Finally ... says Mansfield Lucas in his regular weekly piece for us.

Finally.

Finally Browns' fans came out of the woodwork on Tuesday. I saw more Browns' gear than I've seen since about 2003. Browns' fans didn't come out blinking into the unfamiliar sunlight like traumatized survivors from a bomb shelter. Nope. We emerged feeling our oats acting like we owned the place. Yeah, we punked the 4-0 Super Bowl champs on national TV in front of the world. We *meant* to do that stuff. Some dropped sports sections on the desks of Stillers' transplants and traitors to try to make a statement. The DA-bots felt vindicated and offered up the game as proof. Those who anoint themselves as the "Truth" squad readily chastised those non-believers for doubting. Some resurrected hopes of playoffs and the long awaited breakthrough season. All were happy and just a little sleepy. And while I am as happy as anyone the Browns' shocked the world, I am not back on the bandwagon yet. I am channeling my inner Lee Corso and thinking "Not so fast, my friend."

I'm really excited about the offensive line. Some fans have told me over and over that Tucker was the glue to the offensive line and the guy that made it all work. I didn't believe them. After all, the line was a shambles in the opener last year and then came together in game two, well before Tucker's return, which coincided with his renewed eligibility and Seth McKinney's injury. But Monday I became a believer. To have not played in so long and to come out and do that shut down job

on Justin Tuck, whose been the leader of the Big Blue Wrecking Crew? Ridiculous. Game ball for Ryan Tucker, whose shaken the Mother Roid gloss with that stellar performance. You could also see his effect on Rex Hadnot, who simply got out and got after it like we hadn't seen all year. The defensive line that had been dominant was held at bay on passing downs, and all three backs enjoyed huge holes and clean seams all night. While the whole team extracted observations of "who are these guys and what did they do with the Browns?" from stunned fans, no group besides the two young corners did so as much as the offensive line.

Eric Wright, and more so Brandon MacDonald, brought back visions of Hanford and Minnie. B Mac's job on Plaxico Burress is about as fine as you'll see in the two-hundred plus games played this regular season. They made the routine plays and they made the big, game turning plays, and they kept the Browns in the game early until the offense mysteriously clicked.

Whoever was holding Rod Chudzinski and Mel Tucker hostage in Bogata or somewhere apparently relented and returned them to C-town during the bye week. While not having enough discipline to actually move at the snap count, the Browns' offense overcame stupid penalty and penalty and actually, I think, tallied something like 117 gross yards on an 84 net yard touchdown drive. Amazing, but nowhere you want to live. The return of pressing cornerbacks brought back the good old days of the 1980's, while the UFO's unsightly return made us long-suffering fans chuckle at the repressed memories of Bob Slowak leading hard chargers like Stalin Colinet and Rahim Abdullah. While Nick Sorenson may be the most ineffective blitzer in NFL history, others like Alex Hall stepped in and pressured Eli Manning into looking like the Eli of two seasons ago. Shaun Rogers was simply dominant, and Mike Adams and Brodney Pool played with extraordinary courage and abandon. What an effort!

But I'm not converted.

I have never been more convinced than I am right now that DA is a bona fide

coach killer. Streaky, big play then big bust quarterbacks have never won teams championships, nor will they ever. The Browns were extremely lucky that DA's early game performance didn't dig them an impossible hole and take them out of their game plan. But following that long bootleg pass to Edwards, DA was simply lights out. He was Nuke LaLooch in a garter belt . All of a sudden the mascot stopped getting beaned and mid 90 mile per hour sliders were popping wherever Crash Davis positioned his mitt. And as impressive as that was, and as much as it brought back memories of the Cincinnati game in September last season, you just know DA will regress wildly around some mean that only exists on paper for this erratic performer. And you can't have that in your quarterback and be a winner. Nor, apparently, can you bench him when he's "bad" DA. The result will invariably be one step forward, two steps back. Monday night's stunning win just guaranteed that The Mercurial One is the starter locked in cement, and we'll ride him like a tech fund on the Dow Jones. I'm not looking forward to that.

The win also doesn't mean that the Browns' are a well coached team. While it was the coordinators' night to shine with their X's and O's and countertendencies installed during the bye week, the penalties are completely out of control. Culturally, there's just no reason to expect change, is there? At this point, Romeo is what he is, and we're stuck with what he is. I'm just a little cynical that teams can routinely overcome the fundamental slop we saw Monday night.

The defensive linebackers still are just crummy, except for Alex Hall, who shows speed and hunger on every single play.

The biggest question to ask yourself is how they did all that with Winslow out with alleged elephantitis of the nards
giving new meaning to "taking the needle". Guh. Darnell Dinkins has juuuuust a little trouble remembering the basics of starting a play and catching the ball, but he and Heiden together opened up the running game like a pop top off a cold one. Is it time to challenge some basic assumptions here? Does Chud need to split Winslow out as the possession receiver full-time, taking JJ's place and using Stallworth in the slot? Does KW2 become, gasp, a situational player? The whole thing was baffling, but then again, I always have a tendency to believe my lying eyes.

There's about seventy-five percent of y'all just reading this saying to yourselves, "Dude, get a grip you bunghole. They just won the biggest game since the 2003 Stillers win. Let it go, Enjoy and STFU." You wouldn't be wrong. And don't worry. I am. But I'm just enjoying it for the any given Monday it was until I see some consistency. The next stretch of the schedule is simply brutal. If this bunch plays like it did Monday, a return to respectability and even division contention is within reach. But like Sam said, "...then ehry day'd be Christmas." And it's only a gray pre-Seasonal Affective Disorder day in C-town, making me want to eat and hibernate. I didn't open any presents this morning. I need to see consistent innovation, a consistent quarterback, a consistent running game from a consistent offensive line, and consistently good big-play receivers who catch the football. Consistent defensive backs and a consistent and deep defensive line would also help me believe. And I need to see a team consistently stop shooting itself in the foot with stupid penalties. If I see that with consistently good games plans, and a few more consistent W's than L's, then I'll treat every day after like most Browns' fans treated Tuesday as a day of vindication and arrival. Until then, I'm just happy for the win. Because after all, "Winning, you know; it's like better than losing."