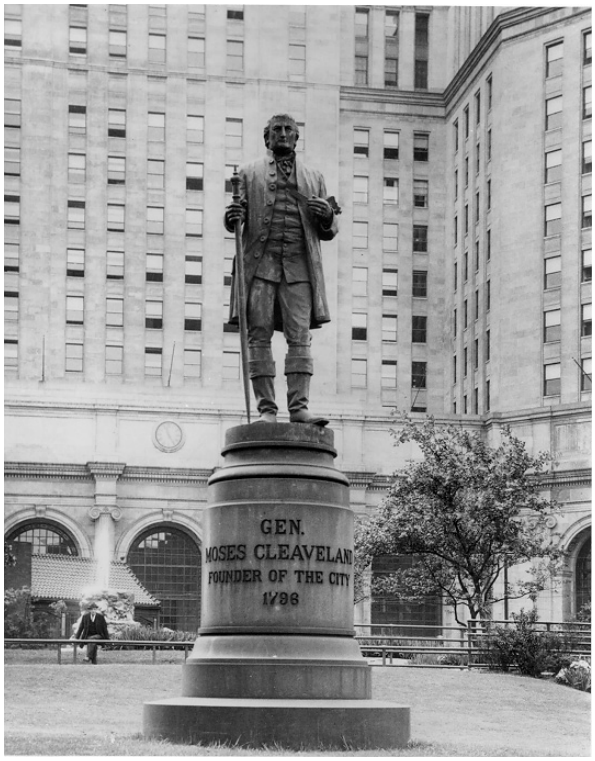

The following is a transcript of a statement read by the ghost of Moses Cleaveland at the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich, Connecticut:

“Today is a noteworthy and exciting day for the city of Cleveland.

“We are proud to announce that the great city of Cleveland – also known as the Best Location in the Nation – will be moving from Cleveland to Phoenix. This move is an important part of an overall strategy for the city to build our population, widen our demographics, and provide additional benefits to citizens such as occasional sunshine and the obliteration of winter. And with many of Cleveland’s former businesses and citizens already in the area, the move will serve as an ironic homecoming. Albeit in reverse.

“We believe we need to raise our profile within the United States, and have determined the best way to do so is by mirroring what millions of panty-waists have been doing since the 1970s: pulling up anchor from a city our ancestors settled in centuries before and moving someplace that has nicer weather four months out of the year, then sitting outside in a lawn chair on 106-degree afternoons bitching about how American companies are ruining this country by outsourcing jobs.

“The move will also replenish our revenue sources, as the frighteningly high number of Cleveland’s unemployed will finally be able to release their inner racism by finding work as a member of a privatized border patrol service or freelance bounty hunter tasked with accosting any minority – whether they be black, Latino, Jewish, left-handed, or able to correctly conjugate verbs – and promptly returning them to the Mexican border. Or, if physically able to carry anything heavier than an M-1 rifle, they will have the opportunity to work at Wal-Mart, Arizona’s largest employer.

“By transferring to the dim-witted, overly-armed American Southwest, we hope to create alliances and partnerships ranging from skin-headed psychopaths who voice political opposition by spraying semiautomatic bullets at nine-year-old girls to erudite intellectuals who smear refried beans into the shape of swastikas on the windows of government buildings.

“We believe these alliances will help grow Cleveland’s population while increasing its role in providing Schedule II narcotics to the youth of America and maintaining our all-important reputation as a great place to raise a family.

“Given Cleveland’s long history as a Cleveland-based organization, we went through a months-long process to determine if a move would benefit the city, as well as to determine the best alternatives. While we considered many locations, the two most favorable alternatives to Cleveland were Miami and Phoenix. Naturally, Miami would be an excellent choice, particularly with its long history of anally raping the city of Cleveland to the saucy Latin beat of Gloria Estefan, but before he could meet with South Beach officials, our representative was executed in a Ponderosa Steakhouse when a cocaine deal between middle-schoolers went sour. Following LeBron James’ thought-provoking Tweet on the situation, we agreed that karma is indeed quite the fickle bitch and instead turned our attention to dropping anchor in the state that refused to acknowledge Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

“Phoenix is approximately the same cost as Cleveland, and as mentioned above, it offers a much stronger connection to the heart of America. Like the citizens of Arizona – both the 143 who are permanent residents and those who arrive in November to spend the next five months driving around at 19 miles per hour with their turn signals on – Cleveland will have the opportunity to be a major player in fostering antagonism and resentment year-round.

“We apologize if this announcement seems sudden. We’d initiated discussions with ESPN to broadcast our announcement, with proceeds benefitting Big White Supremacists/Little Book Banners of America, but following the Cavaliers’ 55-point defeat to the Lakers on Tuesday night and the surprising announcement by the Society for American Baseball Research on Wednesday that it too would be leaving town for Phoenix after decades in Cleveland, we felt the time was right to make our announcement before the earth opened up beneath Northeast Ohio and the decision was taken out of our hands in a torrent of fire and ashes belching up from the bowels of hell. (Which reminds me: Ravens-Steelers 4:30 Saturday on CBS.)

“Accordingly, on the heels of the Cavs’ non-anesthetized vasectomy in Tinseltown, we also saw this as an ideal opportunity to rationalize the Cleveland sports scene.

“We’re excited about bringing the Browns to Phoenix, a city that has never been home to an NFL team despite persistent rumors to the contrary over the past 22 years. We also reached an agreement with state officials to rename the team to better match the rich heritage of Arizona, which Christian scientists have proven was created by Jesus Christ shortly after he invented man in 1965. To mirror the Browns’ selection of Paul Brown as their namesake, we agreed to rename the team after one of Arizona’s favorite sons, who, like Brown, was also pretty much bat-shit crazy by the end of his career. Thus, Arizona fans will spend autumn afternoons cheering on the Phoenix McCains.

“Similarly, Phoenix will no doubt embrace the Cavaliers once their new name of ‘Chupacabras’ is firmly established and the roster is compiled of players who each bear a similar grease content to the great Steve Nash.

“Sadly, we determined that the Indians’ Chief Wahoo mascot would be offensive to some of the actual Native Americans who live in Arizona (those who haven’t yet been returned to their native Mexico by the afore-mentioned bounty hunters, that is) and may cause hostility in that they may cop attitudes while cleaning the pools of the white men with guns who employ them.

“Consequently, we decided to discontinue the Indians franchise – only to discover Larry Dolan had already done so three years ago.

“In this new era of Cleveland athletics, we promise to give the passionate, faithful fans of

Arizona the kind of success that the 35 minutes of patience they're capable of demands. Following the successful business model established by both the Pittsburgh Steelers and Baltimore Ravens, we will encourage our athletes to either efficiently murder its fellow citizens then successfully wriggle out of trouble at trial like a sewage-coated ferret or repeatedly rape any woman they see fit in exchange for a maximum three-game suspension followed by an emotional return to the playing field.

"Additionally, with the increased television revenue coming from larger viewing audiences with ample free time since, like most citizens of the Sun Belt, they won't actually be working for a living, our athletic teams will be more financially capable to buy whatever talent they want. We have already initiated discussions with Pat Riley to learn how we can successfully obliterate other franchises to pick up a piece of jewelry that we already have seven of.

"Finally, we decided it only made sense to change the name of Cleveland to a much more appealing, home-spun term that would appeal to the instant-gratification-obsessed masses of America. Therefore, once we're established in central Arizona, the city of Cleveland will adopt its new name of 'Deep-Fried Orgasm.'

"We believe these synergetic changes can and will help Cleveland grow and certainly make us more appealing to the incestuous, leather-skinned muttonheads who inhabit places that see less than four inches of rain per year and whose brains have consequently long since turned into afterbirth from so much exposure to the sun – or, as they tend to refer to it, the 'day ball.'

"We're also excited about the opportunities for the black hole of vast nihility we will be leaving behind in northeast Ohio, in that it will become an ideal vacation spot for natives of Pittsburgh.

"The city of Cleveland has certainly enjoyed its time in Cleveland, and we leave with fond memories. To be sure, it was an emotional and difficult decision to depart, but once we tried living without a soul for a couple of minutes, we realized it was actually no big deal.

"We thank you for the 215 years of undying support you've given us and wish you the best in return, symbolized by our gift of a free small order of onion rings with any purchase from the Apache Junction Jack In the Box. You will always be a part of us.

“We hope you continue to follow us on this great adventure via Twitter and Facebook, where we will keep in touch with more news about where Cleveland is headed.

“And finally, to allay what is no doubt your overriding concern – don’t worry, it’s a dry heat.”