

Terrible Lie

Written by {ga=jb}

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"I believed those promises, those promises and lies."

- Trent Reznor -



David Veikune, we hardly knew ye. The stiff that many delusional fans swore up and down on [Browns message boards](#) was going to be our Teddi Bruschi has hit the bricks unceremoniously. The kicker is that it appears that Eric Barton will open the season as starting inside linebacker. Mercifully, it is over. Well at least this singular sad footnote to the many pathetic chapters that has been the Browns' draft history is finally over.

Let's all take several steps back in time and reset context. How is this blast of past draft hand-wringing and negativity possibly relevant the days before we kick off a brand new season where we are currently undefeated? What sense does this make? How do we connect dots except to offer yet another boring and hopelessly [OIC](#) take?

Draft day is one of the best days to be an NFL fan. It is the day we all think, depending upon our favorite team's development curve, is going to offer the solution to all of our problems. If you are

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a contender, you are looking for the one player who will address that last need to get you over the hump. If you are defending champion, you look for the depth to hold off the pack. If you are an average team, you search high and low for the two or three guys who will both make an impact and fill needs to take the next step. If you are a bottom feeder, like [one of the few franchises](#) that hasn't seen the playoffs in over six seasons, you look for salvation and hope. Fans seem to fall into three categories when evaluating draft picks. The first are the blind sheep who are so desperate and in love with the leadership of an organization that they post on [message boards](#) or repeat in sports' bars to anyone who offers any sort of critical point of view regarding any matter of opinion,

"Oh year, how come they have NFL jobs and you are sitting here?"

as if that justifies everything. These fans are incapable of rational thought. Dismiss them. The second are those who are so jaded they drink Hatoraide like Ron White drinks whisky on stage. Nothing is good, nothing is ever positive. They, too, are guano crazy and not worthy. The third represents the great middle ground of realists who reject extremism. I think we all like to place ourselves here in our minds, and believe that we are rational, but on occasion we jump into one of the other two groups depending upon issue, bias or most likely, Sunday night mood.

This brings me back top draft day. For the past decade, there are about three axioms that are above refute: First, [fewer of these players actually pan out](#) to do jack-squat than most fans think. Second, we rarely hold our favorite team to this standard of realism when we are either giddy over our favorite team's choices or in despair as they went in a direction we can not understand. Third, most everyone the

[Browns draft sucks](#)

on an uncanny level of suck, and sadly, more often than not, it is an easy second guess real-time rather than in hindsight. And this will bring us to opening day 2010 in just uno momento.

David Veikune was a stupid draft pick in round two. He was stupid draft pick in April 2009 and he is a stupid draft pick now. And when I write stupid, I mean stupid-dumb, not stoooid like this is 1989 and [players rockin' fades and cross-colors](#) . David Veikune, unlike All-American and SI cover boy Teddi Bruschi, was basically a nobody on a [bad defense](#).

He was 2

nd

team all-WAC as a senior and had nine sacks for a team that gave up 27 points a game. He was a 4 – 3 defense speed rushing end projected first as an outside linebacker then as an inside linebacker. Apparently, he ran a cone drill or two, lifted a couple weights, and must have done something some goofball scout liked because he sure as hell didn't do much on the field in college to warrant being the

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[nd](#)

[player selected overall](#)

. To take a gamble on him in the second round of the NFL draft and project him to another position was as stupid as the day is long. Real-time I melted down at the opportunity cost for passing on

[Phil Loadholt](#)

, who probably solidifies the offensive line for the next five seasons if not the decade in the wake of drafting Alex Mack. This would have allowed the Browns to put a big old indelible El Marko™ check in the box next to the living, breathing heart of any football team and focus on drafting defense, and skilled position players in round one where they proliferate. Instead it is back to a rotating mess at right tackle and we still lack any impact linebackers. David Veikune and about 95% of the Browns' draft day decisions under Dewey Clark, Butch, Pete Garcia, Opie Savage, and Eric Mangini and AWOL Guy make sense only in the same manner a viewer could look at a

[Korean Air commercial](#)

and be like,

“Yeah, I

GET

that.”

And all of you who gave me crap on any board for two years over my utter disgust and disillusion at drafting David Veikune, and you know who you are, owe me a great, big apology. And sadly, Veikune isn't the only unproductive pick over the past decade of rudderless suck. Oh very few were as stupid, that's true. Good decisions real-time can result in poor results. It doesn't mitigate the mistake's end result; merely the logic that went into the decision that was later proven wrong is somewhat defensible. And then there's just plain bad luck that renders a quality decision a negative result. For example, in 2000 while fans may have preferred Lavar Arrington's intensity and penchant for the impact play over Courtney Brown's steady play, or seen that the long-term building block of Chris Samuels was a wiser choice for a second year expansion franchise, but who in their right mind thought that Nature's Most Perfect Football Player™ would end up a complete and utter bust? That doesn't make drafting Courtney Brown a stupid decision. He was universally slotted that high and was a 4 – 3 defensive end designed to help build a 4 – 3 defense. Drafting Courtney Brown was bad luck; drafting David Veikune in round two was stupid. And yet, reasons are not excuses.

There is really not much of a need to present the casual Browns' fan with a litany of draft day failures from off seasons' past. And I have no stomach for it on a player by player, régime by régime basis. But it does color our outlook regarding what we are about to see. Or at least it should. This is still not a good football team, and the reason is we haven't drafted nearly well enough to be one. The conclusion is that until we do and the players develop, we won't be a good football team. That should be so simple there is a red mark between your eyes.

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If you are one of those fans looking at the 2010 schedule game by game and circling W's based on 2009 while wearing Brown-colored glasses, do yourself a favor and stop now. If you are one of those fans extrapolating the end of 2009 to 2010 and adding up all the "better" players we have added (that their own teams didn't want), do yourself a favor and stop now. If you look at Jake Delhomme showing us what an NFL quarterback looks like in the fake rip off games, errrrr exhibition season, and saying to yourself that is worth at least four more wins compared to the butt-clowns we had to watch all last season, stop now. If you are celebrating the impending under-500 season facing the Inbred or inexplicably mocking the Bengals after watching **US** for the past decade, cease and desist. Temper your expectations as kick off arrives.

The heart and soul of an NFL football team talent-wise arrives through the draft. It just does. In other news, water is wet, the sun sets in the west, and cold beer and pizza tastes good. The long-term damage to this franchise as craptacular front office beget craptacular front office for 10 long years after the NFL prescribed epic expansion fail doesn't get undone in one off season. It just doesn't. Tell yourself that until you believe it. Then enjoy 2010 for what it is and don't be a whiney female dog after a few inevitable losses to good teams.

Now my only warning is that no one can use this Truth to mitigate everything negative, as was tried in the past by [Coach Fudd](#), Coach "fought-their-guts-out", or The Ginger Kid Excuse Machine and his [Gimmace](#). We need to see solid game plans, player development, heart, and good, crisp fundamentals. In other words, the Browns need to look like a football team worthy of Sunday, not a bunch of stumble bums. Off field, they need to react to ups and downs with class, and dare I say, maturity, to advance the organizational culture of this team. It is as much part of the process of building a winner as is more talent arriving each off season.

For too many years you've been lied to as a loyal Browns' fan. Art lied to you. The NFL perpetrated chicanery in the way expansion was derived and how they set us up to fail and flail. Butch deceived you when he kept telling you how six or so teensy-weensy little plays were the difference between an all-time NFL single season rushing record and stuffing the run. Phil was too close to God to actually lie in his mind, but his "woe is me" hypocrisy of constantly blaming the past for his team's failures when the reality was poor talent evaluation and development was responsible represents a deception of another sort.

Just don't lie to yourself like you've been lied to by these losers in the past. That's pathetic. Don't play yourself like as if your name was "X Box". This bunch of 53 isn't ready for prime-time

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and in the modern game there is only so much “coachin’ up” through scheme and heart that can manifest itself when there is a complete absence of a single impact playmaker outside of Josh Cribbs on special teams. And yet this team should look better and play better. It should *progress*. Enjoy that. Enjoy the season and bark hard. February and a Lebron-less Cavaliers season is closer than you think. Drink beer to remember and beer to forget (just not until 7:00 am, the City of Cleveland thanks you in advance). Just don’t get nuts and angry when the inevitable happens, hope like hell these kids that Heck-gren brought in can play, and appreciate good coaching and fundamentals for what they are and be realistic in any criticism if they are absent. Starting Sunday, realism *is* optimism.

Go Browns and Pittsburgh still sucks!