Round and round it goes. When it stops, nobody knows.

Game after game, year after year, all is the same, give me some beer.

You can't even pinpoint the problem when the problem is everything.

Colt McCoy isn't the whole problem, but he's part of it. SSDD and his Wondrous Playcalling isn't the whole problem, but he's part of it. The right side of the Offensive Line isn't the whole problem, but they're part of it. The Receivers aren't the whole problem, but they're part of it. The Running Back situation isn't the whole problem, but it's part of it. The Run Defense isn't the whole problem, but it's part of it.

The general lack of toughness, imagination, heart, guts, balls, desire, and identity isn't the whole problem, but it's part of it.

It's like looking at a Rothko: *What don't you like about it?*

Everything.

Generally, I detest incessant whining when it comes to sports. There's nothing YOU personally can do, so man up and take the lumps or get out, I say. Complain, sure. Pontificate on your opinion, yes. But there's a fine line between righteous frustration and chronic crybaby, and too many people cross it.

But apathy... sure I understand that. It's impossible to avoid sometimes. I've been writing this column since 2007, and I can pretty clearly recall most of the games from that season. But the end of 2008? A blank. The beginning of 2009? A blur of blah. The end of last year? A fog of repetition. I stopped caring when the Big Repeat began.

That's why this feels all too familiar. The game just ended, and I've already forgotten almost everything about it other than it was a miserable and useless waste of my time.

The blur has begun. No matter the coach, the QB, the front office... it all comes back around, it all returns to mush. It would be deja vu if the original memory were memorable.

Round and round it goes. When it stops, nobody knows.

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You can't even pinpoint the problem when the problem is everything.

What don't you like about it?

Everything.

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Stats

Time of Possession: HOU - 35:15, CLE - 24:45

Total Yards: HOU - 380, CLE - 172

Yards Passing: CLE - 128, HOU - 119

Yards Rushing: HOU - 261, CLE - 44

First Downs: HOU - 21, CLE - 10

Turnovers Forced: HOU - 2, CLE – 1

Sacks: HOU – 4, CLE - 0

Final Score: Houston 30, Cleveland 12

These are eerily similar to last week, but even worse.

Game Balls

Ha!

Honorable Mention

The End of Regulation.

Wall of Shame

Everything.

Regarding Sacrificial Years

Going into the season, I was pretty sure that the Browns had no intention of trying to win this year. That's not to say they don't want to win week in and week out, just that the organization as a whole realized that they were not a playoff team yet and decided to eschew short-contract veteran depth and a possible 8-8 record for youthful experience, contract extensions, and 5-11. If you're not going to make the playoffs anyway, might as well get your young players some experience, find out what you've got, and get a higher draft pick.

I get it. I don't like it. It makes for a miserable damn experience and wastes a whole bunch of my time and money, but I get it.

But it had better pay off and it had better pay off soon, because there are times when it seems like the gamble might become a huge f-bomb disaster.

To get players to play, to solidify the franchise, to build this grand organization you envision, you've got to start a winning culture. This culture looks more like something that grows in a petri dish.

Mr. Holmgren and Mr. Heckert, your names and your pedigrees were what separated you from the riff-raff that preceded you and gave the organization hope. If you soil that in an effort to build "the right way", you might not get a chance to finish.

Regarding Peyton Hillis

I hate to even address this overblown situation, but I must.

He must! He must!

Last week, Hillis-related articles came out from Mike Silver of Yahoo Sports and Mary Kay Cabot of the Plain Dealer
that the Browns were sick of Hillis and his camp's antics and are willing to let him walk after the season. And the rest of the players are just as sick of him as management is. Some excerpts from both articles:

By Wednesday, a group of about eight Browns veterans had summoned Hillis into a meeting room for an intervention-style, air-clearing session designed to restore his focus. After a breakout season in 2010 that vaulted him to national prominence, including a spot on the "Madden NFL '12" cover, the 25-year-old back's consuming desire for a new contract has become a locker room distraction that numerous teammates regard as an impediment to cohesion and collective success.

"I've never seen anything like it," says one Browns veteran. "Last year, Peyton was such a positive, inspirational force on our team – but now he's like a different guy. It's like he's in a funk that he can't get out of, and it's killing us, because we really need him. And we've told him that. But we're at the point where we just don't know what to do."

"It's one thing after another, and what's been out there isn't even the half of it," one source said.

One veteran player said, “The organization is not going to reward a guy they think is moping or acting out or going about it the wrong way, just out of principle, and because of the message it sends to younger guys. And I totally understand that.”

Heckert conceded on Thursday that “the guys we did sign [to big contracts], those are the guys we feel are ultimate team guys who want to be here.”

A source said Hillis was recently late to a team meeting on top of his other erratic behaviors. On Monday night, he missed a scheduled appearance at the Boys and Girls Club of Cleveland's Halloween party and issued an apology Wednesday. He attributed it to not receiving the right information from his brother and business manager, Kyle Hillis, and not realizing the importance of the event. He also promised to make it up.

(Seneca) Wallace acknowledged that Hillis doesn't seem to be the same person he was last season when he rushed for 1,177 yards and 11 touchdowns.

"I think everybody's noticed a little bit of a change in him, but he could have some family issues or something," said Wallace. "Maybe his priorities have changed. We have a whole new staff, so a lot of things have changed. Maybe some of it's overblown."

I'm sure a lot of it is overblown. I'd bet good money that he'd be playing if he wasn't hurt, and it's true that the media has some responsibility in poking this beehive. But it's not like there's a helluva lot to discuss when it comes to the Browns these days, and most of the distress seems to be coming from Hillis fanboys and girls (like they know anything about him).

People - You don't know Peyton Hillis. He could be as big a d-bag as anyone. He's looking a lot like one now. It's almost certain that he's seeking excessive coin, the kind that NO ONE will pay him. Even his fellow players are piling on him. Doesn't that tell you anything?

Yes, there is no question that Hillis is the best RB the team has, and part of their horrid Offensive display this season is due to his absence. But it is also true that he is completely replaceable and is proving that a Back that can't stay healthy ain't worth diddly-poo. Dude is KILLING his Free Agency value right now, and actually turning a lot of the public opinion to "*Thank God the Browns didn't break the bank on this guy*
."

It's frustrating. Not because I give a shit about Hillis (I don't), but because him leaving just creates another hole that needs filled. It feels like we've been climbing a cliff for years, and every time we look up, the top is somehow further away.

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Regarding Chasing Mediocrity

Sigh. I hate to go after Terry Pluto for a 2nd straight week, but I have to. He's usually much more fair than most, but the last couple weeks he's become a bit of an apologist, at least in my untrained view.

You see, Terry wrote an article this week trying to defend Colt McCoy's poor play by stating that it takes time to develop a QB and SF's Alex Smith is an example of what can happen if you maintain your patience and surround the QB with talent to protect him. I can see defending Colt, but using Alex Smith as an example of something we can hope for? Ick.

A. Terry, I hope you don't think for one second that Alex Smith is good enough to lead his team to a Super Bowl Championship. Not in this day and age.

B. This is Alex Smith's 7th year, and he's JUST NOW finally competent. Solid, but not great. So if you were to tell me "*Hey, if we stick with Colt McCoy, he will suck for a long time but can be as good as Alex Smith by 2016*

" (his 7th year), I'd respond:

Uh, no thanks! Next!

In case you hadn't noticed, Terry, some rookie QB's come in and produce right away these days. There should be no damn need to wait 7 years.

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Regarding Drama Queens

From this week's MMQB by Peter King :

Text Message of the Week

"I want to die. This feeling feels like death. Nothing else can describe this. The pain is that bad."

-- Pittsburgh Phil, Phil Gennaro, a friend of mine and a 41-year-old claims adjuster from Monroeville, east of Pittsburgh, leaving Heinz Field early this morning. He went on to text that today "will be miserable. I will have to deal with angry people, all because of this game."

Boo f-ing hoo you POOR f-ing Steelers fan. Man, your life is HARD. Your team is ONLY 6-3 now. You have a Championship quality Head Coach and QB, and they should be good for another 5 years or so. You've been to 3 Super Bowls in the last 6 years, and you ONLY won 2 of those. It must be SO FREAKING HARD to be a fan of your team.

After listening to that whiny f-ing Steeler crowd on Sunday night, I have now determined that is the most spoiled disgusting group of fans in the league (like I didn't know that already). Mr. Gennaro, Shut The F*** Up. Someone should sever your toe and shove it up your ***, because I would gladly sacrifice one of mine to have enjoyed the same lifetime of success that your team has had.

(Who needs a pinky toe anyway?)

Please feel free to do what you "want to". And take your brethren with you.

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Regarding Whatever

***Yes, I realize this is a subpar effort on my part this week. Even I am being affected by the group malaise that has entrenched itself in the Cleveland locker room. Also, I have a minor cough and a zit on my shoulder, so my agent advised that I shut it down.

***When you're down to your 4th and 5th string RB's, line Cribbs up at RB a few times, for the love of Brahma. Have him throw once out of that formation. Do something that makes it look like you're TRYING to win.

***The Browns Defense is apparently a huge mirage. They are ranked so high - especially against the pass - because they've played bad teams, or good teams that got up early (and easily) and shut it down. I think there are tons of talent and potential, but they are so thin and young that they're hitting a wall, and good running games just kill them.

Enter Steven Jackson, Maurice Jones-Drew, Ray Rice, Rashard Mendenhall, Cedric Benson, and Beanie Wells. Those are the RB's left on their schedule. Also known as Fantasy Locks.

***My brain tells me that SSDD/Paddy O'Shurmur/Pat Shurmur will be here for at least 3 years, so settle down and hope that he grows into the role. But my heart just hates the hell out of how he's done so far.

***Many have blamed the Madden Curse on Hillis' year so far, but I find that to be poppycock and hogwash. Curses don't exist, people. I will no more believe in curses than I would demons, vampires, Santa Claus, or the Afterlife. But curses can be like voodoo - they work if you believe in them. This only means that if you let the concept get to you, it can definitely affect you psychosomatically.

Thus, I suppose curses CAN be real.

***I just mentioned something to my wife about Faith Hill needing to be on Monday Night Football too. She suggested that Ms. Hill wear a different outfit each week to "mix it up".

Brilliant!

I would definitely tune in each week to see how short what Faith was wearing might be.

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Next Up

St. Louis Rams (1-7).

There are only 3 truly winnable games left on the schedule (they'd better win them all if they

want to get to my 6-10 prediction), and this is one of them.

The STL Offense has been miserable, Sam Bradford has been injury prone, and the Ram WR corps strikes fear in no one. Still, Steven Jackson is getting healthy and effective again, and good RB's are the bane of Cleveland's existence. The Rams beat the Saints 2 games ago and really should've won last week, so they're on the up-tick. Especially their Defense, which has been harassing the life out of QB's the last few weeks.

Which can't mean anything good for the Browns and their pathetic O.

Thus, I anticipate another low scoring affair with the Bronx cheers raining down on the players like auditory waterfalls as the season officially becomes a fiasco. And I get to be there to experience it. Oh joy.

Rams 13, Browns 9.