So I'm watching the Brown's game with this feeling of dread. I can't quite shake it. Everyone in Cleveland knows the feeling, and I have it in spades. It started after about the 3rd or 4th Jacksonville turnover that turned into nothing. It was that feeling that the Brown's luck would soon run out and it would be all over but the crying. I bet a lot of you who are reading this had the same feeling.

Unfortunately, it turns out we were right. The Brown's luck *did* run out and we were left once again with that sick feeling that is all so familiar to any Browns fan. We let another one slip away and all we are left with is the best 3-7 team in football, except maybe Dallas. And Minnesota. Possibly San Fransisco.

But we are sure as hell better than Arizona. That's for damn sure. And I think we are better than a handful of teams with a better record than us too.

So, why is the Brown's record so bad? That's the question I keep asking myself. Besides the obvious answer, which is they've played a brutal schedule so far, the answer is depth. We have none. That's why the Browns lost Sunday.

When the Browns are at full strength, they are as formidable as any team in the NFL. They can play with anyone. But, when there are significant injuries; that's just too much for this team to overcome.

When you replace Josh Cribbs, one of the most dynamic return men in the history of the league, with a schmoe named Clifton Smith*, apparently the slowest man available to replace him, that is going to make a difference on the Browns. And that isn't even considering the hit that the Brown's take by not having Cribbs involved in the offense.

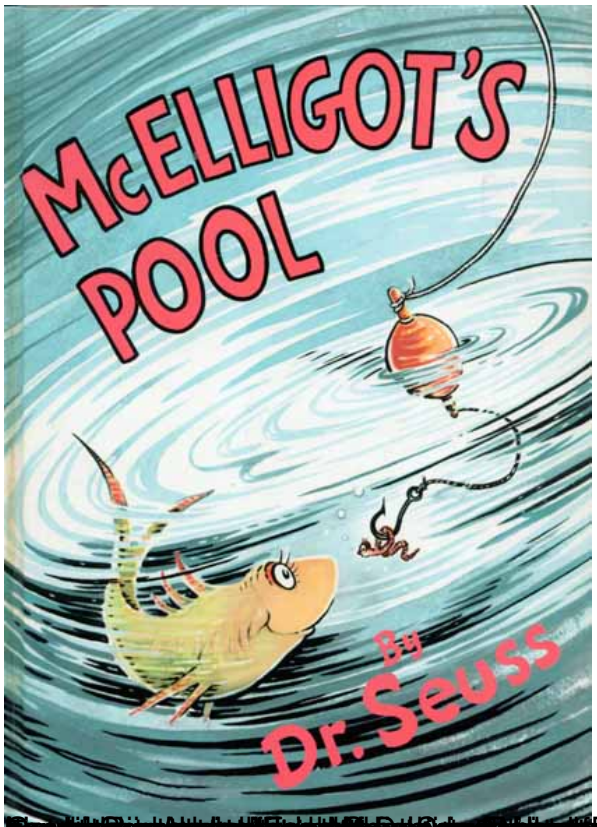
I looked up Clifton Smith. Can you believe that this schmuck was a Pro-Bowl return man 2 years ago? It doesn't make sense. He looked so ssssllllloooooooooooooooow.

When you lose Eric Wright, despite the terrible year he's having, that is going to make a difference as well. The fact that Eric Wright is a starter tells you what you need to know about the depth in the secondary.

When your star running back breaks one for 50 yards and needs a quick breather, you need to have a competent replacement. I've seen enough of Mike Bell and his 35 yards on 29 carries to know that the Browns would be better off trying to trick the opposition with a cardboard cutout of Kevin Mack in the backfield.

When the right side of the line is out and replaced with a rookie at right guard and a 320 lb mound of refried beans with "St Clair*" written on the back, that's a problem. All of a sudden your franchise savior goes from "young Joe Montana" to "rookie with no time to throw taking sacks on every drive against a very mediocre defense."

**I can't believe that John St Clair is still a gainfully employed NFL player. He's terrible. I know he's terrible. You know he's terrible. The coaches HAVE to know he's terrible. But, he's been taking meaningful snaps for the Browns for what seems like 5 years now. I can't understand it. He must have a compromising picture of Eric Mangini that he took in Thailand or something. That's the only thing that makes sense. He's the Andy Marte of the Cleveland Browns.*



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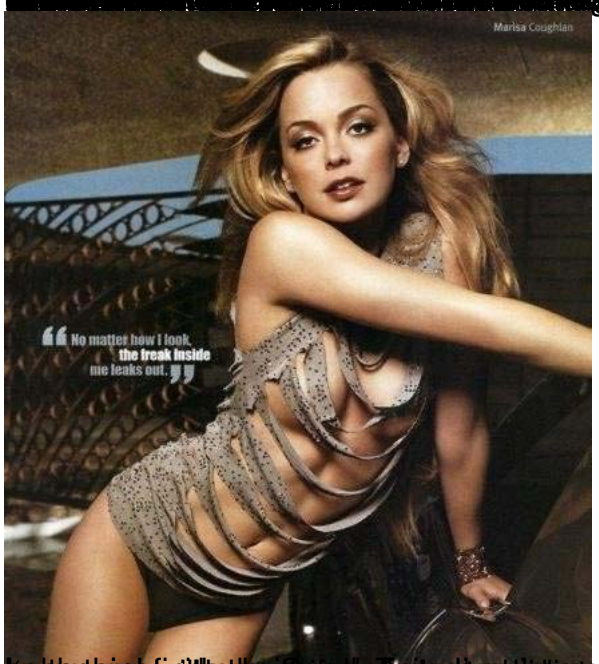
Marisa Coughlan
No matter how I look, the freak inside me leaks out.