

# TRASH TALK: WHEREIN THE CHAMPS SHOOT THEMSELVES IN THE FOOT THIGH

✘ Don't know where that slacker bmaz is with this week's Trash Talk (oh wait? Trash is supposed to be my job, you say??). But today is the day when teams' playoff hopes will live or die and it's already 5 AM in the desert yet still bmaz sleeps.

But before we talk about the on-the-field fun, let's talk about Plaxico Burress.

How does a guy whose career depends on his 4.4 speed (and whose team depends on his ability to stretch defenses) happen to head out to a nightclub one night and shoot himself in the thigh? It seems Plaxico doesn't want to talk about it—having left the cops standing outside his home for 37 minutes yesterday...

New York City police arrived at Burress' sprawling \$4-million home in Totowa, N.J., at 4:35 p.m. and spent 37 minutes outside the home. According to a police spokesman, Burress' wife, Tiffany, told them, "You can't come in. You can't talk to my husband."

Police made a second visit just after 7:30 p.m. and left when no one answered the door.

And the hospital that treated Plaxico doesn't want to talk about it—having failed to inform the cops of the gunshot wound they treated...

Police said they learned of the incident yesterday only after reports of the shooting surfaced around noon, because the hospital did not report the gunshot wound to police, as is expected.

And the Gents don't want to talk about it—at least not until after they play their big division game against the 'Skins today.

According to police, the Giants have agreed to put police in touch with those two players, saying a meeting could be arranged this week after they return home from Washington, D.C.

They also appear to be in no rush to give the cops the gun.

According to police, the Giants told them that a team representative might be able to bring them to a third location where the gun is currently being held.

All this reluctance to talk probably has something to do with the fact that it is a felony to carry an unlicensed gun in NY—and Plaxico's only gun permit is an expired one for Florida.

Records show New York Giants' star receiver does not have a permit to carry a weapon in the city, meaning that he had no legal right to do so in the LQ Club in Manhattan, where he allegedly shot himself in the leg.

Burress did have a concealed-weapon permit issued to him in Florida, where he has a home, but records show it expired in May.

And even if it was still valid, New York does not recognize out-of-state permits.

Incidentally, the bullet appears to have gone through his leg, missing all bones and arteries, but piercing some part of that 4.4 speed thigh. Plaxico's hamstring injury—which was already slated to keep him out of today's game—is now the least of his worries.

**Gents at Skins**

Look, the Gents are going to win the NFC East. And they're going to continue to be a superb team even without Plaxico. But all this distraction is precisely the kind of thing that gives the Skins an opportunity to win this game and keep up with the Boys in the hunt for the top wild card spot in the NFC. And since Zorn is a much nicer coach than Coughlin, I'm gonna say the Skins stay focused and beat the champs today.

### **Bears at Vikes**

Yes, they still do let one NFC North team come to the playoffs (figuring that, on average, the division is much stronger than the NFC West). And the winner of today's game ought to be the favorite to win the division. This will be a contest against two great running backs and two decent defenses. I think Childress will goof something up and give it to the Bears. But then you never know whether Da Bears will have a last minute penalty to give the game away. Ah! NFC North—who couldn't love it?!?! I'll go with Da Bears on this one.

### **Stillers at Pats**

Remember when everyone but me and a few other diehards believed that Matt Cassell was gonna sink the Pats' season? You know, Matt Cassell, the guy who has thrown two-straight 400-yard passing games? Well, I'm going to take this opportunity to say "I told you so" now, before the Pats meet the best defense in the league today, just in case I don't look so smart around 7PM (besides, it's about the only thing I've been right about this year). In any case, I think this game will be decided by the Pats' D—can those old farts chase down Rotty after the sieve-like Stillers O line breaks down? I say yes, if only because a Pats loss today would make bmaz even more intolerable with his friggin' "J-E-T-S" inanity than he already is.

Those are the marquee games today, but the potential surprises include Colts at Brownies (remember, the Brownies have been the only team

to beat that other Manning this year), Ravens and Bengals (yeah, the Bengals suck, but screwing up the Ravens' shot at the AFC North is the kind of game they might pull off), and the Falcons at San Diego (I predict Michael Turner will have a much bigger game than the guy he used to back up).

Plus, how much fun will we have with everyone at their mother making fun of Plaxico today?