



**POSTGAME QUOTES VS. HOUSTON TEXANS 12/31/17
TEXANS HEAD COACH BILL O'BRIEN & PLAYERS**

Head Coach Bill O'Brien

Do you feel like the controversies that surrounded you were a distraction during this game?

"I don't think so."

Did you address the team about it?

"No."

Do you expect to be coaching the team?

"If you have a question about the game. We'll have a year-end meeting. We'll have a squad meeting. I'll meet with ownership, and we'll see what direction everybody wants to go."

Does it have to be done pretty soon, so you can get on about your business?

"I mean, that's not up to me. That's not up to me."

If this is your last game, what do you feel like you've done in your four years? What are your thoughts?

"I don't want to go down that road. I just want to reflect on this one, think about improvements that need to be made and then just kind of go from there."

When you go to bed tonight, are you fully intending to be back running the team?

"Again, I don't have any comment on that. I don't control that. I don't control that, I'm the head coach, I have a boss and he controls that. So, I'll meet with him. I'm sure at some point, and we'll decide what direction he wants to go."

Is this like a microcosm of the season, when you had opportunities here and there?

"No, I wouldn't say that. No. No. This season- this was not a microcosm of this season."

I mean the last six games.

"No, I just think that, you know, I don't really want to get into that. We had a point in time during the season where we were averaging almost 40 points a game. So, I wouldn't say this was a microcosm of anything. I think the guys battled hard. I appreciated the way that they fought. But each game is different."

Is it hard to believe that after everything, you guys are 4-12?

"Yeah, I would say though in the end, you are what your record says you are. A famous coach said that one time and I think that's the truth. We are what we are. I've said this all along, I appreciate everybody in that locker room, coaching staff and especially the players. They battled hard for us. But (when) you're 4-12, you're 4-12. That's what it is."

As depleted as this team is, do you believe this team kept playing for you the entire season?

"No question. And not for me. No, I wouldn't answer it that way, I would just say they played hard. I just told them I really appreciate their professionalism and how they showed up every week, went to work and prepared in the meetings. You won't remember much from this season because you don't want to take too many memories from this season. But you will remember the professionalism of the players and the coaches and how they showed up every week and prepared."

You've made change after each of your first three seasons on your staff. Do anticipate changes?

"Again, I'm not going to comment on that right now. The game just ended, I mean that would be crazy for me to comment on that. You fly back, the players checkout, you meet with the players and then you go from there."

Can you talk about Alfred Blue and his effort today?

"Yeah, he's been running hard the past two weeks. You know, Alfred's done a good job for us all four years that he's been here. He's been a good special teams player, but when he's had his opportunities to run the ball, he's done a good job."

At halftime, you led for the first time since Cleveland. What happened in the second half?

"We just couldn't run it, couldn't throw it and couldn't convert third downs. We had several third downs where we had third-and-five, third-and-six, and we couldn't convert. Third-and-three and couldn't even convert it. So, it just wasn't good enough."

You all did a great job on Gore in the first half, and he came back a totally different guy. What did they do to run so well in the second half?

"Yeah, I'll have to look at it on film. Look, they did a good job. I mean, their first drive of the second half they ran the ball on almost every play and we just had a hard time stopping it."

When you pulled Will Fuller were you just being careful?

"No, he was injured."

Thoughts on Frank Gore?

"Great player. I've been watching him my time in this league for a long time. I mean, he's a great player. He's a hall of fame player and much respect for him."

This is the first time you've had a losing record in the NFL, what's that like for you?

"It's brutal. Absolutely brutal."

What makes it brutal?

"Because we're winners in there, and we're not. We didn't win."

When the season started in the offseason, you said you wanted to be more hands-on this year. Is there a way that your staff can really learn from a season like this?

"I've learned more about myself in four years, not just this season, about everything - about coaching, about everything. So, the answer would be yes. You can learn from all these situations and you have to try to come back and be better."

Do you want to be back here next year?

"Again, I'm going to tell you, I'm not going to go down that road with you guys. You know, it's right after the game, we have a squad meeting and I'm sure I'll meet with Mr. McNair at some point. The only one that matters when it comes to that is him. That's all that matters."

Can we assume you haven't changed your mind since the last time?

"You can assume whatever you want. You can assume whatever you want."

Running Back Alfred Blue

Can you take us through the touchdown that you scored?

"It was just a downhill play. Just let the line cover them up and just find a hole and get in there and just keep your legs moving until you get in the end zone."

How tough has it been dealing with all of the injuries and trying to forge through with everything that's happened?

"It's been real tough. A lot of key players on the team got hurt early in the season, so it's just been the next guy's up. It's been tough. You've got to deal with the adversity. I think we did a good job doing that, and the guys who had opportunities stepped up and played to the best of their ability."

Has it been tough hearing about Bill O'Brien's future? A lot of people think it's up in the air. Has that been difficult to deal with inside this locker room?

"Ignore the noise. That's something we don't control, so we just go out there and play each and every week."

Cornerback Kevin Johnson

Do you feel like, similar to other games this season, it was right there and then it slipped away? Can you put it in words?

"We went out there and fought hard and just didn't come away with it. It just wasn't the year that I think anybody on the team wanted to have this season."

Did the talk about Bill O'Brien and Rick Smith and all of that - how did that affect you guys?

"I can't speak for anybody else on the team, but I love those guys. I believe in those guys, so that's stuff that's out of my control. So, I just hope for the best for that situation, and I'm going to do my part and just try and be the best player I can be."

How tough is it when all the controversy is surrounding all the time? How tough has that been?

"You just kind of have to do your best to cancel out all the outside noise and what people are saying, rumors or whatever and just kind of focus on you."

Fullback Jay Prosch

How do you feel about the season, 4-12 on the year, ending the year 0-6?

"It's definitely something different that we haven't experienced since I've been here, so obviously not something we prepared for, not what we expected this season. But it happened the way it happened, and we've just got to deal with it and we've got to work extra hard this offseason and there's no doubt in my mind. Guys get healthy and things like that next year, we're going to come back and we're going to be a dominant football team."

How hard is it to stay focused on the future when there is so much talk about the organizational future leadership, Coach O'Brien? How did you guys compartmentalize?

"I mean as far as I'm concerned, I didn't really hear too much of that stuff. As far as the players in the locker room, it wasn't anything. As far as I know, it wasn't anything that was circulating, so I don't really think it really affected us too much. But we were just trying to, week in and week out, get a win, and that's what we were focused on."

Guard Xavier Su'a-Filo

How difficult has this been dealing with all of the injuries and trying to mix and match as you go along here?

"Yeah man, it's real difficult, but unfortunately in the NFL it happens. A lot of adversity and teams have to push through it and try to get it done regardless."

Has it been difficult or easy to not allow the speculation around this team to affect you guys in any way?

"No, because regardless the coaches come in every day, and they work hard. They prepare for the next opponent. They know they're professionals as well, so that really helps us as players to not get distracted and do the same thing. We prepared this week just like another game."

Can you put into words the journey you've been on this year?

"I can't, man. I just - unfortunately things happen. You know what I mean, in this league? The next guy has to be ready to step up. Some of it is bad luck. You know what I mean? There were just a lot of opportunities, a lot of opportunities that we had and missed. Like I said, today give credit to the Colts."

Quarterback T.J. Yates

With all the speculation on Bill's job, does that affect the players? How did you all deal with that?

"I don't think it affected us one bit. Those types of decisions are out of our control. We did a good job of sticking to football and focus on what we had to focus on during the week to get ready to play."

How do you stick to football in that situation?

"That's the one thing - you can't speculate about it, so there's no need to go around the locker and speculate, pretty much. There's nothing we can do either way. Any type of talk like that will just get you off focus so all of the guys in the locker room did a good job of not talking about it at all."

Do you think Bill O'Brien deserves to be back?

"Absolutely."

Why?

"Because he's a good coach."

What makes him a good coach on a 4-12 team?

"Obviously, this situation that we had this year with all the guys getting hurt, that's going to be tough for any coach whatsoever. But the way he handled himself week in and week out, the way he got us ready to play, how much he cares about us players - and you can tell. I've been around coaches that are not that way and he really has our best interests at-heart. He's had a very good year — I mean this is the only year that he hasn't had a successful year. So with all the things that have been going on, I don't see any reason why he still wouldn't be the coach here."

What happened from the first half to the second half?

"First half, we did a good job of running the ball, getting completions, making third down conversions. Offense was clicking pretty good. Then we only got one touchdown. The other two field goals were definitely needed, another touchdown and there, but in the second half they did a good job stopping the run. Tough sledding on those third-and-longs."

What happened to the running game?

"It's hard to say. Need to look at film to see exactly what they were doing. They definitely brought a little bit more pressure in the second half. We just try to stick to our game plan and go to work in the first half. So we stuck to it and we just didn't execute in the second half."

First time you didn't have DeAndre Hopkins. What was that like?

"It's difficult, and in certain situations you know where you're going to go — whether it's third down or any type of pressured situation, stuff in the red zone. We definitely missed out there, but other guys have to step up. That's the way this league is."

What happened on the safety? Can you take us through that play?

"They just brought some pressure, and I don't know exactly what happened as far as who got loose and why. They had a good scheme and I tried to get down as quick as possible, not really knowing where I was. Soon as I turned around, I tried to get down before the goal line and didn't get down on time."

Did you earn style points for your barrel role on your first down that you got?

"Sure, yeah. I guess so. I'm just glad that no one took my head off on that one."

What did you think of the job Alfred Blue did in the first half?

“He did really good. He was running the ball hard, he was there in all the checkdowns, you know they were playing coverage and their guys were locked up and he was there on all the checkdowns. He did a really good job.”

You have been on several rounds with this team and this franchise. How depleted is this team right now?

“Obviously, I think someone said it last week - we set a record for how many people that are playing for our team and everyone knows how many guys are on IR. Obviously very, very, depleted. But I've been in situations like this before and guys have to step up and guys did that. It's hard for some of the guys who are working through playing for the first time. Obviously, you get ups and downs and you have to fight through it, but yes, obviously very depleted but I thought a lot of guys did a really good job stepping up these past few games.”



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COLTS HEAD COACH CHUCK PAGANO & PLAYERS**

Head Coach Chuck Pagano

Opening Statement:

“Obviously really, really proud of these guys. We talked about finishing all week long. I’ve never been around a group of guys like this – players and coaches, before. Faced so much adversity and so many ups and downs and so many disappointing Sundays, Mondays, Thursdays, what have you. But what a way to go out and you can walk out of here winners; can walk out of here holding their head high and feel really good about themselves and feel really good about starting a new year and going into 2018. But really, really proud of their effort. Credit Houston, I’ve got a ton of respect for Coach (Bill) O’Brien and that organization. Played a really good football game. Again, just really proud. Proud of our guys and the way that they hung in there and finished.”

Do you believe you will be back next year?

“Call me crazy, I’m a believer to the core. I don’t know what tomorrow will bring; I don’t know what the next hour brings. But I do know that I’m very grateful to Jim Irsay and very grateful to the Irsay family. His unwavering commitment is second to none to football. He’s gave us everything that we needed. Gave me everything that I needed over the last six years to be successful. Nobody has more passion and love for the game than Jim Irsay. I’m very grateful for the opportunity that he gave me. Chris Ballard is one of the finest men I’ve ever worked with. He’s a great football mind. He was unbelievable. He was with us through thick and thin and supported us. He’s a great man; he’s a great person. I’ve had a great year working with him. He’s unbelievable. These players and coaches, like I talked about, I could go on and on and on. It would have been real easy for these guys to throw in the towel. They never did. They never quit. It’s my football family in there – those players and coaches. I’ve always been about relationships. It’s always been about love with me. It’s always been about connection. The price of love, sometimes you have to say goodbye. So again, I don’t know what tomorrow brings, but I know I’m grateful for every one of them and challenged them to finish. What they went out and did today, to finish this game and to win this football game, I’m forever grateful to every man and all the players that I’ve had the opportunity to coach past and present. And then this community, the fans, they’re unbelievable. All that we’ve been through, they brought me through the fire back in 2012. I got great love and respect for our fans and for this community and what they’ve done for me and my family. I’m in debt of gratitude. We’ll always be Hoosiers no matter what happens. Again, I don’t know tomorrow brings or the next hour, I just know that right now I’ve got a lot of joy in my heart just knowing how these guys finished. They’ve got the hearts of lions. The staff and the players and this organization, again, it’s been a blessing.”

When do you anticipate having some finality on your fate?

“Again, I wish I had an answer for you. Just wait and see.”

You said that you don’t know what’s going to happen. What does that mean?

“I haven’t had a conversation with Mr. Irsay yet.”

How trying was this season?

“They’re all unique in their own way. They’re all different. They’re all challenging. We’ve had some great, great moments and some disappointing ones but this one was a challenge. I think, again, we will never make any excuses, but you don’t have your quarterback for a whole season and you have a bunch of guys that go to IR – this, that and the other. Houston is no different; everybody else has to battle the

same thing. Again, we kept picking ourselves up week after week and going to work and these guys competed and prepared and laid it all on the line every single time that we went out on that football field. It's always challenging. Life is challenging. As long as we don't lose the lessons from this season. Winning teaches you things and losing teaches you things. We fell short; I fell short. I've got to be better. I can do better, you know. We didn't meet our goals and I'm sorry that we haven't hoisted that thing yet. But again, call me crazy. Faith is believing what you can't see and the reward for believing is that you get to see it. I'll continue to have faith and our players will continue to have faith that that will happen at some point for this organization. But it was a challenge. But again, proud as hell of every man in that locker room – every coach. Their wives and their family and all the sacrifices that they made to hang in there.”

Are you bracing for the possibility of not being back?

“No, I'm just grateful. I'm just grateful. I'm on this side of the dirt. Okay so, whatever happens, I'm good. You guys know that. You know me well enough, and I appreciate you guys. I appreciate – you guys have treated me very well, and you've treated my family well. And you've carried yourself – you've got tough jobs. We've all got tough jobs, and I respect the job that you guys have to do. I really do, and I appreciate you guys.”

Will you meet with Jim Irsay and Chris Ballard tomorrow morning?

“Again, I don't have an answer for you.”

You called this the 'last rodeo' coming into the game.

“What a rodeo it was, man. Did you see them ride? They put their spurs on, and they kicked that horse. And they kicked it, and what a way to finish. What a way to go out.”

What about the last six years? This rodeo as Colts head coach – how's that been?

“Blessed beyond measure.”

What was it like on the sideline there? I saw you having some good moments with the players.

“Unbelievable. Unbelievable. That's again – we do this for those five minutes, and we got to enjoy those five minutes. The blood, the sweat, the tears, all the sacrifices that you make; it's really, really hard to win a game in the National Football League. A game. And so that's why we do it, and that's why we keep coming back and that's why you compete. That's why you prepare. That's why you fight and you scratch and you claw, and you keep digging for those five minutes. And those five minutes that we just had were the best five minutes of my life.”

How emotional was today for you? Was it more emotional than the last two Week 17 games?

“They're all emotional. They're all emotional. I'm an emotional guy. I cry at movies, so it doesn't matter what it is. *Old Yeller*, I've seen it 15 times. If I watch it tonight, I'll cry again.”

What was your message to the guys after that win?

“Just that the sky is the limit. They can do anything they want to do as long as you fight and you don't ever quit and you don't ever throw in the towel, which they never did, and you keep picking yourself up day after day after day and you do the right thing and you work, prepare and you compete. You can do anything you want to do in this life. You don't make excuses. Just how proud I am for them sticking to it and not giving in and not making excuses. Never did, never did. They just kept working. I've never been more proud. In 33 years of coaching, I've never been around a group – I've been blessed to be around a bunch of great players, but this was a special, special, special group.”

What were your impressions of Frank Gore today and what he's given you this season?

“Unbelievable. Just simply amazing. Poetry in motion. I mean the guy is a warrior. He runs like a man possessed, and to do what he did today, 100 yards. I think he eclipsed another a milestone of 14,000 (yards), whatever it is. I don't have the numbers in my head, but the guy is a warrior and he laid it on the line. And he didn't have to. All of them – T.Y. (Hilton), AC (Anthony Castonzo), Jackie Doyle, that quarterback No. 7 (Jacoby Brissett), coming into these circumstances, what he did. That guy is a warrior. He's a winner. All of those guys are winners in there. I appreciate you guys.”

Quarterback Jacoby Brissett

What kind of feeling is it to just kind of get a win and get out of there?

“You know, it’s a great feeling. I was kind of eavesdropping a little bit and he hit it right on the head. Those five minutes in the locker room was just the best Christmas gift, New Year gift. To see the smiles and the feeling of finally finishing. One of the games Chuck gave us one of the best speeches I’ve ever heard, he was talking about no matter what grade you get an A or an F - you never get an I. Grade incomplete. Today, we didn’t get an I. We finished it, maybe not been the season that we were all hoping for, but no better way to do it than what we did today.”

What has Chuck meant to you given the way this entire year has panned out?

“Everything. I can’t put into words how thankful I am for him. I tell the story all the time when everybody asks me about that. I will never forget before we played the Browns, it was after we lost to Arizona in a tough way and I felt like I lost the game for us. Before the game he said, ‘I got your back.’ Through all of the crazy things that I was kind of going through at the time with the trade and just trying to remember everybody’s name. He told me he had my back and I know that it kept me from giving up through the hard days, the hits, what you all write about with the sacks and the tackles and all that stuff. Hearing those words, I knew I had somebody that had my back and those words will forever associate me to him.”

Was there a sense at all today that you guys could win one for him?

“It was for us. He stressed that last night. It was no win for this person or that person, or let’s do this so this person can get recognition. It was just we want to win for us and end the season off on the right note.”

As you hit the offseason, will you have a chance to decompress and kind of absorb all of the stuff that went through this season for you?

“No doubt. I know that the first thing I want to do is sleep. I’ve got a little more time than I wished to sleep so I will go back and reassess everything from this year and about myself and find ways that I can get better for next year.”

Have you ever seen a running back quite like Frank Gore?

“Never in my life. You know, it’s the greatest thing to see. I kind of felt bad that I tackled him on the last play and I know he wanted to keep going but I wanted him to go down and stay in bounds. Watching him run, watching him come to work, watching him show us how to be a professional. As a young player in this league, those lessons that he teaches us, not by even saying anything but just by doing what he does speaks wonders.”

Did you notice a maybe more emotional Chuck postgame today than the normal?

“We all were emotional; we didn’t want to end our season like this. The joy of winning is so hard, like he said it’s so hard to win in this league. I know it’s easy to write a story about a loss but the best stories are when you win. And the way we won today, throughout the adversities and the bad things that have happened to us and being close in so many games to finally finish one.”

Was it difficult inside the locker room with all these questions and comments involving your coach week in and week out?

“Yeah, no doubt. You don’t want to hear that about somebody that I personally look up to or somebody that I know I would run through a wall for. Like I said, that’s what made everybody in this locker room come to work and come to play how we play. You all see, no team ever plummets us. He drove the ship, and that’s a real man there.”

We saw on the field the growth as a player, what about the growth as a person this year?

“This has taught me so much about myself, how to deal with others, how to be a leader and how to be a server and how to listen. It’s hard to say how you will apply it but I hopefully in the years to come will apply a lot of lessons that I have learned throughout this year. Especially as a teammate, disregard the player right now; there’s a lot of areas that I can grow as a teammate.”

You have shown that you're an NFL starting caliber quarterback and with the Luck thing we don't know how he's doing. Just what is going to go through your head this offseason as your career is decided for you by other people?

"Just come to work, try and get better, the best I can for next season. Like you said I don't have any control or anything besides what I do. And that's the only thing I will worry about is what I do and how I can come back and be a better player, a better teammate and a better man."

What did you learn about yourself this season, given the way it was a complete 180 from the way it started to now?

"I first got here, I thought it was going to be impossible to learn everybody's name and be able to address people by looking them in the eye and saying their names. To come to this point here and it's been a whirlwind of a year. I wouldn't change anything, I would do it all over the same way and do it with the right people."

Who taught you to want to address people by name? You mention this all the time, and you are the only guy I have ever heard that it seems to matter to.

"Because it's what you live and you die with, your name. To be able to look somebody in their eye and say, 'Through the tough times and the bad times, thank you for teaching me through this time.' Not just coaches but players. Being able to address somebody, because in a game you can't say number this or number that, you've got to say their name. To be able to look a bunch of grown men in their face and say their names, I think that helps me out as a leader. Happy New Year."

Tackle Anthony Castonzo

It's got to feel good, how does this feel?

"It does. That feeling in the locker room, that winning feeling is something we haven't had in a while. Obviously, the season didn't end up the way we wanted it to, but at least it's good to go out on a win."

How much of that effort today was in the name of your head coach?

"I don't think directly. It wasn't like, 'Oh, we're going out there to play for Chuck.' We play for Chuck every week. He prepares us to go out there and play hard and that's what we just did again today. Kind of indirectly it showed his spirit through us and that's we play hard for him because that's how he prepares us."

Anything you can share that he shared with the team after the win?

"He was just proud of us for not giving up. He preached, 'Completion, completion, completion.' Complete the season and don't leave it undone and fight the way that we have and we did. He was just kind of expressing his pride. It was pretty emotional."

What has Coach Pagano meant to you as a coach?

"He's a special guy in terms of as a head coach, how much he cares about everybody in this room. I think on a personal level, he doesn't just look at us as football players that go out there and get the job done for him. He cares about each and every guy as a person, which is a pretty special thing for a guy in his position."

Running Back Frank Gore

You've talked about finishing. Is that what today was?

"That was the right thing to do. A tough year and a lot of things didn't roll our way and a lot of close games. I wish we were getting ready for next week. I will say this group of guys are special. I take my hat off to all the young guys. They keep fighting, even these last couple when we are out there just playing to finish strong for our coaches. I am very proud of this group."

What did it mean to come back and celebrate with this group, and end this season with a win?

"It was great, especially for the fans. These fans were with us from day one, no matter what. Each week, things didn't go our way and they are still here. It was great to win this last game in front of our fans."

You reached 14,000 career rushing yards. What does that mean to you?

"Blessed. Especially the things I've been through coming out of college and all the doubters. Even every year, everybody is saying, 'He can't do this.' But that man up above got me. I'm still feeling good. I'm still having fun. Whenever that man tells me I'm done, I'm done."

What was Coach Pagano like after the game?

"We won. He was excited. Wish we would have won more. We were in a lot of games that things just didn't happen for us. He just said he was happy the way we kept fighting and our group was very special. I really think this group was special because that's hard to do to go out each week and compete the way that we did. Even though things didn't go our way, today it did and I'm going to celebrate today. Happy New Year. Be with my family and go enjoy life."

Wide Receiver T.Y. Hilton

Anything with the effort today in relation to the head coach? Did it feel like you were playing this one for Coach Pagano?

"No, we were just out there playing and having fun."

How frustrating was it not to get 1,000 receiving yards this season? It seemed like you had a nice start to the game and you just couldn't get on the same page the rest of the way.

"Yeah, they started doubling me a little bit more. And that's it, the ball didn't come my way so we're good."

Why has Coach Pagano been so special for you guys?

"We always fight for him. He's a players' coach and you dream of having a coach like that. He's special."

What was Coach Pagano's message to you guys after the game?

"He just appreciated us never quitting even though we had this record. Never quit and continue to fight."

Did you sense some extra emotion in him after the win?

"Yeah, he's a very emotional guy. That's what you love about him. He almost made everybody cry."