



The Indians were swept by the Tigers, further distancing themselves from the pre-season Division favorites and falling below .500. Ubaldo Jimenez was undone by a series of papercuts, while Justin Masterson took a more dramatic approach, and Carlos Carrasco ... well ... look, let's be honest here. If there is a point to Carlos Carrasco, it escapes Buff, who is driven to Eastern Philosophy by the recent ineptitude. Like the Indians themselves, in this endeavor he is destined to fail. The Tao of Cleveland is no Way at all.

FINAL

1

2

3

4

5

6

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

Indians (30-30)

[0

[0

[0

[0

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

3

0

0

0

2

5

10

2

Tigers (33-26)

0

3

0

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

2

1

0

1

0

X

7

12

0

W: Verlander (8-4)

L: Jimenez (4-4)

FINAL

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

[1

[2

[3

[4

[5

[6

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

Indians (30-31)

1

0

0

0

1

0

2

0

0

4

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

5

0

Tigers (34-26)

0

4

2

0

0

0

0

0

X

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

6

12

2

W: Porcello (3-3)

L: Carrasco (0-2)

S: Valverde (8)

FINAL

1

2

3

4

5

6

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

Indians (30-32)

[2

[0

[1

[1

[1

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

2

p

4

o

11

14

o

Tigers (35-26)

o

p

o

The B-List: 6/7 - 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 12 2013 7:22 AM

[3]

[0]

[0]

[0]

[0]

[0]

[3]

[11]

[1]

W: J. Alvarez (1-0)

L: Masterson (8-5)

S: Benoit (3)

*That which does not kill me still irritates the crap out of me.
-- Fred Nietzsche, paraphrased*

1) Philosophical meanderings

When I was a younger man, I was called to Jury Duty. I never understood why people thought of Jury Duty as something horrifying, something that should be avoided at all costs. Sure, I've been busy at work and in my life, but it always seemed like an opportunity for a Life Experience. As long as you don't get sequestered on the O.J. jury or anything (which is pretty damned unlikely, and anyone reading this article is likely to get thrown out of the room for something like that because you have access to media and take the time to read on occasion), it's a day of your life you spend learning why law is really pretty unglamorous. In the three times I've actually been on the list, one case got settled while I was filling out the forms, in another I was Juror 17 for a twelve-juror panel (had five people been disqualified, I was ready ... for a speeding violation), and in one case, I was actually chosen Foreman because I produced the following exchange in the empanelment questioning:

Prosecuting Attorney: Would anyone here have a problem convicting someone of an offense that could be considered to be harming only themselves (sic)?

Me: What does the LAW say?

Prosecuting Attorney: Excuse me?

Me: This is not the Supreme Court: it's not up to me to determine if the law is just. It's up to me to determine if the person violated the law. What does the law SAY?

Prosecutor and Defense: You're in.

The case turned out to be pretty stupid: a young woman was arrested for Public Intoxication on suspicion of using an illicit hallucinogen. The sum total of the evidence is that the woman was talking to herself and had enlarged pupils. That's it. That was the whole case. The trial took four hours. The jury deliberation took 90 seconds. I got elected Foreman because I took notes. And while one could argue that the entire affair was a colossal waste of time, I felt I learned a valuable lesson: if you are conspicuously paying attention, people seem inclined to attribute a much deeper level of understanding to you. While this was probably technically true, it is only because you can multiply very small numbers by very big ones and still end up with a pretty small number. As my old boss once said, "If I know one more relevant fact than you do, then I am the expert."

Anyway, whenever I'd fill out the Juror Form, I'd always make sure to enter "Taoist" as my "Religious Affiliation." At the time, I liked the image of Texan Computer Programmer as Taoist, and secretly hoped someone would call me on it, but the fact is, I'm not actually very Taoist at all. I'm more Taoist than, say, Mormon, but not only do I not have special insight into the Tao Te Ching or anything, I'm actually wired as a Western Citizen to struggle mightily against many

of the basic tenets of the Philosophy. Taoism seeks to align one's life with Nature, and while I appreciate Natural Beauty and such things, I'm allergic to a significant portion of it and really, really like air conditioning and preserved food. The Taoist ideal seeks a path of minimal resistance, treating still water as the model for a harmonious life. Water has value without struggling against anything: it flows, it stands, it never tries to go uphill or through an obstacle. Problems in life come from struggling against nature or others: in this way, the Taoist has something in common with the Buddhist. As an American born in the Sixties, this goes against the very fiber of my being: I like doing exceptional things. I view art as striving for something higher. I would like to write prose or music or humor that strikes people in a way they haven't been struck before. The very principle of American Success is to provide something to the world that makes one stand out, that makes one interesting in some way. But in the words of the Tao Te Ching:

Passage 2:

Not to value and employ men of superior ability is the way to keep the people from rivalry among themselves; not to prize articles which are difficult to procure is the way to keep them from becoming thieves; not to show them what is likely to excite their desires is the way to keep their minds from disorder.

Therefore the sage, in the exercise of his government, empties their minds, fills their bellies, weakens their wills, and strengthens their bones.

He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it). When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.

I mean ... that's pretty much the opposite of the most basic premises of the value system I was brought up with. "Superior ability" isn't just desired, it's the entire POINT of whom we "employ" and "value." Who goes into a job interview hoping to find someone who doesn't at least display the potential for doing better than the last guy? What person goes into an election hoping that the person they're voting for will keep him ignorant and poor? A Taoist, I suppose, but I mean, this is the level to which I really lied on my Juror Form. I can appreciate the basic (Buddhist) contention that we suffer because we desire, not because we lack. I just can't actually GET there.

What does this have to do with the Cleveland Indians? Well, consider how much less suffering I

would have if I were able to simply let the results stand as they come. Rather than struggling against the losses and failures, I would openly accept them without resistance, knowing that this is their rightful place in the world. Rather than trying to change the process by which the results are attained, I would with calm satisfaction let them wash over me as embrace their nothingness. This would not be a nihilistic existential sort of acceptance, but more an appreciation for what the Indians can show me about life, the universe, and everything.

Passage 19:

If we could renounce our sageness and discard our wisdom, it would be better for the people a hundredfold. If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly. If we could renounce our artful contrivances and discard our (scheming for) gain, there would be no thieves nor robbers.

It's worth a shot.

2) The Tao of Ubaldo

Passage 13:

Favour and disgrace would seem equally to be feared; honour and great calamity, to be regarded as personal conditions (of the same kind).

What is meant by speaking thus of favour and disgrace? Disgrace is being in a low position (after the enjoyment of favour). The getting that (favour) leads to the apprehension (of losing it), and the losing it leads to the fear of (still greater calamity):--this is what is meant by saying that favour and disgrace would seem equally to be feared.

And what is meant by saying that honour and great calamity are to be (similarly) regarded as personal conditions? What makes me liable to great calamity is my having the body (which I call myself); if I had not the body, what great calamity could come to me?

In Friday's start, Ubaldo Jimenez was matched against Justin Verlander. To beat Justin Verlander, you have to depend on Verlander being "off," or you have to pitch exceptionally well.

Verlander wasn't exactly "on," giving up three runs in seven innings, but Ubaldo most certainly did not pitch exceptionally well. It wasn't all terrible, of course: consider the Tigers' 3-run second inning. A 405-foot homer is most certainly not "exceptional goodness." However, after this, Jimenez allowed a walk (four straight balls after having Jhonny Peralta down 0-2), a fielder's choice, then a frightful error by Nick Swisher at first, and another walk (on another 3-2 count) to load the bases. After Andy Dirks struck out, embracing the space between objects that Taoists find so appealing, Jimenez induced a ground ball to short that turned into an RBI single, then walked Miggy Cabrera to force in a third run. This speaks to Jimenez' primary weakness, that of control. And yet, have we not been taught that control is illusory, and that grasping it more tightly simply results in us possessing less of it? In Jimenez' case, at least, this appears to be so.

His other two runs were more mundane: a double, a single, a second single, and then a double play induced by his replacement Matt Albers.

Does this qualify as a bad start? Yeah, 5 runs (3 earned) on 7 hits and 3 walks in 3-plus (the plus stands for Extra Fail!) innings qualifies as pretty bad. His previous two starts were quite good, so instead of worrying about this start as a self-standing entity, I choose to embrace the spaces between Ubaldo Jimenez starts and consider that on the season, his OAVG is only .239, and if he threw more strikes, Nature would reward him with more Success

3) The Tao of Carlos

This is not from the Tao Te Ching, but rather a parable I once read.

A Taoist sage was walking with an Important Official, who did not appreciate the Way of the Tao (which is technically redundant, but bear with me here). He pointed to a gnarled old tree, which was severely bent and didn't have any limbs straight enough to be harvested for boards. It had a disease that prevented it from yielding fruit.

"Look at this tree," the official said. "You Taoists always talk about how we should embrace nature and revel in its intrinsic value, yet this tree is completely useless. It's too gnarled to be cut into useful building material. It doesn't even bear fruit. How can you tell me this is a wonderful thing, when it's utterly useless?"

“What’s wrong with being useless?” the sage replied, and lay down in the shade of the tree to take a comfortable nap.

I must admit, I don’t really see the parallel of this story with the pitching of Carlos Carrasco, except insofar as Carrasco’s pitching was useless. Perhaps if he stands very still, you can take a nap in the shade he produces.

4) The Tao of Justin

Passage 36:

When one is about to take an inspiration, he is sure to make a (previous) expiration; when he is going to weaken another, he will first strengthen him; when he is going to overthrow another, he will first have raised him up; when he is going to despoil another, he will first have made gifts to him:--this is called 'Hiding the light (of his procedure).'

The soft overcomes the hard; and the weak the strong.

Well, YOU come up with a better explanation for allowing a three-run homer to Don Kelly.

5) The Tao of Ryan

Passage 59:

For regulating the human (in our constitution) and rendering the (proper) service to the heavenly, there is nothing like moderation.

It is only by this moderation that there is effected an early return (to man's normal state).

Getting a couple of starts against lefties Drew Smyly and Jose Alvarez, Ryan Raburn rose to the task by banging out a pair of homers, although one came off right-handed Luke Putkonen. In Sunday's game, Raburn's solo shot off Alvarez represented the sum total of Cleveland's feeble offense, while on Saturday his two-run shot produced two of his three RBI. Across the two games, the Indians scored five runs, and Raburn drove in four.

Of course, he also racked up 3 strikeouts in 7 at-bats (he did draw a walk Saturday) and went 1-for-4 with RISP, so it may be that Raburn could embrace man's normal state with a little less moderation.

6) Passage 59 revisited

The Indians went 3-for-8 with runners in scoring position and scored 5 runs on Friday.

The Indians went 2-for-19 with runners in scoring position and scored 5 runs on Saturday and Sunday combined.

Listen: the passage says, "moderation." Not "exceptional badness." That is not the Tao. The Tao embraces inaction and nothingness, not egregious failure. The distinction is subtle, to be sure, but not undetectable.

7) Like the mighty oak

Passage 63:

(It is the way of the Tao) to act without (thinking of) acting; to conduct affairs without (feeling the) trouble of them; to taste without discerning any flavor; to consider what is small as great, and a few as many; and to recompense injury with kindness.

And thus we address Nick Swisher's and Mark Reynolds' defense.

8) Credit Where Credit is Due Dept.

There is no appropriate passage for this, but it should be noted that the offense was not thoroughly inept: Mike Bourn, Jason Kipnis, Mark Reynolds, and Drew Stubbs each banged out two hits Friday, and Carlos Santana did it Sunday. Both of Santana's hits were doubles. Stubbs hit a homer off ersatz closer Jose Valverde.

The only Taoist element to this is that they were all pretty meaningless.

9) A Contrast in Styles

Matt Langwell posted two scoreless outings, including 2 innings of work on Saturday. The bullpen Saturday was exceptional, throwing 4 scoreless innings with two hits allowed (one each by Cody Allen and Joe Smiff): as a whole the bullpen pitched 10 innings and gave up one earned run.

The "contrast" to which I allude is to the starters, who were uniformly crummy. Well, Masterson wasn't terrible. Carrasco was terrible enough for two, though, so it works out in the end. This is more of a "Yin and Yang" thing than pure Taoism, but it does represent a balance of some sort.

10) Words to live by

Passage 68:

... Thus we say, 'He ne'er contends, And therein is his might.' □

And so the great sage Laozi foretold the Cleveland Indians of my lifetime.

11) In which the author finds his depth by finding that which is greater than it

Passage 60:

Governing a great state is like cooking small fish.

Yeah, thanks, Laozi. You and Vardaman. I got nothin'.

12) Public Service for the Google Search Engine

Passage 79:

When a reconciliation is effected (between two parties) after a great animosity, there is sure to be a grudge remaining (in the mind of the one who was wrong). And how can this be beneficial (to the other)?

Jack Zduriencik ... um ... inaction ... er ... spaces in between ... uh ... Aw, screw it. Just fire Eric Wedge already.