After losing one in heartbreaking fashion Monday night, the Tribe came back and stole one in an equally thrilling fashion last evening. Ryan Garko tied the game with two outs in the 9th inning with a pinch hit home run, then won it in the 11th with a broken-bat single. Buff analyzes the win in a way that only he can in today's B-List.

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	**R**	**H**	**E**
White Sox (41-51)	0												0	0
Indians (55-38)	2												0	0

W: Betancourt (2-0) L: D. Day (0-1)

I'm tellin' ya, we lose this game last year.

1) Full Disclosure

One of the things that makes performance evaluation maddening is the concept of a baseline. That is, if my 14-year-old brought home a 0 score on a Differential Equations exam, it wouldn't faze me much, beyond the concept of him being administered a Differential Equations exam. If he brings home a report on the tropical rain forests of modern Alaska, I'll be more disappointed. I have certain expectations for what he "ought" to be able to do, based on experience and past performance. For example, I literally had a discussion last night in which several people heaped praise on Mike Rouse for making a 10-pitch *out*. I am no longer particularly disappointed in Mike Rouse making an out: it is part of his skill set at this point. It's what makes him so charming, in a sense.

So part of what makes a game like Monday's so teeth-gratingly infuriating is that Eric Wedge is obviously capable of managerial performances like last night. From trying to create something on the basepaths with Rouse stealing with two outs (it didn't work, but I appreciate the concept in a one-run game: remember, evaluate decisions based on the state before the decision, not the result), to pinch-hitting Ryan Garko in the ninth, to the four-man defensive weave that allowed Garko to make his appearance, to bringing in Joe Borowski to face the bottom of the lineup in the 10th so that Rafael Betancourt could face the top of the order in the 11th (and potentially the meat thereafter), last night's game was well-managed, and Wedge deserves some degree of credit for the win. (Not as much as Garko, but hey.)

So look: Eric Wedge is certainly not an idiot. He is clearly not a talentless yes-man lummox in the dugout. But I really think he could do a better job in a higher percentage of the 162 games. That's all I'm asking for. I'm just not convinced I get that from Wedge himself … but

I got it last night, and I'm grateful.

2) The man of the match

Ryan F. Garko!

Left out of the starting lineup to allow Kelly Shoppach to catch Paul Byrd, Garko was brought in well after Byrd vacated the premises to face portly closer Bobby Jenks with a man on first, nobody out, and a two-run deficit in the bottom of the ninth. Garko hit the first strike he saw over the left-field wall (quite a bit over the left-field wall, actually) to tie the game, saved from the requisite pummeling only by the fact that the game was, in fact, not actually over.

Two innings later, Garko was buried under an avalanche of debris as Travis Hafner, inspired by the new "Transformers" movie, dropped a Volkswagen on Garko after his game-winning broken-bat single. In two plate appearances, Garko collected half the Indians' RBI, going 2-for-2 with a run scored and 3 RBI.

3) Insightful insight

Paul Byrd started off bad, then was tremendous, and then was bad again before being briefly tremendous.

Actually, the middle of Byrd's outing really *was* tremendous, as he retired 10 in a row, including perfect 2nd, 3rd, and 4th innings. Byrd didn't start with his best control, hitting A.J. Pierzynski (huzzah!) and walking Paul Konerko on four pitches. However, staked to a two-run lead in the first, Byrd sawed through the order before getting in trouble in the fifth. After a clean single by mACKowiACK, Josh Fields hit a potential double-play ball that Rouse threw away, but fortunately, Josh Fields has been watching the 2006 Indians Baserunning Blunder Instructional Video ("Not used by back-to-back-to-back AAU champs!") and was thrown out going to third on a ground ball back to Byrd. After that the wheels fell off: a single by Owens, a 5-pitch walk, a two-run single, and a ground rule double, and Byrd had given back the lead with an extra run tacked on. He did retire the Sox in order in the sixth … well, after the leadoff homer by Jermaine Dye.

All told, Byrd's start was more remarkable for the 2 walks than anything else: 6 hits and 4 runs in 6 innings, for a sub-quality start that ate some innings. Woo woo.

4) A contrast in styles

Raffy Perez came out to pitch the 7th. Perez threw 9 pitches,

all nine for strikes, and allowed only a bunt single while striking out Jim Thome on three pitches (huzzah!).

After retiring the first two batters in the 8th, Perez gave up a single to mACKowiACK, bringing in Tom Mastny to face the right-handed Josh Fields. On the night, Perez threw 21 strikes in 25 pitches in 1 2/3 scoreless innings.

Mastny promptly walked Fields on five pitches. He then started Jose Uribe 2-0, but got him to foul out to catcher after finally finding the strike zone.

In the 9th, Mastny got Owens to fly out, then gave up a single to Iguchi (hit to Mastny himself), a looooong double to Thome, and intentionally walked Paul Konerko to load the bases.

Now, I'd obviously rather have Perez out there with the bases loaded. However, Mastny can strike out hitters (8.51 K/9) and can induce a ground ball, so no sense crying over spilled Raffy.

Mastny then hit Pierzynski on a 2-2 pitch. (No huzzah.) And then got Dye to ground into a double play.

Remember what I said about baselines and maddeningness? Mastny ended up throwing 18 strikes and 18 balls (albeit 4 of the balls were intentional). If the man ever gets his command back, I think he'll be a valuable bullpen pitcher. Until then, he's a guy who will give up a run by hitting a batter with the bases loaded.

5) Sotto voce

Joe Borowski struck out his first two batters swinging in a perfect inning of work. He has given up a single run in two of his past eleven outings, being scoreless in the other 9. His WHIP is down to 1.39, his ERA to 5.15, and sports a 31:8 K:BB ratio. Don't tell anybody.

6) Ho Hum Dept.

Raffy Betancourt threw a perfect inning with 7 strikes in 8 pitches.

7) Cruel and unusual

Well, I think we all knew that Ozzie Guillen was unusual already, but as a guy with a shaky bullpen, there's nothing quite like Ozzie. The Indians worked the counts against starter Jon Garland all night, including a back-to-back sequence of a 7-pitch walk by Shoppach and a 10-pitch groundout by Rouse in the 2nd. Garland had already thrown over 70 pitches before starting the 4th inning. To his credit, he was a little more efficient the rest of the way, and he outpitched Byrd in giving up only 3 runs in his 6 innings, but he threw 122 pitches to do it, including *starting* the 6th with over 95.

It's one thing to not trust your bullpen, but

I'm not sure if I endorse cutting off your Jon Garland to spite your Kenny Williams.

(Ironically, knuckleball pitcher Charlie Haeger pitcher two scoreless glass-bruising innings before yielding to Jenks, suggesting that that sixth inning was somewhat ill-advised.)

By the way, I have yet to come up with a compelling reason why Guillen let Day pitch to Garko in the 11th with a runner on second and first base open and Mike Rouse on deck.

8) Terror on the basepaths!

There is good terror, and there is bad terror. The Indians did have two innings end with runners being caught trying to steal second base, but I attribute that to "trying to make something happen" in a lowish-scoring game, and at least they were fast runners with the near-top of the lineup coming to the plate. I would like more success, of course: I'll complain about the execution, but not the plan.

Jason Michaels, on the other hand, was a one-man terror in the 11th: after hitting

the ball to right to lead off the inning, Michaels challenged Jermaine Dye's arm to leg out a double. This is a crucial base in a game needing one run: getting into scoring position with no outs is very much better than either being on first or having one out. I mean, sure, that's intuitively obvious, but the magnitude is like a half-run of expectancy there. It's a big base.

Garko followed with a blooper that could possibly have been caught by Jose Uribe had he had Flubber shoes or been Kevin Garnett (I think Zydrunas Ilgauskas would have had a shot, but his tiptoe-vertical leap

might not have been enough). Still, it wasn't that far from being caught, and for Michaels to be running on that play either shows remarkable depth perception, significant chutzpah, or reckless abandon.

Ask me if I care which today.

9) Full Disclosure, Part II

Trot Nixon had a pair of hits last night

in four trips to the plate. Not only did he have two hits, but one of them produced the only two-out RBI the Indias had, and the other was getting on base in front of Ryan Garko in the ninth off a hard-throwing closer I was convinced Nixon no longer had the ability to touch with a tennis racket. That's not a nice night at the plate, that's a CRUCIAL night at the plate. That's tremendous. In Toast Watch terms, at least for one night, Nixon was an unripened wheat stalk.

10) Duly Noted

Victor Martinez laced his 25th double of the season, going 2-for-4 with an RBI and 2 runs scored.

Jhonny Peralta went 3-for-5.