“Ever hear my dominatrix story?”

That’s how my good friend Lester, who I’ve known for about 15 years now, opened a conversation with me at a bar one Saturday morning.

“Um, no.”

“Are you sure? Because I can’t imagine I wouldn’t have told you it before”

“I think that is something I would remember.” I replied.

As the story goes, Lester was in the club formerly known as The Basement in the area of Cleveland formerly known as the Flats. The Flats have long since become a Scooby Doo ghost town , and the club has long since been demolished, but I'm sure more than one of you remember it in the peak of it's vibrancy as the place to go on a weekday night in Cleveland. They "decorated" it very much like a single man would decorate his basement, complete with a washer and dryer on which women would dance luridly in the hopes of attracting a mate for the evening. Like baboons with the giant red thing on their ass, only entirely different.

So my friend is on top of one of the washing machines chatting with an amiable young lass, and inquires her profession. "Dominatrix." For some, this would be a deal breaker and the conversation would end there. But not Lester. Lester studies humans like Dian Fossey studied gorillas, and his brain instantly told him " I gots to know ". So he wound up taking her number and calling her for a date.

Long story short, he picks her up and she lives with a much older man who was a hardcore badass Marine sniper. He was introduced as her slave, and she made him kiss her feet as she left on her date. On the date, it was revealed she was building some sort of torture dungeon in the basement with him, but Lester (who can rightfully be described as gimpy) was afraid to go and see. The relationship ended after two dates when the dominatrix got back together with a former girlfriend.

What makes a man capable of killing you sixteen different ways with a paperclip decide he needs to be someone's bitch in his private life? How do you go about becoming a professional dominatrix anyway? And what the hell was in that basement? Our minds can only wonder.

In related news, the Cavs play seven of their next eight games against teams over .500.

Off to the questions.

Considering we only have 300+ days left on earth (if you can't trust a 4000 year ole pre-Columbian civilization's calendar then who's can you trust), what is your outlook on

this last apocalyptic year of Cleveland sports? As a die hard Tribe/Browns fan, I see the Indians choking away yet another solid start sometime in mid June. As for the Browns, it's almost guaranteed that we start 14-0 only to see a giant fireball annihilate us all before the team can even sniff a playoff game.

This is why I drink. Thoughts? –Brady, Bowling Green

First of all, please allow me to go off on a little rant about people who actually believe 2012 will be the end of the earth. There are thousands of people, maybe millions, who actually think, based on a loose set of facts spread through internet lore, that the Mayans could actually foretell the end of civilization, yet couldn't predict the Spanish invasion that destroyed their civilization, or even invent a decent color TV or recliner for that matter. I would encourage each and every one of you to come up with unique scams to steal all such fools' worldly possessions ahead of 12/21/2012 that de facto makes this belief come true in a glorious act of social Darwinism.

But, hey, maybe the Mayans *were* right. The first sign will be if the Cavs make the playoffs as an 8 seed, and then upset the Bulls somehow. This will give the city of Cleveland hope, but it will also pave the way for the Heat to win the east and have LeBron James eviscerate every single loyal Cleveland fan on a national stage as he clutches that golden ball.

That's the thing about the Cleveland curse – it is an unusually cruel dominatrix. She won't stop when you yell "hippopotamus", and she cares not about anything other than torturing us in the most evil and inhumane manner possible. She gives you hope only to make the pain worse, and laughs as she breaks your will. And if this is indeed her final chance to torture you, she's taking you to her basement of horrors and pulling out her A game. She will tell you that she loves you, and then rip your heart from your chest and make you watch her eat it while it still beats. She's not going to fuck around.

While a June swoon and 14-0 Browns team annihilated by a fireball would be perfectly cruel, more likely outcomes are a World Series loss to an Ozzie Guillen led Miami Marlins team, and a 73-6 loss to the now 12-2 Steelers to drop the Browns to 13-1 in the Sunday night game in front of a record television audience. Because then all the pain of past and present failings can crush our very souls before we die.

If that happens, you can rest assured the apocalypse is 12/21/2012.

In your most humble opinion, which is the better board game, Risk or Stratego? I would appreciate you breaking down the pros & cons of each in your answer, and it should go without saying, be as verbose as possible. –Bored in Cleveland

Risk and Stratego are two entirely different games. There is a classic argument that winning in Risk is more luck-based, as there are dice involved and a randomness to your opening position. Stratego, on the other hand, is a strategy game where you try to outthink and outmaneuver your opponent, and as there are no dice or cards involved, it is a pure battle of minds. Of course, with any classic argument, this construction is seriously flawed on both accounts.

I prefer to think of Risk as more like the NBA . The NBA draft lottery is akin to the opening of the game, and decides if you have three territories in Australia plus Siam (aka the “Kevin Durant”), or if you have the Middle East, Western US, and South Africa to start (the “Greg Oden”). Individual NBA games are won and lost when impossible shots fall or don’t, and a home court advantage plays a role, but by in large the better team wins and in a seven game series, there is little doubt who the superior team is. Similarly with Risk, the roll of the dice and advantage of attackers vs. defenders does in part define the game, but if you have the right combination of strategy, patience, and aggression, you can consistently win at Risk. Couple the fact that you can have six people playing at once, creating a great social experience, and Risk is a phenomenal game.

Stratego is more like MLB. Man on man matchups, and usually the better man prevails. But there is some luck involved too. Cory Fucking Snyder actually hit 3 homers off Randy Johnson in 16 ABs in his career , which is the equivalent of you randomly finding your opponent’s 1 with your spy. Guess fastball, get a fastball, you can beat a superior opponent sometimes.

So are you more a baseball fan or basketball fan? And are you looking for a social game or a man vs. man matchup? Given these criteria, I prefer Risk.

By the way, the best game of the genre is Diplomacy, and it isn’t even close. For those that have never played, Diplomacy involves no dice and absolutely no random chance. Your success is solely based on your ability to scheme, collaborate, sell a plan, make a plan, backstab at the appropriate time, and otherwise coerce your opponents into doing things that lead to your victory. Pure strategy, a lot of genuine and interesting social interactions, and a great test of your ability to be a swindler, con artist, and, well, diplomat (redundant with the first

two, I know). Henry Kissinger and John F. Kennedy used to love playing Diplomacy, and I can't imagine them playing Risk or Stratego (I can picture them getting loaded and playing Operation off a naked intern while another leather-clad intern whips them for touching the sides, well, JFK at least, but that's neither here nor there).

Dilemma.....My 11 yr old has asked on several occasions to switch allegiances from the Browns to a professional football team. He is tired of the abomination on the lake, and frankly questions my sanity in maintaining loyalty to all things Cleveland & even the Buckeyes. You see my problem. My son is intelligent and realizes there is something very wrong with his father. The Buckeyes are a much easier sell with the recent Meyer hiring and #3 rated recruiting class.

He doesn't perceive 1964. Jimmy Brown is likened to George Washington era wise. Lebron left town, and Victor Martinez was his favorite Indian. He routinely sees ex-Clev players shine in the playoffs. One of the hardest things to grasp (or him & me) was watching CC face off against Cliff Lee in the world series. "Dad, were they not both Cy Young winners... and isn't that the type of player you want to have on your team?"

I am running out of excuses and optimistic projections, he doesn't believe in Santa, Easter Bunny, or the Tooth Fairy anymore. What should I do? Spare him & save his life? Doom him to....this? -Distressed in Youngstown

Ah, the eternal question for a Cleveland fan. Why do we, the aged Marine sniper, choose to be subservient to the cruel dominatrix of the Cleveland Curse? The answer is simple – sports are not all about sports. Winning on the field is the least important part of the game.

Let's use as a case study a fictitious a kid from Akron, we'll call him "LeBron", who grows up the son of whore so filthy her crabs have herpes. She doesn't teach him anything about loyalty, perseverance, patience, discipline, courage, or fortitude (he literally can't spell most of those words). No, instead, she lets him front run and cheer for the Cowboys and Yankees. What good does that do for you if you only cheer for the team that is winning? You learn nothing of character, you always take the easy way out, and you develop no inner strength and courage. Later in life, how will LeBron react in tough situations? He'll likely be known as a choker in the clutch, and he'll likely cost himself hundreds of millions of dollars being a hated and disloyal front runner trying to take the easy way out. Do you want your kid to be like LeBron? I think not.

Anything worth having is hard, and that rings especially true for being a fan of Cleveland sports. You learn to survive all kinds of adversity, and have your teams' most inglorious moments captured forever in two word titles starting with "the", to be rehashed annually on ESPN like bamboo chutes under your fingernails. That is a special kind of pain and abuse, but it makes you strong to go through that. There is an old adage that "man learns nothing from success and everything from mistakes," making Cleveland truly the smartest and most educated fanbase in the world.

But back to the fundamental point of sports – it is a distraction over which men, especially fathers and sons, can bond. If you allow your son to be a bandwagon whore, you lose a vital bond between the two of you. He'll say "hey did you see that Pujols hit two homers to put my team of the moment the Angels on top of their division," to which your only response could be "no, because I couldn't give two shits, and California is filled with horrible and vacuous people that I would relish seeing perish in a massive earthquake." And then your son gets a pierced nose, facial tattoos, and winds up kissing the feet of his master with a torture room in his basement, because he has no bond or attachment to you. All because you let him front run.

Final question:

Does anyone get away with more false flavor advertising than The Doritos Company of America?

There isn't anything remotely pizzay about their Pizza Supreme Doritos, nor anything tacoy about their Taco, nor cheeseburgery about their Cheeseburger (IIRC, this was once a flavor). They're all just vaguely cheese-flavored. Really, the same goes for long-timers like Nacho & Ranch, but at this point, I've just lied to myself for so long that I've accepted those as representing the chip versions of their respective flavors.

The now-defunct Guacamole Doritos were really, really awesome--they gave you a crazy green tongue and some fucked up breath as a bonus--but again, they had absolutely nothing in common with the flavor of real live guacamole. Their similarities started and stopped with the color green. It was the wrong color green, but still, it was green.

The Sweet Spicy Chili Doritos. Also awesome. Quite possibly the greatest Doritos flavor ever, and while I suppose you could say there's a touch of sweetness there, spicy? Chili? Please.

Are we all just afraid to sue, fearing they may, out of spite, withhold from us their vast store of deliciousness? - HoodooMan

Here's the thing about Doritos.

That fucked up Dorito breath you get from eating them? Imagine going to the gym and having some Eastern European dominatrix named Helga punish you for two hours in an insane workout, then you immediately come home and use one of your filthy gym socks to masturbate thinking of her (because you are a sick sick man), and you leave said sock in the corner for a few days. That is a general approximation of Dorito breath. Now consider that once the blast of salt, sugar, heat, and/or food coloring covering the chip are gone, *that smell is the actual flavor of the chip* . But how the hell is the Frito-Lay company going to market Spicy Bold Gym Sock Fap flavored Doritos? They can't, so they take some liberties.

So why don't you sue? Because in a trial situation, you'll be forced to take the stand and admit you like Spicy Bold Gym Sock Fap Doritos. Under full discovery, that will be revealed as the flavor, and the presumably horrible secret flavor ingredients will also be revealed. And you'll be forced to admit to yourself that you find said flavor delicious. Do you want to live life knowing you like Spicy Bold Gym Sock Fap flavor? Do you really want to know what is in the flavor mix to give it that taste?

It's best just to keep this whole thing quiet.

Please email questions to lars.hancock@yahoo.com , or DM them to me in the forae to LarsHancock.