

The Look Man Report 2006 **Halloween VIII: The Return of Michael Myers**

"The game was closer than the score indicated." – MLB star Dizzy Dean, after a 1-0 game

OPENING

Week Eight in the NFL was a celebration of all things spooky. Fans dressed in costume, and the players decided to follow suit. Good QBs shape shifted into Jon Pickna, and New England unveiled a run and shoot offense in Minnesota. There were closely contested games all over, proving that it does indeed take a while for teams to discover their offensive identities. All in all, it was a typical Halloween week in the NFL.

The Cincinnati-Atlanta, Indy-Denver, San Diego-St. Louis, and Seattle-KC games were all big time shootouts. Chicago and the Jynts dominated at their home fields, courtesy of fans and wind, respectively. The Stillers laid an egg by starting their concussed QB at the Black Hole. And Cleveland followed its termination of the Mo Carthon era with a zebra assisted win over the Aeronuaticals.

The other development in Week Eight was the meteoric rise of the New England and Dallas bandwagons. The media and fans have jumped all over the Chowds and Dallas, making them the Flavors of the Week after dominant wins in big games. The Look Man is not ready to ride the bandwagons just yet, especially in light of their defensive deficiencies. In the case of the Chowds, they really haven't played any competition, and half of their team wears black and white uniforms. The combination of Bill (Dr. Evil) Belichick and Tom (Zoolander) Brady is formidable but the Look Man is not going to "crown their asses."

More importantly, Halloween Week in the NFL has historically been full of outliers. In addition to the outrageous fan costumes, NFL cheerleading squads gussy up quite nicely. Cincinnati likes it so much that they devote their entire season to the event.

Without further goblins and gooseflesh, the Week in Review:

WEEK IN REVIEW:

Frisco at Chicago (-16):

Chicago broke out of their typical post-bye swoon mode by punishing a young Niners squad. The Look Man Pepto Pick went by the boards after Niners LB Coach Mike Singletary got the team riding too high in the saddle. Instead of playing well, they turned the ball over early and often, resulting in a 41-0 halftime deficit.

The 41-point halftime lead was only one short of the NFL record from 1983. Da Bearz have established one of the largest scoring differentials in NFL history, surpassing the Greatest Show on Turf Lambs in 1999, the 1996 Cheeseheads and the 1991 Genocide Victims. Each of the previous teams won the Lombardi trophy. The Chicago Sun Times features a weekly countdown to Super Bowl XLI in Miami. If Chicago continues doing the Monster Mash at home every week, this action may be warranted. They might even force the locals to rename it *The Win-D City*.

Head coach Mike Nolan was ticked off, shouting, "THEY WERE WHO WE THOUGHT THEY WERE! AND WE LET THEM OFF THE HOOK!" Singletary was indifferent in the blowout, saying, "I like this kinda pahty baby! We're gonna be here all night!" He was later seen eating dinner and dancing on tables at the Haunted Submarine on Lake Michigan.

Hotlanta at Cincy: (-4.5)

The Bengals looked to extend their winning streak over NFC Souse opponents in hosting the Atlanta Dirty Birds. Chad (The Dentist) Johnson sported his new "Ocho Cinco" nameplate, and the fans had an air of anticipation similar to other big games at Pall Bearer Stadium. They believed the Bengals would right the ship on the Halloween weekend that celebrates their orange and black color palette. They didn't count on having to endure the Michael Vick Experience.

Vick turned the game into a shootout with a 19 of 27, 290-yard passing performance. He tossed in another 55 yards running the ball in a game that looked like Madden 2002. He was so unstoppable that it appeared he was operating at a different speed than the rest of the players. He outran the angle on several defenders, defeating Marvin Lewis' game plan to use faster edge players.

"We tried to keep him contained, but he played like Mike Vick from Madden 2002," said OLB Caleb Miller. "I think he has an extra speed button or something. And those bullet passes weren't even on the joystick."

The Bengals no-huddle offense kept them in the game, and remarkably, Cincy had a chance to win this one in regulation. Marvin Lewis must have gone to the Walrus School of Clock Management, because his use of a timeout at the 4:41 mark in the 4th quarter likely cost him a chance for the win.

Down 29-20, the Telethon Man called his 2nd and 3rd timeouts before his offense even got possession. As a result, the Ugly & Black had no timeouts remaining after a stunning TD bomb to Chris (O) Henry to cut the lead to two points at the 3:41 mark. By the time they saw the ball again, they had less than 40 seconds left and no timeout even if they got within FG range.

Afterwards, Rudi (Ray Moore) Johnson complained about the game plan. He contributed 40 yards and a TD on the Bengals' first possession before disappearing for the balance of the game.

"Stick with what's working. If you're trying to win the ball game, stick with what's working," said Johnson. "If they find a way to stop it, then you change up. You change up throughout the game, but don't just cold turkey something for no reason."

Head coach Marvin Lewis disagreed. "*Cold turkey something?*" replied Lewis. "What is he, a deli clerk? You tell Rudi I'm a pastrami and rye man. Strictly kosher."

Ocho Cinco backed up his pregame boast with a TD and a beautiful sideline reception in crunch time. He was later fined five large by the NFL for incorrectly spelling "85" on his jersey. "We had a number of complaints from our Hispanic fans," said a league spokesman. "Selma Hayek was particularly vocal. And she has a great set of lungs."



"Ochenta y cinco, idiota!"

Indy at Denver: +3

Denver and Indy may have been one of the best games of the year to date. Peyton Manning carved a previously stingy Donkey defense up like a Jack-O-Lantern. As a result, when the Ponies gave up a TD on a long Donkey running play at 1:30 in the 4th quarter, everyone knew that the Donkeys had scored too soon.

Peyton marched right down the field on short passes to RB Joseph (Live and Let) Addai and TE Dallas Clark (Bar), setting up the 37-yard FG for Adam (The Winemaker) Vinatieri. The Winemaker's kick was champagne, and the Ponies left victorious. "We wanted to rename it a Mike-O-Lantern D in honor of Shanahan," said Manning. "Coach Cronyn said it wasn't a good idea, though. Unless, you're like, a 6'5" 230 pound laser rocket armed QB with a *Falcon and the Snowman* disguise."

The Donkeys tried to play vanilla against the Ponies, using deep zone coverages in standard Cover Two. The Ponies responded with a chess maneuver to use Clark Bar in the slot, exposing the lack of speed by SS John Lynch (Mob). Even though the base defense kept Marvin Harrison quiet, Addai, Clark Bar and WR Reggie (Millionaire Playboy Bruce) Wayne went *Scream* on the Donkeys.

The best part of this win was that Donkey Fan couldn't only yell "IN-COM-LETE!" once during the drive. Indy owns Denver, and this game was a likely preview of the AFC Divisional Playoff. The smart money will be on Indy in that one as well.

Coach Mike (The Rat) Shanahan may be a genius, but he is no Belichick. The defensive scheme was horrible, and despite scoring more points than normal, the Ponies still took home the W. Ponies coach Tony (Hume Cronyn) Dungy continues to win more regular season games than anyone, and his only remaining challenge is to get a ring.

New England at Minnesota: (+2.5)

Tom (Zoolander) Brady morphed into Michael Myers, as the Chowds destroyed the up and coming Swedes on MNF. The game was an NFL version of Halloween, with the subtitle "The Night HE Came Home!"

The "he" in question was RB Laurence (Boney) Maroney, who returned to the Baggie Dome where he played collegiately. Boney Maroney wore his *Predator* costume for the event, and everyone agreed the hard running back was "one ugly thirteen letter expletive."

Swedes head coach Brad Childress went along with the Halloween motif, and did his best Donald Pleasance impression. When asked if he was out-coached by Bill (Dr. Evil) Belichick Childress replied, "I met him, fifteen years ago. I was told there was nothing left. No sportsmanship, no conscience, no understanding; even the most rudimentary sense of life or death, good or evil, right or wrong."

Childress continued, "I met this twenty year coaching veteran, with this blank, pale, emotionless face and, the blackest eyes... the *devil's* eyes! I spent eight years trying to reach him, and then another seven trying to keep him out of the NFC because I realized what was living behind that coach's eyes was purely and simply... *evil*!"

Well, perhaps "evil" is too strong a word, but when Swedes QB Brad Johnson turns into Walter Brennan right before your eyes, one has to worry. Bad Brad threw four picks, then told one reporter, ""Luke, tell Pepe to cook us up some of them there tamales he's always a-talkin' about. I'm a mighty hungry."

Zoolander had a career in one evening, throwing for a near-record 257 - - - in the first half. "You come into this environment, and you see the fans leaving midway through the fourth quarter," said Brady, who hasn't lost in 10 NFL dome games. "Maybe they heard a Prince concert was breaking out at First Avenue nightclub? I did see Apollonia tonight, and she gave me her number. She told me my lips would make a lollipop too happy."

Swedes D-Coordinator Matt Groening couldn't stop the Chowds. He simply kept yelling, "D'oh!" after each completion against his soft zone. "It was like a *Treehouse of Horror* episode out there. Since when do the Chowds have the run-and-shoot?" he asked.

The Look Man is not putting too much stock in the ugly loss, since the Swedes had just played an emotional and physical battle with the defending NFC Champs. The Chowds defense includes octogenarian Junior Seau, their D-line is inconsistent, and their DBs are marginal. They are more *The Grudge* than *Nightmare on Elm Street*.



Brady looks over the Swedes D

LAGNIAPPE

Michael Myers, I presume?

Dr. Evil dressed as a homeless man on MNF, wearing a cutoff sweatshirt that displeased the league and Mr. Blackwell. Worse yet, he arrived at the Metrodome in a green station wagon that he stole from some sanitarium. The league is expected to either fine him, or set him up with Jamie Leigh Curtis. Police are also investigating a dead body found in the bushes outside the Baggie Dome. Rumor has it that it was one of the Swedes' DBs.

The Chimera Panthers

Carolina may be the most inconsistent team ever. After winning four straight, they lose to Cincy and Dallas in consecutive weeks. The Dallas game was particularly disturbing after the Black Cats D gave up 35 unanswered to Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs).

Matters went from bad to worse with Keyshawn Johnson and Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer) Smith catching dropsy disease from the ATL. Both WRs dropped key balls that might have made the difference.

How Many Fingers?

Big Ben was still on Queer Street in the Black Hole and he looked it with four picks, including two Drew Bledsoe Specials for six. Bill (Iron Chin) Cowher started Big Berger despite a recent concussion in order to keep rust from developing before a crucial matchup with the Donkeys in the Still City on Sunday.

By failing to upload Charlie Batch (File), he could have corrupted his entire hard drive. The Stillers now stand eye-to-eye with the Browns at 2-5. Word on the street is that local restaurants are naming a new sandwich for Big Ben. The sandwich has fried brains and no mustard.

Play it again, Bob

SI's Peter King contributes one of the best lines of the week. He was watching the Bengals-Dirty Birds game and noticed ATL NT Grady Jackson, who is huge. When King shouted, "He's bigger than three Sidney Greenstreets!", NBC's Bob Costas responded on cue: "Then they're the Atlanta *Maltese* Falcons."

The game also featured Cincy DT Sam Adams (Lager), who is no small man himself. After the game, Adams and Jackson went to BW3 and knocked off over 2,000 chicken wings between them. The CDC is now investigating to determine if these two could single-handedly cure the HN51 bird flu epidemic by eliminating every chicken on earth.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Let's keep it short and sweet this week:

Walt (Hellraiser) Anderson – Dirty Birds at Bengals:

Anderson allowed TE Reggie Kelly leaving early on Bengals TD pass in the first quarter, rescuing their moribund offense. He later indicated that an out of bounds kickoff should be spotted on the 35 instead of the 40 before ATL coach Jim Mora went ballistic.

Toss in a few key defensive holding calls that were bogus, and you have one of the scariest officiating jobs in the history of the league. No wonder Vick and the Dirty Birds nearly lost!

Mike (Candyman) Carey – Jets at Cleveland:

It was likely the first home cooking in C-Town since Bottlegate, Carey overruled a force-out TD that would have tied the contest. Either he was late for a mirror date, or he and the Crew were goin' bowlin' in Solon later, courtesy of Browns Fan. And he was dating Mimi from the Drew Carey Show. The horror.



Break the mirror, break the curse.

Terry (The Boston Strangler) McAulay - Chowds at Donkeys:

Question: Since when did chokes holds become legal for offensive linemen? The Denver PD nearly had to call in Gil Grissom for a consult after seeing the petichia and ligature marks on the Indy D-linemen.

Larry Nemmers(kull Island) – Chowds at Swedes:

On the first pick by Walter Brennan, the Chowds LB had his arm around RB Mewelde Moore's waist. Either they were getting married, or it was a foul. Brad threw the ball just to force the flag, and cheap shot artist Rodney Harrison picked it inside the five. Moore complained vehemently, but the response was like talking to the natives of King Kong's habitat. Nada.

Nemmerskull followed this up with a no-catch call on the Jermaine Wiggins, three feet, a knee and an elbow down catch-and-fumble, then upheld it on review. The Swedes weren't going to win this game unless they had biplanes with machine guns.

Larry Nemmerskull is the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week** for the second time in 2006. Way to go, Larry.

THE LOOK AHEAD:

Week Nine features excellent matchups with excellent playoff implications. The AFC Conference matchups include key games for the West, South and North. The NFC Least and South also have key games with Dallas, Tampa, Carolina, and New Orleans going toe to toe.

The Look Man has been getting killed in the Look Ahead segment, so he asked for some outside help from his friends. Smoothie picked the Week 8 Pepto Bismol of the Week by selecting the Grayders over the Stillers, so the Look Man requested him to proxy the Look Ahead in Week Nine. You should know that Smoothie's favorite QB is Trent Green, and he is very angry that Robert (Guillotine) Geathers beheaded him.

Without further ado, Smoothie's Week Nine picks in italics with Look Man table addendum:

Cincy @ Baltimore -3

I'll take the Ravens in this one. I expect more of what we've been seeing out of the Cincy running game: not much. Baltimore doesn't run the ball particularly well, but they'll get what they need against the Bengals. I expect Baltimore to come out on top by 5, but it could get ugly. The Bengals are ripe to get blown out this week.

Indy @ New England -3

I like the Pats and I'll lay the 3. I can't stand Manning and all his fidgety hopping and waving, but he still is the best QB in the game and he'll keep this one a contest. I expect New England to run for more than 200 yards in this one. It might even be possible to have both Maroney and Dillon above 100 yards. This will burn clock and limit Manning's possessions. Manning and his offensive weapons will probably keep them close enough to have a chance, but I see the Pats holding on for the win.

Denver @ Pittsburgh -2.5

The Look Man will attest that I correctly picked Oakland to beat the Steelers last week. Big Ben needs to take a sack or get rid of the ball in some way other than tossing it randomly down the field. It might not be fun football to watch, but some times you need to step out of the pocket and just throw the damn thing out of bounds and get on with the next play.

I think Pittsburgh will have surprising success running the ball, and I expect some timely passing to keep the chains moving enough to outscore Denver. The Broncos will be lucky to score a touchdown. This game is where Pitt bounces back and posts a quality win. I'll take the home team and give up the points.

Cleveland @ San Diego -12.5

I am sticking with another home team here. Cleveland is no pushover, but San Diego should be able to get in the end zone multiple times. LT does well against Cleveland, and the Browns will not be able to answer with enough offense to keep this game anywhere near close. I'd give up 20 in this one and still feel comfortable. The Chargers will win by a lot.

Dallas +3 @ Washington

We all saw Dallas fall apart a couple weeks ago, and we don't have a lot to go on with Romo other than his last game. Romo impressed me and I think he's going to have another good game. Julius Jones will have a big game, and I think Romo will have a tidy game with a high completion percentage. They'll run and run, and when they pass it'll be open. Washington will collapse in this one.

New Orleans -1 at Tampa Bay

I'm back on the chalk in this game. I like almost all the home teams to win this week, including New Orleans. I'm just tired of hearing about Hurricane Katrina. I expect Cadillac to have a nice game, and I think that this will be a close game. New Orleans has too many weapons on offense for Tampa to stop. Tampa will probably hit their season high in points scored this week, although that won't be saying much. This game is going over, and I'll lay the point to boot.

The Look Man assembled all of the picks as follows:

			GB Shaw	Smoothie	Look Man
At Baltimore	-3	Cincinnati	Bungals	Ducks	Ducks
At New England	-3	Indianapolis	Chowds	Chowds	Ponies
At Pittsburgh	-2.5	Denver	Donkeys	Stillers	Stillers
At San Diego	-12.5	Cleveland	Browns	Bolts	Browns
Dallas	-3	@ Washington	'Boys	Pokes	Pokes
New Orleans	-1	At Tampa Bay	Icons	Icons	Corn Kings

In keeping with the horror motif, the Look Man's ***Slasher of the Week*** is Miami plus the 13.5 over the Monsters of the Furniture Mart. The MOTFM are ripe for the picking as Miami features former NFC Norse alumni Mike (Fried) Tice as OC, DT Dan (Big Daddy) Wilkinson, and QB Joey (Blake) Harrington. Further, they have big receivers in WR Chris (Carter) Chambers and TE Randy McMichaels, complimented by former Bear Marty (Feldman) Booker and possession receiver Wes (Craven) Welker.

The Marine Mammals stretch the field, then run Ronnie Brown to eat the clock. Their D line is led by sackmeister Jason (Voorheis) Taylor and a stiff LB corps featuring Zach (Scrubs) Thomas. Da Bears will suffer from the look-ahead syndrome due to their upcoming road game against the Jynts. The Mammals drop them like a bag of dirt at Tommyknockers Stadium, covering the points and winning outright. The '72 Fish pop the corks courtesy of their Saban, engendering a really frightening close-up of Chris Berman and Tom Jackson.

EPILOGUE

We are entering the second half of the NFL season, and teams are rounding into form. Week Nine has some dynamic matchups, and the wheat will begin to get separated from the Bengals. Bolts LB Shawne Merroidman decided to forgo his steroid suspension appeal, which could affect the entire AFC. He will now return in time for the Denver game, and with the top dogs knocking each other out, 10-6 might get a Wild Card berth.

Over in the NFC the Monsters of the Furniture Mart are looking at tough schedule over the next few weeks. After the Marine Mammals dust them off this week, they go on the road for three straight, which should bring them back to earth. The G-Men are beginning to get dinged up, and the NFC Souse is pounding one another. We won't even discuss the Seattle and the NFC Worst (or Worst).

Halftime of the NFL season saw a normalizing affect for many frontrunners. It also included two undefeated teams for the first time since the Niners and G-Men did it in 1990. It had happened only once in 56 prior years, reinforcing the level of difficulty. The 1990 season included two head-to-head matchups of these teams one week following blemishes to their records, and they met again in the NFC Championship. The Jynts went on to win the Lombardi after Bills kicker Scott Norwood swallowed a chicken bone.

As the weather turns colder, it is time to analyze which teams can run effectively and stop the run. This factor determines the contenders from the pretenders every single year.

Peace,

The Look Man

PS - November 7. 'Nuff said.