OUR CENTURY
1987

AT A GLANCE

'The Fumble' joins Browns' heartbreakers

Again the Browns won the Central Division Again they won their first playoff game. They beat the New York Jets, 38-21, with Earnest Byner running for 122 yards and Bernie Kosar throwing three touchdown passes.

Again the Browns were one game from the Super Bowl. Again John Elway and the Denver Broncos stood in the way. At halftime in Mile High Stadium, the Broncos led, 21-3. But with Kosar throwing touchdown passes to Reggie Langhorne, Byner and Webster Slaughter, the score stood at 31-31 in the fourth quarter.

As he had on "the Drive" a year earlier, Elway took the Broncos 75 yards for a 38-31 lead. But this time, 5:14 was left on the clock. Kosar staged his own drive. With 1:12 to play, the Browns had second and 5 from the Denver 8-yard line. On a trap play, Byner burst through the line and appeared about to score. Somehow, the Broncos' Jeremiah Castile reached out and stripped the ball from him. The Broncos recovered. They ran the clock down to 8 seconds, then took an intentional safety.

Final score: 38-33. "The Fumble" went down in history with "the Drive" and "Red Right 88."

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The Cavaliers had a new general manager, Wayne Embry, and a new coach, Lenny Wilkens. For the first time, blacks occupied the top two positions in a major-league sports franchise.

They also had a draft in which they picked Brad Daugherty, Ron Harper and Johnny Newman, and traded a draft choice for Mark Price. Waiting in the wings was John "Hot Rod Williams," whom they had drafted a year earlier. He had to wait until he was cleared of charges of fixing games in college.

They young Cavs won only 31 games and missed the playoffs, but the rookies developed steadily. The future looked bright.

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The new owners of the Indians, Richard and David Jacobs, named Peter Bavasi general manager. The Indians had won 24 more games in 1986 than in 1985 and a Sports Illustrated cover story picked them to win the 1987 American League pennant.

As usual, the hopes were dashed. The Tribe won 61 games, only one more than in 1985, and finished seventh. Lead-off hitter Brett Butler batted .311 and stole 47 bases and pitcher Neal Heaton won 17 games. But Bavasi feuded with sportswriters and with the fans, whom he irked by closing the Stadium bleachers. Attendance fell by 400,000.

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George Voinovich, meanwhile, was having trouble being both mayor of Cleveland and candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Chief among his troubles was a police narcotics scandal that kept slipping out from under the rug where it had been swept. In January, details of Arthur Feckner's 1986 grand jury testimony came out. He told of selling $560,000 worth of cocaine from a house on Woodland Ave. He operated, he said, under the protection of narcotics detectives who wanted to set up a record 50-kilogram cocaine arrest. They told him the arrest would help their supervisor, Inspector Howard Rudolph, become police chief — which it did.

Councilman Jeff Johnson, the NAACP and the 21st Congressional District Caucus called for a City Council investigation. Voinovich said the police were conducting an internal investigation and no other probe was necessary. Forbes backed him.

It turned out that hundreds of thousands of dollars from the drug arrest was missing. In July, however, the police internal investigation ended with no action. The case disappeared from public attention — temporarily.

Voinovich had better luck downstate. Rep. Bob McEwen withdrew from the Senate race in December. That meant Voinovich wouldn't face opposition in the 1988 Republican primary and could concentrate on Sen. Howard Metzenbaum.

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After a ruling by federal Judge Ann Aldrich, the Justice Department reopened its antitrust investigation of the closing of the Cleveland Press by its last owner, Joseph Cole. On June 17, the fifth anniversary of the Press' demise, the department announced it found insufficient evidence for criminal charges against Cole and The Plain Dealer.

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Cleveland in the year 2000 will have a livable downtown with apartment complexes grouped around new office buildings. Or so said city planners unveiling Civic Vision 2000 plans.

The planners got a jolt from a Cleveland State University population study they had commissioned. It said city population would continue to drop to 419,000 in 2005. The Voinovich administration did not release the study, but a copy leaked.

A second bleak report, from Case Western Reserve University, projected no increase in metropolitan employment by 2005. That contrasted with projections by the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis that the area would add 172,000 jobs in the 1985-2000 period.

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Three members of the Regional Transit Authority resigned, saying they had been frustrated in their efforts at reform. Cuyahoga County commissioners threatened to pull out of the RTA, and take with them the 1 percent county sales tax on which the agency depended.

The dispute ended in Cleveland fashion. The \board bought out the contract of General Manager John Terango for $265,000.

Demjanjuk goes on trial in Jerusalem

PLAIN DEALER FILE PHOTOS

Treblinka death camp survivor Josef Czarny weeps while giving testimony at the trial of accused Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk.

By Fred McGunagle

The whole nation of Israel was transfixed.

Television and radio carried the trial live. "Bus drivers, as is the custom here, turn up their radios so riders can listen to the proceedings," The Plain Dealer reported. "The trial can be heard by radio in shops and cafes downtown and even above the Friday morning racket at Mahane Yehuda street market."

In Cleveland, the interest was nearly as intense, especially among Jews and Ukrainian-Americans. John Demjanjuk, a retired auto worker from Seven Hills, was on trial for "crimes against humanity" — the first person to face that charge in Israel since Adolf Eichmann in 1961.

In the courtroom, Holocaust survivors wept as witnesses described the horrors of Treblinka, Sobibor and other concentration camps. They watched as witness after witness identified Demjanjuk, even after 43 years, as the sadistic "Ivan the Terrible" who sent Jews to the gas chambers and whose skull-cracking brutality stood out even among his colleagues.

A survivor of Treblinka told the court he wanted to look Demjanjuk in the eyes so he could be sure he was Ivan. He did, then told the judges, "I wanted *him* to remember *me*!"

On another occasion, a spectator stood up and shouted at Demjanjuk in a mixture of Yiddish and Ukrainian, "Be ashamed of yourself, you murderer!" He was removed from the courtroom.

At one point, Demjanjuk called out to a witness, "You liar." His lead lawyer, Mark O'Connor, asked the court to excuse the outburst. He said Demjanjuk had spent more than a year in solitary confinement and it was "eating at him."

The circumstances that brought the 66-year-old Demjanjuk to Jerusalem began in 1940 when, as a 20-year-old Ukrainian farm worker, he was drafted into the Soviet army. In 1942, his unit was captured by the Germans. He was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp. Like many Ukrainian prisoners, he was offered a chance to serve in a unit fighting against the hated Russians.

He accepted. He said he later drove a truck and guarded a German general. After the war, Demjanjuk worked in Germany as a truck driver for the U.S. Army motor pool. He came to Cleveland in 1952 and got a job at the Brook Park Ford Plant. In 1958, he became a U.S. citizen, stating on his application that he had been a farmer in Poland during the war.

In 1975, a pro-Soviet newspaper in New York listed more than 70 suspected wartime collaborators of Ukrainian birth. Demjanjuk found out he was on the list when he was called in for questioning in 1976. In 1977, the Justice Department moved to revoke his citizenship, making him subject to deportation.

In the Jerusalem courtroom: John Demjanjuk, top left, and lawyer Mark O'Connor, bottom right.

Government lawyers maintained that, contrary to his account, he was really a guard in Nazi death camps. They produced a Nazi ID card with a picture experts identified as a young Demjanjuk. The card had been turned over by the Soviets. Demjanjuk's lawyers denounced it as a forgery.

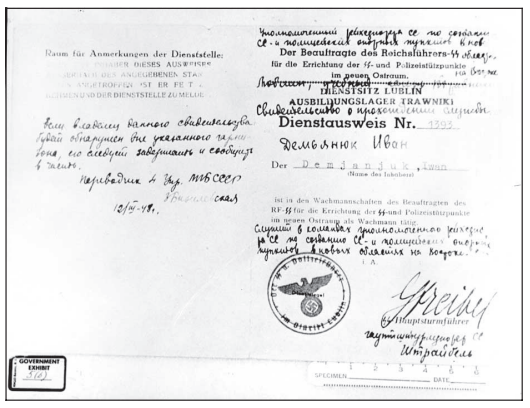
Demjanjuk admitted he had lied about his German service, but claimed it was to avoid being sent back to Ukraine, where he was in danger from the Soviets. Ukrainian-Americans demonstrated outside the courthouse, saying they had endured their own Holocaust when millions starved under Stalin.

In 1981, U.S. District Judge Frank Battisti revoked Demjanjuk's citizenship, and in 1985 ruled he should be extradited to Israel. In February 1986, Demjanjuk was flown to Jerusalem. A year later, he was finally on trial. Three Cleveland television stations sent crews. They were joined by television networks from around the world that sent back video for the nightly news.

Because Israel had decided to use the trial to educate young Israelis about the Holocaust, evidence was introduced of atrocities in which Ivan the Terrible was not involved. Many spectators wept. Some fainted. A telephone hot line was set up for Holocaust victims and others for whom the testimony caused emotional stress. A psychologist was in the courtroom to help those who were overcome.

American Jews — many with their own memories of the Holocaust — watched intently. So did Ukrainian-Americans. "By the time they finish with us, the Ukrainians are going to be looked at as barbarians," protested George Kulchytsky, a history professor and vice president of United Ukrainian Organizations of Cleveland.

The trial dragged on with intermittent breaks. In August, shortly before the defense was to begin, Demjanjuk fired O'Connor. When he did take the stand, he appeared confused and forgetful.



The Trawniki identification card: John Demjanjuk's defense argued that it was a Soviet forgery.

Demjanjuk's family visited him in Jerusalem. His daughter, Irene Nishnic, said the family feared hostility from Israelis. They had seen an interview with Israeli children on television. "Some of them said they want my father to hang," she said.

"It's sad, the way things are right now," she said. "But so be it. What can you do? I have a feeling everything will work out. It has to. He's innocent. My father is innocent." She began to cry.

Few in Israel thought Demjanjuk was innocent. Observers predicted he would be convicted and hanged. As the year neared an end, his son-in-law, Ed Nishnic, said Demjanjuk had concluded that two of the three judges had already decided he was guilty.

"My father-in-law says the only insurance he has is that everybody is watching this," Nishnic said.

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Can chair-swinging incident unseat Forbes?

Only one man could threaten George Forbes' ironclad control of City Hall — George Forbes. Suddenly, he did.

In a fit of anger, Forbes swung a chair at fellow Councilman Jeff Johnson. The public outrage revived a move for an anti-Forbes charter amendment that had seemingly run out of steam.

A group called the C-FORCE (Coalition for Reforming Council's Efficiency) was circulating petitions for a ballot issue that would limit a council president to two, one-year terms. It would allow Forbes to remain president through 1991. But it would be a symbolic blow that could hasten his overthrow.

The drive was led by James Barrett, the former safety director. It got little support from the public and none from council members.

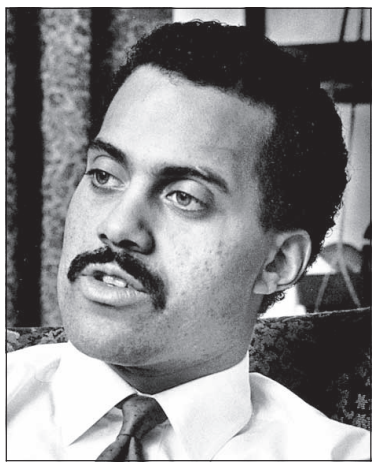
But in September, West Side Councilman Dan Brady was angered when Forbes closed a caucus to reporters in violation of the city's charter. Announcing it was time "to have 21 councilpersons instead of one," he joined the amendment campaign.

Still, by December the petition drive was well short of the 12,000 signatures needed to force a citywide vote. Then Johnson denounced Forbes for blocking a federal grant for a shopping center in Johnson's Glenville ward.

At a caucus of black council members that followed, Forbes and Johnson argued. That's when Forbes reportedly called Johnson a "mulatto punk" and swung a folding metal chair at him, but Councilman Tyrone Bolden got in the way.

C-FORCE quickly collected the signatures it needed. Council set a special election on the proposed charter amendment for April 1988.

— Fred McGunagle



Jeff Johnson

LOOKING AT A YEAR

March 19: Television evangelist Jim Bakker resigns his ministry after admitted to an extramarital affair with a church secretary.

March 20: The federal government approves the use of AZT, the first drug designed to help victims of the AIDS virus.

June 2: President Ronald Reagan names Alan Greenspan chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Oct. 19: The stock market suffers its worst crash ever, as the Dow Jones average topples 508 points. The 22 percent drop in the Dow nearly doubles the decline of the 1929 crash.

Oct. 23: The Senate rejects Reagan's nomination of Robert H. Bork to the Supreme Court.

Nov. 18: A congressional report says Reagan should bear the "ultimate responsibility" for the Iran-contra scandal.

Dec. 8: Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev sign a treaty agreeing to a reduction in nuclear weapons arsenals.

Deaths: Dancer Fred Astaire, CIA Director William Casey, film director John Huston, author James Baldwin, actress Rita Hayworth, former Ohio State University football coach Woody Hayes.