

The Look Man Report 2006 **Week XI: Black Rain**

"We won the NFC championship with Rex. Give him a break. Give him a break ... You sure don't hear that type of [criticism] when Tom Brady has a bad game or when Peyton Manning has a bad game." - Bears DE Alex Brown

OPENING

It is said that Hiroshima encountered a very strange atmospheric phenomenon following the atomic bomb detonation in 1945. The skies opened up, putting an end to the sweltering heat that had been exacerbated by the Bomb. Unfortunately, instead of a cleansing rain, all of the dust thrown into the sky caused the rain to turn black. The 1989 Ridley Scott joint, *Black Rain*, featuring the original Jack Bauer - - - Michael Douglas, focused upon the impact on modern day Asian culture.

Well, the rain was more purple than black in Miami, but the showdown between the first two bald NFL head coaches was also memorable. Unless you count Hank Stram and Bud Grant in Super Bowl IV. The NFL no longer promotes erectile dysfunction drugs, but Hair Club for Men missed a great marketing opportunity on Sunday.

The 92-yard kickoff return to open the show rivaled Billy Crystal's Oscar opener featuring Crystal as Hannibal Lecter. Too bad the rest of the game was pretty pedestrian based upon bad weather conditions and the implosion of Grossman.

The game was touted as a matchup between Indy's Peyton Manning and Chicago LB Brian Urlacher. But, like all football games, it really came down to the guys in the pits. The Indy offensive line destroyed the front seven of the Bears and the Ponies stampeded the Monsters of the Furniture Mart for 430 yards of offense.

When it was all said and done, Super Bowl XLI was one of the highest rated programs ever watched. It's hard to believe after the NFL nearly caused hysterical laughter with that pre-game Cirque de Soleil performance. Not only was it like a bad acid trip, for a moment, the Look Man thought *Up With People* had been invited.

Without further slamming of the NFL front office, the week in review:

WEEK IN REVIEW

Chicago vs. Indy (-7) in Super Bowl XLI:

The Ponies and da Bears met in a wet Dolphins Stadium field that was not covered prior to the game. The NFL takes over all Super Bowl fields for the championship, resodding, painting the field, and verifying that everything is just perfect for the contest. In this case, the groundskeepers reasoned that the humidity under the tarp would've been worse if it had been covered. Marine Mammals Field has a drainage system that can absorb 8-10" of water an hour. Unfortunately, it rained that much during Billy Joel's rendition of the national anthem.

As a result, Ponies K Adam (Money) Vinatieri was out there water skiing when Devin Hester (Prynn) ran by him. Money slipped and the Adulterer was by him faster than you could say, "chastity belt."

The Ponies made a nice adjustment by squib kicking the ball thereafter. Backup TE Gabe Reid coughed up one ball on the return, and Hester got few touches for the balance of the game. All the Ponies need to do then was to establish their own offensive identity and ensure that QB (T-)Rex Grossman never got chances to go deep with success.

Though the Indy-Chicago game had the feel of a blowout, this game was up for grabs until Chicago QB (T-)Rex Grossman threw a pick six to free agent CB Kelvin (Silverado) Hayden. Though the Look Man usually designates the "T" in T-Rex to refer to the Jurassic reptile, in this case it might also stand for something else. We've had Good Rex, Bad Rex, and finally, on the biggest stage of his career, Train Rex.

But the real story was not the poor execution of Grossman. In the words of Dan Marino, "The Bears had a drug problem. Their D is getting drug up and down the field." Brian Urlacher might as well have been on roller skates, because OG Jake Scott was pushing him all over the field. With little help from safeties lined up 18 yards deep, ten yard runs were routine.

There were a few turning points in the game. The deep bomb to Millionaire Playboy Reggie Wayne, Kelvin Hayden's pick six on a punt by Grossman, and Antoine Bethea knocking The Butler into next September all qualified. As a result, the Pony Express offensive line mauled the Bears D-line for nearly 200 running yards and kept Peyton clean with only one sack. Manning never held the ball long enough time to go deep, instead choosing to get rid of it on the second read to avoid his own rendition of Benny Hill.

The Indy defense played the run much better following one 55 yard explosion by Thomas (It's Not Unusual) Jones. The Welsh RB was forced to play the entire contest after the detonation of RB Cedric (The Butler) Benson. Mr. Guillaume coughed up the rock once on a punishing hit by S Bob (Colonel) Sanders, then decided the spin move would help him avoid direct contact.

What ensued was a nuclear hit by Bethea that knocked Benson out of the game. Two carries, one fumble, one knee injury and the Butler was done on Super Sunday. Although Benson's knee was bandaged, his concussion would've been enough to end his evening. The last time a RB absorbed a hit like that was when Ronnie Lott drilled Ickey Woods in the Orange Bowl in '89. Benson wasn't doing any shuffle afterwards, because he spent the time counting his teeth.

The Ponies scored on a quick strike, this one to (Millionaire Playboy) Reggie Wayne. There wasn't a Chicago defender in the same zip code as Batman caught the ball on the twenty and scampered to the Hizzie. The Dark Knight would've taunted Urlacher the last ten yards except for the fact that Urlacher wasn't within 30 yards.

The play was reminiscent of the momentum swinging TD to Reggie (Dubya) Bush in the NFC Championship. Even more reminiscent were the multiple swing passes to Joseph (Live and Let) Addai. The Bears never did figure out how to defend those, and LALA carved them repeatedly. There was simply too much room on the edges with the safeties playing in Orlando, making sure Batman and Marvin Harrison didn't burn them deep again.

Dungy's timely installation of Rhodes and his downhill running style was perfect, and the Monsters of the Furniture Mart were on the field for 38 minutes and 81 offensive plays. Instead of keeping Manning off the field, they kept T-Rex off the field. If not for the goofy turnovers by Indy in the game, this would've been a 46-10 whoopin'. Instead, it was a 29-17 pounding that was much worse than the score indicated. Subtract Hester's scamper and the turnover TD, and the Bears managed only a FG.

Sexy Rexy did all right until the third quarter, when his blood sugar got too low and Robert Goulet showed up in his office. The Rex Cannon should've packed some Emerald Nuts in his travel kit, because it was brutal. Goulet was out there tripping him, slapping the ball out of his mitts, and generally abusing him. He ended up 20 of 28 for a buck forty, including his two 'punts'. The Look Man expected the DBs to make the fair catch signal on a couple of his throws, because the rock was covered with ice crystals when it landed. With all due respect to Bears DE Alex Brown, Rex is no Tom Brady. Alice Brady, maybe, but not Tom.

Folks will say that Rex Grossman gave this one away, but the truth of the matter is that superior coaching equals superior results. Manning and center Jeff Saturday spent two full days doing wet ball drill despite the forecast. The Wet Ball Drill involves dunking a ball into a bucket of water, then snapping it and running plays. Manning threw the wet rock like a Nerf football while Grossman handled it like a greased pig.

Manning also threw for two hours before game time with receivers Harrison and Wayne. (T-)Rex Grossman was in the locker room eating a goat chained to a stake. When a teammate complained, O-Coordinator Ron Turner asked them, "Whassamattah kid, you never had lamb chops?"

Lovie Smith failed to adjust to the Manning out of fear of the deep strike. Instead, he got the Chinese Water Torture, with Manning throwing at a 66% completion rate for 247 passing yards. Basically, Manning parlayed one deep ball into ten dump passes to Addai, who nearly tied Jerry Rice's 11 catch record in the Bowl. Can you say "MVP?"

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Tony (Rush to Judgment) Corrente did a pretty nice job in XLI. The only ugliness was the overruling of a Harrison grab that was corrected by replay. While the Look Man questioned Dungy using his last challenge early in the 3rd quarter, it was a clear indication that Indy wasn't taking any BS from the Zebras.

The sideline pick-six by Kelvin Hayden was called correctly on the field, and Lovie's challenge was merely a last ditch effort. Hayden escaped Bullwinkle Muhammad's tackle beautifully, tip-toeing down the sideline for six. T-Rex was seen strolling over for a poor tackle attempt inside the ten.

Super Bowl XLI was in direct contrast to XL in Detroit, where questionable calls abounded. The Look Man can only hope this trend continues in 2007, because the calls this season have bordered on WWF quality.

LAGNIAPPE

And the winner by TKO...

Before the season, the Look Man solicited picks for NFL divisions, playoffs and the Bowl. Here are the results of that unscientific poll:

The Look Man had zero correct picks for division winners. While he picked the Bears, Indy and Philly to make the postseason, his Bowl picks of Carolina v. J-ville tanked.

C-Ray picked three division winners including the Chowds. He was last seen in compromising photos with Tom Brady and Giselle Bundchen, but don't tell his wife.

Da Gorill tied C-Ray with three correct picks, and received extra credit for having sacked Doug Flutie in a collegiate game.

GB Shaw backed up the truck with five correct picks, including the Pokes (surprise!) over the Ponies in Super Bowl XLI. GB did get points deducted for reiterating his favorite conspiracy theory regarding the Dave Manders recovery of a fumble in SB V.

J-Jack of the Big Windy correctly picked the Ponies to win SB XLI, but received a deduction for saying the LM would launch a conspiracy investigation afterwards.

And the winner, by TKO is Smooth, who not only picked seven of eight division winners, but also had the Iggles in the playoffs. Even without selecting a Super Bowl pick, Smooth crushed the competition.

Smooth, you are the Look Man **Pick Pundit of the Year!** Ejaculations!

The Playmaker Cracks the Hall:

Pokes WR Michael Irvin was elected to the Pro Football HoF in his second year of eligibility. The Playmaker was rejected in his first ballot attempt, largely due to his history of running afoul of the law. As recently as last year, he was suspended from his ESPN gig for having a crack pipe in his rig during a routine traffic stop.

His membership in the Triplets all but guaranteed him a future spot. Teammates Troy Aikman and Emmitt (Catch 22) Smith are already dancin' with the stars in Canton.

Look for Irvin to buy an ill fitting tie for his garish yellow jacket in August 2007. He will still talk over his colleagues on ESPN, but now he will have the prefix "Hall of Fame WR" in his intro. He is expected to ask Tyrone Biggums to introduce him in Canton.



"We smoke rocks."

Some Like it Hot II:

Hasbro Inc. recalled nearly 1 million Easy-Bake Ovens due to a potential burn hazard. The company received 29 reports of child burns and one report of a QB violating Man Law by baking on game day. The latter report came from an unnamed member of the Bears defensive team.

Apparently, Rex Grossman has owned an Easy Bake Oven for some time, but he only breaks it out for special occasions. "I talked to Jimmah Johnson and them guys from the Miller Lite commercials, so I knew about the Man Law thing," said Grossman. "I decided to bake up a few turnovers for the tailgate party, and we had a few left over for the game. But it seemed the rest of the team didn't care, because they wanted to leave Miami early, so we violated two Man Laws at once."

Hasbro EBO spokesman Jon Pickna had no comment on the story.



Grossman recalled, but expected to return in 2007

The Rex-Placement Players:

The Rex Watch has begun as talk of free agent QBs has filled the Chicago media. The Big Windy can't wait until next year when Brian (Beer Batter) Griese gets a chance to unseat him. The Sex Cannon's agreement expires in 2007, so like Houston, the Bears must decide if he is their guy. If so, they exercise the option and Sexy backs up the Brinks truck. Otherwise, they look at a free agent hurler or trading up for the QB of the future.

Guys like Jeff Garcia, Matt Schaub, and even David Carr have been mentioned to star in the Shane Falco role. But no one has mentioned the obvious choices of Mike Vick or Billy Volek. Both are deep ball throwers who would thrive in Ron Turner's system. Ron Mexico might do well in a new environment, especially one in which he would actually have receivers who can catch the football.

Either way, the window for championships stays open only so long. The MOTFM would be wise to jump into free agency with all four paws.

Big Wade in Big D

Pokes owner Jerry (The King of Pop) Jones finally made a coaching selection following a marathon interview session. Jones interviewed ten candidates, including Bears D-Coordinator Ron (Los Rios) Rivera, former Poke Norv Turner, and Mike Singletary.

When it was all said and done, the KOP chose re-tread Wade Phillips over a host of young turks. Phillips inherits O-Coordinator and former Poke Jason Garrett (Morris) of Saturday Night Live fame.

So despite the numerous interviews, Jones went with a tried and untrue selection in Big D. Phillips may be the guy to lead them back to the Lombardi, but the Look Man has his doubts. The Pokes need a speedy free safety, an OLB, and a RT in the off-season. The first two would help their 3-4 defense become more than Doomsday Lite.

Given that the Pokes haven't posted a playoff win in ten years, it seems odd that Jones would select a coach with an 0-3 postseason record in Denver and Buffalo. America's Team interviews ten candidates, then selects Captain Kangaroo? Are Bunny Rabbit and Mr. Moose calling plays as well? If Phillips wins in his home state will he be showered by ping pong balls? The Look Man, for one, is not fooled by the shaved mustache disguise.

The worst part of this story is that The King of Pop is now on his fifth coach in eleven years. Parcels, Dave (Papa Smurf) Campo, (Charlie) Chan Gailey, Bozo the Switzer, have all driven the Poke-Mobile off the cliff following Jimmah Johnson's termination. The King of Pop is dangling his franchise over the balcony yet again with this hire.



Hello, Jerry. Is Mr. Green Jeans there?

Bears Win Super Bowl XLI?

The Look Man was in Chicago the night before the '85 Bears dismantled New England. On Rush Street, vendors were selling shirts that declared the Bears champions on the Saturday night BEFORE the game. Their chant: "Why wait? We all know what's gonna happen!"

Those vendors have nothing on the folks at Reebok, who ensure that the winners get their champions T-shirts and caps. Since they print both teams championship gear ahead of time, Reebok is also responsible for ensuring that the losers' outfits never see the light of day. At least in this country.

Reebok guards the gear like treasure, putting the losing teams gear in lockdown. After the hoopla, they quietly ship the merchandise to an impoverished nation, typically in Africa. A humanitarian organization then distributes it to villagers who have never even heard of the National...Football...League.

This approach is also used in the NBA, while MLB destroys its gear. For what it's worth, it would be odd to see a jersey declaring Chicago winners of Super Bowl XLI. With the popularity of E-Bay and internet commerce, one never knows.

THE LOOK AHEAD:

As soon as the game was over, folks began to play the Dynasty Card regarding the Ponies. Manning has gotten the 800 pound gorilla off of his back and onto Grossman's, so Indy is looking to reload. With the toughness of the AFC, this seems unlikely at best. Free agency could devastate the Ponies, who could lose Rhodes, LB Cato June, O-linemen Lilja and Ryan Diem, and DE Dwight Freeney.

The Bears are in better shape, but need to lock up LB Lance Briggs, find a QB who doesn't look like someone's paperboy, and replace the brittle Mike Brown at safety. Brett (The Pope) Favre announced his comeback prior to the game, thus ensuring another season on the Island of Misfit Toys in Breen Gay. The Hornheads snapped up Indy coach Leslie Frazier, but the players are likely to mutiny against Brad Childress in 2007.

The retirement of Bill Parcells, the arrest of Andy (The Walrus II) Reid's kids in Philly, and the miasma in the rest of the NFC Least doesn't bode well. The NFC West has a new player in Frisco with the re-signing of OC Norv Turner. Seattle is solid, but there is no real powerhouse in the conference. With D-Coordinator Ron (Los Rios) Rivera staying put, Chicago could easily post another double digit winning season in 2007.

EPILOGUE

The rain in Miami also triggered a serious backlash for contesting the games in domed stadia. While this is the first Super Bowl ever played in rain, corporate types with no dog in the fight had to endure the ignominy of a cold, soaking rain. Their trophy wives may never be the same, and the stands emptied out in the 3rd quarter despite a five point differential in the score.

The Look Man finds this to be a horrible development. Not only should the game be played outdoors, the NFL is losing core fans to the corporate (means "filthy rich") atmosphere. The game is out of reach for most fans and at the current rate of ticket cost growth, the game will cost more than a trip to Fantasy Island within five years.

So the 2006 NFL season comes to a close with a storybook ending. With the salary cap at \$109 million per team in 2007, things should be very interesting. Look for draft and free agency updates as appropriate.

Peace,

The Look Man