for the 2012 season.

Before speculation could begin on the (still) underwhelming options out there to replace Sizemore in the OF, some of the answer as to the use of the money arrived with the news that the Indians traded for Derek Lowe, who wore out his welcome in Atlanta and was essentially jettisoned by the Braves, who essentially paid $10M for Lowe to NOT be on Atlanta's roster next year. Sure, they got a LH pitching prospect in Chris Jones (who, it should be noted, has spent FIVE years in the organization and has not made it past Kinston), but this was pretty much a player dump for the Braves.

So, the Indians received a player that was ostensibly "dumped" by the Braves, who paid $10M (more money than the Indians will pay anyone this year, except Hafner) to NOT have him on their team…sounds great for the Tribe, right?

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]