If you want a traditional Training Camp preview, you know you're not going to get that from Mansfield Lucas. But good golly is it nice to see his name back on our front page. Because that means the Browns are back. And anticipation amongst fans for the coming season is at late eighties levels. So why does Mansfield have a bad vibe that Jobu is screwing with him? He lays out the reasons in his latest column for us. Training camp is here. Mansfield is back. It's all good.

On the eve of Browns training camp starting with the highest expectations since 1995, or maybe even 1990 (foreshadowing?), I am NOT going to write another training camp preview. They've been done to death and you'll find some great ones and some weakness out there. Have at it. Most of y'all know what time it should be. Even Soul Dawg's annual optimism on the boards doesn't seem out of place - for once. I'm so looking forward to a changing of the AFC guard like we haven't seen since the USFL infusion of 1986.

Eh'ryone is hyped. The Browns have a new t-shirt out for training camp that says "Believe in Now". Much like agent Mulder, I want to believe. So why do I have a bad vibe that Jobu is screwing with me, fixing to give me another drink (or is that a high colonic?) of The Cleveland Experience (TCE) from the fire hose of doom. What the hell is wrong with me? (There are about six people out there who know and are NOT allowed to answer that question!)

Is it; the schedule?

We feasted on some lame ass teams last season with a ridiculously easy schedule in a crappo division. The up-and-down Bengals of the Wicky-Wacky Era returned and Ozzie losing James and Phil seemed to finally catch up with him. We also saw a pretty mediocre Stillers bunch take advantage of our inability to close. Most importantly, we mailed in a sure wild card berth when we choked against some stiffs. This season's schedule is a different breed of cat.
In fact, versus the NFC East, it is a veritable be-yatch. There is almost no margin for error. This bunch that played too often like yo-yo's needs to have 53 bring 100% for 60 over 16. Jerking around like last year will result in a back step and maybe even a losing record faster than you can imagine. One thing is for certain. We'll find out how good we are very early on.

Is it; the lack of proven depth at critical positions?

Sure, the offensive line looks like it has deep-depth. Even the once thin defensive line looks like it has some decent potential for a quality two-deep rotation if Shaun Rogers brings the pain. But the defensive backs? Good Lord. We're a hammy and ankle twist away from Damon Jenkins, A.J. Davis or Jereme Perry covering Hines Ward or Santonio Holmes in the game deciding the division. Guh. Or Harrison or Wright carrying the load if JayLew re-injures a knee? You get the idea.

Is it; the lack of the lack of proven experience at too many positions?

The linebackers are the heart of any great 3 - 4 defense. The Broncos once boasted a unit led by Randy Gradishar. The Appalachians in the day sent out Lloyd and Greene, and then Porter and Gildon. Kam Wimbley had a good pass rushing rookie year learning the position, then it seemed like he regressed last year, often disappearing. Willie McGinest allegedly did all that intangible crap so

valued by RAC, and does a decent job on outside contain, but he's so far past his prime if he were milk, he'd be a smelly old curd. The jury is out on NyQuil Jackson. Some think he'll come on with a real defensive line, and it could happen, but he's completely unproven, as is the athletic but enigmatic Leon Williams. If every game were a blizzard, the game would slow down enough for Andra Davis to be an all pro. And to that, we add a fourth round pick in Beau Bell, another unknown who allegedly ran slow. Wali Rainer? Or Earl Holmes? That's the heart of a contending defense?

Is it; DA?

Right now, DA is either The Floaters or Bo Donaldson and the Heywoods , or Right Said Fred
, depending on your musical top 40 spectrum, until he proves otherwise. OK, so not even I'm THAT concerned. I don't think DA will regress to worthless mush like the football version of baseball's Ryan Garko. But he DOES need to take the next step of being more consistent across multiple games and all four quarters, overcome his downward trend displayed in the second half of the season, be more accurate, and he must cut down on the turnovers and big mistakes.

We need DA to be more consistent to help carry the team to win.

Is it; the injury factor?

It has to be there in Browns' fans' minds: the specter of everything from Ryan Taylor in practice to blades of grass destroying patella tendons and careers to eye gouging bean bags. KW2 is held together by bailing wire and more or less in chronic pain. BE got hurt coming down awkwardly on a routine jump. JayLew has missed whole seasons with knee injuries and had ankle problems derail him. We are helli-dependant on those three to carry the offense. If any one of those three is out for any period of time, we are simply a mediocre offense - and a different team.

Is it; the Indians?

OK, so this is completely unfair and irrational, but I was all jacked up for a contending season. And we got complete crap. And I thought the Tribe was more solid than the Browns.

Is it; RAC doing his John Cooper versus Michigan imitation against the Appalachians?

Push comes to shove, I don't really think that Tuna's disciple by way of the Bluegrass State, or 'bama Phil, "get" The Rivalry. They see it as 2 of 16. I also believe in the old Rik Flair Flair adage , and the Browns have shown an annoying tendency to lay down against the Inbred, either choking away sure wins or getting http://youtube.com/watch?v=O-NS1XIjllc&feature=related , embarrassing a whole region and fan base in the process. What is it going to take actually sack Big No Teeth? Or keep scoring after coaching adjustments? Or outcoach that group? If we can't actually get over on the Appalachians, we won't win the division. And the casual fan will not fall back in love with the team.

Taking out those arrogant know nothings will be so sweet. The problem is actually doing it, and until then the Browns' players just have to hear banjos every time they see those Inbred. What's it gonna take for the Browns' game day crew to play

James Brown's The Payback
in a loop for three hours before kickoff?

OK, so there's a whole bunch of other reasons why we ARE for reach. I need to cool the hell out, I know. But as we embark on what will FINALLY be the for real ass return of the Cleveland Browns after about twenty years in exile, can you blame me for having PTSD after all the crap we've all been through together? But for a few glorious weeks, it is just about the punkins back on the field and hope will spring eternal.

I got a feeling; Browns be goin' to the Super Bowl.

This year's gonna be different. Tee up the football, Lucy. This year Charlie Brown is ready to kick the hell out of rock.