

Game Day

By: Adam Bogdan

Ugh...what happened? Stupid beer, stupid people, stupid Deflate Gate, stupid Seahawks. I shouldn't have done that. I regret everything I did last night. Well maybe not everything... I shouldn't have gone out, I shouldn't have bought that fourth pitcher, and I shouldn't have stayed up that late. I mean today is the day; it's Super Bowl Sunday. On top of the mild hangover I'm still fighting that virus I had last week. Ugh, why did I do that? I need to be on top of my game today. Ok, first things first, I need to make sure everyone is still coming over and aren't suffering from what I'm going through.

Where's my phone? Oh, there it is. Ok, I'll text Jake, and Tom, and Amanda. *Hey guys, so when are you coming over today?...*jeez, it's already 10:30 AM. How's my room look? My clothes are on the floor, some beer cans scattered about, and I guess I left that light on, but overall nothing disastrous. I mean it's a Rec room, it never looked good to begin with. Hopefully I still have some burgers and alcohol left for later; I may need some drinks if things start going downhill. Better to be drunk and distracted if your team is losing in the biggest game of the year than being completely aware of the situation. At least that's the way I look at it. I heard it. My phone vibrated. I hear it. Ugh where'd I put it? Ok, I found it. *Hey dude, I'll be over in an hour or so.* Jake says he's coming, whew. Ok, I need to shower and get my shit together, and then I can worry about the other things.

This warm water is heavenly. I don't want to get out. Maybe I'll just rest my head up against the side of the shower.....WHOA! Ok, almost slipped there dozing off. How to concuss yourself for dummies moment. I can't do that again. Focus damn it. Rinse, shake off the water, towel dry, back to the room. For clothes, I gotta stick with the hoodie; it's brought me good luck all year, can't not wear it now. Alright, all dressed, room cleaned, and two more texts to answer. *I'll be over there when I can see straight.* Oh Tom. *Hey babe, I'll head over once I'm*

all ready. Everyone is coming, that is both good and bad. It will either result in me having fun with my friends, or me erupting in fury that they will never want to spend time with me ever again...worth the risk. Fridge has all the necessities: beer. Chips and frozen food for dinner so I don't have to leave my room, all set.

All week, the stress has only piled up. Day after day of hearing about this deflated football nonsense, and yet still no evidence of any wrong doing. Gotta love the media for hyping up a nonstory right before the Super Bowl to bring down the Patriots and their success. **YOUCH! SON OF A GODDAMN...** bottle cap. Damn that hurt. Bud Light Platinum. Nice choice whoever had that. Oh yeah, ESPN calling Brady a liar, people basing their opinions off of speculation and biased opinions. Whatever, I'm done with it, and after tonight it won't matter. The story will erode until the point of irrelevancy and no one will have a second thought once it comes out that they were innocent. Tonight will be their redemption.

My anger throughout the week could only match the amount of anxiety that had accompanied it throughout my every waking minute. And, as my memory slowly returns to me, apparently my every angry drunken moment as well. Nnnnooowww I remember...I mean the guy talked shit; I had to remind him what the truth was. I wasn't going to let some drunken fool insult my team. Not the night before the Super Bowl. So yeah maybe I got in his face, maybe I pushed back, and mmmmaaayyybbbeee I hit him a little too hard, but he was asking for it. It's not like it was the first drunken fight that Features has ever seen. Best part is I walked away the winner, just like my team will tonight. Patriots – 1, Other Guys – 0. And that happened like eighteen hours before the game even started. Off to a good start I remember thinking to myself. Oh would you look at that, my shoulder's bruised...how'd that happen? Whatever, I still won.

Ok, back to reality here. People coming over to Res in a half hour. I've got just enough sustenance to last me the evening, and enough alcohol to enhance the enjoyment or drown out the sorrow, depending on what happens. That bruise looks worse and worse the more I look at it. Well might as well turn on the pre-game show and see what smack is being talked right now. Hmmm, I didn't know Chris Pratt was a Seahawks fan. That's unfortunate. At least Captain America is a Pats fan, and Marky Mark. I'll take it.

That point in the hangover where you're hungry, but the last thing you want to do is eat...yeah that's where I'm at. That static state of complete lethargy. Movement must be minimal. I even used the app on my phone to change the channel instead of bending over slightly to grab the remote. Complete bum status. And I'm not even embarrassed. I need to get into the mood. I've waited too long for a game of this magnitude and my ass does not even want to leave my futon. There's a problem with that. What should I do? OH! THAT HYPE VIDEO I WANTED TO WATCH! Aww damnit... my computer is...at my desk...five unfathomably long feet away...I don't know if I can do it...someone carry me...must...crawl...ok that wasn't so bad. Now for this video.

Oh man...the music. That Dolphins game was brutal. I was at Bar Louie with Kyle for that one. This is sad to watch. They were so bad in the beginning of the year. A clip of ESPN bashing them. Brady getting sacked. Picked. Dropped pass. Chiefs score. McNabb saying Brady should be benched. Saying Brady is over. HICCUP! That was bad, but man my skin is crawling. The beat is picking up. I want to head butt something. Now Back in Black is playing. Awww yeah. My fists are clenched. I turn up the volume. Goosebumps are in full effect. Brady just head butted Gronk. Adrenaline is surging through me right now. Years of anticipation, anger, sadness, and disappointment are coursing through me. Talk about a hangover cure. I'll have to remember

this for the future. *Pirates of the Caribbean* theme song just kicked on. Can this get any better? I remember every single play. I watched every game. I knew this was the year. It had to be.

A knock on the door. The video just ended. I screamed something that had to be reminiscent of a South American tribal war chant. I don't know what just came out of my mouth, but whatever it was described exactly how I felt. I opened the door to see a mildly shaken Tom. Laughing, I pulled him in and welcome him to my humble abode. Tom is a football fan, but unfortunately for him he was a Bears fan. I still loved him though. Not everyone can be perfect. I've gotten to know him more and more as college has moved on, and I consider him one of my best friends. We shared war stories about the night before, and I learned he also had a morning similar to mine, instantly making me forget whatever regret I had left. Tom was a bona fide frat star...at least that's what this scrawny, former Boy Scout, engineering major thinks of himself. I've drank him under the table on a few occasions. He wasn't on my level.

Not long after, Jake shows up. Now Jake wasn't a football fan, but he was the closest thing I had to a best friend, despite his cocky personality. He was the one I worried about for this game. He'd be the one to talk shit if the Pats got down. And unlike the guy last night, he was two inches taller and had nearly forty pounds on me. I wouldn't win that one. Now Jake was there the last time I had a Patriots Super Bowl party at my house...he was one of the four friends I had that left the room before the game was over. I am still the only one who knows I chucked a deadbolt lock at my bed's headrest. Thankfully it only left a dent. Good thing I played baseball then, a little to the left and they would've heard me shatter my window. I have a history of close calls to destruction during these sporting events.

Another knock on my door, my saving grace arrives. The love of my life, whom I owe for stopping me from destroying my room and previously served as my stress ball during games like this, was here. For Amanda's sake, I tried to get out all of the football talk out of my system with Tom and Jake before she came, because despite her being awesome and trying her best to learn football, it wasn't in her blood like it was mine. She came in with the Patriots shirt I had bought her for the playoffs. Man do I love this woman. Snacks are in place and distributed. Beers are comfortably in place in everyone's hands. The game is mere minutes away. So far, so good.

I put my phone out of reach. Can't afford to be distracted by the texts and notifications that were sure to accompany this game. The last two Super Bowls alone resulted in me unfriending or blocking nearly eighty people who messaged or texted me insults after they lost. Those games were tests. My true friends knew how much this meant, and if you talked trash afterwards you weren't my true friend. You were my enemy. On that note, I decide to just turn my phone off and try to think happy thoughts.

John Legend has the voice of an angel. Idina Menzel, the New York Jets/Giants fan...yuck...had an okay rendition of the national anthem. Now here comes the...first commercial break. OH MY GOD THE JURASSIC WORLD COMMERCIAL!!! FOOTBALL AND DINOSAURS!!! WHAT A-oh there's the Seahawks fan Pratt. Meh. But oh my god, that was awesome. I hug Amanda. My world is perfect right now. My best friends and girlfriend by my side for the biggest sporting event I've had the pleasure of experiencing, AND JURASSIC WORLD. Nnnnoowww here comes the opening kickoff. A tear comes to my eye. I couldn't even hide it. This was going to be a night to remember for the rest of my life.

Patriots start with the ball. I'm by far the most stressed individual in the room. Tom and Jake are calm, neither of them worrying about the outcome of the game. Amanda was still on the fence about how much to care. She had shown flashes of intensity throughout the year which gave me hope, but I needed this game to hook her into it. Ok, the Patriots got a first down. My stress weans a bit. They needed that. Darn, Brady underthrew Vereen and has to punt. Seahawks ball. The commercials begin, and my friends and girlfriend instantly lean forward. I sit back and take a sip of Sam Adams. I had to get a Boston beer for this game. It would've been wrong not to. I shake my head and smirk as they laugh at a funny commercial. I couldn't afford to be distracted by humor. At least that's what my sarcastic serious-self told me. Well that commerca

Back to the game...finally. The Patriots defense plays all three downs perfectly, forcing the Seahawks to punt. I pumped my fist, ever so slightly, out of satisfaction. I knew this was just the beginning, but that was a promising start. I need another beer.

Now for the Golden Boy, Tom Brady, to do what the G.O.A.T. does: DOMINATE! They're moving the – NO JAKE, GET YOUR OWN DAMN BEER – ball down the field. Jeez, does he not get that the game is on. Some people. Redzone time now. Throw it to Gronk. Let him spike, OH HE'S OPE----NOOOOOOOO!!!! WHY DID YOU THROW THAT?!?!?! WHERE WERE YOU THROWING?!?! THAT WAS RIGHT TO HIM!!!! FUCK!!! Oh shit, that guy's arm is broken. Wow, that's disgusting. It's sideways. I don't think Amanda saw it, otherwise she'd be squirming right now. I better not say anything. I'd regret that. Grotesque injury beside, that was awful. I had an awful sinking feeling in my stomach. All it takes is one bad play to completely change a Super Bowl, and I'm praying to the football gods that that play wasn't one. That quarter flew by, my god. Already a quarter of the way done and no points. That's lame.

Tom's being a dick. He gets that liquid courage in his hand and all of a sudden he thinks that I won't slap the stupid out of him. Don't push me Tom...cause I'm close to the edge. Hehe.

Damnit, I'm a dick. I forgot to get the Jaeger for Amanda. No, no, no. I'll get it. I'm terrible at mixing drinks...I probably shouldn't be doing this, but I am a good host and a gentleman. Alright, don't spill...whew. Ok, Amanda here's your drink. She shot me a look of disgust. I fucked it up. I knew it. Game's back on...must...make...new...drink...football. Next commercial break babe, I promise.

I hate this. Every five minutes there's a commercial break. Amanda lucked out. Jake and Tom just took a bet on what I'd do if the Patriots won. Tom said cry. Jake said streak down the hallway. I have a feeling Tom will win, but I'm not counting Jake out just yet. More alcohol will be consumed. That will be the deciding factor. DAWWWW, WHAT A CUTE PUPPY! OH AND THE CLYDESDALES COME AND SAVE HIM FROM THE WOLF!!! SO ADORAB— oh footballs on. Yeah, manly football. Grrrrr. Jesus, I'm going to have to pound my chest after that commercial to reclaim my man card. I'm pretty sure I pouted at the cuteness. Well at least Amanda hugged me. That's gotta be a pass. Can't revoke a man from his man card when he gets affection from his girlfriend. Yeah, I'm good.

Pats are making big plays here, they are rolling. Jake said some smart ass comment about an interception. I give him a jab to the ribs without removing my eyes from the screen. He punched back. I'm unphased. They're so close, they just need to-YES! FUCKING RIGHT! TOUCHDOWNS BITCHES!!! WOOOOOO!!! Amanda is smiling, but it's partially out of fear. I don't think I've reacted that excitedly after a touchdown in her presence before. My bad. Deep sigh of relief there. The Patriots needed that. Now to go to the-uhhhh, that was my knee ever so

gracefully colliding with my side table. I have definitely hit the tipsy phase. Breaking the seal is a necessity. Hurry, the game may be back on soon. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...alright, all good.

As I reenter my dojo of football, Tom and Jake are talking to Amanda. Always reassuring to see your friends and girlfriend hitting it off. Probably a really good thing considering this is like the tenth time they've met. Ehhh, I need food. Burgers. Yeeeessssss. Seahawks aren't doing much, this is my time to strike. Out of the freezer...two minutes annnd thirty nine minutes for Brandon Browner. Respect. Back to the couch. Excuse me while I take my place as the love wedge between Tom and Amanda. Apologies, I need to grab my be-YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING ME! How did he CATCH THAT?! What luck. They suck all game and they double the yards they have on one play. I KNOW YOU'RE DONE MICROWAVE! I CAN HEAR YOU! Son of a...mehhh. I'm not going to want to move after I sit down, better grab another beer. Oh god...Seahawks scored...and now Tom is calling for shots. Apparently I agreed to take a shot every time the Seahawks score. Why would I agree to that? Actually...that does sound like something I'd agree to. Clinks. All of us take it a champ, just like the Pats will be by the end of this. Even Amanda. She's perfect.

OOOHHH IT BURNS. I hate shots. Beer doesn't sting your esophagus as soon as it hits your throat. Mmmmmmm beeeeeer. D'OH! How much have I drank? Couldn't be more than five. Right? Whatever. Tom Terrific is doing his thing. Patriots are already on the Seahawks side of the ball. They so good. Two minutes warning. Plenty of time to score again. And they get the ball to start the half. Yesssss. Just a few more minutes and then the simpletons to my right and Amanda will have their Katy Perry. Until then, it's my time. And Brady drops back...lobs it up...GRONK! GRONK SMASH! Hell yes! Only forty seconds left and they go ahead. Sucks Seahawks. I'll drink to that. Seahawks can't score here...but you can't do that. Why are they

letting them run that easy? Jeez, they're going to score. Unbelievable. Ok, fourth down, holding them to a field goal. I can live wi-why is their offense out there? They're going to go for it. Aww damn, please don't, please...damnit. Why are they putting the short guy on the 6'5" giant? Tie game. And another shot. Need to pump the brakes here. Feelings it now. Bathroom. Go.

Open door, lights are off. I am questioning my friends now. They dimmed the lights for Katy Perry. They are slobbering like dogs. At least Amanda has her composure. Alright, let's do this. HOLY SHIT, what is that thing?! Hold on...wait a second...that mechanical monstrosity is a lion, but in Roar, she is talking about a tiger...Katy already losing in my book. I'm the only one to notice it seems. Tom and Jake's eyes are filled with lust...and Amanda's for that matter. Should I be jealous? Nah, Katy is above that. She's a goddess. That left shark has no idea what it's doing. Even intoxicated I know that. Haha, I bet he's kinda drunk too. I feel ashamed for really not knowing who Missy Elliot is. I guess I wasn't "hip" as a preteen. My loss apparently. **BABY YOU'RE A FIIIIIRREEWORK, COME ON LET YOUR COLLLLLLORS BURST!!!!** I sang in chorus with the others in the room. None of us could sing except for Amanda. It sounded beautiful regardless. Drunk singing can make anyone sound like JT or Lady Gaga. I still feel that anxiety. Not even the golden pipes of one of the amazing women on the planet could calm my nerves. Back to the game.

Ok, here we go. Seahawks start with the ball. Tie game. Beer. I squeeze Amanda, half out of adrenaline, half out of love. Tom and Jake are both more into it now. Even they are cheering and on edge. Hell, Amanda even seems excited. Awww yeah, let's get this started. And the kick is off. Oh god. Another bomb. The Seahawks aren't even playing good, they're just getting lucky on these lucky plays. Aaannnnnddd they get a field goal....annnnnd another shot.....

I sees Amanda shoot me a swightly concerned look. She knows that Im fine. For now. Im gonna stop with da beer though. And hopefully the Sheahawks don't score again. Another mediocre commercial break. Who caresh anyways. Kickoff. Ok, alright, shit, there we go, oh, dam, ugh. WHY WOULD YOU...another interception. I'm more depressed than angry. Dejection. Misery. Intoxication. I'm not sure which is more apparent to the people surrounding me. All the momentum was against me and my team. Even threw the buzz I feel the knife of defeat slowly inching towards my heart. Before I even realized what – HICCUP! - happened, I saw the ref get in the way of Darrelle Revis, allowing the Seahawks to score an easy TD. My team was down ten points against one of the – HICCUP! -greatest defenses in NFL history. Jake and Tom didn't even tell me to take a shots. I just stares at the TV, and they knew what had just happens on that field was far more damaging to self than any amount of alcohol ever could be. HICCUP! Good lord. I need to take a walk.

Walking turned into wobbling. Sitting down a much better idea. I hear a couple of whispers coming from my room. I can only assume they're talking about how to deal with me should the Pats lose. That's bit upsetting. I may be crushed by this, but they shouldn't be worried about me being irrational. Deep breath. Back to the game and my concerned amigos.

As I enter, I see three confused faces all looking at me. My reaction quickly switched from "fuck off" to "I guess that's fair". Given my obsessive fandom, safe to err on the side of caution. I did say this game would make the legacy of my favorite player, coach, and team. I also said this was the best chance they'd have, possibly forever. Did I hype myself up too much? I break my deep thought to witness the Patriots punt again. Was this really happening? I enter a state of near hypnosis. I hardly comprehend the fact that the Patriots had to punt the following drive with a mere fourteen minutes left in the game...I couldn't believe this.

During the commercial break, all I could hear was the TV. I don't remember the last time I heard Jake, Tom, or Amanda talk. I couldn't tell if they were already in mourning for me. Twelve minutes left. Brady sacked. Whatever buzz I had once had now gone. No consolation for me at all. I want to cry. Probably would cry if I hadn't pissed out every drop of liquid I had in my body. Thankfully the defense is playing amazing, but is it really better to hold on hope if they end up losing anyways? Or should I just accept that they're going to lose and move on? I'll wait until this drive is over before I decide. Well here we go. Good pass. Nice blocking. Penalty. I'll take it. Ok..ok...yes...yes...YES! Alrighty then! That's a boy Amendola! Down a FG now. Guess I owe it to this team to keep faith. I'm smiling, and now my companions are too. SO YOU'RE SAYING THERE'S A CHANCE! As I smile the best Jim Carrey smile I could muster.

I redistribute drinks. I have a new vitality. I'm shaking with anticipation. LET'S GOOOOOOOOOO! Seahawks with the ball...incomplete pass...nice hit...ANOTHER INCOMPLETE PASS! THEY HAVE TO PUNT! Just under seven minutes left. Holy shit could they pull this off?! Goosebumps start to cover every inch of me. The hair on the back on my neck stands up. My whole body feels this game changing. AHHHHH! I'm bouncing in my seat. Jake and Tom are smiling and pushing each other. I grab Amanda's hand and smile the biggest smile at her. I tell her that she is my good luck charm. She rolls her eyes, but smiles. I'll take it. Time for destiny.

First down...6:52 on the clock...thirty six yard line...let it begin. I'm locked, hand in hand with Tom and Amanda. This drive means everything. Pass – complete – eight yards. Yes. Pass – complete – five yards – first down. Good. Pass – complete – nine yards. Beautiful. Pass – compl-penalty. Damnit. Pass – complete – GODDAMN RIGHT GRONK! – twenty yards. They're in field goal range! They can tie it up! Don't do anything stupid. Just don't do anything

stupid! The three yard line. Brady is looking at Edelman...snap...throw..HE CAUGHT IT! HE FUCKING CAUGHT IT! TOUCHDOWN! YESSSS!!!! I fall to the floor. I pound the carpet. Amanda is screaming in joy. Tom and Jake are cursing in wonder. THEY DID IT! I hug Amanda from my knees. Squeeze her as tight as I could. Kissed her more times than I could remember. Eyes water. No tears...not yet at least. It isn't completely over yet. Two minutes and two seconds of agonizing anxiety until I can fully embrace this moment. But still...that was amazing. Something right out of my biggest sports dreams. I was so busy kissing Amanda that I missed the whole commercial break. One more deep breath. This will seal it.

Ughhhh, big play for the Seahawks. Can't do that. My heart starts to pound. My palms are sweating. I don't want to stop holding their hands. It would give them doubt. I need to stay strong. Oh god, Russell Wilson threw it deep...pew, incompl-NO FUCKING WAY!!!! HOW DID HE CATCH THAT?!?!?! HE WAS ROLLING ON THE GROUND AND IT FELL RIGHT INTO HIS HAND?!?!?! WHAT BULLSHIT!!! I was on the ground again. I couldn't believe it. That couldn't have happened. I watched the replay...once...twice...three times...he fucking caught it...they were four yards away from taking this game away from the Patriots. I wanted to scream at Jake and Tom blabbering like idiots about the catch. Amanda sat in disbelief, as silent as I was. There is no god. First there was the helmet catch. Then there was Mario Manningham. I can't take a third play that shouldn't have happened. They can't lose this way. They can't. The commercial break from the timeout gave that play time to sink in. I was out of words. They were so close. The Seahawks have the best running back in the NFL. They just have to give it to him once, maybe twice, and there's no way they can stop him. Unfuckingbelievable. I don't want to be here. I want to leave. I can't handle this. They hand it off the Lynch. Just short. They have one yard to go. One yard stands between them and one of the most depressing moments of my life. I

tried to think of a way they could screw this up. I prayed. I'm atheist. It's never too late to ask for forgiveness right? If there is a god, please don't let this happen. I sit back down. Amanda held my hand and looked at me with the most sympathy-filled, sad smile I've ever seen in my life. I loved her. She was more important than this game. All I could do was smile. I had her even if they lost. I could be at peace with that.

The Patriots didn't call a time out...:30...:29...:28...the Seahawks snap the ball...Wilson drops back and...NO WAY! NO FUCKING WAY! HE PICKED IT OFF! THERE'S NO FLAGS ON THE FIELD! THE PATRIOTS INTERCEPTED IT! MALCOLM BUTLER! THEY ARE GOING TO WIN!!! I'M ON THE GROUND LAUGHING! AMANDA, JAKE AND TOM ARE ALL GOING NUTS! I KNOCKED OVER A BEER! I DON'T EVEN CARE! THE ENTIRE TEAM IS ON THE FIELD! THEY ARE GOING NUTS! YYYYYEEEEESSSSSS!!! DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?!?!?!!