

## No It Won't: Why Mansfield Lucas's Glass Is Not Only Half-Empty, But That Half Is A Mirage

Written by {ga=diminishingskills}  
Saturday, July 21 2007 7:00 PM -

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He's baaaack. Just like we do with Buff in the baseball off-season, we let John Hnat detox during Cavs off-season. He puts out so much high quality material for us on the Cavs beat, and we need him fresh and ready for the season. But sometimes he just can't help himself. And after being called out by Mansfield Lucas in his recent piece, felt the need to slap him across the brow with a hard dose of reality.



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I am not sure what any of those seem like to somebody who has been drinking large vats of Cleveland Browns-flavored Kool-Aid (TM). Whatever it is, that is how I must appear to Mansfield Lucas.

In his [recent article](#), Mansfield chides a fellow "STO TCF pundit" (i.e., me; I happen to favor [Bill Belichick phrases](#) for my message board names) for viewing the upcoming season with a level of skepticism more appropriate for a vegan scanning the [menu at a Ruth's Chris](#)

Mansfield, I'm with you in spirit. I want to drink the Kool-Aid. I want to believe that we just have to give Phil a chance, and that they're going to build this thing, gosh darn it. I want Uncle Randy to come over to my house and bake me some warm chocolate chip cookies and let me put on his comfy Cleveland Browns jammies (preferably washed ahead of time with some bleach-based detergent) and tell me that everything will be okay. I want the Browns to continue the 2007 Cleveland sports renaissance that started with the Cavs' title run and is continuing with the Indians' playoff charge. But the clock is striking midnight, and we haven't even put the ball gown on yet.

I WANT to believe that Joe Thomas will be the rock-solid anchor of the Browns' offensive line for the next decade. I ACTUALLY believe that he will hold out of training camp, arrive sometime after the first exhibition game, and then get introduced to the Cleveland Clinic House O' Staph Infections. (It's interesting that you compared JT to Tony Boselli, an admittedly great player whose career was derailed by injuries.)

I WANT to believe that Brady Quinn will ride in on his white horse and be that rarest of creatures: a rookie NFL quarterback who actually produces. I ACTUALLY believe that Quinn's holdout will make JT's look short, and that he'll still be thrown into the fire way too soon after he's found his way to the frying pan. (I also ACTUALLY believe that the same fans who today think that Quinn was a steal will think he is a prima-donna puss weed three weeks from now, when his holdout continues with little sign of resolution; and they will think he is an utter flop next April, when the Dallas Cowboys take some prime talent with what would have been the Browns' pick.)

I WANT to believe that Eric Wright will continue to make people forget about a series of poor decisions one night a few years ago when he was at USC, and become the lock-down corner that all teams crave. I ACTUALLY believe that Wright will be playing Hearts every day with JT and the Mighty Brady in August,

as they kill the hours while waiting to see which one of their agents actually gets them into camp the earliest.

I WANT to believe that all of the Browns improved over the offseason. I ACTUALLY believe that ... they're the same players that they were last year, except now they're a year older. Linebackers who were a step slow to pursue last year won't be on time this year; if anything, they'll be TWO steps slow. (By the end of the year, they'll be Wali Rainer.) Receivers who could not catch the ball in 2006 are not any more likely to be catching it in 2007. (Fortunately, Dennis Northcutt will be not catching balls for Jacksonville. The sentence includes the words "addition" and "subtraction"; you put them in the order that makes the most sense.) Players who had chronic health issues a year ago didn't suddenly get better. Some of those boo-boos (*yes, I have two small children, why do you ask?*) have healed, true ... but those boo-boos will return once large men wearing different colors try to knock them silly.

I WANT to believe that Charlie Frye will develop into something that could fetch a high pick in a future ... sorry, I can't even complete that sentence. My [Norman Vincent Peale](#) -o-meter tops out long before I can get to "Charlie Frye is a desirable commodity";

I WANT to believe that Eight Ball Jamal will find the fountain of youth (at age 28!) in Cleveland and resurrect his career to the tune of 1,400 or so yards. I ACTUALLY believe that the Ravens let him get away for a reason.

I WANT to believe that Romeo Crennel will develop into a solid coach. I ACTUALLY believe that he has never been anything more than a fluffer for Kirk Ferentz, and that first-time sextuagenarian head coaches rarely work out well (remember [Bud Carson](#) ? At least Romeo has never had to ask a reporter to repeat a question because his hearing aid malfunctioned), and that him tossing

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the red replay flag on the field is a sure sign that the original call was spot-on.

I WANT to believe that Kameron Wimbley and K2 will continue to play like studs. I ACTUALLY believe ... that they will. Hey, the Browns do have SOME talent.

I WANT to believe that veterans like Willie McGinest and Ted Washington will produce this season. I ACTUALLY believe that money will make a man do crazy things, like stay in his profession after he should have retired.

It's like this, Mansfield. The Browns are McDonald's. Time and again, they put out tasteless, barely palatable products. You eat them because you don't have much of a choice. And almost immediately after you start, you feel a quaking in your stomach, and the rest of the night is filled with gas and the occasional retching reflex. ([Morgan Spurlock](#) was onto something there.) Yet for some reason, people across the nation keep coming back to them.

Now, you're telling me that THIS YEAR IS DIFFERENT ... that THIS YEAR, the local McDonald's is going to stop serving chemically processed McMeat and unrecognizable chicken parts, and will instead deliver a feast of filet mignon, washed down with a rare red wine, topped off with a dessert of bananas Foster (God forbid what would happen if the average McEmployee tried to flambee something), and maybe capped with a fine cigar and some small-batch Basil Haydns.

Mansfield, I just looked inside my Happy Meal sack, and what I'm smelling ain't a filet. But is that a little cup of Kool-Aid that I see?

*(For the record, the author will change his tune before the first game of the*

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*regular season, and will come to believe that there is no way that the Browns won't win double-digit games this year. He's done that every season since 1980 -- even including the years that the Browns didn't exist. )*