Many of us have now read the extensive interview that Browns head coach Eric Mangini recently did with CBS Sports. In it, he likened the situation with the Browns to that of the Partiots of nine years ago, and said that Belichick was villified at first but given time to turn it around. In Gary's latest, he talks about Mangini's wrecking ball approach here in Cleveland, he hits on the Jamal Lewis/Mangini media war of words, and Mangini's hilarious explanation this week why Brady Quinn is back in as the team's starting quarterback.

When people lack the information they need, they'll go about filling in the blanks with assumed facts and then treat these assumptions as reality. It goes on in sports all the time. We don't know if Cleveland Browns head coach Eric Mangini will be able resurrect a franchise he's spent the season burying so whatever side of the debate you fall on with respect to whether he should stay or go colors how you go about providing an answer to the underlying question that only time can actually confirm.

Mangini, the ultimate biased observer, likened his situation with the Browns to the New England Patriots of 2000 in an interview recently with CBS Sports. His premise is that Bill Belichick was vilified at first but given time was able to turn it around. Putting aside about a million holes in the theory, Mangini's point is that "the process" takes time and those who curse him now will be singing his praises later.

With that, others jump into the fray to defend Mangini's wrecking ball approach by continuing to counsel patience as if that is the magic pixie dust that will make the Browns a local version of the Patriots.

The flaw here is that this has never been about patience. Cleveland fans have plenty of that. It's about progress and competence and Cleveland fans have seen nothing of either since the Mangini brought his demolition crew to town. In fairness though, they didn't see much of it before he got here, either.

Forget about addition by subtraction moves like the trade of Braylon Edwards. Anyone suggesting that this necessary excision somehow made things worse so that they ultimately can get better obviously wasn't watching the team last season. Edwards is an intriguing player at this point only because of his high draft status. With but one year of accomplishments to go along with several years of mediocrity, he's still an "if" category player, as in "if we can get him under control" and "if we can get him motivated" and "if he can hang on to the ball then, you know, he's a pretty valuable guy." But without much to distinguish himself yet in New York except a high-profile snub by Rihanna, the bloom on Edwards' rose, metaphorically speaking, has pretty much wilted.

Rather than try to draw an analogy about New England that serves to justify the point of the current wreckage, look to the past as the best evidence of what's to come. And in looking at the cold hard facts, where exactly is there something substantial on which to hang your hat that Mangini is the right guy to do anything more than he's already done to this once proud team? Truthfully, there is nothing other than Mangini's ability to parlay one job into the next. Having climbed the mountain, an admittedly admirable task, all he's done since is prove that he should have stopped several feet short of the peak. As a head coach, he's an awful good ball boy and maybe a decent defensive backs coach.

If you want to talk analogies, then the similarity with what is going on in Cleveland what is taking place at the University of Michigan is fascinating and provides

ample evidence for the axiom that every analogy has an equal and opposite one waiting in the wings.

When Rich Rodriguez headed to Michigan he made it crystal clear that he would be overhauling the program, whether or not it really needed it. His system, particularly on offense, is unlike anything that anyone in the Big Ten plays on a regular basis. In that sense, people knew that immediate results weren't forthcoming.

Thus when the Wolverines faltered last season under the weight of player defections and philosophical 180s°, no one was surprised. But all the Rodriguez supporters said that he had a track record of making major strides in his second year, just look at what happened in his second year at West Virginia was the common cry.

Well, two years in and what do you have? Michigan isn't West Virginia and the reasons why are all the explanation anyone needs to see what the comparison the Rodriguez believers used was silly. The Wolverines are struggling in the Big Ten again and haven't made the anticipated progress because the problems inherent in his system are magnified when applied to the Big Ten. This isn't to say that Rodriguez may never win at Michigan or that there isn't even some merit to the spread option, read and react that Rodriguez runs. But it is say that the physicality of the league almost across the spectrum eventually takes its toll on teams that try to survive on the backs of smaller, supposedly faster players. It's a very physical league and always will be.

Of course there were people that saw this all along and never bought into the idea that Rodriguez was right for Michigan. Whatever the merits of his style, he personally suffers too much from the same things that trip up Mangini. He thinks he's smarter than everyone when the reality is that he's arrogant to a fault and character-challenged. In short, he's nothing like what the University of Michigan really stands for and the obviousness of his square-peg status is starting to occur to almost everyone at this point.

In much the same way the Browns can stick with Mangini even as the flaws in his approach reveal themselves similarly. But be wary of trying to draw the analogy to New England unless you're also prepared to talk about all the various systems and coaches long time doormats like the Detroit Lions have gone through without any anticipated up tick. The New England experience is a nice story but it's the exception not the rule. It's also a bar Mangini couldn't live up to even if he changed everything about himself, which he can't in any event. Treating everybody as carpet to be walked upon eventually takes its toll. In New York, it was three seasons. In Cleveland it's been barely a half season.

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And what, my friends, would be a week in the lives of these Browns without still more drama to contend with?

Now it's a bit of a pissing match between team captain Jamal Lewis and Mangini over whether or not Mangini is working the team too hard during the week.

Lewis, for his part, likened the players to mere crops under Farmer Mangini. But the good farmer is not tending well to his crops and as he goes to market each Sunday he doesn't have much to sell. As analogies go, this is one I can heartily get behind.

Whether or not Mangini is working the players too hard is always going to be subjective. Mangini, for his part, naturally denies the charge. (As an aside, notice again the parallels with Rodriguez and the complaints by his players earlier in the season? Scary.) Different coaches do follow different philosophies. Under Romeo Crennel, the team rarely practiced in pads during the week and weren't any better for it. In fact, if I recall correctly, one of the things Lerner and fans alike thought they would be getting out of Mangini was just this sort of taskmaster approach for a team clearly in need of it.

What doesn't make much sense in any of this though are those that view Lewis as a whiner, arguing essentially that Lewis can't fully come to grips with the fact that he's washed up and thus is pointing the finger of blame elsewhere.

That Lewis is washed up is hardly a secret and I've said as much since the beginning of the season. But I rather doubt you can rationalize away his moment of candor by claiming it's a bitterness borne out of a player facing up to his own mortality. More likely, Lewis feels completely unburdened after announcing his retirement and actually has nothing to lose by being the only publicly honest person affiliated with the Browns.

It's not exactly news, though, that Mangini's approach has been to grind his players into submission. It was the exact formula he used in New York up until the moment the players revolted and had him fired. The fact that he brought this same approach to Cleveland was, as noted, initially seen as one of his calling cards. It's like Michigan fans complaining about Rodriguez running a spread offense.

The one thing to support Lewis' view, however, is the mounting injuries on this team and I'm not just talking about the serious injuries suffered by two rookies in the so-called post-practice opportunity periods, as ill-conceived and misleading of a moniker as any. Injuries are often borne out of fatigue. When a player is tired he's not functioning at full speed and going anything less in the NFL is the exact formula for a serious injury. It's exactly why coaches keep players out of that last exhibition game.

Mangini and Lewis can debate the issue of how much work is enough and never reach a consensus. Just know, though, that Lewis isn't the bad guy here just because he spoke his mind. There aren't more because most of the rest of the team has far more at stake if they were to likewise speak out. Rest assured, though, when Mangini is gone the stories that will be told will be legendary.

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Listening to Mangini try and explain why Brady Quinn is back at quarterback was perhaps the most unintentionally funny moment of the season.

In essence, Mangini said that this was more a decision for Quinn and not against Anderson. Quinn, according to Mangini, is back because he got better while not playing while Derek Anderson is out because he got worse by playing. It's pretty much the same rationale he used to explain why Anderson was inserted as a starter after sitting out the season's first 10 quarters.

If this were any other coach, you'd think that Mangini was just spinning this in a way to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. But Mangini is all about hurting anyone and everyone's feelings. It's the biggest tool in his toolbox of motivational techniques. Besides what's the point of sparing the feelings of two quarterbacks he doesn't like?

But that doesn't mean Mangini is being dishonest. Far from it. Quinn did get better, but it's all definitional and as Terrell Owens might say, there are 11 million reasons why.

This has always been about the $11 million incentive bonus in Quinn's contract but Mangini can't admit that without alienating every agent for every player and facing, possibly, an official rebuke from the league. It's hardly coincidental that Quinn is coming back at a time when earning the bonus is no longer possible.

Quinn, almost by default, was the better quarterback in preseason, though better is a very relative term. Starting Anderson would have been disingenuous on every level after his preseason and his body of work in 2008.

But at some point, perhaps the second day of practice, perhaps the second series of the Minnesota game, Mangini surmised that his team was doomed irrespective of the quarterback. After that it became all about managing the money for the future and suddenly Quinn was on the bench. Put it this way, on the list of Mangini's faults, this one doesn't make the top 50.

It was humorous in the interim to listen to Mangini stammer for reasons to support Anderson even as he threw 3 interceptions in one half against the Ravens. It was an oft-repeated refrain: Sure we didn't score, but hey did you see that 3rd down pass to Robert Royal?

With the Browns no longer in danger of being burdened with a huge payout this season to Quinn and an inflated salary next season that would lessen his trade value, it's easy to see exactly how Quinn indeed got better playing while Anderson got much worse.

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The Browns game this week was almost subject to a local blackout. Likely some will be. In that vein, here's this week's question to ponder: If the Browns game is on local television but no one is watching, does that qualify as a blackout?