

TD passes to Lynn Swann built Bradshaw's confidence, status with Steeler fans.



Inside Terry Bradshaw

By Jim O'Brien

TERRY BRADSHAW'S big blue eyes beg for understanding. The blond bomber of the Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers seeks empathy, if not sympathy, for what he's gone through here as he starts his 10th season in the National Football League.

It's been mostly good these past five years, as the Steelers won three NFL titles in that span with Terry tossing touchdown passes to Lynn Swann and John Stallworth, or slipping the ball into the bellies of Rocky Bleier and Franco Harris and letting them find their way into the end zone.

But there were bad times, especially in the beginning, and somewhere in the middle, and they left a younger Bradshaw slightly bewildered and wondering what or who was going to hit him next. A first marriage went bad. Fans turned on him. At times, it seemed to him anyhow, the world was against him.

The rewards have been great in more recent

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Tight end Randy Grossman excelled last year, but Bradshaw has "team goals," no favorites.

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'It's Been A Long Struggle For Both The Fans And Myself. I Think I've Opened Up To Them; I'm Not Hiding Anymore.'



Linemen like Jon Kolb "keep Terry clean," a key to Steelers' success.

Veterans like Rocky Bleier, Gerry Mullins, have helped Bradshaw enjoy five good seasons.

Terry Bradshaw

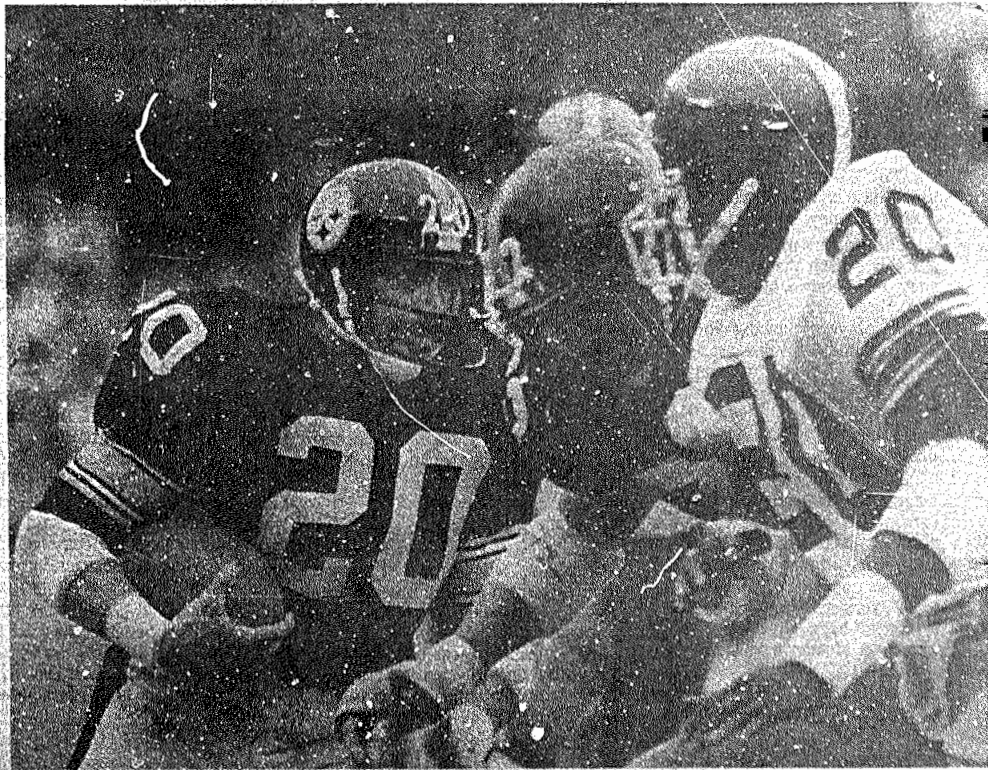
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seasons, so has his second marriage — to showbiz skating celebrity Jo Jo Starbuck — and his reaffirmed faith in God and all that is good in his fellow man and this world. All's right in the world Terry Bradshaw sees through those blue eyes nowadays, but he hasn't forgotten the past, and he wants you to understand.

"It took about four or five years for me to begin to grow and mature since I came here," Bradshaw said this summer. "It's been a long struggle for both the fans and myself. I think I've opened up to them; I'm not hiding anymore. They believe in me.

"But it was hard for awhile. I had never experienced the bench, the booing, the bad press. I grew up in front of the media and the public. My marriage and its end were all out in public view. I could've become hard-hearted, but I didn't."

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Terry Bradshaw

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Being Terry Bradshaw in this town hasn't been all milk and honey, believe it or not. To see Bradshaw in the flesh, as many fans did when he wore only shorts and his football shoes during some of the lighter workouts at the Steelers' training camp at St. Vincent College in Latrobe this summer, he seems impregnable.

His muscles are bunched all over his body and, at 6-3, 215 pounds, he appears to be indestructible. But he bruised the wrist on his right — and throwing — hand in one of the early contact drills, and the Steeler brass held its collective breath for a few hours.

The Steelers are shooting for their fourth Super Bowl title in six years, a feat no football team has ever accomplished, but they need a healthy Bradshaw to do it. No quarterback can boast — and Terry never does — that he won three Super Bowl titles.

Kruczek, Stoudt Capable

Mike Kruczek or Cliff Stoudt might be able to step in and direct the Steelers all the way. In 1976, in fact, when Steeler owner Art Rooney believes the Steelers were the best team over a 10-game stretch that he ever saw, even though they failed to make it to the Super Bowl, Kruczek was the starting quarterback in six of those as a rookie. But Kruczek simply isn't Bradshaw. Who is?

"We'll be a contender as long as Bradshaw is at his best," said club owner Rooney.

The Steelers may even be stronger this season than in recent seasons. All veteran hands are back, and there are some impressive young players pushing for more playing time or even starting positions, and a rookie running back such as No. 1 pick Greg Hawthorne of Baylor is ready to give Harris and Bleier, if not the opposition, a breather now and then.

J.T. Thomas is back to challenge Ron Johnson for the left cornerback spot, and Bennie Cunningham has come back to give Randy Grossman a run for the tight end slot, and the Steelers just have to be stronger. To win it all, though, it comes back to Bradshaw and what sort of season he has in store for us.

"We won the Super Bowl with-

out people like Thomas and Cunningham, and that just shows the caliber of players we have here," Bradshaw said. "I'm as much for Grossman as I am for Cunningham, and Johnson as Thomas. Chuck Noll just puts the best people in the best positions, and if somebody gets injured, he puts somebody else there. To him, there are 11 pieces on offense, and 11 pieces on defense. It's just a big chess game. Sometimes the people on this football team have to swallow their own pride."

Bradshaw is an expert on that subject. Though he's won 11 of 15 playoff games in his nine-year career, something no one else can say, and set records in the Super Bowl, he insists he's set no goal for himself — other than surpassing Fran Tarkenton's record of playing 18 seasons in the NFL.

"The team aspect, that's what you're supposed to think of," Bradshaw said during a visit to his room at St. Vincent, where he'd been sitting, strumming on his guitar while a country-n'-western song was playing on his stereo tape machine.

"You have to have team goals. What if you break records and your team still can't win? What satisfaction would you get from that?"

Or, as the Greene put it, "You have to win the game, so you have to win the trophy. You want to take home all the rewards you can get, and they only come with winning."

No one took home any more hardware than Bradshaw this past winter, yet he turned down so many invitations to dinner, and opportunities to receive more trophies and plaques.

Doesn't Want Praise

"I don't go for that stuff, somebody getting up and boasting about me," Bradshaw said with a smile, and a spit of his chewing tobacco into a paper cup. "That's not me."

His teammates and coaches appreciated that. "It was wonderful how humble he was about all that," said assistant coach George Perles.

It's nice to know he's appreciated. It wasn't always that way. Bradshaw remembers only too well.

"I've grown up in the National Football League," allowed Bradshaw, who turns 32 today. "Coming from a small school (Louisiana Tech), there was a lack of exposure to the media and the fans," he said. "I was so immature, mentally and physically. I hadn't played the Alabamas. I hadn't been

on TV. I hadn't gotten great national exposure."

Or, as Bradshaw said before the Super Bowl last year: "My rookie year was a disaster. I was totally unprepared for pro football. I'd had no schooling on reading defenses. They'd never blitzed me, and I'd just run away. I had never studied the game, never looked at films the way a quarterback should."

Never Benched Before

"I had never been benched before. I'd never played on a team that had another quarterback besides me. I had no idea how important I was to the team. I'd never been to Pittsburgh, never even seen the Steelers play on television."

"We had another good quarterback in Terry Hanratty. He was an All-America at Notre Dame, and he was from Pennsylvania (Western Pennsylvania, to be more specific, in nearby Butler). He related well with the other players. He had polish. He was one of the guys."

"I was an outsider who didn't mingle well. There were no cowboys on the team, no one who liked to fish or do the things I like to do. The other players looked upon me as a Bible-toting Li'l Abner."

Then there was Jefferson Street Joe Gilliam, who moved to the beat of his own drummer, and got his own fans to join his parade. Competing with Gilliam for game time, and fan adulation, wore as thin on Bradshaw as his blond hair.

No more. He knows he's No. 1, and he feels better about that. Bradshaw mixed well with his teammates and the fans at St. Vincent. While he enjoyed the peace and privacy to be found in his own room, he also seemed to be having a good time when he was performing for the folks who support the Steelers like no other pro fans in this country. "He enjoys this," said Steeler publicist Joe Gordon when fans cheered Bradshaw into a bit of fun/play at the camp.

"I'm comfortable now," Bradshaw said.

Offensive captain Sam Davis disclosed at camp that Bradshaw had bought oil portraits of each of the offensive starters as a way of saying "thank you" for their help in his award-winning season. "That was a warm thing to do," said Davis. "That's one of the reasons he's my hero. We've got a special group of guys here. People don't realize that."

Coach Noll believes the best is yet to come for Bradshaw and the Steelers. "This is the most cohesive team I've ever been associated

with," said Noll. "I really believe that we have not reached our peak as a team."

"Terry has matured a great deal as a quarterback. And the key thing is he has a lot of help. I'm a believer in the team concept. It starts with the offensive line which gives him more time to throw."

If there's anything Bradshaw likes to boast about, it's his offensive line. And, as Jon Kolb, the Steelers' left tackle on offense, put it: "In our playoff games, the other coaches said the reason they didn't win was because they didn't get to Bradshaw. Our bunch takes pride in that. We like to think that if we can keep Terry clean, we will win the game."

Somebody wrote a book about Bradshaw during the winter, and Steeler coach Chuck Noll was

On Chuck Noll: 'He Has One Thing In Mind, To Make You The Best You Can Be. I Respect Him.'

asked to provide a preface for it. "He had to say some nice things about me, and I know he doesn't like to single out people on this team," said Bradshaw. "I'm not looking for praise from Chuck."

"The confidence I felt from him in recent seasons has helped me become a quarterback that's what I always needed the most. He's my coach and I respect him. His understanding of the game is unbelievable. I believe in him. He used to scare me. It took me a long time to get comfortable with him. I hear people say they don't get to know him; it takes time, but it's worthwhile. I know there's a soft side to him. He's a very sharp man. I love talking to him. He has an opinion about everything."

"He has one thing in mind, to make you the best you can be. If you have the talent, he and his assistants will give you the technique. They can't play for us, though. Everything else is up to the players. I don't want to let them down. I don't want to let myself down."

It's unlikely he will. Terry Bradshaw seems to enjoy being Terry Bradshaw these days. "Hey, I'm not going to worry anymore," he said with a Super Bowl smile. "I'm not taking myself seriously anymore. Football should be fun."

With Bradshaw behind center for the Steelers, as far as the fans in this city are concerned, it can't be anything else.

COMING OF AGE IN PITTSBURGH

Severely tested in the early years of his career, the Steelers' Terry Bradshaw talks about his maturation as a quarterback and as a man.

By Jim Natal

It is late in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl XIII. The Pittsburgh Steelers are moving toward victory with all the inexorable beauty of the dusk settling over the Miami skyline. The Dallas Cowboys are already reeling from a Pittsburgh touchdown that has put them behind 28-17 when Dallas defensive tackle Randy White fumbles the ensuing kickoff and the Steelers recover, giving them a first down on the Cowboys' 18 yard line. If you were one of the 100 million people riveted to that telecast, you saw: Pittsburgh quarterback Terry Bradshaw take the snap, fake a handoff, set, and throw high into the end zone, where Lynn Swann made one of his routinely remarkable leaping catches for the Steelers' second touchdown in 19 seconds.

Up in the broadcast booth, Curt Gowdy turns to John Brodie and says in a voice hoarse with excitement, "Well, ex-quarterback, how's that for a call?"

"I like the execution," responds Brodie, also hoarse. "Anybody can call that play, but there are only a few guys who can get it done."

Color man Merlin Olsen breaks in. "I tell you," he says, "it takes a lot of guts to make that call. Because the conservative thing, the easy thing, was to stay on the ground, not to make a mistake. Bradshaw would have none of that. I think he's really grown up as a signal caller and a quarterback."

Many months later, Terry Bradshaw, quarterback of the world champion Pittsburgh Steelers, most valuable player of Super Bowl XIII, and a Pro Bowl starter, walks into the lobby of a hotel in Los Angeles. It is the middle of a hot, dry afternoon. There is no wind, and the palm trees by the pool outside look pale and dusty. Bradshaw seems to tolerate the heat as well as he does pain on the field.

Terry Bradshaw perceives adversity, whether it's criticism or bad weather, as a challenge.

He appears to be in midseason physical form. His eyes are clear and blue and he is grinning.

Nursing a slight limp from a muscle pull, he ambles into the deserted bar, where the evening's band is practicing, and orders a beer. Sitting at the bar, a bottle of "Lite" beer beside his elbow, he looks like a jock waiting for a commercial to happen.

But commercials are not on Bradshaw's mind at the moment. He is there to talk about a very difficult subject—himself. It is a subject he often jokes about, but one he knows well, for, unlike most people who never seem to ask themselves the basic questions, Bradshaw is surprisingly aware of who he is, where he is, how he got there, and where he's going. It is obvious his eyes have turned inward as often as they have upfield.

"When I was in high school," he begins in his soft Louisiana drawl, "I always felt special. I had no reason to feel that way, because I was not special. Nothing I did was special. But inside of me, I always felt different. I wanted to work. I wanted to be somebody. I wanted to be good. I guess that's ego. Maybe I had a huge ego. I've never said that before until today, though 'ego' never does sound right. I always had a lot of pride, and the Lord blessed me with a certain attitude and a great willingness to work hard.

"I went through so many growing pains. When I'd start throwing the ball halfway decent I'd grow two inches and everything would get all screwed up. Then I started lifting weights and adding bulk. I never had a natural throwing motion. I had to constantly work on it. Even today I've changed my throwing motion many times and it's still not natural. One year I may throw one way and the next year I'll switch and throw some other way. I may not throw well or I'll lose confidence, so I develop a new style.

"Back in high school, I threw into

buckets in my backyard. I threw into swing sets. I tore up two swing sets—literally tore them up throwing into the swings. And I tore up I don't know how many footballs. I threw for hours and hours. A Bert Jones or a Bob Griese can go out today and pick a football up and they'll throw the same way they did six months ago without ever throwing in between. I wouldn't. When I go to training camp, I'm terrible. I have to work back into it. And I may lose it two or three games a year. Then I have to work real hard after practice to gather it back."

Is it possible that this variable throwing motion is the source of Bradshaw's early branding as "inconsistent?"

"I don't think anyone ever really knew but me," he says. "All of my changing stems from two words—*no confidence*. I think the more confidence I have, the better I play. The last four years I've felt good about the way I've played. I think Chuck [Noll, coach of the Steelers] said it best when he said, 'Terry's finally stopped worrying.' I had to let the natural things, the fun things, take over instead of worrying all the time. I got in my own way. It used to be that if I was throwing the ball badly, I would just stop throwing it. Now," he laughs, "if I'm throwing badly I just throw badly the whole game. I just keep on going and don't let it dictate to me and it goes away.

"I was trying too hard early in my career. Trying to prove myself. I didn't get the confidence from the people that I needed to get it from. It was just a misinterpretation. They were waiting for me to grasp the situation myself. They were letting me grow up. Instead of helping me grow up, they were gonna let me grow up on my own. I think that was the secret, the key to my whole career, the fact that I've overcome all these things with patience and understanding on everybody's part even though I was the one who flirted with danger. I was the one who was spouting off and mad and wanted to

"I wanted to work. I wanted to be somebody. I wanted to be good. I guess that's ego. Maybe I had a huge ego."

be traded at one point and was unhappy with Chuck and unhappy with the quarterback situation. Everybody else just sat quietly and let me go through it. I look back on that now, and I can't believe what a difference there is. That's the way time works. I feel like I'm just becoming a quarterback. It took me nine years. Some it takes two or three."

Was Bradshaw slow to mature as a quarterback? Was the media slow to recognize his true talent? Or were there other contributing factors, external factors, that played on Bradshaw's insecurity and made him push himself too hard for his own good?

Bradshaw came to the NFL 10 years ago out of Louisiana Tech. He chose that school because it was small, because it was not too far from his home in Shreveport, and because, he says, he knew that if he was what the scouts were looking for in a quarterback, they'd find him there with only a little more trouble than if he'd gone to a major college. In three seasons at Louisiana Tech, he completed 462 passes in 879 attempts (52.5 percent) for 7,149 yards and 42 touchdowns. Needless to say, the scouts found him.

In 1969, Bradshaw's senior season, the Steelers' record was as bleak as winter in a mill town. The pro team in Pittsburgh won only 1 game and lost 13. Not that losing was anything new to Pittsburgh. In the 37 years the team had been in existence, it never had won a championship, and, since 1950, it had a winning record only four times. So it was symbolic, and maybe ironically prophetic, when the Steelers went head-to-head with the Chicago Bears, who had won a few titles in their years in the NFL, in a coin toss at the end of the 1969 season to determine which team would get first pick in the 1970 college draft. The Steelers won the toss, and they made Bradshaw the number one choice in the entire draft. Fame had tapped Terry Bradshaw, and its touch was no light.

"I was on the team when Terry was a rookie," says Andy Russell, the Steelers' retired all-pro linebacker. "We had a whole lot of bad years and had played poorly because we just didn't have the



"Jojo and I sometimes have to stop and see where our separate careers have taken us."

talent to be a winner. When Terry was drafted, naturally everyone in Pittsburgh thought he was going to lead us out of the basement overnight. He was thrown into a difficult situation right from the start. He had to learn the business under a magnifying glass. Linebackers don't win games, but quarterbacks do. They get more credit than they deserve, but, as in Terry's case, they also get more blame.

"He was operating under tremendous pressure—in his own mind and from the veterans. I remember I had a barbecue for the team in Terry's first preseason and everyone sat around scrutinizing the young 'savior.' It was beyond belief! He had to feel like he was being interrogated. Plus, he wasn't one of the boys. He had his own style, and he wasn't comfortable. I think that made him feel even more sensitive. What he didn't realize was that the veteran players didn't care if he went out with them for a beer. They just wanted him to throw touchdown passes."

Russell's words are echoed by Steelers running back Rocky Bleier. "When Terry first came into the NFL," says Bleier, "he was touted as the man who would do it for the Steelers. He had all the qualifications for the role: He was over six feet tall, blond, blue-eyed, he had a cleft chin, he was exuberant and enthusiastic—almost a rah-rah type—he could throw the ball, and he was strong. Terry first split time with [Terry] Hanratty, then he took over the reins completely. During that time, his mistakes like any young quarterback. The press got on him because his mistakes were so visible. People became critical."

In retrospect, it seems that Bradshaw was at the whim of the ebb and flow of the mass psychology of the entire city of Pittsburgh. The fans and the press expected him to be something he couldn't be. They had high hopes and reacted all the more strongly—and negatively—when Bradshaw proved to be human after all. Not that he didn't try to live up to his



"My singing's good enough so that I can go on stage and not embarrass myself," says Bradshaw, here with country singing star Marty Robbins.

advance notices. He *did* try, and that may have been the biggest problem of all.

"Coming in as a number one draft choice, Terry felt he had to carry the load by himself," says Babe Parilli, the Steelers' quarterback coach from 1971 to 1973 (he is now with Denver). "He wasn't experienced enough to handle it. Physically, he had as much talent as any quarterback to come into the league. But he had to learn the game. No rookie quarterback is going to come in and make it right away. It's tough to go in as a starter, and Terry didn't have an experienced quarterback to learn from. And I think that hurt him."

That wasn't all that hurt him that first year. "When Terry got into pro football it was a different world," says his father, Bill Bradshaw. "He had never been exposed much to the media before. In college, the exposure level was maybe three on a scale of ten. In the pros it was a ten. He was just a raw ol' country boy from Shreveport. And it was embarrassing to

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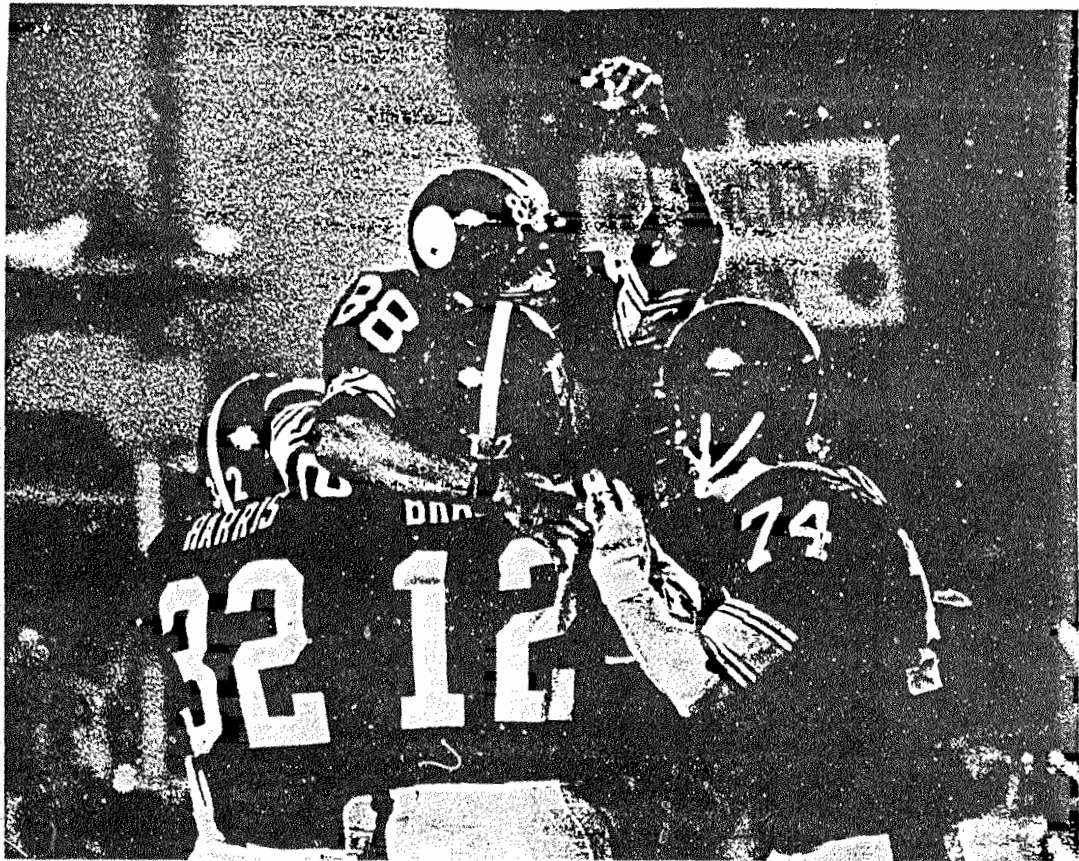
him when that's just what they showed him up to be."

In that country boy persona were spawned the unfortunate beginnings of the undeserved identity that haunts Bradshaw to this day—that of his being "dumb." Once the rumors began, the image was helped along by Bradshaw's inexperience on the field. "Terry would sometimes get flustered and make mistakes," explains Parilli. "Then people would say he wasn't very smart."

Bradshaw only grudgingly discusses the subject. "I've got several ideas how the whole thing started," he says. "I did

some things on the field that, in the eyes of this one reporter, were dumb. Like scrambling around all over the field, then throwing an interception when I was a rookie. That was dumb. So the guy wrote about me being dumb.

"Because I read the Bible, because I kept my hair cut close, because I said 'Yes, sir' and 'No, sir,' because I was a nice guy, because I kept my clothes clean, because I stayed out of trouble. They just had nothing against me. What could they say about this kid? But when I got out there on the field and acted *wild* and *crazy*, right away I was *dumb*. When things didn't go right for me it was because I made a 'dumb' play selection, a 'dumb' call. I had nobody defend me, either. The coach didn't defend me. Players didn't defend me. I *did*," he laughs bitterly, "but there's no defense. Any time I'd come out and defend myself, I'd just dig my hole deeper and deeper. It really got out of hand when I went to the Super Bowl the first time



Bradshaw, Lynn Swann, Franco Harris, and Ray Pinney celebrate Swann's acrobatic touchdown catch in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl XIII.

[game IX in 1974]. Everybody wanted to know what grades I got in school. I got furious. I still get angry about it, as you might have noticed," he says, laughing again at his own agitation.

"I finally just said the heck with it. If these people want to write that about me, there's nothing I can do. All I can do is go out and play well, win the games I play, and if I'm dumb in their eyes, okay, I'm dumb. I've learned to live with it, but it's always there. When someone says to me, 'You've killed your dumb image,' I say, 'No I haven't because you keep bringing it up.' And when I retire after eighteen years in the NFL, they'll say, 'Here's a guy who hung in there, the Steelers won a bunch of Super Bowls with him at quarterback; here's a guy who overcame his dumb image.' If I go in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, under my picture it will say, 'Here's a guy who overcame his dumb image.' When I die, on my tombstone they're gonna put, 'Here lies a guy who overcame his dumb image.' So

"When I die, on my tombstone they're gonna put, 'Here lies a guy who overcame his dumb image.'"

it's always there and it always will be. I don't believe you can ever completely kill an image.

"There are people today who believe that I'm dumb. I meet 'em on the street. There's always someone you're gonna run into who may be a diehard Rams fan and you beat his team and he can't stand it. So he comes up to you and says, 'You dummy!' I run into that all the time. What am I gonna do? All you can do is walk on. So I live with it now, but there's not a day that goes by that I don't think about that image."

In Bradshaw's first pro season, it ini-

tially looked as if he might just be the "savior" Pittsburgh was waiting for. The young quarterback had a tremendous preseason, leading the Steelers to four consecutive victories. Then came the regular season and things toned down a bit.

"I, for one, didn't expect Terry to set the world on fire his first two or three years," says Bill Bradshaw. "It was hard for him to accept the pro philosophy of bringing quarterbacks along slowly. I remember his first regular season game. He thought that he had played poorly, or, as he said it, 'stunk up the place.' If crying would have helped, I would have cried for him."

The 1970 season didn't exactly end on a high note either. "Our last game that year was against Philadelphia," recalls Russell. "Brad was benched, but he was going to do the punting because our punter was hurt. Our first punt that day had to be kicked out of the end zone. In the huddle we were telling each other,

"The benching was the lowest part of my career. I just couldn't understand why it was happening."

'Remember to block. They're gonna come.' But nobody paid attention. The ball was snapped and the gates opened. Terry's first punt in the NFL was blocked. He got wiped out and had to be helped off the field. The Eagles scored, too. That's how he ended his first year."

The Steelers finished 5-9 that season. Statistically, Bradshaw didn't do badly for a rookie. He started eight regular season games and threw six touchdown passes, four of them over 50 yards. His completion percentage could have been better—83 of 218 attempts for 38.1 percent—and his interception total, 24, led the league. Still, he had three 200-yard passing games and he established himself as a dangerous and powerful runner, finishing the year with a 7.3-yard rushing average.

Forged and tempered by the trials of his first year, Bradshaw slowly began to emerge. In his second season he set a team completion record (203) and raised his completion percentage to 54.4. He almost doubled his passing yardage of the previous year, more than doubled his touchdown pass total with 13, and led AFC quarterbacks in rushing, running for five touchdowns. His interception total was still high, 22, but it was clear that he was learning.

"As he went along," says Parilli, "I think he realized there were other players around him and that he didn't have to do it all himself."

"Brad suffered from tunnel vision, he was trying so hard," says Russell. "He wasn't seeing enough of the field. He didn't see anything but his receivers. But I always felt Brad had the most physical talent of any quarterback I'd seen. So it had to be only a matter of time for him."

Two years, to be exact. In 1972, Bradshaw led the Steelers to an 11-3 record and the AFC Central Division title. Pittsburgh beat Oakland in the first round of the playoffs on the famous Bradshaw to John (Frenchy) Fuqua to Franco Harris "immaculate reception" pass, but lost the AFC championship game to the unbeaten and eventual Super Bowl champion Miami Dolphins. Nevertheless, notice had been served on the league that Bradshaw and the Steelers had arrived.

If the 1972 season set the stage, 1973 began the overture. The Steelers went 10-4, lost the division title to Cleveland on a tiebreaker, but made it into the playoffs again, as a wild card team. Oakland, however, avenged its loss of the previous year, trouncing Pittsburgh 33-14.

Then came the 1974 season, the turning point for the Steelers and both a turning point and a crisis point for Bradshaw.

"Terry was having personal problems," explains Bleier. "He had gone through a divorce, and he hadn't quite learned to put things in perspective, to put things on different levels, and not to bring things in his personal life to the professional level. He was learning self-discipline."

Bradshaw's father saw it the same way. "Terry drifted away from his Christian upbringing," Bill Bradshaw says. "He was stuck up there in Pittsburgh with his problems all by his lonesome."

Lonesome probably doesn't begin to describe what Bradshaw felt during this period in his life. He was so traumatized that it affected his play. He was benched by Noll. Joe Gilliam took over at quarterback for the first six games of the season.

"I won't use the divorce as a crutch for the way I played," Bradshaw said at the time. "But it was very hard on me. Let's face it: When you get divorced, it means you're a loser. You've lost something that was very important, that was meant to last a lifetime. I never want to go through that again."

"The benching was the lowest part of my career. I just couldn't understand why it was happening. I can't take anything away from Joe Gilliam. He had an outstanding preseason and he deserved to play. The team was winning and I was happy about that. But I was selfish enough to want to play."

"My own idea about the quarterback situation is that a quarterback shouldn't lose his job in the preseason. I use those games to prepare myself for the season. I'm not out to set any records in preseason games."

"But Chuck Noll had to make a decision, and that was the decision he made. He never discussed it with me. I never questioned him about it. But there was a time I thought the whole season would be a waste for me."

Then, with the Steelers at 4-1-1, Noll reversed himself and restored Bradshaw to his starting role. The rest is history. The Steelers went on that year to win Super Bowl IX, beating Minnesota 16-6, then returned the next season to win Super Bowl X 21-17 over Dallas. There

were playoff losses in 1976 and 1977, but, anything, they only served to spur Bradshaw. He responded in 1978 with the next year of his career, a year culminated by the 35-31 victory over Dallas in Super Bowl XIII last January.

In that game, Bradshaw set two Super Bowl records (most yards passing in a game, 318, and most touchdowns in a game, 4) and tied another (longest touchdown pass, 75 yards). During the regular season, he threw 28 touchdown passes, most in the NFL, gained a personal high 2,915 yards passing, and rated second among NFL quarterbacks, one-tenth of a point behind Roger Staubach of Dallas.

Things are looking good now for Terry Bradshaw. He has three Super Bowl victories under his belt, the first quarterback to reach that goal. He is married to ice skating star JoJo Starbuck. He is as close to his family as ever. He has his beloved 400-acre ranch in Grand Cane, Louisiana, where he raises quarterhorses and cattle. His country singing career is blossoming again and there are plans for a national tour when the season ends. He is taking acting lessons in preparation for what he hopes will be a successful venture into the movies. He has survived an off-season schedule more rigorous than all 16 games of the regular season and the playoffs combined. And he has managed to get, as his father says, his head screwed on straight.

So what's left for Bradshaw? Is his maturation complete?

"No," he grins. "I can't help but get better. I'm still working hard. I don't believe I'm as good as people have been saying. I'm never mentioned in the same breath as the *great* quarterbacks. Not that I should be. I don't expect that.

"But I'm really enjoying the game now. I have a good relationship with Chuck Noll. We understand each other. I think that's been a big factor in my development as a quarterback. Noll has helped me. I scream and holler at him, and he swears and hollers at me. But we know each other. He knows that I won't argue with him about something unless I really believe in it. The confidence that I've gotten from his approval of me as his quarterback is what I've needed. I don't worry about being pulled from a game anymore. I know I'm his quarterback. I've been needing a vote of confidence all through my career. Now that I have it I have a better perspective and I can see that all the things that have happened to me—the benchings, the bad games—have been important in molding me as a person and as a football player.

"I wouldn't change any of it." !