Starved for a victory, the Indians romped to a 8-2 win over the White Sox last night behind the right arm of Aaron Laffey and a first inning grand salami from Franklin Gutierrez. In today's B-List, Buff said last night's game was everything he expected to see: walks that come around to score, a crushing multi-run homer, simple bad defense, complex bad defense, runners stranded in scoring position ... except it was Chicago doing all these things. Tribe going for the series win this afternoon in Jake Westbrook's return to the rotation.

FINAL				**RHE**
White Sox (28-23)	0	0	2	0
Indians (24-28)	(3rd		4.5 GB CHW)	5

W: Laffey (3-3) L: Buehrle (2-6)

It's strange: there was everything I expected from a White Sox game: walks that come around to score, a crushing multi-run homer, simple bad defense, complex bad defense, runners stranded in scoring position ... except it was *Chicago* doing all these things.

1) Aaron Laffey

This was clearly Laffey's worst start since his first, the fluky nature of which I've written about in excess already. It is his first start since then to be of fewer than seven innings. It is the first to have more hits than innings pitched. It tied his season high for walks allowed, and set a new low for strikeouts. It matched his highest runs allowed since that first start.

The fact that these numbers are 6 IP, 7 H, 2 BB, and 2 RA (1 earned) tells you what kind of season Laffey is having.

Laffey was not particularly sharp last night: he gave up a pair of doubles, one of which directly led to both runs (Toby Hall's double was an RBI and he scored on the subsequent single). He walked consecutive batters in the 5th, both on two-strike counts. His 58:41 strike-to-ball ratio was pretty pedestrian. (Actually, that's pretty bad.) He threw a number of pitches high in the zone, and he doesn't really throw hard enough or with enough late movement to get away with that on a regular basis.

But he also induced two ground ball double plays, and got a third gift DP when Alexei Ramirez was doubled off second on a fly ball to left. Except for a Sabathian **Inning of Crap™** in the 3rd, aided by Asdrubal Cabrera's first Sweeney Todd error, and a bout of wildness in the 5th, aided by Asdrubal Cabrera's second Sam From Brady Bunch error, Laffey had a pretty nice game, limiting the Sox to single baserunners and generally erasing them.

The question of how large the magnitude of the injustice would

be were Laffey sent back to Beefalo to make room for Jake Westbrook has largely been rendered moot by the injury to Fausto Carmona. Carmona will be out for up to a month, which allows the current rotation to remain settled until then, unless there are further injuries.

Which is kind of the point, of course: Laffey may have begun as the "6th starter" when the season started, but at this point he's one of our healthy 5 of 6 starters. In other words, I wouldn't get so hung up on the fact that he was the 6th starter any more than San Antonio fans care that Manu Ginobili comes off the bench (a majority of the time). He's going to get his starts, and it doesn't really matter whether they were the starts from the first week of April or the last week in May. Right now, we have five good healthy starters, and the reason for this is that we had *six* good healthy starters. (Whether Paul Byrd is truly good or just performing that way is a matter of conjecture: still, his WHIP of 1.20 and ERA of 4.10 are quite solid to this point.)

Sure, there's certainly a part of me that would like to see Byrd moved for a bat because "we don't need him." Except ... well, we *do* need him. I know that Sowers could potentially replace Byrd, but I hate playing with that thin a margin (replacing Sowers is someone really, really undependable). Anyway, Laffey's pitching really well, remarkably well, and it's a real asset to have him in the rotation.

2) Smashing Franklin

From the perspective of a Cleveland fan, the first inning had already produced a prodigious rally when Ben Francisco lofted a fly ball to medium-deep left field to score Jamey Carroll from third base. Carroll had doubled and advanced on a wild pitch that Mark Buehrle cleverly bounced at Francisco's feet. Since scoring a run in an inning constitutes a "big inning" for the Indians these days, I sat back and waited until the next run would score, in possibly the 6th or 7th inning, probably by the White Sox.

As if a wild pitch weren't enough for me to question whether Buehrle had his best control, though, Buehrle proceded to walk Victor Martinez on six pitches, one of which Victor considered swinging at but thought better of it. He went 3-1 to Jhonny Peralta, and although Peralta kept his "swing at at least one pitch out of the strike zone" streak alive at Every Game He's Ever Played, Peralta did eventually line a single to left before Ryan Garko walked on five pitches, swinging at nary a one of them.

To the plate strode Franklin Gutierrez. In past seasons, Gutierrez has hit left-handed pitching well, although he's not doing so well this year at .231. His average is actually higher against right-handers at .240. However, most of his meaningful power has come against port-siders: he is slugging .564 against them, while a paltry .280 against righties. Seven of his nine hits against lefties have been for extra bases, while only 4 of 24 against right-handers. Anyway, Buehrle actually threw a decent 2-1 pitch, but Gutierrez timed it properly, and although I didn't think it looked special off the bat (near the end, as I recall), it sailed just over the left-field wall for a grand slam and started the Indians on their way to victory.

Gutierrez was later hit on the thigh with a pitch by Ehren Wasserman hard enough that he was pulled for a pinch-runner later in the game, so he may get a day or two off, but that was a nice blow from The Newt.

3) Power Stroke

Before the Barnum and Bailey portion of the inning, Jhonny Peralta and Ryan Garko teamed to score the Indians' sixth run with back-to-back doubles in the bottom of the 6th. Garko's in particular was of the Ground Rule variety and was a well-struck ball.

Peralta is on a bit of a mini-tear: after an atrocious 3-for-31 start to May, he's gone 13-for-45 with 7 extra-base hits in his past 12 games, getting hits in 9 of those games. Garko hasn't been as pseudo-hot, but he does have a hit in 8 of his last 12 games, including two games in which he made a single plate appearance. As importantly for Garko, he's drawn 3 walks against 3 strikeouts in his past five games: part of what made April barely palatable was that he boasted a positive 14:11 BB:K ratio. He's at 18:23 on the season.

The Indians managed 5 extra-base hits against Buehrle, including a double by Jamey Carroll and Andy Marte's first of the season.

4) Snide Aside

If you are giving up doubles to Jamey Carroll and Andy Marte, topping out at 87, and not throwing your breaking ball for strikes, how are you, in the guise of Mark Buehrle, distinguishable from Paul Byrd, except that you throw left-handed and have a head like an unshaven balloon?

5) The best-laid plans of mice, men, and Eric Wedge

With Travis Hafner hurting, Jhonny Peralta was slotted into the DH position while Asdrubal Cabrera slid from second to short. This made a certain degree of sense, in that Cabrera is the superior defensive shortstop and Aaron Laffey normally induces a number of ground balls. Besides, Peralta, freed from the requirement to stay conscious between plate appearances, banged out

a pair of hits, so that element worked well.

Now, note the presence of the word "normally" in the sentence above. Because last night, Asdrubal Cabrera was bloody awful.

Cabrera's first error was relatively pedestrian, simply making a horrendous throw on a ground ball that temporarily blinded Ryan Garko with its awfulness. (Actually it got up in the sun to blind Garko, but it was still awful.) That baserunner scored Chicago's first run.

His second error, though, was more infuriating: after walking the first two hitters of the 5th, Laffey made a heads-up play to throw a comebacker immediately to third for the force. Marte was unable to throw quickly and accurately enough to turn the rare 1-5-3 double play, but after Laffey diabolically induced

Carlos Quentin to foul a ball off his testicles, Quentin popped out and Laffey induced the next hitter to ground into a routine ground ball to short.

Leaping on the ball with cat-like quickness, Cabrera cleaved the ball neatly in two with a Anthony Bourdain-signed knife, then lightly fricasseed the halves in butter and lemon. Because he was preoccupied with not allowing the butter to scorch, Jermaine Dye had ample time to reach first safely.

But even this doesn't fully qualify Cabrera's night: on a double play in the third, Cabrera grotesquely flailed at the ball before getting it to second: I have to believe that Dye was not running hard out of the box, for he somehow still managed to be thrown out after that.

He wasn't actually very good at the dish, either, but that's not necessarily something I'm going to get down on him for. I don't know if he's capable of hitting well, but I KNOW he can play defense better than that.

6) March of the Gladiators

(No, really, that's what it's called. Go look it up.)

After the consecutive doubles in the 6th, Franklin Gutierrez was hit by the new reliever and Andy Marte sacrificed the runners to second and third for Asdrubal Cabrera. Now, this is a pretty strange thought: sacrifice an out so that our Very Worst Hitter can come to the plate. Well, it does keep Marte from grounding

into a career-ending double play, and Cabrera does get to bat from his more-natural left side. Still, Cabrera struck out looking and Grady Sizemore was intentionally walked to load the bases with two outs.

After a brief time out to afix large red noses, puffy shirt buttons, and large, floppy shoes, the White Sox pitched to Jamey Carroll, who meekly grounded to second base. Alexei Ramirez scooped up the ball, and with impressive aplomb, threw with one hand and squirted Paul Konerko in the eye with a large seltzer bottle with the other. Konerko, momentarily distracted, dropped the ball, pulled fifty-three handkerchiefs tied together out of his pants, and fell on his backside. Everyone was safe, and Garko scored, niftily skirting the large cannon filled

with confetti catcher Toby Hall had set up near the plate.

Ben Francisco then took a strike as White Sox infielders began spinning plates on long sticks. He took a ball, fouled off a pitch, and worked the count to 3-2. At this point, each infielder was distracted by a monkey, and third baseman Pablo Ozuna had been incapacitated when the large blob of pizza dough he was attempting to spin in the air fell onto his head, temporarily blinding him.

On the full count, knowing the runners would be running on the pitch, Ehren Wasserman executed the old Fake To Third Throw To First Move That Never Works

Ever On Anyone Ever, which, naturally, caught Jamey Carroll off first base. Konerko began to follow him, then hit Ramirez in the face with a large cream pie. Ramirez, who was carrying a long board at the time, swung around, narrowly missing shortstop Orly Cabrera, who looked very pleased as he stood up, only to be struck on the backside by Ramirez' return followthrough. Konerko, giving up on Carroll because of the lack of difficulty, whirled, stepped on a roller skate, sailed around the infield, fell onto a see-saw, launched Ozuna into the air, pulled a flopping fish out of his pants, and threw the ball nowhere near Hall, who set off the cannon, turned to be struck in the face with a water balloon, staggered around, and watched David Dellucci cross the plate.

The net result was generously scored as a "triple steal," the first since 1987, and easily the most utterly nonsensical scoring decision I've seen since then.

7) The problem with writing for a family-friendly site

I am unable to write what I think Ozzie Guillen thought about the play.

8) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

Masa Kobayashi pitched quite well, giving

up a hit and whiffing two in two scoreless innings. He threw 18 strikes in 24 pitches, although several of those "strikes" were really sliders out of the zone that White Sox players swung at. He made Nick Swisher look preposterous, though.

9) Eddie Moo sighting!

Eddie Moooooooooooooo!

He ... uh ... didn't actually pitch that well. But he did throw strikes (9 in 13 pitches) and got a scoreless inning out of it. Plus he wasn't sent down for Jake Westbrook's

return, waving sayonara to Mr. Jorge Julio, designated for the wazoo, instead.

He will remain on the roster and never pitch again. But I got to see him! Moooooooo!

10) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Larry Dolan cannot eat alphabet soup because his mouth is dyslexic. That statement has as much truth as it makes sense. Fire Mark Shapiro.