Terrelle Pryor was always supposed to leave Ohio State after his junior year. It's just that it was assumed it would be through the front door and not some back alley during finals week of his spring quarter.

Whether Pryor left of his own volition or was pushed probably doesn't matter much. He's gone and off to wherever his mercurial life takes him next. He'll probably latch on to a NFL team at one position or another at some point. He may have to take some detours first, like the CFL. Maybe he just fades away. For Pryor, his next career will only take him as far as he's willing to let it.

If past is prologue, that thought doesn't bode well for Pryor. On the other hand with kids past rarely is prologue. So there is hope.

There are new allegations of course about Pryor that came out the same day he left Ohio State for good. The latest set is from someone who labeled himself as a one-time close friend who got tired of Pryor's arrogant attitude. This anonymous source claimed he witnessed Pryor being paid between $20,000 and $40,000 in exchange for signing various pieces of memorabilia.

It's a pretty damning accusation if true but the principles involved, including the person who is alleged to have made the payments, claim it never happened. There have been no cancelled checks produced and no proof other than a disgruntled ex-friend. On that score, it's always instructive that those making the accusations try to bolster their credibility by claiming a close relationship with the alleged perpetrator but then are too afraid to identify themselves publicly.

At this point, not much of this really matters much anymore anyway. Pryor didn't so much leave the Buckeyes as he did the jurisdiction of the NCAA. No longer bound by their rules and under no compulsion to subject himself to any more investigations or interrogations from them, Pryor's exit is more about relieving himself of the headaches that come with acting like a professional in a land of sham amateurism.

Pryor will be vilified for years because he's an easy target. He comes across as arrogant and entitled but let's remember, since we're the adults in the room, that usually these are just the outward manifestations of the real affliction—raging immaturity.

His charge going forward will be to learn and grow. It won't be a straight line because it never is. For Pryor's sake, though, hopefully he can learn from the adversity that he inflicted upon himself in the same way that Maurice Clarett, Pryor's like-minded bookend to the Tressel's years, finally learned from his.

In a story from Rusty Miller for the Associated Press, Clarett gave an interview on The Dan Patrick Show and offered a surprising, refreshing and yes, mature, perspective on what's taking place at his former school.

In no uncertain terms Clarett blamed the players, just as he blamed himself, for the trouble that followed their actions. Clarett dispensed with the notion that Ohio State has been infiltrated with a cadre of boosters preying on unsuspecting players. Instead it is the players themselves that go looking for trouble, looking for ways to capitalize on their local fame, and doing it under the radar. As Clarett said, boosters didn't reach out to him, he reached out to them.

Maybe that's little solace to Buckeye fans at the moment, but it does illustrate that even if it

does seem like the Buckeyes are trapped in a do-loop of accusations and investigations, the world indeed does keep on spinning.

For now though, those caught in this ring of Hell, including most Ohio State administrators and the Board of Trustees, are just as happy just to close the book on Pryor as he likely is on them. As it is, Pryor will now essentially be remembered for nothing on the field (though his contributions there were considerable) and always for being the catalyst for the program's more destructive instincts.

Whether that assessment is fair likewise doesn't really matter anymore anyway. What matters most is public perception and once Gene Smith and Gordon Gee, at the urging of the most senior members of the Board of Trustees, determined that Pryor, like Jim Tressel, became the stain that couldn't be cleaned, he had to go, graciously or otherwise. If Tressel was getting lukewarm support from Smith even as he was being dangled as the entrée for the NCAA's investigative appetite, Smith's silence toward Pryor was deafening.

In most ways, what's happened to the Ohio State Buckeyes football program since the end of last season is unfathomable. I doubt anyone thought that the Buckeyes program was pristine in the same way that no one thinks that any major football program is pristine. But I doubt that anyone thought the Buckeyes program was built like a Bluth Family housing development, impressive from the outside but lacking virtually any substance behind the façade.

And yet here we are, just 6 months from the end of last season and the Buckeyes program looks more worn and tattered than a fading 2002 National Championship banner hanging from a flag pole in the neighbor's yard. It seems like a week hasn't gone by since the run up to last year's Sugar Bowl when another negative story about this player or that coach hasn't come out.

There's a certain fishbowl quality to any major program, but the Buckeyes aren't just swimming in a fish bowl. At the moment it seems like they are the only fish in a very large aquarium and all anyone can do is fixate on them at the moment. That glare will end at some point. Sooner or later another school will step into it and become the next target of the collective wrath.

But until that happens, it's going to be body blow after body blow and like the captive Louis Zamperini, the hero of Laura Hildebrand's excellent book "Unbroken" had to do in front of his

Japanese captors, Buckeyes fans will just have to take the punches and the kicks and the constant degradation without flinching lest even more then be inflicted.

Even as this latest chapter in the Summer of Hell for the Buckeyes unfolds, I suspect that eventually those fans that bother to stop and consider Pryor in a broader context will begin to understand and empathize, if just a bit, recognizing that in many ways he, like every other Cam Newton of the world, is the byproduct of the intense greed that rests at the center of big time college football.

For whatever else this sordid tale tells us, it screams for major reforms. Until that happens, until those issues are finally and forcefully addressed, those laughing at Pryor and the Buckeyes at the moment would be wise to keep in mind that the next Terrelle Pryor may very well be working his way through your favorite college program right now.