Why is there a picture of Kerry Wood here? Because I couldn't find a pitcure of Buff's stomach lining, which is now gone. Wood walked the bases loaded before striking out the last two hitters to preserve the win, and Buff tells us things we might not know, like Asdrubal Cabrera's switch-hitting has flipped, the Indians can run the bases, he would like to play for Eric Wedge, and Grady Sizemore is not on fire.

FINAL	1	2		
Indians (15-26)	0	0	0	2
Royals (21-19)	0	0	3	1

W: Laffey (3-0) L: Ponson (1-5) S: K. Wood (6)

0) Administrative Note: Advice for Parents

If you need some sort of documentation from your son's high school, you should go to your son's high school and get the documentation. If you ask your son to get the documentation, you will get no documentation from your son's high school.

1) Bring me the head of ... almost everyone!

In a perfect world, the following would happen:

The Cleveland Indians would fire their pitching coach and hire me as a consultant.

I would then conduct a thorough series of interviews to find just the right person.

This person's sole qualification would be the willingness to attach remote-control electrodes to the testicles of each Cleveland Indians pitcher.

And then I would push the remote control button every time they walked more than 1 batter per three innings. I would be given the option to consider a hit batsman, wild pitch, or errant pickoff throw in this category.

I think this plan has a lot of potential. I am thinking Hiko might be available.

2) Motivational performance

It's over.

Fausto Carmona is not a good pitcher.

Now, listen: Fausto Carmona has excellent stuff. He has an outstanding sinker, and in fact induced a wonderful 12:3 GO:FO ratio (and 16:4 GB:FB ratio). In only 3 of his 9 starts has he given up more hits than innings pitched. Right-handers hit a paltry .204 off him and post a meager .587 OPS. He generally keeps the ball in the ballpark (at least partially a function of his groundball nature). He has good velocity and a great, projectable frame (which is scout-talk for, "Fausto Carmona has a large rear end"). If he weighs 190 lb as it says on his profile page, I am a fruit bat.

But ultimately, a pitcher has to know where the f*#@ the ball is going to go. The brutal numbers: in his last three starts, he has walked 4 in 6 IP, 3 in 5 1/3 IP, and 6 (!) in 6 2/3 IP. He has 3 starts of fewer than 3 walks, and has not made it through the 7th inning in 2009. His ERA of 5.74 is not an early-season sample-size problem: it is a fully-earned, big fat suck problem. He gives up a lot of runs because there is always someone on base.

Now, I would compare him to by go-to blunderbuss guy, Bobby Witt: in Witt's first five seasons with Texas (and they brought him up at age 22 because, well, he threw really hard), Witt posted these K:BB ratios:

174:143
160:140
148:101
166:114
221:110

Hey, that last one's almost approaching acceptible. (That was Witt's career year, a 17-10 3.36 ERA masterpiece.) But here's the problem with comparing Carmona to Witt: at least Witt struck guys out. He might hit the backstop. He might hit the mascot. But he would make you miss. Carmona doesn't, really. His 30:30 K:BB ratio is obviously truly execrable, but the fact that he's doing this with a 5.06 K/9 rate basically makes him Barry Zito (the Giants version, not the A's version).

There is obviously a decent chance that Carmona will harness his stuff and blossom into a real, good pitcher. He's only 25. Until then, I will no longer consider him such, though: he's going to have to prove it before I invest in that any more.

Carmona's 3-run 3rd was well and truly earned: the Royals strung some hits together, the big blow coming from Jose Guillen's two-run double. What made this hit especially galling was that Carmona had Guillen 0-2, then threw three straight balls, then served up the double. I mean, good hitting by Guillen and all that, but that's still galling. See, I would

have blamed Carmona's inaccuracy for the rally, but the fact is, the first two singles in that inning were on the first pitch. Now, maybe those pitches weren't of high-enough quality because he was just trying to get one over: he'd already walked two guys in the first, another in the second, and started eight straight hitters after the leadoff guy with a first-pitch ball. Two of his first seven outs were on 3-1 pitches, which is probably not real good hitting by the Royals. Anyway, it was galling.

But the 4th run, the run that prevented Carmona from getting the win (the Indians scored a 4th run in the top of the 7th after Carmona finished the 6th), was truly special: with two outs, Carmona lost Mike Aviles, going from 0-2 to 3-2 and Aviles singled. This sequence followed:

Wild pitch, Aviles to 2nd
Infield single, Aviles to 3rd
Wild pitch, Aviles scores

I mean, that's something I could see Tim Wakefield doing on an off night, but ... great googly moogly, that's a bad run. And it's earned! Sometimes, I'm not sure how scoring decisions are made.

3) Quality on the Basepaths

The night for baserunners did not get off to an auspicious start when Asdrubal Cabrera was doubled off second after a leadoff double when Gil Meche speared Victor Martinez' liner into the box, although this was far more a good play by Meche than a bad one by Cabrera.

This was a one-run game, remember, so any run-scoring play gets magnified in hindsight. And last night, it was the Indians that made the run-scoring plays, some the result of high-quality baserunning.

In the 4th inning, Martinez smashed a double off the left-field wall, and when Shin-Soo Choo singled on the next pitch, Martinez hauled around to beat the throw to the plate. Now, I make fun of Victor Martinez being slow on a frequent basis, largely

because Victor Martinez is slow on a frequent basis, but in this case, he hustled his way home and scored.

As important, though, Choo took advantage of the throw him to advance to second. This is seemingly an obvious play, but it takes some awareness and skill, and it proved doubly important when Jhonny Peralta singled on a full count and Choo was able to score. The next batter was out, so he wouldn't have scored without taking the extra base.

In the 7th, Grady Sizemore's smash up the middle looked like it might be an inning-ending double play, but turned into a single out when Aviles was unable to make the relay throw. This isn't technically Sizemore doing anything tangible, unless you want to argue that Aviles

rushed the throw because Sizemore is fast. It's not without merit, but the Indians more caught a break there. Again, though, that's a run-scoring play in a one-run game.

In the 8th, though, Choo's leadoff single put him on second after a sacrifice by Peralta, then Ryan Garko grounded the ball to reliever Sidney Ponson. Choo was caught trying to get to third, but because he got himself in a rundown, normally-pokey Garko advanced to second, putting the runner right back into scoring position. Garko may actually be slower than Martinez, but this was a heads-up play. Although pinch-runner Matt LaPorta may have scored from 1st on Mark DeRosa's subsequent double, right fielder Jose Guillen has a good arm, and he certainly

DID score from second. And because DeRosa has some speed, he was able to score pretty easily on the subsequent single by Ben Francisco.

In all, it was a good night for the Tribe taking advantage of opportunities: although they left 8 men on base, only 3 were in scoring position. In contrast, KC left 11 on base, a whopping SEVEN of them in scoring position.

4) A Treatise on Trust

As a ballplayer, I would like playing for Eric Wedge.

Ironically, I think some of the things that make him a frustrating major-league manager would make him an outstanding minor-league manager, but one of the hallmarks of a Wedge-run team is that if a player has an egregious failure, he is almost always given an opportunity in short order to face the same situation. I wrote about this with respect to Ferd Cabrera in 2006, and it has been seen with any number of players, from Aaron Fultz with the bases loaded to David Dellucci under pretty much any circumstance. Joe Borowski got the benefit of this. Fausto Carmona

as closer did, too, although with much less satisfactory results.

Some players get a higher benefit:doubt ratio than others, but I glean from this that Wedge could be interpreted as a guy who always had your back, a guy who believed you could succeed, a guy would wouldn't jerk you around after your first bad performance. There are exceptions to every rule, and I don't follow every team equally, but this seems to be something Wedge does more often and more dramatically than just about anyone I can think of.

Anyway, last night illustrates why Eric Wedge is the manager and I am not: after Kerry Wood walked his second batter (and Billy Butler appeared to bail Wood out slightly by flying out on a 2-0 pitch), he had thrown 13 pitches, and THREE of them were strikes. Three! I would certainly have panic-warmed someone up at that point.

When he walked Jose Guillen on five pitches, to give him a sparkling 4:14 strike-to-ball ratio, I was almost completely overcome with anxiety, rage, and an inability to reach through the computer screen to physically remove Kerry Wood from it.

And then a funny thing happened: Mark Teahen gambled (rather reasonably, actually) that Wood still didn't have anything but a fastball, and decided to be aggressive. And Wood DIDN'T throw a fastball. And the pitch that wasn't a fastball ... moved. Kerry Wood found his non-fastball repertoire. After that, he struck out Teahen. And then struck out David DeJesus, who had taken the opposite approach: "Prove you can throw a strike." Okay, then, how does 0-2 sound to you? Sure, DeJesus finally worked his way to 2-2, but the pitch that struck him out appeared to be a slider that dove under the bat of DeJesus, and the game was over.

And this goes back to what I said elsewhere: to win the division, Kerry Wood must be a capable closer. Without that, it's debatable as to whether anything else would do. To make Kerry Wood a capable closer, Wedge had to put him in a position ... and even more precarious position than the night before, a 1-run game ... to capably close. And through the adversity, Wedge didn't warm someone up, saying in effect, "You do this." And Wood did.

A Kerry Wood with more than just a fastball may actually be that capable closer. And now he appears to be that Kerry Wood.

My brain is happy. My stomach and accompanying acid-soaked pancreas are not.

5) Slamming the door

Raffy Betancourt came in with a man on first and promptly walked the first batter he faced. The electronic device from item (1) would have been in effect at this point: don't walk your first hitter! Throw strikes!

Well, Betancourt DID throw strikes. He

threw third strikes to each of the next two hitters and closed out the 8th in the manner of ... well ... Raffy Betancourt.

I will take that.

(Those Ks were a contributing factor to me not wanting Wood on the mound in the 9th at the time, but in retrospect, Betancourt's 19 pitchers were kind of a lot.)

6) Promoted to "Cog"

I was going to say that Mark DeRosa's poor April was offset by a better May, but of course, that's utter nonsense. DeRosa's May is actually worse than his April. Which wasn't any good. So that's a whole lot of ungoodness to be carrying around.

However, in his last 9 games, DeRosa has been on a miniature hot streak, gathering 10 hits in 34 AB and drawing 3 walks, giving him a .294 AVG and .351 OBP over the stretch. Over the past 7 games, it's

.333 and .379. Three of the games feature multiple hits, including 3 last night.

Look, these aren't great numbers. It's a li'l hot stretch. I'm graspin' at straws. It was a nice night, though.

(He should be playing second base.)

7) Something to watch

This might be "selection bias," where I notice when something I'm looking for happens and instantly forget or dismiss any cases where that thing doesn't happen, but Asdrubal Cabrera seems to have a real propensity for driving the ball the other way. Even when he simply lines or flies out to left, he seems (at least from the left side) to be hitting the ball with some authority the other way.

Cabrera has a pronounced platoon split this season, hitting

.346/.408/.495 against righties and .239/.300/.261 against lefties. As a switch-hitter, he is hitting left-handed and right-handed respectively in those samples.

In his career up to this year (511 AB, 378 LH and 133 RH), he has a very pronounced platoon split ... THE COMPLETELY OTHER WAY:

vs. left: .346/.403/.554 (hitting RH)
vs. right: .239/.331/.325 (hitting LH)

This was so consistent from year-to-year and even month-to-month, I once advocated that Cabrera should consider abandoning switch-hitting and simply hit right-handed. And now he is doing TOTALLY THE OPPOSITE.

Now, the opposite is actually preferable: a switch-hitter gets a lot more LH appearances than RH. If you're going to be better from one side, make it the LH. But more likely, Cabrera worked his buttocks

off this winter hitting left-handed, especially by driving the outside pitch the other way, and that has made him an offensive threat from the left side that he never was before.

If he combines this new skill with a rejuvenation of the old one (hitting right-handed), Cabrera might be one of the most valuable players in the AL.

8) Bears mentioning

Shin-Soo Choo matched a pair of hits with a pair of walks. He sports a .420 OBP on the season.

Victor Martinez went 2-for-5 and did not affect his AVG one iota.

Ben Francisco played credible CF and smacked two more singles, including one that produced a 2-out

RBI. Jhonny Peralta had a pair of singles with an RBI as well.

Grady Sizemore was not seen by Raffy Perez and thus remained flame-free.