We love game tape analysis here at TCF. After we hit you with instant reaction, passion, and opinion pieces ... we come back 3-4 days after the game with two weekly pieces that really break down what happened. Mitch's "Upon Further Review", and Hiko's "Browns Outsider". Mitch's is a little looser, little more above the surface. Hiko's is a little more in depth and down in the trenches. But both of these cats know how to break down a tape.

Primetime, Baby!!!

With the very opening of Monday Night Football, those of us that have followed the Browns for the longest (and therefore have the most dread), immediately got a chill running up our backs when we heard Mike Tirico say "a chance to check out one of the chic picks of this NFL preseason".

Nothing like setting expectations high for the rest of the country to bring into risk laying an egg on national TV (see also; Game 1, 1999).

Houston, the Egg has Landed.

To make matters worse, the Browns decided to unveil the worst uniform decision not coming from an Oregon Duck; brown pants that looked more like leotards. Combined with the white jerseys and orange helmets, they looked a little like walking Neapolitan Ice Cream bars.

Which leads us right into the Meltdown in the Meadowlands.

The Not Ready for Primetime Players

In addition to the gnarly looking threads, each Browns player was given a 200 mg dose of Stupid Pills. A few players liked them so much, they went back for

seconds or thirds (Eric Wright, Mike Adams, and Andre Davis...I'm looking at you).

Let's just go ahead and get this out of the way, because we all know what happened. Mental mistake after mental mistake; blown coverages, sloppy tackling, rotten coaching, missed blocking assignments, dumb penalties, and a total lack of focus led to a quarter and a half of football not seen since a certain kid from Willard was under center.

There.

I'm done talking about how horrible it was. I'm now going to do something that will make some of you question my sobriety (which is fine, at the moment...give me a few hours and that will probably change).

It Wasn't That Bad

WTH are you talking about??? Didn't you see the game?

Yes, I did...and I was reaching for the Drano to gargle on Monday night, just the same as the rest of you.

And then I reviewed the tape, and came away with some different thoughts.

First of all, there is no need to be worrying about the offensive line. Were they great? Of course not. But the first team o-line didn't necessarily look any worse than the last team that played against the Giants Defense in Prime Time (that would be the Patriots, for those of you who can't figure it out...both of you).

They weren't great, but they weren't quite at the 2000 team version with Jim Bundren, Everett Lindsay and Scott Zahursky.

In fact, they did pretty well when the Giants went with a standard four man rush, opening up holes for the runners (Jamal and Harrison had a couple of decent runs), and giving Anderson time to pass...which usually resulted in him hitting a wide open Charles Ali for two yards, or throwing behind a receiver downfield. More on that later.

But whereas Romeo and Mel Tucker couldn't have been more vanilla if their names were Baskin and Robbins, Tom Coughlin was pulling out the stops. The Giants blitzed early and often, and several times went with sending six men at the quarterback.

Quite frankly, I think this was a case of Romeo thinking that Coughlin would be as boring as he, and he just didn't prepare the team for going against a defense using those schemes this early in the preseason.

When they finally tried to do something to stem the rush, the execution was horrible. The sack that gave Derek Anderson his concussion and bruised hand came on an attempted screen pass. Eric Steinbach just gave Osi Umenyiora a tap, and them pulled out for the screen, but Osi was too fast for Hank Fraley, who wasn't able to step up in time to stop him from planting DA near Jimmy Hoffa's burial site
.

Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play?

To be sure, the Browns brain farted themselves into way too many mistakes. The blame goes to Romeo for not having them ready, and to the players themselves for the types of concentration lapses that lead to the myriad of problems seen

Monday night.

Now let's get to the real potentially long term problem with this team that has me concerned most: Derek Anderson collapses like a lawn chair being sat on by Ted Washington when he's on the road or under extreme pressure.

Last Tuesday on TheClevelandFan's BlogTalkRadio program , Swerb and I discussed the fact that our biggest concern coming into the Giants game was the tendency Anderson showed last year to have his worst games when on the road in pressure situations. Unfortunately, our forebodings were correct, as DA looked as bad Monday night as he did in Cincinnati last December. Given that he didn't have much time to throw, the receivers couldn't blow past their defenders, forcing DA to lay the ball in perfectly. Instead, he went back to his Ricky Vaughn impressions, missing juuusssstttttt a bit behind the receivers. Constantly.

Brady Quinn, on the other hand, looked excellent once again. As much as I love ripping on the E$PN announcers (especially Tony Kornholio), Ron Jaworski has been the best addition they've had since Dan Fouts...and I really appreciated what Jaws was saying about Quinn's ability to "be coached", making the adjustment to his grip, allowing him to throw faster, tighter spirals. It was some great insight from Jaws.

(I could have done without the "Finger Cam" references from Tony...although if you'd have had a camera on me at the time, you would have seen a finger as well).

No dink and dunk complaints this time about Quinn. And I don't want to hear about "playing against second stringers". It doesn't matter if it's sixth stringers out there, the ability to hit an open receiver in stride downfield is still something you either have, or don't have.

And though Romeo won't say it...we have a quarterback controversy on our hands until Mr. Anderson can prove that he can perform on the road or under the bright lights. If he sucks this badly against the Cowboys and Squealers on national TV, it will be getting downright ugly after Week 2.

But if he does fine, then we'll be able to look back with the "it was only preseason" comments we're desperately holding onto right now as we step towards the ledge.

Help Wanted: Linebackers

I know Phil had to spend his money (OK...Randy's money) as wisely as possible, and I am 100% behind his signing of Shaun Rogers and Corey Williamson. Too bad that left it impossible to upgrade the linebacker position, as this group still is mediocre at best. In re-watching the game on tape, I was constantly shocked at just how slow most of the starters are...other than Wimbley, who is showing that pure speed means nothing if you have no technique.

The job of the defensive linemen is to tie up multiple blockers so that the linebackers have a free shot. Which made it so damn aggravating when I saw Robaire Smith do just that...occupy a tackle AND a tight end...but Andre Davis was so slow that he still couldn't get to the runner, who wasn't brought down until 8 yards upfield, by Brodney Pool.

And then there is OldWillie McGinest. If you say he has Glacieral speed...you are insulting the glacier.

D'Qwell Jackson didn't completely suck...but he's not the Playmaker this unit really needs. He's fine at making tackles three yards (or more) upfield...which puts him way ahead of Davis, but he just lacks the killer attitude (and ability) to make those impact plays that stop a RB dead in his tracks at or behind the line.

Syndric Steptoe: No Longer Just Someone Who Should Be A Harry Potter Character

Last year during preseason, I took the Harry Potter reference even further, calling Syndric "He Who Shall Not Be Kicked To".

Not this year. The kid has really come on, and I'd say that at this point, he is a lock for a roster spot, not just as a receiver, but as a special teams player, and a great insurance policy for Joshua Cribbs (because Josh's high ankle sprain could be one of those nagging injuries that drags him down all year).

Three fantastic plays from Syndric; the kickoff return to the 8 (we'll just forget about what happened two plays later), the swing pass catch and run for the TD, and then that beautiful act of concentration where he took an interception away from the Giants defender, turning it into a touchdown.

We've all been hoping to see Josh Cribbs play more of a role as a receiver...but in truth, Josh is still learning the position, and is not the best route runner. But Steptoe seems to have speed and shiftiness almost equal to Cribbs combined with true receiver skills on his patterns.

Just another weapon for Chudzinski to use.

Random Blurbs from an ADHD Mind

~ You know...he does kind of look like him. So is Phil Dawson the long lost younger brother of Paul Byrd? I just know that his leg strength has been quite impressive lately.

~ Which means that we now have two NFL level kickers on the roster. Believe me, Jason Reda will be on the field on Sundays...it just won't be for the Browns...but we wish him good luck.

~ Jerome Harrison had a couple of nice runs on Monday night, including one where he absolutely broke the ankles of the DB trying to change directions as fast as The Ghost did.

~ Andre Davis is probably at the point where I should rename the "Of the Same Monetary Value As Mammary Glands On a Sus Scrofa" Award to the "Andre Davis Award". Same difference. Not only was Davis a complete non-factor on defense, he also got a 15 yard unsportsman like conduct penalty for "swinging and missing an opposing player". Andre is so slow, players even have time to get out of the way of his haymakers.

~ Eric Wright looked like crap in the first half...so he high-steps it after an INT for a TD in the second half. Even Chad Johnson was watching while shaking his head saying "dude...that's just totally classless".

~ Did I mention that I really hate one third of the MNF announcing crew, and another one third of them bores me to death? Tirico really needs to stick to announcing golf...and Tony Kornholio needs to go the way of Dennis Miller. (Maybe Tony can also eventually end up getting a lame CNBC show that no one watches).

~ Did I also mention that I hated the Brown Pants? They are ugly, and they led to the humiliating loss. Burn them all.