What's left to say that hasn't already been said or won't be said 10,000 times again in the next eight weeks in regard to the Cleveland Cavaliers?

Fans and the media are pissed. There is a tangible feeling of hurt and betrayal given how sudden and complete the collapse that killed the Cavs truly was. Even more troubling to fans and followers was the seemingly overnight transition of LeBron James from MVP to 'LeQuit' as James has been dubbed in some circles.

I'll be honest: I never saw this coming.

I stood on the sidelines for 'The Drive'. I sat before a TV in Bowling Green, Ohio in stunned silence the following January as Jeremiah Castille stripped Ernest Byner at the goal line in 'The Fumble' game. I watched in disbelief as Michael Jordan hit 'The Shot' over Craig Ehlo and I was depressed as I've ever been in my life when Jose Mesa gacked up the lead in the 9th inning of Game 7 against the Florida Marlins.

You expect the worst as a Cleveland sports fan. You almost dread success because it only makes the impending collapse more difficult to take.

Yet despite all of that, I thought James and this Cavs team was a different breed. I simply never saw this collapse sneak up behind me with a baseball bat aimed squarely at my head.

So you react naturally with indignation and bile aimed at who you blame for the attack. James and the Cavaliers, from top of the organization to the last man on the roster, took the brunt of our indignation. And they got it, deservedly, with both barrels.

But now what?

What happens with this Cavaliers team now? Is James's tank-job in the Boston series an unforgiveable sin that has to result in him going elsewhere in the fans' minds? Is there more to the story that we don't know and that at least indicates why James was seemingly so nonchalant about the team's fortunes in the Eastern Conference semi-finals? We are talking about a singular talent who has never, EVER, backed down from a challenge before in his professional career. In years past, with less talent, James carried the Cavaliers to heights previously not seen. All the while he was elevating the performance of guys like Drew Gooden and Eric Snow to what almost seemed acceptable standards.

Why quit now? Why lay down in a 2-2 series that was coming back home to 'The Q' where James and the Cavaliers have been extremely hard to beat? Was it a culmination of years of frustration and a sudden realization that no matter what heights James soared to that it wouldn't be enough? Was it a culmination of the frustration in watching Mike Brown react slowly, if at all, to adjust to in-game situations? Was it a combination of seven years worth of shouldering the load mixed in with the first injury that James couldn't overcome? Or was it a vindictive James basically flipping the bird to the Cavaliers organization and sending a loud message that his mind was made up about where he would be playing next season?

I have a very difficult time believing it was the last possibility. Nothing in James's history indicates he harbored that kind of ill will or would ever be willing to act on it.

My instincts tell me that LBJ's relationship with Brown deteriorated to the point that LBJ took the floor against Boston with no faith or confidence that Brown could or would pull the right strings in terms of style of play or player rotations. Too many times the cameras caught James grimacing in huddles or shaking his head at a substitution or play call that James didn't agree with. Add to that the discomfort with his elbow and one can begin to see how James's frustration level climbed off the charts.

But still, what to do now? The Cavs don't have many chips in what's about to become the biggest NBA free agency poker game of all time. But they do have some.

Brown is gone. It may not be today or tomorrow but Brown is a dead man walking. Regardless of whether James is in wine and gold come November Mike Brown will not be with this team. And that's a big move for the Cavs to be able to make. The other advantage the Cavaliers have is that they can pay LeBron more money than anyone else can. And those two factors amount to a couple of very high cards as this hand gets underway. Players keep score with how much influence they have and in how much money they make.

The Cavs also have an owner in Dan Gilbert whose shown he's willing to spend whatever it takes to improve this team and surround James with whatever talent is out there and available. He's also gone out of his way to open new markets to James with his sale of a 15% of the team to Chinese investors.

And don't discount the fact that LBJ is comfortable in NE Ohio. That's a huge factor. Yes, money can buy you a nice home anywhere that you can pack full of friends and relatives, but James is comfortable in NE Ohio and enjoys the fact that the media here is not oppressive or intrusive and that he's, for the most part, free to live his life without the hot lights of cameras and countless microphones tracking his every move. His girlfriend and kids are here, his roots and his mother are here and James has always seemed to value the safety and security that those roots have provided him in the past.

Now, I'm pissed that James quit on this team at times during the Boston series and I will go to my grave believing he did just that. But the further we get from that series the more it seems to me that the greater good for the Cavaliers and this city is doing what it takes to keep James a Cavalier. I'm not willing to throw away the baby with the bath water. A James-less Cavs team is a three year rebuild staring directly at all of us. I'd much more prefer we keep a singular talent and pray to God that James gets over whatever the hell ailed him the past month or so.

And he'll also have to grow up. James hasn't won a damn thing despite the way he carries himself and he's in desperate need of a 'Come to Jesus' moment where he clears away the desire for marketing and 'Q Rating' dominance and focuses more intently on a title. Utilizing a low post game, accepting that there are benefits to someone else controlling the basketball at times and understanding that friends and sycophants may not be the best possible choice to coach your team or be your mouthpiece are vital in James advancing past the point where he's

acknowledged as the greatest player never to win a championship.

That all said, this team and this city need LeBron more than he needs them. And I don't see many of the other premier players in this league, the guys you build around, coming to Cleveland any time soon to take James's place.

It's an ugly situation today. Time will provide more clarity and perspective and potentially more information that could affect how all of us feel about James staying in Cleveland. But it seems clear to me that just tossing James aside out of spite is ignorant thinking. And while you don't completely sell out to keep a 25 year-old kid happy and here in Cleveland, you do need to do things that just might make you feel a little slimy if you want the best chance to win.

Stay tuned.

Weekly Lou Marson Update

Sweet Lou has cooled off after notching his first RBI last Sunday. He's still at one RBI on the season meaning he has still has several more passed balls than runs batted in.

Even more distressing for Lou is that Matt LaPorta evened up the Marson RBI vs. LaPorta HR contest they've been waging all season when LaPorta connected for his first home run of the season this Sunday (I implore anyone looking for excitement from Marson and LaPorta to consider a Sunday purchase of tickets).

More Tribe

- There was a time when losing Grady Sizemore to a bruised knee and having to replace him with Trevor Crowe in CF would have been a huge loss in terms of the production differential. These days: Not so much.
- Almost as unlikely as the complete and horrifying Cavs collapse this past week was the

Tribe scoring eight runs in the top of the 9th inning Saturday night to turn a 2-0 deficit into a stunning 8-2 win. Thankfully I was in a bar with friends who also witnessed it as opposed to drinking alone in a dark room with my Cavs towel drying my tears, or else I'd have likely figured that it was the product of an alcohol-induced hallucination.

- Mitch Talbot is the ace of the Indians staff. Yep, I said it. Talbot was very good Saturday night again against the Orioles. The fact he was very good is terrific for the Tribe. The fact he's their ace should probably scare the crap out of the Tribe.

- Ahh…Russell Branyan. Four homers this past week. All of them against bad teams, all of them against bad pitchers. But when he occasionally connects, the sound of the ball coming off the bat is truly different than for most guys. That sound is what has kept the guy in the league for a dozen years and it's something GMs of bad teams just can't get out of their heads.

- Two straight series wins and Jake Westbrook was brilliant on Sunday in Baltimore. If MLB ever goes with a consolation pennant and consolation championship to placate the fans in smaller markets, I like the Indians chances of getting by the O's, Royals and A's in a bizarre playoff bracket and then hammering the Pirates in the Anti-World Series.

I do fear an onslaught of calls to talk radio shows and threads on message board forums that lay out how, if the Indians continue to get great pitching from Westbrook, Talbot and the re-emerging Fausto Carmona, and how if the bats heat up and how if Marson stays hot and LaPorta homers again this week, that the Tribe can get back into the AL Central race and make some noise.

I know it is coming.

Count it Down

You do realize the Browns are the closest team to a championship if LeBron leaves for greener pastures this summer, right? How's that taste?

Well, it's true. And the Browns get things rolling in just about eight weeks when training camp begins. So we have that going for us.