We like NFL draft talk as much as the next person, especially when it involves the Cleveland Browns, but all the speculation about what will take place in the first round of the draft on April 26 is starting to work our last nerve.

The biggest thorn is the ongoing narrative pushed by the media that the Browns "must" trade up for Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin III at any and all cost. Failure to do so will somehow prove that the Browns are and incompetent, insipid and generally insignificant franchise that doesn't care one bit about winning.

Or something like that.

The cries started anew this weekend when Jim Thomas wrote in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* that the Browns are unwilling to include their second first-round pick (No. 22) at this time in a potential trade with the Rams to move up from No. 4 to No. 2.

That led Peter King to write in his *Monday Morning Quarterback Column* that "Cleveland can't seriously think RG3 can be had for anything less than two first-round picks and at least two additional picks or an additional pick and a player. Now, if the Browns are talking about a one this year, a one next year, a two this year and something else, that's a good starting point."

And Dan Hanzus at NFL.com wrote that "Does it seem odd to anyone else that two franchises starving for a potential franchise quarterback would miss the opportunity to land RG3 over bargaining principles?"

Last week ESPN's Jamison Hensley wrote that "There's a growing sense that the Cleveland Browns should trade up and draft Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin III. I'm here to tell you that the Browns must do it."

You get the picture.

Apparently the media believes that negotiating is for wimps and that the team should just let the Rams have their way with them.

The question is, why?

The Rams hold all the cards right now (although the fact that they have told everyone they are trading the pick and want a deal done by the end of the week seems like it should put a lot of pressure on them to make any deal they can get). But when free agency opens at 4 p.m. on March 13, the power starts to slowly shift away from the Rams and toward the Browns.

Some team needing a quarterback is going to sign Peyton Manning - and we're willing to bet it will be the Redskins. Washington owner Dan Snyder likes nothing more than winning the off-season (the regular season is another story) and what bigger free agent is there than Manning?

Even if the Redskins don't sign Manning (or another free agent), it's unlikely that the Rams would want to drop down to No. 6 (where the Redskins are picking). The draft is only 4-6 players deep in elite players (depending on who you talk to) and if the Rams drop down to No. 6 they may be left looking at Alabama running back Trent Richardson as the only player left for them.

And while Richardson is good, he's not going to give the Rams anything that Steven Jackson doesn't already provide.

If Matt Flynn leaves Green Bay, it seems likely that he'll go to Miami to work with former Packers offensive coordinator Joe Philbin. Even if he doesn't, the Dolphins have reportedly said they are not going to trade with the Rams because they are pissy about Jeff Fisher taking the Rams coaching job rather than come work for the Dolphins.

So knowing all this, why would Browns general manager Tom Heckert want to deal from a position of weakness?

Sit tight and the Browns may very well be able to swing a deal with the Rams on the Browns' terms - or at the very least work a deal that is not one-sided for either team.

And we're not necessarily opposed to the Browns giving up two first-round choices to land Griffin. But we would prefer if that second first-round pick was in the 2013 draft because, if the Browns could land Griffin and another player at No. 22 this year, that would go a long way to making sure that No. 1 pick in 2013 is not a Top 5 selection.

The worst-case scenario if the Browns stay patient is they don't make a lopsided trade and hold on to their two first-round picks and their second-round selection. Then, on draft day, they walk away with a star player at No. 4, a very good player at No. 22 and another start at No. 37.

Certainly not as sexy as selecting RG3, but as far as worst-case scenarios go, not a bad back-up plan.

The self-proclaimed experts can all insist that the Browns must do something, but it's easy for them to say that - they get to keep their jobs no matter how many times they are wrong. But if Heckert over plays his hand and screws up this draft, the locks may be changing on his office door in Berea sooner rather than later.

With the first round of the draft still 51 days away the picture is still cloudy on how the first four to six picks are going to play out. But with each passing day the picture becomes a little clearer and will crystallize even more when free agency starts next week.

Until then, we may just have to self-medicate with a healthy supply of Maker's Mark.