Woe is Cleveland, a sports-crazed city whose Browns have never won a Superbowl, whose Cavs have never won an NBA title, and whose Indians haven't won a World Series since 1948.

Cleveland has fallen victim to "The Shot", "The Drive", "The Pitch", "The Curse of Rocky Colavito" and countless other heartbreaks. It's enough to make you think the Cuyahoga River caught on fire in 1969 purely out of protest.

It's been painful, but at least we've got some great stories. Of course, every great story needs a villain, and Cleveland has no shortage of those. We're still searching for our happy ending that will allow us to let all the old grudges with longtime nemeses go, but for the time being we'll have to settle for reveling in the hatred of our former foes.

Following are eight of the most hated villains in Cleveland Sports, together in one list which you can use to relive unhappy memories or for target practice. Feel free to add more of the Cleveland villains you love to hate in the feedback section. After all, misery loves company.

8. Albert Belle

Hurling a baseball at a photographer. Unleashing a verbal tirade on a female reporter. Trying to run down trick-or-treaters with his car. Just a few of the many misdeeds of the prickly, ornery Albert Belle. When Belle was an Indian, such incidents were easy to overlook. It's tough to get too mad at a guy banging out 50 home runs for you. At that point, Belle mostly came off as a pain, and as possibly the world's youngest curmudgeon. But then he bailed on the Indians in 1997 for a big paycheck from their closest rival, the Chicago White Sox. He was the first to jump ship on the late 1990s Indians juggernaut, eventually paving the way for Jim Thome and Manny Ramirez to do the same.

Returning to town in a White Sox uniform, Belle became a jerk of a different color, and suddenly all his nasty antics started to look different. True, mostly we hate Belle because we missed having him in our lineup after he abandoned us, but any way you cork it (hehe), Belle was a pretty terrible guy. The one small consolation prize for Indians fans here is that Belle was never quite the same as a player after he left for Chicago.

7. Michael Jordan

It's really tough to hate Michael Jordan. He's probably the greatest NBA player of all time, and he's not a bad guy off the court, either. But that didn't make it any easier to stomach for Cleveland fans when "The Shot" happened on May 7, 1989, in Game 5 of the first round of the NBA playoffs.

Jordan's legendary "shot" was a buzzer beater that knocked a talented Cavs team out of the playoffs, killing the hope of the Cavs bringing a first-time NBA title to Cleveland. Jordan isn't much of a villain at all outside of Cleveland, but there's little love lost between MJ and the Cavs faithful who had to watch their hopes die as "The Shot" sunk.

We'll grudgingly call our feelings toward Jordan "respectful hatred" while we cry ourselves to sleep in old Mark Price jerseys.

6. Bill Belichick

There's no denying it: Bill Belichick is a football genius. What a shame he didn't figure that out back when he was the Browns head coach.

The Belichick Era in Cleveland marked the beginning of the end for the Browns, closely predating when He Who Must Not Be Named kidnapped the team and hauled them off to Baltimore.

Looking at Belichick now, sporting his many Patriots Super Bowl rings, it's tough for anyone to remember that this same man was once a disaster as a head coach when he ran the show in Cleveland. Tough for anyone but a Browns fan, that is.

Belichick became Public Enemy No. 1 in Cleveland when he announced hometown hero Bernie Kosar had "diminishing skills," then unceremoniously cut him and expected all of us to embrace Vinny Testaverde. And then Todd Philcox. Yes, Todd Philcox.

In his tenure with the Browns from 1991-1995, he compiled a lackluster 36-44 record, capped off by a 5-11 offering in 1995, the Browns final season in Cleveland before they were packed off to Baltimore.

So maybe there was one good thing about the Browns leaving town, then; at least they took Belichick with them.

5. Frank Lane

Do you believe in curses?

Then Frank "Trader" Lane is the villain for you.

In 1960, Lane sent beloved Indians home run champ Rocky Colavito to the Detroit Tigers in exchange for Harvey Kuenn. It was then that The Curse of Rocky Colavito was born.

The trade happened twelve years after the Indians championship season in 1948, and they haven't had one of those since. Cleveland was heartbroken when Lane sent Colavito to the Tigers, but Detroit fans seemed pretty pleased with the swap.

It is also worth noting that Lane didn't get the nickname "Trader" based on the Colavito trade alone. He also traded away every member of the talented 40-man roster he inherited within two years of taking the GM job.

"The Curse of Rocky Colavito" doesn't quite roll off the tongue like Boston's "Curse of the Bambino" or Chicago's "Curse of the Billy Goat."

Still, when you consider that the Red Sox managed to break their curse, and while the Cubs still haven't won a World Series, every other pro team in Chicago has won a championship, "The Curse of Rocky Colavito" almost appears to be the most sinister hex of the lot.

4. Jose Mesa

Nobody went from hero to zero in Cleveland faster than Jose Mesa, who spent the entire 1997 season looking like a stellar closer, then punctuated the year by throwing the pitch that killed the Indians' championship hopes in Game 7 of the World Series.

Mesa had been lights-out all season long, so when he was called upon to pitch in the ninth inning of the last game of the 1997 World Series for the Tribe, it seemed as though it was as good as won.

Unfortunately, no one knows better than Cleveland that you mustn't count your goose eggs before they've hatched.

Mesa, in a move that completely betrayed his reputation but completely symbolized Cleveland's, blew the save, the game, and the whole World Series for the Indians by giving up a single to Florida's Moises Alou, then a single to Charles Johnson, and finally a sac fly by Craig Counsell that would tie the game and ultimately lead to the Indians' demise.

Many Clevelanders (myself included) are still plagued by nightmares of Mesa's World Series Meltdown. In the blink of an eye, one of our own crushed our dreams.

I've tried many times to sweep Mesa under the same rug where I'm keeping Ernest Byner, but he continues to haunt me and my fellow die-hard Tribe fans to this very day.

3. John Elway

In perhaps the single most heartbreaking moment in the history of Cleveland sports, John Elway led his Denver Broncos to victory over the Browns in the 1987 AFC Championship via The Drive.

Elway's drive was a 98-yard funeral march that netted the Broncos the touchdown they needed to tie the game (they would later win on a field goal in overtime) and sent the Browns Super Bowl hopes to an early grave.

Throughout the game, Browns fans did their very best to help their team stop Elway by pelting he and his teammates with everything from dog biscuits to batteries. But alas, not even a biscuit shower from the dog pound was enough to stop lucky No. 7 and The Drive.

Though almost 25 years have passed since The Drive broke Cleveland's heart, for most Browns fans, the wound still won't heal. We still menacingly warn Elway to stay far, far away from Cleveland.

We still mourn The Drive like it happened yesterday. And we'll probably continue to do so until the Browns finally win a Super Bowl.

That's bound to happen sometime soon, right? Too bad that's the same thing we were thinking in 1987 before the AFC Championship game.

2. LeBron James

LeBron James could have been worshipped as one of the greats in the Cleveland pantheon of sports heroes for the rest of his career and the rest of his life. LeBron grew up near Cleveland, was drafted by the Cavs, and spent the first seven years of his career here.

A local boy, an unworldly talent, and a seemingly likable guy, James was the perfect hometown hero. It wouldn't have even mattered if he never won us an NBA title; we would have loved him anyway.

James spent most of his career gushing about how much he loved Cleveland, how important the city and the fans were to him, and how badly he wanted to bring a championship to his hometown. But then last Spring after the Cavs were eliminated from the playoffs, everything seemed to change.

James and his entourage suddenly got very, very quiet when asked about his future in Cleveland. While James' eventually re-signing with the Cavs had once seemed like a given, suddenly it appeared to be anything but.

And the longer James failed to show himself and indicate what his future plans were, the more unclear his future with the Cavs became. We were left wondering, waiting for a man who seemed to be hiding himself and his intentions from those who loved him most.

But speak of the devil and he doth appear on his own ESPN special, to announce that he's

"taking his talents to South Beach."

Cleveland, in its heart of hearts, is a football town. So for some of us, James' decision to skip town will never be as meaningful or as painful as The Drive. Still, what happened with James seems to really torque us all more than almost anything except maybe Art Modell.

Maybe it's because what happened with LeBron is still so fresh in our recent memory. More likely, it's because it was more than just a loss; it was a betrayal.

John Elway and his Broncos beat us with The Drive, but they were our opponent. That was their job. But LeBron? He was one of our own. He was supposed to be on our side. When he screwed over Cleveland, he wasn't just doing his job. Quite the opposite, actually.

And of course, the way he went about announcing it, turning our pain into a media circus to feed his ego on national TV, made the betrayal 10 times more offensive.

Perhaps that's why it will take Cleveland a long time to forgive, or at least forget James. Or maybe we'll never get there, because that's exactly what James deserves.

1. Art Modell

Every once in a while, an evil so great that it far surpasses all the other evils in your city comes to town. Sometimes is comes to pillage and plunder, burn your village, eat your neighbors, and all that good horror-film stuff.

But other times, it just steals your football team. In Cleveland, that's a far worse evil deed than eating your neighbors.

Thus without further ado, let me present the most hated man in Cleveland sports: Art Modell.

In 1961, Modell bought the Browns for $4 million. Modell fired coaching great Paul Brown two years later, mostly because Brown, being the coach and having won seven league championships, had the nerve to think he had a right to have an opinion on how the team should be run.

Contract battles with players in the late 1960s and early 1970s further exposed Modell as the stingy control freak he was. Later, as the landlord for Municipal Stadium, he managed to alienate the Indians to such a degree that they began plans to build and move to a new baseball-only facility, Jacobs Field.

But all of that was nothing compared to what Modell would do in 1996: take Cleveland's beloved Browns and move them to Baltimore.

The city and the fans, who loved the Browns more than anything else in the world, were equally heartbroken and outraged. Further fueling the fire was the fact that Modell had promised several times in the past not to move the team.

The Brooklyn native had also spoken many times of how upset he was when the Brooklyn Dodgers moved to LA in 1957. Ironically, he also voted against the Colts' move from Baltimore to Indianapolis in 1984, 12 years before Modell would make the very same move he voted down there.

After Modell skipped town in 1996, there would be no football in Cleveland for three years as we waited for an expansion team (the city, mercifully, managed to keep the rights to the team name, logo, and history).

Three years might not seem like much time to some people, but for Clevelanders, three years without football may as well be an eternity.

Thankfully, we got our team back, but that doesn't mean we'll ever forgive Modell for betraying us by taking them away. Modell is undoubtedly the single most hated man in Cleveland sports history, and probably always will be.