As the Indians head into Game 5, with the possibility of sending the Red Sox where they sent the Yankees, one can't help but marvel at the tenacity and heart of the Indians team as they have stared down a much-more-ballyhooed opponent with an us-against-the-world-mentality to have the possibility to overcome (what some called) long odds to come away victorious in the ALCS. But this story sounds familiar, doesn't it? Paulie C thinks so ...

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Isn't it the plot of every Rocky movie (none were made after IV, as far as I'm willing to acknowledge) and don't the Indians just feel like Rocky, going against all odds to prove the skeptics wrong with their determination and (here comes that word) grit?

Specifically, doesn't the way that the ALCS has played out nearly mirror **the final fight in Rocky IV?**

Don't believe me?

Consider how the series and how the bout played out by **watching it here.**

Coming into the game (between stories on the Fall of the Yankee Empire), the talk was how the Indians would have C.C. and Fausto to go against Boston, but how the Red Sox could counter with Beckett and Schilling and how the "Holy Trinity" of Manny, Papi, and Lowell were just too much for the Indians to overcome. Similarly, Rocky was facing a force of nature, one that it was better to get out of the way of (while watching the movie in the theater, my sister thought...and will still contend...that Apollo's head flew off) than to face.

But put up their dukes these underdogs did, in unfriendly environments with the Boys in Bristol and the FOX Corp. playing the role of the Gorbachev and the boys in the Politburo Box. Early on, it seemed that what everybody said would happen was unfolding before our very eyes. Watching Drago batter Rocky in the early rounds , remember how Friday night felt as C.C. walked batter after batter as the Fenway Faithful knocked back another Sam Adams, certain of a quick series. Watching your workhorse, your go-to guy take a beating like that was not just hard to watch, it was hard not to get disheartened.

All of Cleveland got ready for bed on Friday thinking, "Well, these guys were supposed to be good and they sure as hell are, let's hope Fausto can stop the bleeding." Saturday's game started and Boston started throwing Carmona around as effortlessly and as fiercely as Drago unleashed combination after combination (with a suplex thrown in for good measure) on the Italian Stallion in the 2nd round. Just like the Rock, the Tribe was "tired and bleeding, but on their feet...if on the run". But the Indians sat there on Saturday night - staying close, tying the game, taking the punches, getting Game 2 into extra frames, biding their time, and perhaps playing a little game of rope-a-dope.

Waiting, waiting...

Suddenly, seemingly backed into a corner, the Indians landed a punch out of nowhere, drawing unexpected blood with the surprise bloop from Trot Nixon and the Red Sox reeled back as if they were Drago checking their face to see what this wet stuff was coming out of his eyebrow. Dazed, the Red Sox gave up hit after hit to the Tribe as the folks in Boston, like Brigitte Nielson, stood and wondered what had happened. Had this impenetrable block of granite, cruising to its destiny, been exposed by this little speck...this nothing of a team?

Unfazed and perhaps with their confidence buoyed, the Indians just kept coming until Frank the Tank's moonshot disappeared into the New England night and the Red Sox were left to sit in their corner wondering what they had gotten themselves into. This was supposed to be a coronation - the Yankees were already on the golf course, the three remaining teams in the LCS looked like tomato cans for the Red Sox to tee off on. In the Indians' locker room, Wedge convinced his boys that "they had them hurt bad and worried because you cut ‘em, you hurt ‘em...because they aren't machines - they're men".

And like that the momentum swung distinctly in the Indians' direction as the "piece of iron" kept scrapping as the Indians came out in Game 3 and 4 matching punches with every ball that Jake flung sinking towards the dirt and every time Byrdie sent the Sawx flailing at what looked like meatballs. But the Red Sox (like Drago) didn't have a glass jaw and stiffened their backs a little bit as they fought their way into the games throwing combinations like the back-to-back-to-back jobs in Game 4, albeit in fruitless causes. You think Manny's admiration job in Game 4 is akin to Drago signaling to the crowd that everything was in

order as Rome burned around them?

Every time the Red Sox looked to be poised to make a run, the Tribe simply pulled themselves off the ropes or off of the mat to grind through innings, relying on Jenny Lewis, Senor Slo-Mo, and JoeBo to guard the head to ward off the punches flying in their direction, as the Red Sox looked on, disbelieving, from their dugout that this team was still around - still throwing punches and still coming at them with everything they had.

Suddenly, a funny thing happened - just as the Rock chopped down the Big Russian, and as the Indians showed their mettle, the nation saw this team not as a "Little Engine That Could" but as a force to be reckoned with - a team with the heart and the guts to go toe-to-toe with the "elite", and stare them unflinchingly in the eye. Theo Epstein sat there in his Diamond Box in Game 4 and played the Gorbachev role, watching this team with the tiny payroll and (allegedly) without the heavy lumber that the Red Sox were bringing to the stadium systematically put his team away, incredulous that this could even be happening.

As Game 5 dawns, the teams sit in their corners, imploring each other to "come on", to throw their best punches and their best pitchers (Hey, C.C. - to be The Man, you have to beat The Man) to find out, once-and-for-all, who the true champion is. Let the broadcasters and writers do their best to spin this series into some sort of surprise - the combatants know that they're up against a worthy opponent and want to score the knockout punch.

Tribe - it's the 15th round.

There's no stopping us now...this is our round.

We start and we don't stop.

All your strength, all your power, all your love...everything you've got.

Right now.

To win, you got to knock them out.

You gotta punch and punch and punch until you can't punch no more.

Do it now...NOW!