LeBron is many things: A basketball great, a global icon-in-training, a business mogul, philanthropist and all-around solid family guy. But like so many celebrities who are both attracted and repelled by the fame lavished upon them, LeBron also wants to be the center of attention when it suits him. In his latest, Erik Cassano talks about all the LeBron to Europe in 2010 talk going around right now, and says LeBron is basking in it all of it.

LeBron James has a secret. It's a secret that dwarfs the great mysteries of the cosmos. It's a secret that overshadows matters of national security, the circumstances surrounding the JFK assassination, and - yes - even how many licks it takes to get to the Tootsie Roll center of a Tootsie Pop.

It's absolutely killing you that you don't know it. And that's just the way he likes it.

LeBron is many things: A basketball great, a global icon-in-training, a business mogul, philanthropist and all-around solid family guy. But like so many celebrities who are both attracted and repelled by the fame lavished upon them, LeBron also wants to be the center of attention when it suits him.

He likes it when people talk about him, when volumes and volumes of written words are spent exhaustively analyzing his every syllable and gesture for layers of meaning.

Right now, LeBron is without a professional championship ring. He hasn't yet financed or produced a multi-platinum record or an Oscar-nominated movie. He doesn't have the corner office on the 99th floor of the building that is to house his business empire. All those things - or most of them - will likely find him at some point.

Right now, what gets people gossiping about LeBron James is where he's going to play in the fall of 2010, the season after he can opt out of his contract with the Cavs.

If the kinetic energy produced by the unrelenting mass-hand wringing over his future address could be converted into electricity and harnessed, it could probably light Canal Park in Akron for an entire season of Aeros baseball.

LeBron has been accused of subscribing to the Michael Jordan theory of bland, paint-by-number interview quotes, lest he say something even remotely controversial and alienate potential customers for the companies he endorses. That's true, to a point. But unlike Jordan, who grew into his fame over the course of his early career, LeBron was brought up from his formative years to handle fame.

During his playing days, Jordan largely stayed away from controversy when he opened his mouth. LeBron uses controversy as a tool to manipulate fans and media and increase his profile. It's actually quite an intelligent approach when done correctly. Brett Favre is trying to do something similar with his drama-queen approach to retirement and reinstatement, and he's starting to look quite silly. LeBron, by contrast, has masterfully worked fans and media in Cleveland, New York and apparently Greece into a lather over what team he'll play for in two years.

When LeBron conducted his annual charity bike-a-thon in Akron earlier this summer, he gushed about how he loves Akron, how he has such a great relationship with the Cavs organization and how he loves playing for his home-region team. Our Cleveland hearts swelled with pride, and a number of us probably wanted to hand-deliver a copy of LeBron's quotes to Stephen A. Smith and his big-city ilk who have spent the past five years insisting that LeBron is leaving Cleveland the first chance (OK, how about the second chance?) that he gets.

But then a few weeks later, he was in New York as Team USA gathered to being preparations for the Olympics. He wasn't in Ohio anymore, and he didn't try to act like it. Different city, different face, and maybe different loyalties.

The eager beavers in the New York and national media wanted a story, and LBJ did not disappoint. His favorite city in the whole wide world? New York, of course.

He also threw in Dallas (home of his beloved Cowboys), Washington (a good American loves his nation's capital, right?) and Los Angeles (presumably the future location of LBJ Studios, I'm guessing). His hometown of Akron came in a paltry fifth on the Bron Scale, and Cleveland was nowhere to be found.

Gentlemen, start your laptops. "LBJ? Oh, he is definitely, 900 percent certain, coming to the Knicks or the Nets in 2010. Cleveland, it's nothing personal. Your city just can't hold a living god. That's New York's job. Hey, we still love that Rock Hall. That has a lot of good stuff, like Jim Morrison's toothpicks or whatever. And we think Drew Carey is awesome. You guys from Cleveland worship him or something, right? And hey, that Brady Sizemore is one heck of a tight end! So you still have something to root for, see?"

LeBron rode that wave right into this week, when a little birdie let it be known to an ESPN writer that LeBron might ditch the NBA altogether for the right price once his contract with the Cavs has expired.

Of course, the asking price was downright outlandish, according to the article penned by ESPN's Chris Broussard: $50 million per year. But if the Knicks, Nets and whoever else can clear the decks of salary cap space to try and land LeBron in two years, why couldn't we assume that a filthy rich European team might not stash cash away to make a run at LeBron? Even if you think the idea is preposterous, I would reason that you should never underestimate your opponents.

This summer, European basketball teams took a large step forward in proving that they have the resources and money to be more than just a safety net for players not quite good enough to make a living in the NBA. Hawks restricted free agent Josh Childress signed a three-year, $20 million deal with Olympiacos, an Athens-based Euroleague club. Dynamo Moscow lured former Hornet and Net Bostjan Nachbar away from the NBA, and most recently, Virtus Bologna signed Earl Boykins.

The Childress deal is what really caused waves in NBA circles. Childress was sought after by NBA teams, but Childress spurned the NBA with its salary cap restrictions to go to Greece and play for a team outside of the NBA's umbrella. As the most successful European teams, such as Olympiacos, continue to gain financial clout, the fact that they aren't bound by the NBA's financial rules will become of increasing importance. That fact probably wasn't lost on LeBron.

No one outside of LeBron's inner circle knows whether the anonymous source that leaked LeBron's supposed interest to Broussard was truly relaying LeBron's interest, or acting alone. But, judging by how LeBron carefully controls his image, it would be hard to imagine him tolerating someone putting false words in his mouth for all to hear.

Is LeBron headed to Greece, or Russia, or Italy? Probably not. But the seed is planted in your head, and now you're wondering. Just like you're wondering if he'll bolt for Manhattan or Brooklyn. Or maybe two weeks in China will turn LBJ on to Asian basketball.

If the Shanghai Sharks of the Chinese Basketball Association let it be known that they were willing to make LeBron the richest athlete on Earth, I'm sure he'd be listening. And I'm guessing any Chinese team that wanted LeBron would probably have the full faith and backing of the government of the People's Republic of China.

In a global economy where money is flowing into China like water, maybe that idea isn't so far-fetched. It probably will be a lot less far-fetched in five or 10 years.

Heck, if LeBron, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh can conspire to land in New York together, as former Plain Dealer Cavs reporter Branson Wright speculated in an article several years ago, why couldn't LeBron, Wade and Bosh conspire to hook up with Yao Ming in two years and turn China into a basketball powerhouse?

LeBron couldn't. He wouldn't. But then again...

With LeBron, those three ellipses are worth a thousand words. And he loves it.