



The plot continues to thicken when it comes to Ohio State head football coach Jim Tressel and what has come to be known as "Memorabilia-gate," the alleged trading and selling of Ohio State memorabilia by five current Buckeyes to the owner of a Columbus area tattoo parlor...a man also currently under federal investigation for drug trafficking.

After an internal investigation by Ohio State University Tressel and five Ohio State players, including starting quarterback Terrell Pryor and starting running back Dan "Boom" Herron, have been suspended for the first five games of the 2011 season. Tressel has also been fined \$250,000. The NCAA can either accept this punishment or increase it.

The most recent tidbit of information that has come out is that Tressel, when warned via email about what was happening between some of his players and the tattoo shop owner nearly a full year ago, forwarded the warning email to a hometown Pryor confidante, Jeannette, Pennsylvania businessman Ted Sarniak, 67. This after, during a March 8 press conference announcing Tressel had committed NCAA ethics violations, the embattled coach stated he kept the information to himself.

A number of questions should be answered, including what relationship exists between Pryor and Sarniak, a man Ohio State has admitted has attended some Ohio State games over the last three seasons but is not considered a "booster."

Here is what Ohio State had to say about the Pryor-Sarniak relationship in an email to *The Columbus Dispatch* from Ohio State director of compliance Doug Archie:

"Mr. Sarniak and Terrelle Pryor have been friends for a number of years, and their friendship dates back prior to Terrelle's enrollment at Ohio State. As the friendship developed, Mr. Sarniak is someone who Terrelle has reached out to for advice and guidance throughout his high school and collegiate career."

Sarniak was Pryor's contact person during the recruiting process.

You also have to wonder why Sarniak was warned, but not Pryor's family. And why Tressell did not divulge that he had forwarded the warning email when he was questioned during Ohio State's internal investigation.

This entire situation smells to high heaven. The initial violation...the players selling and trading the memorabilia...is not a huge deal. However, as per usual, the cover-up makes matters much, much worse. And Tressell, who had a sterling reputation before all this came to light, now looks like a man who is hiding something. And that's not good for the Ohio State football program.

As a result I would like to send an open letter to Jim Tressell.

Dear Coach Tressell;

There is a favor I would like to ask of you, a favor that will not cost you a thing (except an hour and a half or so) and could completely change the way you are responding to the current memorabilia-tattoo scandal that has the attention of the country focused on you and your program at Ohio State University.

There is a movie playing on cable right now, a movie released in 2009, called *The Invention of Lying*. It stars Ricky Gervais, that cocky British comedian who was the creator of the BBC version of the television show *The Office*.

In the movie everyone tells the truth because that is all they know how to do. No matter how uncomfortable or insulting the truth may be, the people in the movie do not know how to lie so they say what they are thinking whenever they are asked. Here is an example from the movie...

Richard Bellison is inside a house, intending to rob it, but is surprised by the homeowner who comes home early from work. They have this exchange:

Richard Bellison: What are you doing here? It's Monday at noon. You're not supposed to be home now!

Man at the Door: If you must know, I'm incredibly stressed at work, I've come home early, I'm having a bit of me-time. More importantly, what are you doing?

Richard Bellison: Well, I was gonna rob your house.

Man at the Door: I don't like that idea. Not a fan of that at all.

Richard Bellison: I'm not gonna do it now, because you're in.

Man at the Door: Do you know what's gonna happen? I'm gonna call the police, you're gonna be arrested.

Richard Bellison: Well, I'm just gonna leave, and you don't know my name.

Man at the Door: What is your name?

Richard Bellison: Richard Bellison.

As you can see, the people in this movie do not have the ability to formulate a cover story to protect themselves from the truth. However, Mark Bellison, the movie's main character, discovers the ability to lie and uses this ability to his advantage throughout the movie. However, at the end he has an epiphany. All he has to do is lie to Anna, the woman he loves, to get her to ditch the man she is about to marry and go away with him. However, Mark does not lie to her because he knows the relationship with Anna, from that day forward, would be a fraud. He tells her the truth, no matter how much it pains him, because he does not want a future based on a lie.

Coach, this is a lesson you have to learn. You have to stop the lying and come clean about "Memorabilia-gate," no matter how painful the truth may be. As things stand you are making Ohio State look very bad, and there has to be a lot more coming down the pike. Come clean, and let the chips fall where they may.

Think about the promise you make to each and every recruit, and their parents, when you are trying to sell them on joining you at Ohio State. I have no doubt you promise the parents you will make their sons better football players and, just as important, better men. You no longer have the credibility to fulfill this second promise.

If you cannot come clean and reveal everything you know and everything you did, you should resign your position as head football coach at Ohio State University. Ohio State's football team means a lot to millions of people, and you were hired to be a guardian of this program. Yes, you have won a lot of games and even a national championship, but if the program is built on a foundation of lies, pretty much everything you will accomplish from this day forward will be meaningless. Come clean and face the music, if you survive the blowback you will again have earned the credibility to walk into the living rooms of potential recruits and have your words and promises actually mean something again.

At the end of **The Invention of Lying** Anna, the love interest, comes to the realization that she does, indeed, love Mark. Her reason for not being with him, before her realization, was that she didn't want her kids to be "little fat kids with snub noses." She was dating a different man, played by Rob Lowe, because he was a better genetic match and they would have attractive kids if they were married. But she went with her heart because she wanted to be happy, and married Mark.

Coach, I know you love Ohio State University. This is your dream job and what you have worked for all your life. But, truthfully, if you love the program as much as you have said all along would it not be better if you actually acted in a way that would benefit the program in the long run? Yes, it may not seem like it at the time but will you ever really be happy if you are holding in some kind of secret that is harming your personal credibility and the credibility of the program you love? Right now Ohio State looks very bad. Do your part to restore it to the great program it was when you came on board. Come clean, tell the truth, make sure there are no skeletons in the closet that could come back to bite you and Ohio State down the line. This is the only responsible thing to do, and if you can't do it you should move on to the next chapter in your life.

Sincerely,

Mike Perry