

THE RISE AND FALL OF ZIGGY STARDUST AND THE CARDS FROM ARIZONA

College football is done and over. I thought Clemson had a *lot* better chance against Bama than many did, mostly because of their quarterback, Deshaun Watson, and their defense. One of those was spot on, the latter, not so much. Irrespective, Alabama won fair and square in a fantastic game. Big hat tip to Tide QB Jake Coker, who proved to be calm and cool under big game status. He reminds me a little of Jim Harbaugh (and, seriously, I was personally present at Harbaugh's last college game. Was in the Rose Bowl against ASU, and big Jim did not fare so well, but has had a hell of a career as a player and coach afterwards). Coker is a big kid, with a strong arm and huge heart. Coker might actually be a smart late round draft choice for an enterprising NFL team that could afford to try to groom him. I know Alabama QB's have a bad name since Bart Starr and Joe Namath, but Coker seems to have something intangible.

Before we get down to the games, a word about David Bowie. Music, for better or worse, has always been a part of Trash Talk at Emptywheel. If you like it, many thanks, if not apologies. But a part it has always been. Because Trash has mostly been one of my duties here, you all usually get stuck with some music I select. Sorry about that.

I have been around a while (read: way too long chronologically) and, truly, have a pretty diverse range of likes in music. There has been everything from Charlie Pride and John Cash to Jimmy Hendrix and Be Bop Deluxe. And everything in between, here in Trash Talk. They are not particularly random selections, it is all music I have known and loved throughout my life. It is a very mixed bag, but I hope you enjoy it all as

much as I do.

So...with a heavy heart, a bit of homage to David (Jones) Bowie. I almost did a standalone post on Bowie's death, but I was pretty tied up in court this week, not to mention a few other things that consumed attention. But the sudden awareness of the loss of Bowie did indeed have a profound effect on me. David Bowie was never the number one band in the moving target of my rock fandom, but he was never very far off either. He was that good, that long, and in ever changing ways that made Bowie both unique and remarkable. There will always be music, but there will never be another Bowie. RIP Ziggy and David.

First up on the docket is the Chefs at Patriots. Edelman is back and ready to go full out. What does that mean, and will his foot hold up? Nobody knows. That was the early concern. But now it the bigger concern is Gronk. No, not the knee that has bee jabbered about, but his back. Gronk missed practice Thursday to get "treatment" at a local Boston hospital. Best bet that was for a serious epidural. Ouch. If Edelman and Gronk both play the full game and play well, then I will take the Pats. If not, then the Chefs may cook them. Alex Smith is not sexy, but he is scary good and consistent. And Andy Reid, while not maybe a game clock genius, is one heck of a coach overall.

The late game today is here in the cactus patch. Packers at Cards. I'm sure some sport will be made of my dual loyalties. I am a Cheesehead from very early in my childhood. It started when I read a book about a former Bear Bryant player by the name of Bart Starr and, about the same time, Lombardi and Green Bay drafted and featured an electrifying ASU player by the name of Travis Williams. Arizona had no pro football then, and still didn't for a long time after the Cardinals plopped their carpetbags down here. The Cardinals were unlovable losers until they drafted Jake Plummer, another ASU hero. Jake the Snake was also electrifying. But the Cards were still the loser Cards until Kurt Warner and

Larry Fitzgerald brought some real game. Both should be in the Hall of Fame, and both will be I hope. Now, under the guidance of Michael Bidwell, son of Bill Bidwell, and a quite decent chap I know from his days as an AUSA in the District of Arizona, the Cardinals are really embraced by the city of Phoenix and the state.

It took a very long time, but the Cards are really ours now, as Jerry Colangelo's teams, the Suns and Diamondbacks were from the start. The Packers have won and been everything to pro football, from its inception. They are Tittletown incarnate. But there is something special about the current Cards of Bruce Arians, Fitz, Carson Palmer, Honeybadger and all the rest. It is pretty contagious. I think Rodgers and the Pack are WAY different than they were a few weeks ago when Arizona rolled them. This will be a hell of a game, but Go Cards!

The early game on Sunday is Seattle at Carolina. The Panthers have been the darling of the 2015 season, and Cam Newton has been simply spectacular. Luke Kuechly, Josh Norman and the Carolina defense are better than even advertised. But the Squawks simply scare the hell out of me far more than the Panthers. We shall see what the Mode does, but the Seattle beast seems to be coming alive at just the right time. I'll take the Squawks.

Lastly, the Steelers are gassing in the altitude at Mile High. Big Ben has a wounded clock arm, and Antonio Brown is out with the concussion the Bengals thugs claim didn't happen. Bottom line, never count out the Stillers if Roethlisberger is on the field. But it is hard to see how the Steelers pull this off with an O-line that allowed the damage to Big Ben it did against the Bengals. Not to mention, of course, that Antonio Brown and D'Angelo Williams are out. Is it possible the Stillers overcome "against all odds"? You bet. But that is not my bet. I am betting on one last epic Peyton versus Major Tom battle for the AFC crown. But that is just me, the games speak for themselves.

So, that's it. Music, of course, by Bowie. Suffragette City is one of the great rockers of all time. The overlaid guitar work by Mick Ronson is simply spectacular. Here's a bit of trivia: There is a line in Suffragette City "Hey man, droogie don't crash here, There's only room for one and here she comes, here she comes". Droogie is an homage to famed Brit author Anthony Burgess and his classic work *A Clockwork Orange*. The original book actually has a glossary with definitions for the liberal slang used throughout the book, and "droogie" is one of the more frequent terms used. It made it into the later (and, sadly, more famous) movie as well, but it really comes out in the book. Second fun fact: As quintessential a Bowie rocker as Suffragette City is, Bowie offered it to Mott the Hoople, but they took All the Young Dudes instead, which gave Mott new and continued life and, arguably, created their brand with the public. Bowie did so much for so many musicians over the years, his greatness is in all of them in addition to his own catalogue of work.