In the past, whenever I've written an analysis column about a developing situation, the situation invariably reaches an outcome shortly thereafter, rendering the column stale.

So if by the time you read this, Amar'e Stoudemire is a Cav, you're welcome. If by the time you read this, Stoudemire is a Sixer or making his way to South Beach to join the Heat, my apologies. But chances are, something is going to happen soon, climactic or anticlimactic.

Here's what we know as of Sunday evening: The Cavs have a strong interest in Stoudemire. Danny Ferry has been in hot pursuit of the Suns forward since Friday. On Saturday, a deal looked to be imminent, per multiple media sources. On Sunday, things cooled a bit. The Cavs are still very much in the thick of the Stoudemire discussions, but it looks like Philadelphia is among the other teams that could make a play for Stoudemire. Miami is also on the radar, but might not have the ammo to get a deal done without involving a third team, which is often a difficult trick to pull off.
The Cavs' interest in Stoudemire appears to be legitimate, but the highly-publicized flirting might also have something to do with forcing the Wizards' collective hand on the Antawn Jamison front. Washington completed a seven-player trade with the Mavericks on Saturday, shipping off the large contract of Caron Butler in the process. In jettisoning Butler, the Wizards might have created enough salary relief to retain Jamison, or they might have run the white flag up the pole in preparation for a complete implosion or rebuild. That's for the Wizards to know and for us to maybe find out at some point.

What we do know is that while the Wizards sport a poker face, the Suns are addressing all suitors for Stoudemire. And because of that, the likelihood of a Stoudemire trade is growing while the likelihood of a Jamison trade stagnates.

The Suns are kind of past the point of no return with Stoudemire. Whether by design or not, they've negotiated his departure from Phoenix in public for the past several days. It sends Stoudemire's camp a powerful message that Suns management is convinced that they can't re-sign the five-time all-star, and that they're determined to get something of value for him

before he can opt out of his contract this summer and potentially leave as a free agent.

Once you've gone down that road as a team, it's very difficult to pull back and mend fences. The Suns are putting themselves in a position where they're almost forced to deal Stoudemire by Thursday's deadline.

That works in favor of the Cavs and other teams in pursuit of Stoudemire. As opposed to having no pressure to deal Stoudemire, the Suns appear to find themselves under a great deal of pressure to make a deal happen. The Suns have essentially gone from seller to buyer.

What are the Cavs selling? Reportedly, J.J. Hickson and the expiring contract of Zydrunas Ilgauskas. There is reason to believe that other teams, particularly the Sixers, might be able to put together a more attractive offer from a talent standpoint, but the Cavs' offer might represent the tastiest bait for the Suns for two reasons:

First, Z's contract would offer Phoenix the chance to get under the luxury tax threshold -- a savings of around $10 million, according to The Plain Dealer's Brian Windhorst. The Suns could --- and probably would -- buy Z out, getting that money off the books sooner rather than later.

Second, if you were in the Suns' shoes and looking for a younger, cheaper Stoudemire to groom for the future, Hickson would fit the bill. At about 6'-9" Hickson isn't nearly as tall as Stoudemire, and his ceiling isn't as high, but they play largely the same game around the basket. And Hickson's midrange jumper has tons of room to improve in the coming years, much like Stoudemire's has. In the Suns' uptempo offense, the offensively-talented Hickson could grow into a key piece of Phoenix's future.

If Ferry can turn this trade from a hot rumor into reality, it would represent his BlackBerry magnum opus. Bigger than the lopsided Mo Williams and Shaquille O'Neal trades. Bigger than the six-players-out, four-players-in face lift of the February before last. Because this would be the long-sought, prime-of-career superstar brought on board specifically to give LeBron James a superstar-caliber running mate and, by extension, a reason to commit to the Cavs long term this summer.

Of course, Stoudemire would have to agree to an extension himself in order to make the grand plan truly take root. But the Cavs would hold Stoudemire's Larry Bird rights and, as a result, be able to offer Stoudemire the max contract he seeks, above what any other team can offer. The same rules that apply to the Cavs with LeBron.

Odds are very good that bringing Stoudemire into the fold would increase the Cavs' competitive standing both during the season and the offseason in the coming years. That's important, but you can argue that's not the most important issue at hand right this minute.

The most important issue is the spring of 2010, and whether the Cavs can win the NBA title. At the all-star break, the Cavs sit atop the NBA wth a 43-11 record and a franchise record-tying 13 game winning streak. They're a combined 4-0 against the Lakers and Magic -- the two teams that tormented them a year ago.

It's hard to imagine things going much better for the Cavs than they are right now. It would be anywhere between reckless and crazy to mess with the team's mojo.

Yet, adding Stoudemire could do just that. On one hand, Stoudemire is a more talented and athletic version of Hickson, so it's not like Mike Brown would have to completely retrofit the offense to accommodate Stoudemire. He'd be catching the ball while move toward the basket, taking quick dishes from LeBron for dunks and, in general, having his job made a whole lot easier surrounded by Shaq and LeBron -- two of the best passers in the game at their positions.

That's in theory. And the theory assumes that Stoudemire is content with living off of whatever the other four guys on the court give him. For a superstar used to receiving a lot of touches and scoring 20 points per game -- and playing for a contract to boot -- the theory might run into some problems when put into practice.

If Stoudemire is content with a drop in shot volume for the remainder of the season, if he's willing to be a team player and sacrifice some of his face time for a shot at a ring, the Cavs could become a historic juggernaut, armed with one of the greatest frontcourts in the history of the NBA. They could level the rest of the league like an atom bomb, burn through the playoffs like a time-release napalm canister and make those of us at the victory parade wonder why it took 46 years to win a title.

If Stoudemire is more concerned with his stat line and how many zeroes he can expect on his next contract, he could just as easily become a selfish, destructive, ball-hogging, shot-forcing dissenter who could make you pine for the days of Hickson starting at power forward.

It's the definition of high-risk, high-reward. The Cavs want to deliver the bold brushstroke that makes a compelling closing argument to LeBron. But at the same time, no argument could be more compelling than holding the Larry O'Brien Trophy aloft on Public Square this June. That's the cinch-lock case for not making any move that could potentially hinder the Cavs' chances of winning a title this year.

No player, no coach and no executive can guarantee a championship outright. Everyone plays a hand, but in most cases, the talent, coaching and front office brains are raw materials. Championships are won by circumstances. Players stay healthy and accept their roles, coaches adapt and lead effectively, and maybe there are some more fortuitous bounces along the way.

The dominance the Cavs are demonstrating right now can't be guaranteed year to year. Doing anything to harm this team's ability to win a championship this year is downright criminal. But leaving a legitimate superstar like Stoudemire on the table because you fear a negative outcome is reckless, crazy and criminal, too.

This is why Danny Ferry makes the big bucks. To lose sleep over this very conundrum. I'm glad he's the one making the call, and I'm glad I'm not in his shoes right now.