It's Rush Hour in New York. Our hero, Neal Page, running late for his flight, desperately searches for an available cab, but he might as well be searching for an electable GOP candidate. However, a nearby man in a suit and trench coat manages to hail one down, so Neal runs up to the man as he starts to get in the vehicle.

Neal: *Sir?... Sir?... Sir? Excuse me. I know this is your cab, but I'm desperately late for a plane, and I was wondering if I could appeal to your good nature and ask you to let me have it.*

New York Lawyer: *I don't have a good nature. Excuse me. Cabbie, come on.*

Neal: *I'll offer you 10 dollars for it.*

New York Lawyer: [scoffs] *Nuh!*

Neal: *Okay, 20! I'll give you 20 dollars.*

New York Lawyer: *I'll take 50.*

Neal: [Neal pauses, then begins to take money out] *All right.*

New York Lawyer: *Anyone who'd pay 50 dollars for a cab, would certainly pay 75.*

Neal: *Not necessarily...* [reluctantly agreeing] *All right. $75. You're a thief!*

New York Lawyer: *Close, I'm an attorney.*

Daniel Snyder, owner of the Washington Redskins, just paid $500 for a cab.

Was it way too much? Of course. That cab could've been had for less. He just didn't care. He wanted that cab so much that he ended the bidding before it started.

And that lawyer (St. Louis Rams)? They are walking away with a smug look on their faces, knowing they just hit the jackpot.

And the Browns, who resolutely decided to not be so irresponsible as to pay that exorbitant amount for a cab, are nonetheless still standing on the curb. Cabless. Likely to miss their flight.

But at least they still have their $500.

Regarding Depression

"*If you love something, set it free. If it comes back to you, it's... well... broken*." - Minnie Driver,

Grosse Pointe Blank

.

In the end, we all knew this was coming. I take that back - there are still a few people that get their hopes up when it comes to the Browns. But, for the vast majority, we were just waiting for the bottom to fall out. A QB prospect like that? In Cleveland? It's almost a scary prospect because suddenly people would be EXCITED about this team again. And then comes the burden of expectation, yada yada yada.

Marry a supermodel? You don't want the headache. Better to stick with good ol' Mary Jane Rottencrotch from down the street. You surround her with enough beauty products, she might look OK.

And since we knew this was coming, the anger doesn't last that long. The anger... it does come - even numbed testicles hurt when they're kicked - but it passes a lot quicker than it used to.

I will always love the Browns, no matter the Owner or the President or the GM or the Coach. But I do find it hard to care about them anymore.

It's like they went off to war from '96-'98, and when they came home, they were... changed. We love them - we can't help but to love them - for what they once were. But this new version... every day's a struggle. And plenty of people in our exact position have run off. Some days, it's tempting.

The light at the end of the tunnel is a train.

_____

Regarding Logic

All right, drama done. This isn't real life - it's entertainment. I for one refuse to let myself get worked up about a sporting franchise except on Sundays during football season (and especially when watching the Redskins from now on). The rest of the time, through training and superior willpower, I try to maintain reason and objectivity when it comes to these things.

GM's do business a certain way. One starts low, one starts high, and they meet in the middle. Same way with Agents. Same way with anyone that makes deals for a living. You never offer them the maximum of what you're prepared to pay right off the bat. It's called bargaining.

Daniel Snyder has apparently never heard of this.

It's hard to play the game when you're going up against a batshit-crazy whackjob like that, a guy that will piss away draft picks like they're light beer, a guy which will toss ridiculous contracts at mediocre has-beens just so long as he recognizes their name.

Which is probably part of the reason why the Skins have always blown goats under the guy.

RG3 is indeed a fine prize, but they better hope his presence sucks the Free Agents in like fruit flies, because he's costing them 3 Firsts and a Second.

If you can only safely consider the players from the first 2 rounds as likely starters, then you will be getting RG3, one starter next year, and one starter in 2014 from the draft. In other words, the draft is dead to you.

Look around the NFL. The reviews are very mixed. Many people feel that the Skins paid too much to move up a measly 4 spots, that the Browns were wise to refrain from trying to match Snyder's insanity (especially since I'm convinced that Snyder would've just kept upping the ante until he won, no matter if he had to throw in his mother to scrub the floors).

Others feel there is no price too high to pay for a Franchise, Championship-caliber QB. The Giants gave up a boatload to move up 3 spots and get Eli Manning, and I'm pretty sure they don't regret it now.

But we don't know what RG3 is yet. That book has yet to be written. So - logically - we can't judge the wisdom of this move (or non-move, as is the case with the Browns) until we have more data. A couple years ago, most considered the Jets winners in their trade-up with Cleveland to get Mark Sanchez. Now? The believers are much fewer.

Thus, in the spirit of rationality, I'll wait and see how RG3 does before completely crucifying Heckert and Holmgren for this. But they'd better F***ing be right. This could define their legacy. No one will remember anything else about them if they're watching NFL Films 20 years from now and hear:

"*Our Number 3 Quarterback of all time was almost a Brown, until a month before the draft when maverick Owner Daniel Snyder mortgaged the farm to get him* ."

And then see Snyder's sniveling little greasy face smiling like a tool. God, I'd like to kick him right in the eye.

_____

Regarding Peyton Manning

Colts released Manning. Redskins called Manning. Manning told Redskins to pound salt. Redskins got desperate and traded every pick they have between now and my retirement to get RG3.

Great F***ing story. Thanks a whole F***ing lot, Peyton.

_____

Regarding What's Next

Yeah, what IS next, now that RG3 is gone and we're stuck with some boring, lame dude...

Well, the Browns still have #4, #22, and #37 in the first 2 rounds. Assuming that Minnesota takes Matt Kalil at #3, Cleveland should have its choice of Morris Claiborne (CB - LSU), Justin Blackmon (WR - Ok St), Trent Richardson (RB - Alabama), Quinton Coples (DE - NC), or even Ryan Tannehill (QB - Texas A&M) at #4 overall.

And since absolutely none of those guys jumps out to me as an "elite" prospect, I support a trade down. If there is one. Which there probably won't be. Because there's no one worth trading up to get.

Let's be clear - any one those guys could really help the Browns.

You get **Claiborne**, you now have Top 10 CB's on both sides, moving Sheldon Brown to Safety

with TJ Ward, where you have an imposing Defensive Backfield for a unit that already ranked #2 against the pass last year.

But CB's very rarely carry their teams to Championships.

You get **Blackmon**, you now have a legit #1 threat to go alongside promising Greg Little. Throw in Josh Cribbs, Jordan Norwood, and maybe even Mo Massaquoi, and you suddenly have a young and potent WR corps - not too shabby for a unit that has widely been considered amongst the worst in the NFL.

But Blackmon probably would've been the 3rd WR taken in last year's draft, so he's hardly as elite as you'd like when you're taking a skill position guy that high.

You get **Coples**, you get an exciting and skilled DE that could be a game-changer all on his own, much less considering the formidable front the Browns would field with he and Sheard attacking the QB while Taylor and Rubin collapsed the middle.

But Coples is famous for inconsistency, for taking plays off. He has probably the highest "elite" potential of all the options, but he also probably has the highest "bust" factor.

You get **Richardson**, you've got your Franchise RB, a guy that is talented enough that he likely becomes a Top 10 back from Day One. Throw in some combination of Hardesty, Ogbannaya,

and Brandon Jackson, and you're set there for the next few years.

But RB's are a dime-a-dozen, and they have become passé in the NFL. Consider of the Top 10 Rushers last year:

1. *Maurice Jones-Drew* (No Playoffs, Picked in Rd. 2)

2. *Ray Rice* (Lost in AFC Championship, Rd. 2)

3. *Michael Turner* (Lost in Wildcard, Rd. 5)

4. *LeSean McCoy* (No Playoffs, Rd. 2)

5. *Arian Foster* (Lost in Divisional Round, Undrafted)

6. *Frank Gore* (Lost in NFC Championship, Rd. 3)

7. *Marshawn Lynch* (No Playoffs, Rd. 1)

8. *Willis McGahee* (Lost in Divisional Round, Rd. 1)

9. *Steven Jackson* (No Playoffs, Rd. 1)

10. *Ryan Mathews* (No Playoffs, Rd. 1)

Half of them didn't even make the Playoffs, and not even half of them were 1st rounders. Compare that to the Top 10 QB's, 7 of whom made the Playoffs and 8 of whom were 1st rounders. It's probably cyclical, but - for the time being - RB's just aren't as important as they used to be. That, and they don't last that long.

You see, with all 4 of these guys (Tannehill excluded), you fill a position of need and pretty much solidify the entire unit. But none of them is likely to make a huge difference the way a QB would.

Regarding What's Next At QB

This is where my depression creeps back up on me. Andrew Luck, Robert Griffin III... those were the high-potential prospects. Everyone who wasn't one of them... different levels of horseshit. I find it hard to care which one ends up taking snaps next season. Hopefully that changes by August.

The clear options at this point are: Matt Flynn in Free Agency, Kevin Kolb should Manning sign with Arizona, some other draft pick, or... Colt McCoy.

Sigh.

Flynn sure looked good in his 2 starts, but 2 starts does not a Franchise QB make. I still thought Colt had potential after 2 starts. Everyone thought Derek Anderson was Jesus Smith after 2 starts. Kelly Holcomb, Brady Quinn... they all can look good for a game or 2.

The problem I have with Flynn is that he's likely to be quite expensive and his ceiling isn't really

much higher than even Colt's - and Colt's is real damn low.

Really, I think I see him - at best - being Ryan Fitzpatrick. Middle of the road kind of guy, but still not elite, and still not Franchise in the sense that he has a realistic shot of leading a team to a Lombardi. An improvement over Colt - sure - but at what price?

Kolb is a guy who many consider to be a colossal failure in Arizona, but he had some high-quality moments in Philly and is well-versed in the WCO, not to mention familiar with all the major Browns' coaching and front-office types.

And if he's cut loose by the Cards, he'll likely come in pretty cheap.

I also see Kolb as a likely improvement over McCoy, with a higher potential than either he or Flynn. But I do worry about Kolb's concussion history. Especially in today's NFL. It's not like it gets harder to get a concussion the more you have. Kolb's a couple of rung bells away from retirement.

McCoy... well, you probably know what I think of him by now. Tough, but small and somewhat fragile. Weak arm. Not so accurate. Gets happy feet. Makes bad decisions. There's almost nothing that I like about his game. And his ceiling is LOW. Like a damn hobbit hole. There's only about so good you can reasonably expect him to become, and I highly doubt that's enough to get you a Ring.

And then there's the crop of Section 8 QB's in the draft, few of which I've seen a whole lot and none of which excites me.

From CBSSportline rankings (with the Top 2 obviously left off because they're dead to us):

3. *Ryan Tannehill* (Texas A&M, 11 overall rank, 1st rd grade)

4. *Brandon Weeden* (Oklahoma St., 42, 2nd)

5. *Kirk Cousins* (Michigan St., 72, 2nd/3rd)

6. *Brock Osweiler* (Arizona St., 81, 3rd)

7. *Nick Foles* (Arizona, 106, 3rd/4th)

8. *Ryan Lindley* (SD State, 124, 4th)

9. *BJ Coleman* (Chattanooga, 170, 5th)

10. *Russell Wilson* (Wisconsin, 188, 5th/6th)

11. *Austin Davis* (So Miss, 204, 6th)

12. *Kellen Moore* (Boise, 223, 6th/7th)

13. *Chandler Harnish* (No Illinois, 264, 7th)

14. *Case Keenum* (Houston, 277, 7th)

This list made me vomit a little in my mouth.

But, using reason, at least one guy from this list will probably end up to be a successful starter in the NFL. Tannehill has skills, but he's raw - a boom or bust type. I like Weeden, but he's 73 years old (fine, 29 in October). Cousins is your typical Big 10 lame-NFL-backup-for-3-years type prospect. Osweiler is intriguing physically (6'7, big arm, somewhat athletic) but inexperienced.

It's gonna take some work, but I'm gonna try to muster up some enthusiasm for some of these guys between now and the draft.

Regarding Heckert's Press Conference Thing

It doesn't really mean much at this point, but let's focus on the Free Agency comments.

"You guys know how I feel about free agency. I think everybody else is on board with it. We're not going to go crazy in free agency. We're not going to do it."

"I know Green Bay didn't sign one free agent when they won [the Super Bowl] two years ago. I don't think the Giants signed anybody, or at least anybody you've ever heard of as a free agent."

OK, this is simple. Free Agents are a useful tool, especially for teams on the edge. But if you're the Cleveland Browns, you're more than a few Free Agents away. And you'll have to overpay them grossly to get them to come to this sad-sack franchise.

Heckert has demonstrated time and again his conservative nature. His refusing to meet St. Louis' asking price for RG3 just underlines it again. He wants to build through the draft (because they HAVE to come here), keep our own guys (that are useful), and sign Free Agents only at his price (or maybe if they were a playoff team).

Get used to it.

Heckert's been surprisingly truthful in many of his press deals, clearly not placating the fans as if he cared at all about how they felt.

Which he shouldn't.

Regarding The Stupid Combine

I'm sitting here trying to think of things that mean less to me than the NFL Scouting Combine.

[redacted]