Gary Benz has seen a change in the attitudes of Browns fans this week in the wake of the trade that sent Braylon Edwards to The Big Apple, with many of the same fans that were ready to run Eric Mangini out of town after three weeks ... now supporting him and his trade of Edwards. In this week's Lingering Items, Gary touches on that, the continued influx of ex-Jets, and defensive coordinator Rob Ryan's comments this week about the Bengals game winning field goal and Bills quarterback Trent Edwards.

For a team that's been serially awful for so long, the Cleveland Browns sure don't act like it, or maybe they do. Each week, miserable loss by miserable loss notwithstanding, this team puts its fans through their paces. Fans emerge each week, tired and beaten down, as if they'd just finished another final exam in advanced chemistry.

After the game against the Baltimore Ravens, all the talk was about whether or not head coach Eric Mangini would survive to see another week. It was exhausting. Now, after the Bengals game, fans have had the chance to bat around the implications of Braylon Edwards' tough-guy act outside a Cleveland bar only to then have those implications realized by his subsequent trade to the New York Jets. It's been exhausting.

The only one that didn't see wide receiver Braylon Edwards getting traded was probably Edwards himself, although it's also not beyond the realm that Edwards orchestrated his exit by purposely not conforming to the "Mangini way."

But however this exit ultimately was accomplished it was an act more than any other thus far that serves as Mangini's signature moment. The trading of Kellen Winslow, Jr. happened in the off-season when people were still under the reflected glory of a magical Cavaliers seasons and dreaming of great moments that were not to come with the Indians. The cutting of Shaun Smith early in camp raised an eyebrow but not much else. No one liked him much, anyway, including, apparently, the Detroit Lions.

Thus for now and for the near future anyway jettisoning Edwards will serve as the official stake in the ground for Mangini's tenure and from the sounds of things anyway, this one act bought him more goodwill than even he probably anticipated.

In the last few days, I've received more emails than I could have imagined not only supporting the move but praising, yes praising, Mangini for having that uniquely New York trait of chutzpah for pulling it off. I can see their point although it's not exactly unheard of for the new guy in town to take on the biggest mouth first in order to snap the others back in line. It's Arthur Fonzarelli 101.

And in Edwards Mangini certainly was taking on the biggest mouth. That is, the biggest mouth after Smith was cut. Cutting Edwards off at the knees is something that had no chance of going unnoticed.

I always believed that Edwards' exit, whenever it would come, would be addition by subtraction. The Browns may be short on veteran talent at receiver, but don't think for a moment that a new day hasn't dawned with the troops.

Don't take my word for it, read the quotes yourself and make sure to read between the lines. Start with Mike Furrey. Talking to the media on Thursday about the impact of Edwards being gone, as reported in the Plain Dealer, Furrey said: "We don't have maybe the superstar that everybody's looking for, but we have quality guys that are out there who want to play and make plays and are

looking forward to start gelling." Hmm.

But there was more from Furrey: "You saw New England [win without a star receiver] for a long time. Guys just go out there do what they're supposed to do and keep their mouth shut and make plays and win games." It's such a great quote both for what it says and what it doesn't say.

Indeed that's the vibe out of Berea and even among a lot of fans, a circumstance that that didn't seem likely just a week ago. Edwards and his attitude toward all things non-Edwards was like a steady stream of air inflating a balloon ever closer to its breaking point. Mangini sensed that too and acted before the balloon did break. Extricating Edwards provided just the release valve both the franchise and the fans needed in the wake of the million other things that have gone wrong this season.

The argument for keeping Edwards seems based mostly on theory. Edwards may possess the requisite talent but he's in the last year of a five year contract and his one Pro Bowl season essentially puts him in the Zagar and Evans category, a one-hit wonder.

Maybe Edwards will strike it big in New York and the hits will start coming again. Truthfully, that's up to him. He has the talent. He lacks the heart. But even if he New York becomes his Oz this tin man will never be the Browns' equivalent to CC Sabathia, Cliff Lee, Manny Ramirez or Jim Thome. Edwards never wanted to be here and had he stayed would have been on the first plane out the day the season ended. Those former Indians at least had sustained success here and acted as if they wanted to stick around.

If the players now feel like they have something to look forward to with Edwards gone then it seems appropriate for the fans to share that same sentiment, at least a little.

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It's hard to know what to make of the fact that with the trade of Edwards the Browns now have essentially become the Jets, one season removed. The 10 former Jets now on the team represent 20% of the active roster. Remind me again, what was the Jets' record last season? Why was Mangini fired?

In some ways this must have been what the Denver Broncos fans felt like in 2005 when virtually the entire defensive line plus backups found their way to Denver. The Broncos had virtually no defensive line to speak of and hired former Browns defensive line coach Andre Patterson to perform the makeover.

Revamp he did by bringing in Courtney Brown (free agent), Gerard Warren (4th round draft pick), Ebenezer Ekuban and Mike Myers (trade for Rueben Droughns). It didn't help the Broncos all that much and while they did get decent contributions from Ekuban and Myers for a bit, none are active in the NFL at the moment. Ok, that's not technically correct. Warren plays for Oakland, but given both the initiative he's shown over his career and the team that currently pays his salary, can anyone really claim that makes him active? The gamble ended up costing Patterson his job as well.

The parallels with the current Jets aren't exact. The Browns need players at nearly every position. The former Jets were brought in to not only fill a slot but more so to seed the locker room and school it in the Mangini way. If/when they fail, no one will much notice anyway and Mangini certainly won't lose his job because of it.

The addition of Chansi Stuckey and Jason Trusnik are a bit different. Both are relatively young players and both appear to have far longer prospects with the team than players like Abe Elam, for example. They

will always be judged in the context of the Edwards trade, along with the two draft picks that the Browns ultimately receive.

Historically, the addition of a bunch of players that the new head coach is comfortable with is commonplace. It's like bringing a few trinkets from your mom's house when you finally move into your own place. Eventually this trend will run its course and new things get bought just as here when Mangini begins to build the club through the next several drafts, assuming he gets that far.

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At his various press conferences during the week, Mangini can be as dull as dirt in discussing everything from what happened to what will happen next. The same goes for offensive coordinator Brian Daboll's weekly Friday press conference. Daboll has been an excellent student in the Mangini move-your-lips-but-say-nothing school of public relations that it's sometimes difficult to tell the difference between the two. Then there is Rob Ryan.

The Browns' defensive coordinator is at least entertaining. He may not be as outspoken as his twin brother and Jets head coach Rex Ryan, but maybe that's because the Browns' Ryan only gets to speak to the media once a week. Here's a vote that he becomes the Browns' official spokesman.

This week Ryan had two gems that have gone viral on the internets.

First was his contention, unprompted, that he thought that Bengals' kicker Shayne Graham missed the game-winning field goal last Sunday. I had exactly the same thought at the same time. It did look wide right.

The problem is the placement of the camera at the time of the kick. While it was in the center, both its height and its depth makes it nearly impossible to tell if the kick passed through the uprights. But the fact that two referees were positioned under the cross bar and both signaled it was good, without hesitation, might seem like pretty good evidence that perhaps the camera in this case did not provide the best visible evidence.

Not to give Ryan a hard time, but maybe, just maybe he brought it up as a way of deflecting any questions about why his defense couldn't hold the Bengals on that crucial 4th down play in overtime that led to the Graham field goal. In that case the camera provided more than adequate visible evidence of the miles this defense needs to travel before it escapes the bottom of the rankings.

It also is probably worth mentioning that the reason a kick that looked a little iffy wasn't reviewed stems from the fact that it is not reviewable. According to the NFL's rule book, only kicks that may or may not have gotten over the crossbar are reviewable. That certainly wasn't the case with Graham's kick. It was far above the uprights, which is why it was so difficult to judge.

Recall that Phil Dawson's field goal against the Baltimore Ravens two seasons ago was reviewed because the issue was whether or not it went over or under the cross bar. The officials got that ruling correct, eventually. But in the case of Graham's field goal, it wasn't a question of whether it went above the crossbar, only through the uprights.

NFL officials have discussed in the past extending the uprights to make it easier on officials and that would certainly help. But it's not as if this issue comes up much, unless you count the Rich Karliss kick against the Browns n "the Drive" playoff game against Denver, but why dredge up that old thing?

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Back to Ryan. His other gem had to do with Bills quarterback Trent Edwards. Again, unsolicited, Ryan seemed to violate one of the key tenets of coachspeak, saying something controversial about an opponent.

Basically, Ryan said that the Browns aren't exactly facing either Brett Favre or Carson Palmer this week in Edwards, which is as obvious as it is true. But then Ryan added: "This guy

[Edwards] always seems to have a lot to say, so I'm going to say the same thing. Let's go. Let's get it on, see what he's all about this week."

Now calling out Edwards for having a big mouth is a fascinating juxtaposition given that it was Ryan doing all the loud talking. It also seemed a little odd because Edwards isn't Favre either when it comes to talking to the media. What apparently has been grinding at Ryan is that Edwards did lead the Bills to a game winning drive against Ryan's Oakland Raiders last season and then had the temerity to suggest, merely suggest, that maybe Ryan's team was a little tired on that last drive.

My guess is that Ryan's team was a little tired on that last drive. Heck, Ryan's team was a little tired in the second half of the Browns' first game this season against the Vikings so conditioning may be an issue. But putting all that aside, is that really something to get into a verbal slap fight about?

Again, not to give Ryan too hard a time or else Mangini may suddenly make him unavailable on Fridays each week, but I'd much rather he fix the Browns defense before putting additional pressure on it to back up his words.

In terms of rankings, the Browns are pretty much where you'd figure a 0-4 team would be, at or near the bottom on everything that counts. As bad as the offense is, ranked 29th overall, the defense is actually worse. It is ranked dead last in overall defense, 31st in run defense and 27th in pass defense. Maybe that's because those statistics are based on total yards surrendered that the defense looks so bad. The Browns' offense hasn't exactly helped the defense in staying off the field but then you could argue why the Browns' defense is so adept at keeping opposing offenses on the field.

Everyone knows the Browns are bad in every way a team can be bad. That's what makes Ryan's words so fun. He has to know he's setting himself up for these kinds of comments and forges ahead anyway. If Mangini really wants to deflect the focus on all things wrong, he shouldn't just trot Ryan out once a week, he should give the guy his own reality show.

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Running long this week, but blame it on the vast amount

of news a team this bad can still manage to generate. Quickly, then, this week's question to ponder: What's the over/under in weeks before Ryan is suddenly unavailable to speak to the media?