Great stuff from Mansfield this morning as he takes a look back at the Super Bowl and provides some excellent analysis on how the Giants were able to do the Patriots on Sunday night. Mansfield makes the case that Giants defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo devised a brilliant scheme against Belichick and the Pats, and super genius Bill failed to adapt.

Arguably the all-time best fan forum poster from an analytical perspective is a guy who puts his name on line for the world to see: Gary Reents. If you don't believe me, ask him. He'll tell you the same thing; the arrogant bastard he is. Gary's posted a few different places over the years, but I first bumped into him in the old skool, pre-AOL, use net "alt" lists in about 1992. In what I think was the original on-line Browns' forum, maybe three or four people actually supported Belichick when he cut Bernie Kosar to play Todd Philcox. One of those, of course, was Gary. His heartless analysis - he turned his back on his fellow son of Y-town - was based on a theory of what Bill was trying to do on offense when the rest of us had no idea what Metcalf-up-the-middle signified. Gary's theory was that BK could only play one style of football and do limited things, and thus took away too much of the playbook. Bill wanted his offense to be an interchangeable entity that would be a chameleon based on what the opposing defense could and couldn't do. He wanted to be the opposite of the Walsh 49ers, the antithesis of the Packers' sweep. Bill wanted generic offensive balance on a Platonic level. He wanted the defense to have to prepare for everything thus being unable to stop anything. He wanted, as Gary coined the phrase, to have *"The Offense of No".* You want to double my best receiver? Fine. He's a decoy and the rest will kill you. You want to double up on multiple receivers and leave seven in the box? Great. We'll run for 200 yards. And so on. Bill never reached this ideal in Cleveland, but he sure did in New England.

First off, lets all agree to come correct on "the Patriots' Dynasty" the mediots rammed down our throats until the clock hit zero Sunday night. The Belichick Pats have been one of several very good franchises over the past eight to ten seasons, along with Polian's Colts, Rooney's Appalachians, and a few others on intersecting window of opportunity lifecycles. But what you saw Sunday is what separates those the mediots christen as Lombardi from Levy. Other than the petulant way BB left the field, abdicating his leadership responsibilities and again revealing his true character we saw all too often in Cleveland when luck didn't give him his binkie, there was little in the outcome that changes his standing if you know football. The fact is New England got lucky in it's three Super Bowl wins, none of which was the least bit convincing. 20 - 17 over the Rams on a last second field goal. 32 - 29 against the, ahem, Jake Delomme led Carolina Panthers. And lastly 24 - 21 over the Eagles who played with Donavan McNabb tied behind their backs. Three titles by a total of 9 points. *Any given Sunday... blah, blah, blah....* I take nothing away from 18 wins this season, but all this talk of dynasty was really east coast media bias. If David Tyree doesn't make the catch for the ages, or Asanti Samuel doesn't drop a ball right in his hands, then there's no one around to kick BB when he's down and the nauseating fawning continues unabated. So this was just one game in four very close games when the luck finally ran out for Mumbles. "Very disappointing" for him, to coin a phrase. But he could very easily be Bud Grant right now.

But that's not the real story within the story.

For some reason, the *"offense of no"* failed Bill. It failed him because he got out-coached on a strategic level by an opposing defensive coordinator of all things. The latest in the long line of NFL mediot proclaimed Sooper-Geni ™ got pantsed.

In one way it is hard to blame him. Just like Jim Tressel against Florida two years ago, when you bring a dominant undefeated team to a championship, there is little to suggest you re-write the playbook for the

coronation. Logic suggests you continue what brought you there and just perfect the execution the best that you can and let the chips fall where they may. This leaves you wide open for the counter-punch.

Steve Spagnuolo brought in Giant defenders in waves, both in rotations to maintain physical freshness and for tactical match-up purposes against the changing New England offense. Every time BB's young surrogate, Josh McDaniels, brought in different packages and looks to try to attain balance or exploit something match-up-wise, Spagnuolo was able to rotate defensive linemen and bring in counter packages on defense. The result was a chess game where the Patriots' hitherto brilliant and unstoppable offense could not get any momentum against the Giants, who were bending at times but kept enough drives failing and enough turnovers happening to keep it close or maintain a slight lead.

It was no coincidence that when the Pats went exclusively to their short passing two minute drill with under five minutes to go and kept rattling off quick plays that the Giants' finally caved. Their defensive players were fighting fatigue and muscle cramps as they were unable to rotate. Wes Welker played school yard ball with Brady as Tom finally got in synch by belatedly taking the short stuff that Giants were giving up all night to focus on containing Moss. What does that tell you?

There are those who will look at the box score and tell you that the Pats didn't run often enough or well enough. There are those who will tell you that the pass per attempt stats mean the Pats did pass short enough. I'm here to tell you just the opposite.

All year long what the Patriots and Brady did best was throw the football. Sure, they could run when the opportunity presented itself, and they still had that balance The Hoodie desired. But on Sunday, they didn't short pass enough. The Giants absolutely sold out on the one-gap up-the-field defense. What you saw was some good old fashioned ante-diluvium 1960's stop the run on the way to killing the quarterback football. All New England had to do was turn to their true personality as a 21st Century passing team, settle on one set of eleven offensive players and stop their substitution packages, and run a no-huddle offense of short, patient passes and screens rather than trying to go deep so often, and they win going away. The Giants just didn't have more than twenty points in them on offense. They would have prevented the Giants from mixing in their defensive line rotations. After a few drives where first downs were strung together you'd have seen linemen with their hands on their hips, gasping for air. You'd have seen Faulk and Moss start to break open on screens and slants like Welker, and the Pats' vaunted passing rhythm pick up. If BB and McDaniels had given up on the *"offense of no"* and simply accepted what this year's team did and didn't do best and not played perfectly into the Giants' defensive strengths allowing them to shuttle in fresh players, I'm going to say New England actually wins a Super Bowl by more than a field goal and suggest that The Hoodie stays on the field the whole game rather than leave early to sulk.

Thank God some things never change and Belichick did not betray his stubborn character. By insisting upon trying to work in his *"offense of no"* and not playing the game as they did against Pittsburgh where they didn't even bother to try to run, BB allowed Steve Spagnuolo to get the best of him. The apprentice bested the master.