

## **The Look Man Report 2006**

### **Week 3: There is No Spoon**

*I learned long ago, never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it. - Michael Hatfield*

#### **OPENING**

Week Three of the 2006 NFL season saw a proud Cincinnati squad take a beating, then rebound to dish one out in the same game. The Browns pulled defeat from the jaws of victory, while Chicago was able to do the opposite. The Chowds got punished by the Donkeys in Foxborough, proving that Bill Belichick STILL can't beat Mike (the Rat) Shanahan. And finally, ESPN's Monday Night Football was more like an in-season coronation of New Orleans than a football game. The hyperbole was so over the top that even Michael Irvin seemed understated. And that, my friends, ain't easy.

If you add it all together, you have quite a week in the NFL. Of course, on the medical front, Chris Simms suffered a spleen laceration and Terrell Owens attempted suicide by sewing his lips together. It's pretty amazing that these stories actually took a back seat to the action on the field, and for the media, they didn't. The media swarmed the Dallas locker room like pigs to slop, and in the words of one Tailpipe, that ain't a good thing.

As we head into the final phase of the first quarter, Cincy, Indy, and Baltimore remain unbeaten in the AFC. San Diego sits at 2-0 while headed into STD-more this weekend for a marquee game. The NFC counters with Chicago, Seattle and New Orleans at 3-0, with the Religious Icons being the surprise team of the year. Seattle meets the Bears on Sunday Night Football after the New Orleans at Carolina matchup, meaning there may be only one unsullied record in the conference by Week 5.

Since ABC TV has decided to do a Hispanic version of Cinderella in the form of its new show *Ugly Betty*, one has to wonder if everything old is new again. The Cinderella teams in the NFL are being re-defined on a weekly basis with the winner of the glass slipper likely to win a trip to Miami in February. Whether a Lombardi Trophy goes with the slipper is debatable. What isn't debatable is that no one wants to dance with the wicked step-sisters of any of these 2006 teams.

Without further mixed metaphors, the Week in Review:

#### **WEEK IN REVIEW**

The Look Man's predictions for Week Three were pretty upside down. While he did correctly assess the New Orleans-ATL coronation game, he was wrong big-time on the Bengals-Stillers, Jags-Colts and Bears-Vikes divisional matchups. They were so bad that Tailpipe Mike (Smoothy) Barsan correctly chided the Look Man, saying, "...just flip those picks upside down and they will be correct..."

So a season that began with a promising 7-4 record has devolved into 9-7. What makes matters worse is the Look Man failed to include his own lead pipe lock, the Carolina at Tampa game.

What made the latter a lock was an unusual late week occurrence. When President George W. Bush appeared at Tampa's training facility and played catch with QB Chris

(Molly) Simms it triggered memories of a similar event in C-Town. Dubya appeared on camera tossing the rock next to then Cleveland QB Jeff (Jerry) Garcia, just before the promising Browns season careened into the dumpster. Later, after Condi Rice revealed her love of all things Browns in her visit to Berea, Kellen Winslow suffered a motorcycle accident. Could these events be coincidental? These and other national security secrets will be revealed in the Dubya Museum opening in 2020.

After the pounding Simms took resulted in a splenectomy, you be the judge. At any rate, the Look Man was able to get some caish down on the money line in Vegas just in time after reading about the presidential visit to St. Pete.

### *Bengals at Stillers:*

The Look Man saw this game as “pivotal” in last week’s Look Ahead segment. In truth, it simply reinforced what we already knew: the Nati is good offensively, and Big Ben is still suffering the effects of a Condi Rice visit this summer.

The Stillers busted out to a nice lead courtesy of ball control offense and (Fast) Willie Parker. The Still Curtain racked up six sacks of (Johnny) Carson Palmer, forcing him to uncharacteristically fumble twice and throw three picks. When the Stillers marched down to the red zone on their second ball control possession, this game had the earmarks of a blowout.

But then Reality struck. Big Ben threw a red zone INT, proving that his polyvinyl wall adornment isn’t the only Fathead in the Still City. Untimely fumbles by PR (Ricky) Ricardo Colclough and RB Verron (Look Who We Get Our) Haynes (On Now) put the Ugly & Black in position to hover, then take the lead. Each time, the Bengals correctly went for the backbite, throwing a TD pass on the first play.



*Courtesy of Condi & the State Department ?*

The huge mistakes by Big Burgher were magnified by the efficiency of Mr. Tonight Show, who made some nice adjustments. The King of Late Night was 8 for 8 passing with a TD after Little Ricky’s first half fumble. Later, after he threw a medicine ball to key WR Chris Henry, he found TJ (Hooker) Houshmandzadeh when he needed first downs.

Though the Stillers shut down the mouth Chad (The Dentist) Johnson, the other Bengals torched their secondary. Backup S Kevin Kaesvihearn sealed the deal, fittingly with a

late Big Ben pick in the endzone. His safety mate, (I')Madiou Williams added punishing hits on Fast Willie, setting up the decisive fumble by the Underwear Back.

The final 5-3 turnover ratio was indicative of the team that wanted this one more. A few of Mr. Tonight Show's fumbles were actually recovered by the visitors. Overall, the Stillers looked like a team that has yet to develop its offensive identity. As the Look Man said last week, they had better get RB Najeh (Dump Truck) Davenport ready for the Bus role during the bye week. Fast Willie is too small to take the pounding, so unless Cowher wants to reincarnate da Burgh as a finesse team, he will need a replacement.

#### Flintstones at Browns:

Last week the Look Man said about this game, "They may not win, but the Browns will close ranks, cover the spread and turn the corner in 2006." Well, sure enough the Browns covered the 6.5, but the win got away courtesy of ridiculous red zone play calling.

The Browns came out like a carpenter's dream in the first half: flat as a board and easy to nail. Charlie (Biggie Size) Frye got most of the puncture wounds, enduring five first half sacks. The worst was a Joe Turkey Jones Special by Flintstones LB/DE Adalius (Danny) Thomas. The Browns O-line made room for Daddy, and the 270 pound Thomas planted the 215 pound Frye unceremoniously on his head.

Biggie Size evidenced some serious heart health in clinical trials with 175 passing yards and 14 first half points. He showed excellent leadership in throwing a long TD pass to Braylon Edwards, then boiling his way downfield for another rushing TD. Frye is still the Browns leading rusher. The only transfatty acids in his game came courtesy of getting hit while throwing ill-advised passes.

Frye wasn't alone in the heart department. LB Willie McGinest answered critics by playing with a bum calf, and sparking the Barking Dawg D to a brilliant performance. Kellen Winslow and Braylon keyed the passing offense, with both getting nearly 100 yards on the day. Down 14-9, Coach Brian Billick(goat) decided to go for two points at 14:58 in the fourth quarter.

The Look Man believes in the old adage, "Kick early, go for it late." By using the famed Vermeil Chart too early in a game, it makes you seem desperate. Sure enough, the Browns D stiffened by rejecting the two point conversion, and the 14-9 score put the Browns in position for a one or two point win.

Billickgoat's ego should have cost him the game, but Browns offensive coordinator called for an ill advised red zone throw, and the Zebras called for a Baltimore win. While the Look Man has always advised that a team go for the jugular instead of the conservative FG, we here in the AFC Asgard prefer our offense the old fashioned way. If an AFC Norse team cannot pound the ball three times inside the five for six, it needs to go to the AFC Souse. We don't throw on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1, and we don't throw inside the five with less than five minutes remaining. It's just our rule. Denver and Indy can do that enough for everyone. We are the Black & Blue Division and we don't do that. End of story.

### Bears at Swedes:

This matchup certainly "...tilted the balance of power in the NFC...", just not the way the Look Man envisioned. The Swedes and Bears played excellent defense, and the Monsters of the Furniture Mart forced a late Chester Taylor fumble that cost the Swedes the game.

Bears QB (T-)Rex Grossman actually pulled this one out with his first career fourth quarter TD pass. The Bears are still doing it with defense, but T-Rex has installed the Air Bears Offense in the absence of a downhill running game. Chicago hasn't had a signal caller this good since Jim (Punky QB) McMahon.

This win sets up a big Sunday Nighter at home against the undefeated Sheepskins, er Shehawks. The 'hawks come in without Fantasy Back Shaun Alexandra (the Okay), and it could be another ugly defensive battle by Lake Michigan.

### Dirty Birds at Icons (MNF):

The Religious Icons proved to be America's (New) Team in what the Look Man will call the Coronation Bowl. ESPN put the hype back in hyperbole with a Super Bowl type preview of the game. The Look Man liked the fact that the network is trying to help a bad situation in New Orleans, but a lot of this was self serving. Ratings have not been great for the Disney Network, which overpaid for MNF.

As for the game, New Orleans coach Sean Payton badly outcoached Jim Mora of the Dirty Birds. The early deep passing game and reverse made the ATL defense look confused. The Religious Icons shut down the college option by using OLB Scott (Steak) Fujita with a hard edge rush, again proving that the option does not work in the NFL. Once they forced Vick to throw from the pocket, the game was all over.

The Religious Icons laid it all on the line in a big game and big venue. They played with fire for the full sixty minutes, but more importantly, they were well prepared. While other teams in the NFC Souse may have more talent, the Icons have more heart. It showed on MNF.

### **ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

Bill Leavy wins hands down for the Baltimore-Cleveland fiasco defeat from the jaws of victory, and continue their home slide. The final B-More drive included a **Zebra of the Week** moment where Bill Leavy and Crew allowed a reception that set up the longest FG of Matt Stover's recent history. Leavy also called a questionable offsides on the play for good measure, and then got confused about whether the coach could accept the penalty or the catch.

WR Mark Clayton's foot was out-of-bounds prior to the catch, but perhaps he "re-established himself inbounds" beforehand. At any rate, the 12 yard catch set up a 52 yard FG that was just cleared the cross bars. Game over, thanks for coming, and keep those bottles in the stands, please.

BTW, Hulk Hochuli gets (dis)Honorable Mention for this calls in the New Orleans Coronation Bowl.

## **INFIRMARY:**

- Fantasy Football bellcow and former MVP Shaun Alexandra (the Okay) has a broken foot that will keep him out several weeks. Alexandra hadn't been doing great for her fantasy owners in 2006 anyway. Fittingly, those same owners can't name his 2005 starting offensive line, which is no longer together.
- Carolina WR Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer) Smith played for the first time on Sunday, and the Black Cats got a win. J-Cubed is still not 100% healthy, so coach John Fox would be smart to reduce him from 50 to about 30 plays per game, or he could end up back on the shelf.
- The Browns placed CB Daylon McCutcheon on injured reserve, so he is out for the year. Cleveland responded by doing nothing, despite the absence of CB Gary Baxter and DE Orpheus Roye. They now resemble a MASH unit with Romeo Crennel as Colonel Henry Blake and Mo Carthon as Radar O'Reilly without the foresight.
- The Bengals are just as banged up. S Dexter Jackson is out with an ankle, replacement LB Rashad Jeanty is now injured, forcing the acquisition of former Bearcat Andre (Smoking Dre) Frazier. Center Rich Braham and WR Tab Perry are also still out, and the DUI affair with WR Chris Henry makes it likely that he will be inactive for Sunday's Chowds game. The Bengals believe they can win without Henry, their best WR, due to injuries in the New England secondary. Of course, the Bengals also still believe in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy.

## **LAGNIAPPE**

### **Sean Payton - The New Morpheus**

There is a great scene in the original Matrix movie where Neo visits the Oracle for the first time and he sees the other potentials practicing telekinesis. Neo is blown away by these talented children, one of whom is bending flatware with his mind. The following dialogue transpires as the Boy hands Neo a spoon:

*Boy: "Do not try to bend the spoon; that is impossible. Instead realize only the Truth."*

*Neo: "And what is the Truth?"*

*Boy: "That there is no spoon."*

The Look Man recounts this scene because it is reminiscent of the job that Icons coach Sean Payton is doing in New Orleans. Payton has taken a rag tag group of athletes and assembled a team. Some starters, like Scott (Steak) Fujita are final cut victims at other restaurants. But to paraphrase the late Governor Ann Richards, "... these guys weren't born with a silver foot in their mouths..." and Payton is showing them how to bend the physical rules in the Matrix known as the NFL.

### **We Decide/What You Report**

As the Iraqi war death toll surpassed that experienced in the Twin Towers on 9/11, Fox News correspondent Chris Wallace asked former President Bill Clinton why he didn't do more to catch and kill Osama bin Laden following the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000. Clinton responded angrily, defending his own record while jabbing at Wallace. The Washington RB then asked Wallace why he had never asked the Bush Administration that same question, saying, "At least I tried."

Wallace at first responded that, "We asked" but later backpedaled, mumbling something about Iraq and Afghanistan. As it turns out, neither Wallace nor his predecessor, current

Press Secretary Tony Snow (Job), ever asked that question, despite nearly 40 opportunities with VP Dick (Shotgun) Cheney, Don (Rummy) Rumsfeld and Condi (Brown) Rice.

Clinton then conducted a comical ten minute bitch slapping of Chris Wallace, replete with finger waving and close talking. It represents a possible momentum swing by the aggressive wing of the Democratic Party. With gasoline prices likely to fall below \$2 per gallon by the midterm elections in November, the Dems must have figured it was time to do something.

Fox News has recently changed it's slogan from *Fair and Balanced to We Report/You Decide*. They really had no choice since the slogan belonged to Press Secretary Tony Snow, who is now using a similar slogan at the State Department.

### **Ridin' Dirty**

Bengals LB Odell Thurman became a contestant of the *Celebrity Drunk Bus* when he was pulled over in Cincinnati on Sunday night. Thurman was transporting Bengals Chris (O) Henry, who was so loaded that he was projectile vomiting out of the vehicle. He and fellow passenger WR TJ Houshmazooli had just returned from their Steel City domination, and decided to enjoy a few road pops with suspended teammate Thurman.

Unfortunately, the cops noticed Thurman was weaving in Henry's rig, and pulled over the group for closer investigation. Thurman blew a 0.17 on the roadside sobriety test, causing the league to suspend him for the other 12 games in 2006. Thurman is now \$340 large lighter in his wallet, and Henry is firmly entrenched in coach Marvin Lewis' doghouse. Given the itchy trigger fingers of the local politizei, these guys are lucky to even be breathing.

### **THE LOOK AHEAD:**

#### **Bolts at B-More:**

Marty Schottenheimer and the Bolts invade STD-more on Sunday to face the Flitnstones in a battle of unbeaten. Marty's boys are fresh off a bye, and the Flintstones played a physical match in C-Town last week.

The Look Man believes that the Bolts used the bye to get QB Philip Rivers ready for prime time. The return of All World LB Shawne (Ethel) Merriman to Maryland could lead to the undoing of the Flintstones, who still have not shown a solid rushing game. Even without indicted CB Terrence Kiel, it's Bolts, baby, Bolts.

#### **Chowds at Beng:**

Dr. Evil will not go down easy as the Chowds have not lost 2 in a row since 2002. Still, this is a new day of the Bengals. This is a day when guys get arrested for DUI every week, and the Po-Po scrupulously avoids including Chad Johnson in the police report despite him riding shotgun with Odell Thurman.

Team Turmoil doesn't help as the Chowds turn Pall Bearer Stadium into Blade Midwest. Chowds cover and win as Marvin Lewis and the Bengals begin to unravel.

#### **Seattle Shehawks at Chicago Bears**

This one won't be as good as the marquee as the Shehawks struggle without their bellcow Alexandra. Look for the Northwest Nabobs to try to spread the field with four or

five wides, forcing Chicago into all nickel, all the time. Unfortunately, this strategy leaves Matt (Hair Club for Men) Hasselback open for punishment and plenty of picks. The Look Man likes the Bears to win a week too late.

### Green Bay Packers at Philadelphia Eagles

The Iggles are for real despite the ignominious loss to the Jynts. They have always owned the Cheeseheads and the string continues on MNF. The Pope recently apologized to Muslims for his low 2006 QB rating, and he will now unveil his new short passing offense with matching bulletproof golf cart/Pope-mobile. It won't be enough as the Iggles win, using the old Genuflect Play at the end.



*A shalom aleichem, boys!*

## **EPILOGUE**

### **Et Tu, Fay?**

ESPN's Monday Night Football took a long hard look at the rebuilding of New Orleans over a year following Hurricane Katrina. The Disney Network as well as the players from both teams toured the lower Ninth Ward area, which has seen no renovation. ESPN featured documentary filmmaker Spike Lee on the broadcast, asking him to provide his take on the game. Luckily, Spike refused to "pull a Kanye" despite being egged on by Tony Kornheiser. He was gracious and dignified, asking viewers to do whatever they could to help New Orleans, not just tonight, but until rebuilding is complete.

Despite the hoopla surrounding this game, New Orleans is sorely in need of help. The federal government is doing next to nothing, and it is unlikely that the Icons will even be resident in the Big Easy two years from today.