



PERFECT CHAOS

The 2013 Boise State football season
through time and space

By Kevan Lee

Perfect Chaos

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Preface

We live in an interconnected world, connected by molecules and thoughts and microwaves and Chick-fil-as. If you believe in the butterfly effect and chaos theory, you know that every action impacts the world on a seismic scale. Did you have Nutella on your breakfast toast? You indirectly burned down the rain forest in 2034. Did you cry during the stage musical *Wicked*? You are kinda responsible for Mitt Romney's one-man comedy tour across America. Did you run a red light in your haste to get home for Leno? Never mind, you don't exist. No one is ever in a haste to get home for Leno.

My point is that we often do not understand the ramifications of our decisions. How could we, in such a big, obese universe? And if chaos theory is just the tip of the iceberg, the whole iceberg shebang might be a super weird dude.

For instance, you think there could be alternate versions of ourselves living in other timelines?

I'll admit, the idea first came to me in an episode of *Community* (Season Three, Episode Three, for those who want to watch the best episode of television of their lives). And now I turn the conceit to the Boise State football team. What if there is another Boise State football team in an alternate universe playing football and winning games? What if there are six alternates? What if one has a 50,000-seat stadium and only fills it with 35,000 people on a regular basis? Oh wait, that's this timeline, ten years from now.

It's hard to keep all these timelines straight.

What follows is the one moment that all the timelines share in common, and the many divergent paths the Boise State story takes from there. Let the Bizzarro Preview commence.

Introduction

Here comes Joe Southwick.

He is smiling about something. Maybe he sees a vulnerability in the defense. Maybe he is remembering a joke someone told him in a Winco. Maybe he is picturing Matt Paradis's hair on Chris Petersen. Regardless, he looks completely at ease. He is a man in charge of his own destiny, for this next play, for the rest of this series, for the rest of the season. No one can shake his inestimable confidence and braggadocio. Joe Braggadocio. People will call him this from now on. The Boise State Broncos have jumped out to a 24-7 lead over the Washington Huskies in the season opener at Husky Stadium, and Joe Bags is looking for more. He is calm and collected, invigorated by the dulcet exclamations of Gus Johnson and the fact that Boise State fans are not actively counting the days until he graduates. For the first time in his Bronco career, more people believe in Joe Southwick than Joe Southwick and Chadd Cripe. The Boise State quarterback has arrived.

Hut, hut, hike!

The hike is authoritative, like Charlie Weis ordering at a Wendy's. Southwick's voice carries over the shocked, quiet stadium. The next play---an out-and-up to Matt Miller, an off-tackle run to Jay Ajayi, a magic show by Shane Williams-Rhodes, doesn't matter really---will be a touchdown. That is how things will go for New Southwick. New, confident, talented Joe Southwick.

Joe Southwick fumbles the snap.

The ball is flopping around on the ground like a fish. It is a magnet full of north poles, and the players are magnets full of souths. The ball lies on the turf for what seems like ages. During the time it takes someone to fall on the ball, the University of Idaho has lost four games, Gabe Linehan got a full back tattoo, Washington fired Steve Sarkisian and hired Dennis Erickson and hired Steve Sarkisian again when Dennis Erickson was obviously just in it for the money. The ball stops flopping and just lies there while huge teenagers and twentysomethings lunge together in a choreographed, climactic dogpile of beef.

Splat.

The pile of players is three-deep. You could see the pile from the International Space Station. Broncos are pulling Huskies off by their shoulder pads. Huskies are pulling Broncos off by their feet. Referees, God bless their souls, are burying their heads into crevasses and armpits to determine who has the ball.

Who *does* have the ball?

Chris Petersen looks on from the sideline. Steve Sarkisian rubs his forehead. Gus Johnson breathes for the first time all game.

The pile erodes.

The referee turns and points ...

Timeline 1: The Man, the Myth, the Legend, the Southwick

Washington football!

The Huskies celebrate wildly on the sidelines. This is just the shift in momentum that Washington needed, that Steve Sarkisian hired that voodoo lady to perform, that the UW football program had earned after all the unspeakable backsliding under the lazy watch of Tyrone Willingham. More than just possession, this turnover gives the Huskies a psychological advantage---an embarrassing fumble like this should do horrors for Joe Southwick's self-esteem. He is probably an inconsolable wreck, rueing the day he chose football over piano, looking for any small hole or ballbag to crawl into and escape. And the Bronco fan base is probably apoplectic, cursing baby curse words like "cheese and biscuits" and "nutter butters" under their breath so as not to make a scene. Southwick must be crushed, and Bronco fans must be irate.

Except, he is not and they are not.

Southwick is completely unphased by the turnover; the fanbase is downright apathetic. This turnover was worth nothing to them, like points in a game of Whose Line or APR to the University of Idaho. Collectively, the Bronco football players and Bronco fans know that a single mistake from the greatest quarterback in school history is not going to keep them from winning this game by 35 points, minimum. A starting eleven of holy disciples couldn't come within a

thirty-burger of this Boise State football team. Go ahead and put immortal Enoch at running back. It ain't gonna matter.

A silly fumbled exchange from center? Pish-posh. Southwick has brought the team back from greater. Remember the 2012 Fiesta Bowl versus those plucky Temple Owls? How he tied the game on an effortless post-corner to Matt Miller, won the game with a scramble in overtime, and proposed to girlfriend Taylor Swift after? Classic Southwick. Remember his freshman year against Virginia Tech when he threw for 300 yards and three scores? Remember the epic win against TCU at home, how he sent off the field goal team and threw the winning score as time ran out?

Go back to where his legacy began, with the great quarterback competition of 2010 when he beat out incumbent Michael Coughlin for the job. He hasn't looked back since. (Fans will always wonder what could have been if Washington high school star Kellen Moore had chosen football over competitive Boggle. If ifs and buts were candy and nuts ...)

National Freshman of the Year.

Two-time Mountain West Player of the Year.

Heisman Trophy finalist.

No. 1 overall CFL draft pick.

Southwick is the face of college football and the heartbeat of this team. A silly little fumble - probably a fumble on purpose knowing how benevolent he is - won't deter him.

Sure enough, the next series Southwick comes out firing. Ten yards to Shane Williams-Rhodes. Ten more to Kirby Moore. A forty-five yard bomb to favorite receiver, former quarterback, and best bud Grant Hedrick down to the one-yard line. Southwick calls his own number on the next play, faking the quarterback sneak, rolling right, and sliding - hovering, really - across the goalline, under the outstretched arms of three defenders.

Boise State scores 28 unanswered points. Steve Sarkisian is removed from the stadium during the third quarter for making a scene.

Boise State @ Fresno State, September 20

Staring across the field through a dusting of Axe body spray, Derek Carr eyes Joe Southwick. The two share a knowing glance. Southwick, the Mountain West's best player and reigning MVP, is on top of the college football world. He's brash and confident, oozing charisma and radiating academic integrity. See the way that backup quarterback Nick Patti looks at him? With those big puppy-dog eyes? That's the way normals admire kings.

Carr knows this vision-in-a-mustache could have been him. At one point, Carr was the one pegged to be the Mountain West star. His face was supposed to be plastered on ESPN the Magazines and Martha Stewart Livings. At one point, Carr was the brash, confident quarterback with the dashing good looks, the charisma, and the hype. His peach fuzz could have been the talk of college football.

Instead of so much glory, Derek Carr is spraying checkdowns and one-hoppers over a litany of three-and-outs while Fresno loses half its games 35-10.

Derek Carr is Ryan Colburn and Tom Brandstater and Paul Pinegar all rolled into one---Tom Pineburntater?---and head coach Tim DeRuyter knows it. To compensate, the Fresno head man has devised what will become a common game plan for stopping Southwick and the Broncos---run the clock, play keep away, poison Southwick's food before the game (not deadly poison or anything, just like a ton of laxatives, as in the *3 Ninjas* movie).

For a quarter-and-a-half, the plan works like gangbusters. Fresno receives the opening kickoff and proceeds on a 28-play, 74-yard drive that eats up 18 minutes of clock and features seven fourth-down conversions. The Bulldog offensive linemen get so tired that DeRuyter must use all three of his timeouts to give them a blow. "Match wits with that!" DeRuyter yells across the field to Chris Petersen.

Petersen does match those wits. On Fresno's next series, with the Bulldogs clutching a 7-0 lead, taking knees, and hoping for defensive penalties, Coach Pete aligns Demarcus Lawrence at middle linebacker and blitzes him up the middle, behind a blitz by Blake Renaud, behind a blitz by Ricky Tjong-A-Tjoe, behind a blitz by a kamikaze Dan Goodale. The middle of the Fresno offensive line caves like a folding chair at a Mangino reunion, and Lawrence blitzes through the wake so fast that he has Velcroed himself to Derek Carr before Carr even knows what hit him. Startled, Carr tosses the ball into the air while being pummeled into the Fresno turf. Jeremy loane picks up the flying ball and returns it for a score.

Petersen's not done. His next wit is to have Joe Southwick just throw the deep ball all the time because if Fresno is going to make a living on time of possession, then the Broncos might as well score really fast when they have the chance. Southwick completes seven of ten passes for 350 yards and four touchdowns. Boise State wins 35-10.

As the field empties after the game and players head to the locker room, Carr takes one last, wistful look back at Joe Southwick. The Boise State quarterback is smooching Taylor Swift on the mouth, helmet in one hand, milk jug trophy in the other. There is a line of Bronco fans waiting to give Southwick a high-five, or waiting for him to heal their leprosy---it's unclear which.

Derek Carr recommits his football playing days to becoming Joe Southwick. He will never make a better decision than that.

Mountain West Championship game: Boise State vs. San Jose State

The Gene Bleymaier Bowl, as the Idaho Statesman demands this game be called, could not have gone any more perfectly for the Mountain West. Its two preeminent programs---12-0 Boise State, led by a Heisman candidate in Joe Southwick, coached by a two-time Nobel Prize nominee in Chris Petersen, vs. 12-0 San Jose State, quarterbacked by a future first-round draft pick, coached by a series of Facebook polls probably, no one really knows who the real coach is or what he looks like.

As fortune would have it, the game coincides with the official grand opening of the Gene Bleymaier Football Complex, construction of which was completed in August. Graphics and decor took four additional months to complete, owing to the delay. Do you have any idea how long it takes to carve Ryan Dinwiddie out of butter?

The press box is crammed to the brim with media members anxious to avoid this evening's ACC championship game and NFL scouts eager for a chance to see Southwick and San Jose State's David Fales compete. The two are considered to be potential first-round picks in next May's draft, so you better believe the Jaguars sent somebody. The Jaguars sent 20 somebodies.

Southwick strikes first on an end zone fade to Matt Miller. Fales responds with a deep bomb. Southwick hits Ajayi on a perfectly executed screen. Fales scrambles thirty yards to tie. Back and forth the two quarterbacks go, and Craig Thompson could not be more excited. He is literally printing money in his box suite, which is strange because it's obviously counterfeit and illegal to do so. Rocky Long's face is on the twenty dollar bill, fer cryin' out loud. Who cares, Thompson's untouchable. His conference appears to be the only one that matters tonight what with the other conference championship games being dogs--a 70-point blowout by Oregon in the Pac-12 title game, a 6-2 snore in the Big 12 title game, and a series of one-yard touchdowns in front of a crowd of hundreds at the ACC title game.

Bronco Stadium is rocking.

The band is blasting Top 40 hits, Daft Punk with a horn section.

The new video board is thrilling the crowd with its Hide the Football game and Kiss Cam.

The stadium announcer updates everyone on the score of the Idaho game: The Vandals have lost by four touchdowns and will finish the season winless.

The very next play, Southwick threads the needle into triple coverage for a 35-yard touchdown, and the Broncos never look back.

BCS National Championship Game: Boise State vs. Alabama

Four yards left between Boise State and history, or Boise State and near-history, or Boise State and crushing defeat. That the Broncos have a chance to win should be victory in itself, says all the feelingsball fans who count moral victories in their win columns. The rest of us want a Boise State championship.

Certainly, few expected this. BSU was a two-touchdown underdog, and no non-BCS team has ever even played for a national championship, let alone had a chance to win on the final play.

The Broncos are down by five with three seconds left.

There is time for one final play.

A Boise-area blogger streaks the field to give everyone more time to think about the levity of this situation. Imagine: a college football champion from Boise, Idaho. City of Trees. Valley of Treasure. Home of Inversions. A national

championship would be the stuff of legend. What job will Chris Petersen take after this? Governor? President? CEO of Earth? Joe Southwick will get his own statue, for sure. Demarcus Lawrence will go pro. Matt Paradis will never pay for apps and zerts at Applebee's again.

On the other hand, the Broncos might not score and will forever be known as the team that came oh-so-close. They will be the Butler Bulldogs of college football, which is ironic because Butler was the Boise State of college basketball. History books will slowly but surely forget this team ever existed once years of memories erode away under Alabama's mountains of championships. This close will be an asterisk, and then the asterisk will be dropped.

Southwick wants to make sure that doesn't happen. As the offense huddles prior to the Play of the Century of the Year, Southwick keeps his guys loose. He tells a joke. He points out funnyman Conan O'Brien in the stands. He strokes his beautiful mustache.

The play is a corner fade to Matt Miller, one that Southwick and Miller have connected on 20 times this season. A fake Statue of Liberty will hold the linebackers and safeties, ensuring that Miller gets one-on-one coverage with the corner. The rest is up to Southwick's ball, Miller's hands, and God's whim.

Snap.

Fake throw.

Fake Ajayi handoff.

Real throw.

Crowd gasping.

Ball floating.

Miller jumping.

Mark May tooting.

Petersen staring.

Cheerleaders Instagramming.

Ball landing.

Hands grasping.

Angles obscuring.

Did Miller catch it? Where's the ball? All we can see is a melding of two bodies, hunched over a golden egg, their backs and buns pointed out to the world and the TV cameras. The referee peers inside the web of arms and legs, deep inside the roil of ball-fighting. He takes a second look to confirm his decision and then signals

The future

Flap, flap, flap.

The Boise State national championship banner swats at nothing, high above the blue turf, shouting its huzzahs from the retractable roof of Bronco Stadium. Go ahead and look. Gawk. Stare. The hologram banner changes based on your perspective. If you stare at it from a certain angle, it looks like Chris Petersen is hugging you. If you look from another angle, Joe Southwick is two-hand fist pumping. The third angle is a Magic Eye poster where you see what is in your true heart. Nike is working it into the next Boise State jerseys.

The Broncos may have been the first non-BCS team to win a national championship, but they were certainly not the last. In the 80 years since their upset of Alabama, non-BCS teams Marshall, Bowling Green, Tulsa, UTEP, Air Force, and Boise State five more times have all won national titles. Of course, it has helped that over the past 80 years the tournament field has expanded from two teams to five teams (one team every 16 years) and that there was a 10-year window with a 64-team tournament, courtesy of short-tenured NCAA president Tom Scott, who was unceremoniously overthrown in the Cryogenic Jim Delany Coup of 2041.

Under the auspicious shadow of that holographic championship banner, the 2093 Boise State football team runs through spring drills. Expectations are again high for this year's team. The Broncos are Pac-Belt favorites. Boise State will go for 92 straight wins over the University Redacted of Idaho. And Tweet Petersen, great-great grandson of Chris Petersen and a reigning All-American, is considered a Heisman front runner.

Maybe Tweet Pete will go down in the history books with such other Bronco quarterbacking luminaries as Kellen Moore, Joe Southwick, Blue Ivy Carter, and

Prince George. It's too early to tell, but the early reviews at OBNUG.biz seem to suggest as much.

Timeline 2: Ground Control to Major Southwick

Washington football!

The stadium erupts in shouts of joy and fist pumps and cups of beer dumped onto the heads of Bronco fans. The Huskies celebrate on the sideline---chex mix and soda only, wouldn't want to tempt Austin Sefarian-Jenkins. Finally, something has gone Washington's way. Finally, they caught a break.

The Husky offense takes advantage of the short field and punches it in for a score. 24-14, the Broncos' lead shrinks.

The Husky defense, inspired by their abilities to intimidate opponents into bad hand-ball-hand-rump communication, force a three-and-out. The Husky offense responds with a quick strike to Sefarian-Jenkins, suspended for the first three games of the 2015 season, up the seam for another touchdown. 24-21, Broncos.

The Husky defense, none of whom I can name but probably a Trufant somewhere in there, holds the Broncos out of the end zone for the rest of the game, and the Husky offense, powered by wide receiver Kasen Williams---a stern warning about Washington's four-strike policy hanging over his head---drives down the field in the waning moments of the game to give the Huskies a 28-24 win.

After the game, Joe Southwick wanders the streets of Seattle, hoping for some sort of Jiminy Cricket moment where a guardian angel insect will reinforce his life

purpose. He gets a beetle who looks like Taylor Tharp. Southwick and Jiminy Tharp Beetle talk at length about losing to Washington---an experience that the man and arthropod share. Tharp, the beetle reminds Southwick, rebounded from the loss to Washington to put up insane numbers the rest of the season and then lose to Hawaii when everything was on the line again. If Southwick followed in Tharp's footsteps, maybe he too could be a second-team all-conference quarterback who guided his team to the Poulan Weed Eaters Bowl or some stupid thing like that, only to lose to Tulane or some strange team like that.

Flush with beetle encouragement endorphins, Southwick rejoins his teammates. If Tharp can do it, so can he.

Boise State @ Fresno State, September 20

To prepare for the Fresno State game, Southwick went back to watch tape from the Washington game to really get inside the fumbled snap from center---deep inside, like an insane amount someone should stop him from watching so much tape of the same play over and over again. He's just so much like Kellen Moore in that way, except Kellen Moore didn't make mistakes ever.

A tic has developed over Southwick's right eye. It is an uncontrollable spasm that causes acute blinking, brought on by flashbacks to that Washington fumble. The tic first appeared in a postgame interview on the Mountain West's digital sports network, but it was largely ignored because the Mountain West's digital sports network is only available on Netscape Navigator and Craig Thompson's iPad

(note: Craig Thompson's iPad is a desktop computer plugged in with an extension cord; it runs Windows Vista).

Southwick should get that tic looked at.

The tic rears its ugly head in the Fresno game. Boise State's new offense uses a collection of non-verbal communication. Make a bird with your hands, and Matt Miller goes deep. Shoot pistols with fingers, and a Moore scores a touchdown. Mouth the word "noodle," and Matt Paradis takes off on a center sneak. Wink, and Charles Leno runs a tackle-eligible screen.

Robert Prince would later admit that the wink-screen to a 300-pound offensive tackle probably should not have been in the new playbook, let alone have its own audible. He would admit this after the Broncos run the play 73 times during the Fresno State game as Southwick's facial tic gets out of control when he sees a ball lying on the turf in pregame. Charles Leno finishes with 56 catches for 12 yards and a 73-yard touchdown. Boise State loses 14-7.

Three weeks later at Utah State, Southwick's mental demolition continues. He is quarterbacking scared---scared of turnovers, scared of criticism, scared of falling in love with passing to Holden Huff so he just doesn't do it ever. Southwick's de-evolution could not even be staved off by the supreme efforts of Bronco coaches who have tried everything they can to instill confidence. For instance, under his pads Southwick wears a No Fear t-shirt underneath a Big Dogs t-shirt. He listens to death metal bands covering Bruce Springsteen anthems. He hands off to Jay Ajayi like 30 times. What more can a coaching staff do? Put in Grant Hedrick?

The coaching staff puts in Grant Hedrick. His arrival in the huddle comes on the heels of Southwick staking the Broncos to a 0-17 hole against Utah State with one half of football to play. Chris Petersen broke the news to the team in the halftime locker room in one of those Knute Rockne speeches except there was no Gipper to win for unless you count kicker Dan Goodale who is nicknamed Gupper.

Hedrick cannot mount a comeback. He *can* throw interceptions, a fact that the Bronco coaches kind of knew about but thought maybe it was just a phase. It was not a phase. It is in his being.

Boise State loses 34-14 and falls to 3-3 on the season. New Mexico Bowl representatives attend every last one of Boise State's regular season games. Like vultures, they are. Vultures with a ridiculous amount of TGI Friday's on their expense accounts.

Mountain West championship

The inaugural Mountain West championship game pits Fresno State vs. San Jose State and is carried live on CBS and the Mountain West digital network, now streaming on LG chocolate phones. During a special halftime ceremony, commissioner Craig Thompson and Sun Belt commissioner Karl Benson arm wrestle over the rights to pursue BYU for conference affiliation. Benson wins (his Perfect Pushup is paying dividends), and the Sun Belt sends out an instant memo to the BYU athletic offices, which the BYU athletic offices immediately throw in the trash.

Oh yeah, and Fresno State wins the game. Whatever. I'm so over it.

New Mexico Bowl: Boise State vs. Cal

Commercials for the New Mexico Bowl promise a high-scoring affair between the Boise State Broncos and Cal Golden Bears. "Come for the touchdowns, stay for the churros." *Free churros?! America says in unison. Where do we sign up?* The ad campaign wins all the marketing awards, and America tunes in for churros that never come.

Grant Hedrick has slowly but steadily improved over the course of the season. He no longer drops the ball on rollouts; he now throws into double coverage. He no longer audibles into the blitz; he calls his own number and takes a knee.

Nevertheless, the Broncos decide to go with a two-quarterback system for the bowl game, believed to be a response from a 30-day letter-writing campaign from a Boise State blogger who is really interested in seeing Nick Patti.

Patti fumbles the snap from center on the first play, a fitting circle to the season opener fumble by Joe Southwick. This completion of a universe thread causes a rainstorm in Nairobi and gives a squirrel the scoots in Montana. Nature. Go figure.

The future

The New Mexico Bowl season put Boise State on a path. An overreliance on the quarterback position caused the Broncos to again retool their offense, and all that retooling led to a decision that throwing the ball is for losers. Throw for show, run for dough. As such, Boise State transitioned to a single-wing offense, the one with the running backs off to the side and all the motions and shifts and counters and dives. Picture an offense that someone like Parma or Melba or a 200-person high school might run, and you're close.

It should come as no surprise then that Boise State's next greatest quarterback---the next Kellen Moore, if you will---is Joey Martarano, a prolific running quarterback at Fruitland High School but a projected linebacker when initially recruited to Boise State. Once the offense went 60 years into the past, the Broncos had to choose between bulking Nick Patti up 75 pounds to take the pounding at fullback-quarterback or let Martarano do his thing.

They chose Martarano.

Jart-Mart has been a sensation. In his storied Boise State career, Martarano has gained 4,000 rushing yards and has been on three consecutive All-American teams, at quarterback and linebacker. His popularity is so great in Boise that the annual release of four Bronco player bobbleheads has been all four Joey Martarano's, each wearing a different outfit.

The Broncos no longer wonder who will be the next Kellen Moore. Now Bronco fans ask, "Who will be the next Joey Martarano? Him? Noooo, we don't want him! We want the other guy!"

Timeline 3: Knick Knack Patti Attack

Boise State football!

Phew, what a relief. The Bronco coaches breathe a heavy sigh and then pull Joe Southwick off the field as quick as they can, seriously it's like he was contagious to all other players or something. Check him for H1N1.

In comes starting quarterback Nick Patti. The Broncos' plan to use Joe Southwick in special Joe Southwick packages is over for this game. Southwick will get his chance to throw five-yard checkdowns and scramble for first-down yardage or just short of first-down yardage next week against Tennessee-Martin.

Patti, the reigning Mountain West freshman of the year and first-team freshman All-American, coolly jogs back into the huddle, swaggering like moderate celebrities do in that way where they always assume someone is taking their picture. People *are* taking his picture. The Idaho Statesman sent a Patti photographer to supplement the photos of the regular photographer. Fans are snapping iPics so often you could piece them all together and make a stop-motion film of his entire day from team bus to warmups to fist-pumping touchdowns. A gaggle of Boise State bloggers is painting a fresco of him from their seats in the upper deck, if only he would hold still so they could get his James Dean eyes just right, seriously hold still, the eyes look like a shooter marble and a tapioca ball right now.

Patti nestles under center and scans the defense. "Two-forty-two! Two-forty-two! Hut! Hut!" Paradis snaps the ball into Patti's angelic hands. The Tiger Beat cover boy drops back into the pocket, looks the safety off his primary receiver, and fires a frozen rope 30 yards downfield into the outstretched arms of a streaking Geraldo Boldewijn. Boldewijn does the rest, speeding past the coverage for a 70-yard touchdown.

Oh if Coach Pete could see this now! I don't believe he gets Fox Sports 1.

Boise State @ BYU, October 25

How convenient.

The Fox Sports version of College Gameday---College Party USA!! with host Regis Philbin---comes to the Boise State - BYU game at just the moment that Nick Patti - Erin Andrews rumors heat up. Are they an item? Gossip reports say that Patti snapchatted a photo of his Vine to Andrews' Moto X, and who knows what any of that means. Kids these days. I guess they're dating.

Pregame, the College Party USA!! crew does a profile on Patti and the Broncos, detailing the sophomore's brief and sterling history in college football from his winning the Boise State quarterback competition as a true freshman, his remarkable performance as a replacement for Kellen Moore, his Fiesta Bowl win against West Virginia to cap an undefeated season, and his philanthropy work with inner city kids and puppies. Living rooms across America get a little dusty, if you know what I mean. The following segment is a political piece on the riots in

Salt Lake over BYU wanting to put Honor, Integrity, and Teamwork on the backs of the player jerseys instead of names, and the ensuing backlash when they thought maybe people would instead like Dry Campus, Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and Deseret Industries on there. People did not.

The pregame show wraps with analysts Kordell Stewart and Dick Tomey picking Chris Petersen and the Oregon Ducks to upset Stanford in the game of the day.

As for the game itself, Boise State jumps out to an early 14-0 lead behind the scrambling of Patti who converts two 3rd-and-20s into first downs. BYU kicks a field goal before the half to get on the board, but it's not enough. The second half, Patti comes out throwing, and the Cougars get left in the dust. Final score 55-16. Boise State improves to 8-0 on the season and greets the soft underbelly of the Mountain West schedule with open arms.

Mountain West championship game: Boise State vs. SDSU

The Mountain West Championship game enjoys a prime TV spot, following the midseason cliffhanger on How I Met Your Mother. Spoiler: Ted and Barney find out they're related. The game had originally been scheduled to air after the SEC championship game that Saturday, but Craig Thompson, in all his wisdom and at the pleading of Rocky Long, requested a kickoff time that wasn't so late. Would 8:30/7:30 central be early enough for Long? Possibly, but he's going to have to drink a Big Gulp of black tea.

Long's Aztecs upset the Derek Carr-led Fresno State Bulldogs to win the Mountain West West (not a typo) division. Long's defense held Carr to under 200 yards passing and zero touchdowns thanks to a scheme that involved dropping ten guys into coverage and waiting for Carr to make mistakes. He borrowed it from every team's defensive playbook who ever played Carr's older brother David.

The early line on the Boise State - San Diego State game was Broncos by 17 points. This seemed a little low considering Boise State is undefeated, San Diego State is 8-4, and the Broncos beat the Aztecs by 45 points when the two teams met earlier in the year. The line shifts 20 points up after Warren Buffett places \$5 million on Boise State.

Nick Patti, prepping a Heisman acceptance speech just in case, comes out firing. He lofts a beautiful ball to Aaron Burks, who outleaps a defender in the end zone. Six points. Patti fires a dart past a linebacker's ear and smack into the gut of Gabe Linehan, between the eight and the seven, under the top loop in the eight and beside the bendy shaft in the seven, you get the idea, it was a good throw. Six more points. Patti hands off to Jay Ajayi, a swooning, epic handoff. Six more points. Patti dropkicks a PAT. One billion points.

Long's defense has no answer for the Patti Express. Boise State wins the inaugural Mountain West championship game and is presented with a trophy at midfield by Craig Thompson who is wearing a Turtle Fur neckwarmer made with his own Craig Thompson hair. It looks exquisite.

Rose Bowl: Boise State vs. Oregon

As Patti warms up on the Rose Bowl field before the game, a familiar face strolls his direction. Wait, nope. That was just Mark May looking for the media buffet. *Now* a familiar face strolls Patti's direction. Patti can't quite make out the man's face because the sun is directly behind him. In fact, this person looks as if he is glowing, a halo surrounding his head, and light streaming from behind his silhouette. The Kanye song blaring from the PA speakers suddenly switches to a sample of birds chirping. Just then a double rainbow appears. Time slows down. It will take Mark May a million years to reach the free media little smokies, time is going so slow.

The rainbows, the birds, the halo, the light, the floating on a cloud. Finally, Patti recognizes the face.

It is Chris Petersen.

Oregon coach Chris Petersen has come over to say hello. The two have not seen each other since last year's Fiesta Bowl after-party, the one that David Augusto got kicked out of, the one that local bloggers called "the party of the century, we can't believe we were invited." A week later, Petersen took the job at Oregon. Locals had pegged Petersen as an Oregon candidate for years, and when Chip Kelly bolted for the NFL and incumbent Mark Helfrich bolted because he has so much respect for Chris Petersen, the job was Pete's.

All he's done with the team since is go 12-1, win the Pac-12, and make a BCS bowl.

Petersen has some encouraging words for Patti. He is stoked about the sophomore's continuing evolution into one of college football's all-time greats. He is prideful in knowing that he helped launch Patti on this trajectory, choosing him on a gut instinct over Joe Southwick last year. Petersen's gut is always right, and now it kind of wants some of those little smokies at the media buffet. Hopefully Mark May has not eaten them all.

The pregame meeting with his former coach and current mentor spurred Patti to one of his greatest games as a collegiate. He threw for 400 yards, rushed for 150, and led the Broncos to a 42-35 win over Petersen's Ducks. The Rose Bowl after-party was a real rager, held in the blogger's basement at Boise State's new football complex. There were plenty of little smokies to go around.

The future

The Boise State football team, part of the NCAA Division 4 Sponsored by Playstation, has an opportunity to make some noise in the 2019 playoffs. The Broncos are seeded 12th in the 32-team tourney, but many experts consider them a darkhorse candidate to win it all. Experts like Dick Tomey, who is still alive by some miracle of medicine.

Running back Stephen Kinsey has been on fire lately, rushing for 150-plus yards in each of his past five games, including the Pac-12 championship. Can you believe he had no college offers and walked on at Boise State? Of course you can, the kid had cancer for awhile. Good thing coaches like Boise State's Kevan Lee are willing to take chances on kids like Stephen.

First opponent: the Kellen Moore-coached Washington State Cougars. The game will air live on YouTube.

Timeline 4: Gentleball

Penalty, Washington, unsportsmanlike conduct.

The new rules of college football state that a fumbling player must be given time to recover his own ball. Mistakes are opportunities to learn. They call it the Five Second Rule because you get five literal seconds before a defensive player may - ever so politely - pick the ball up off the turf and offer it back to you, in a gesture of good sportsmanship. Washington gets flagged for doing the exact opposite of this, and the officials walk off the 15 yards and place a frowny face sticker on the Huskies chore board. Ten frowny faces and you have to clean the stadium steps after, with a positive attitude!

You cannot blame the Huskies for forgetting the new rule. There are so many of them. Ever since the NCAA hired a developmental child psychologist and a bubble boy to run its player safety program, the game has changed dramatically. Last year, uniform rules prohibited shoulder pads, knee pads, hip pads, and helmets. This year, all players must wear breathable shorts and a T-shirt during the game. No tackling. No blocking. No running. Defenses get five mississippi before they can pursue the quarterback. Things have become so extreme that teams in the FCS (Football Cooperation Subdivision) are experimenting with frisbees in place of footballs.

The fumble rule probably got lost in the shuffle.

Back in possession, the Broncos continue to march downfield. Southwick finds an open Matt Miller who tiptoes just inside the sideline ball pit. Jay Ajayi takes a handoff and plunges ahead for a yard-and-a-half before a Washington defender pulls his flags. The running game has really suffered in this new-look college flag football.

Two plays later, Southwick hits Gabe Linehan in the back of the end zone for a touchdown, which has been renamed a glory hug. The Broncos get six points now or ten points if they wait an hour.

The final score is Great Effort to Yay. The Broncos are off to a fast start to their season. Only seven more Great Efforts and they become bowl eligible.

Boise State vs. Wyoming, November 16

Wyoming has established itself as one of the Mountain West's up-and-coming teams. Quarterback Brett Smith has earned two straight You Are Special Today awards from the Associated Press. The midseason firing of Dave Christensen (after he flipped off all the Wiggles during a halftime rendition of "Shake Your Sillies Out") and subsequent replacement with motivational speaker Tim Tebow seems to have energized the team.

At the coin toss, each team is allowed to speak openly about their views on heaven, followed by an exchange of hostess gifts and hospitality bags. Through gritted teeth and forced smiles, the two teams hide their hostility for one another,

hoping to avoid any premature ejections for inappropriate display of emotions.

Demarcus Lawrence keeps it together, barely.

Wyoming's best offensive weapon is called the Globe of Hugs. They wrap the ball carrier in a protective cocoon of offensive friends and together march down the field, cooperating their tails off. The tactic is almost impossible to defend. But Petersen has found a way: You have to hug the huggers. Blake Renaud hugs the living daylights out of those guys.

Three quarters into the game, each team has found the Beginning of Exploration (formerly End Zone) twice. With the Broncos' undefeated season of Grape Jobs hanging in the balance, the pressure is on Joe Southwick to perform. On Boise State's final drive, he escapes the five-mississippi pressure by rolling to his right. Kirby Moore runs an out-and-up, faking his defender and streaking downfield. Southwick lofts a beautiful pass, a spiral as tight as Ricky Tjong-A-Tjoe's skinny jeans, a throw as accurate as the local-blogger-penned autobiography of Kellen Moore, *Tell Me Moore*. The throw is exquisite, fantastic, complete. Plop, it lands in Kirby Moore's hands, and he runs it in for the score.

The clock winds down, the buzzer kazoo sounds, and Boise State walks away with another Great Effort. They remain tied with every other team in major college football at No. 1 in the USA Today Coaches Mentors Poll.

**Mountain West Encouragementship Game: Boise State vs.
Nevada**

With the Mickey Mouse sand timer running low in the fourth quarter, Joe Southwick recognizes this might be Boise State's last possession. "Positive time out," Southwick calls.

The team retreats to their positive time out corner, decorated like a spaceship because that's what the team decided it wanted. Southwick lounges in a papasan chair made to look like the moon. Charles Leno wedges himself into a cardboard rocket.

Tim Socha brings snacks.

While they sip on juice boxes, Petersen delivers a pep talk so sincere and inspiring that the Bronco players could run through a brick wall after he was done---seriously, it would feel real good to run through a brick wall because no one has hit anything all season long. It has been torture for Darian Thompson.

Back on the field, Southwick lines up under center. "Hut, hut, hike please." The Bronco receivers run zig-zagging routes across the field as Wyoming defenders' heads spin. Shane Williams Rhodes disappears for a moment behind the 30-yard-line pillow, popping back up just in time for Southwick to see him and deliver the pass. Williams-Rhodes powerwalks the rest of the way for the winning score.

Bowl game vs. Bowling Green

Check out these CTE Bowl gift bags. You've got a heart rate monitor, a Nike fuel band, a Jawbone, a FitBit, and the new cookbook from Jerry Seinfeld's wife.

There's an industrial roll of bubble wrap, per player. There's *Wishbone* on Blu-Ray. The bag itself is a reusable grocery bag, and it is filled with coupons for Ace bandage. And everyone got a body pillow with their name on it. Wonder if the gift bags for the Famous Idaho Low-Carb Potato Bowl were this good.

The game itself is a rather predictable Boise State effort-fest. While the two teams may be ranked similarly in the polls, the actual on-field performance couldn't be more drastic. Boise State's defense forces three takeaways followed quickly by three apologies. The Bronco offense scores at will, always keeping in mind the feelings of others.

"This is football?!" someone screams from the stands. He is redirected to a new activity.

The future

You would not recognize college football today, mostly because it is Ultimate Frisbee played on gymnastics mats. Halftime is a doctor's physical. Postgame is a counseling session.

For their effort, the heads of the NCAA have dramatically lowered injuries across all levels of college football. Instead of concussions and ACL tears, now the most common injuries are shin splints and side ache. The NCAA, in its zeal for safety, has rendered your grandfather's football inert, but at least no one suffers head trauma anymore. Grandpa would appreciate that.

The upcoming season for the Boise State football team looks promising, as does every college football team's season because the NCAA has mandated that there are no winners or losers.

This pleases the University of Idaho greatly.

Timeline 5: Don't Knock the Hawk

It's a three-way tie for possession.

Matt Paradis clutches the ball for dear life, and so do two Washington defensive linemen. Tie goes to the offense, but what happens when there's a three-way tie and two of them are defensive players? Where is your God now?!

The referees have no clue; their weekend refresher seminar did not cover this. Guess the game's over and everyone just goes home? Seems reasonable.

Washington head coach Robb Akey is furious. How could they end the game now?! Just as his rope-a-dope plan for a 30-point comeback was starting to take shape! He had the Boise State Broncos exactly where he wanted them, in a huge lead, like usual. This was his plan!

Boise State head coach Dan Hawkins is Zen. "Namaste, you guys," Hawkins says. "Would Gandhi argue over a fumble?"

Hawkins lets Washington have the ball.

The next Washington series, the Huskies are stoned on their first two plays when Tyler Horn shoots five yards into the backfield to drop Bishop Sankey and Blake Renaud comes on a delayed blitz to take down Keith Price.

Robb Akey punts on third down because he forgot what down it was.

Washington loses by a crazy amount of points.

Boise State vs. Air Force, September 13

Triple option left.

Counter right.

Fake dive, screen pass.

Fake screen, dive pass.

Dan Hawkins stands on the sideline mesmerized by the Air Force offense. Who even has the ball? The spellbinding display of illusion resembles one of those hidden-ball street acts where the magician makes a ball disappear under one of three cups and you always guess wrong where it is. Dan Hawkins is always guessing wrong on where Air Force's football is.

It sure would be helpful to have Demarcus Lawrence around for this madness. Lawrence, having been notified by NFL teams that their draft boards read "1a Jadeveon Clowney, 1b Demarcus Lawrence, 547 Johnny Manziel," has decided to forego his junior season at Boise State and spend the year in CrossFit training until next May's NFL Draft. He was last seen carrying a tree up the Boise foothills and pulping his own wheatgrass.

Instead of a Lawrence-heavy gameplan, the strategy for stopping the Air Force attack is to outscore the Air Force attack. So far, the plan seems to be working. Jay Ajayi has 100 yards rushing and two scores. Southwick has 200 yards passing and a pair of touchdowns. The seesaw battle between Boise State's pro-

style offense and Air Force's bag of gadgets makes for riveting television---well, as riveting as one can get with Todd Christensen calling a game on CBS Sports Network.

Late in the fourth quarter, Joe Southwick hits Gabe Linehan on a seam route for the winning touchdown. It is the Chicago Connection Delivery of the Day.

Someone in the stands just won a free pizza, and when the new JumboTron---all 1,300 square feet and sparkling HD of it---zooms in on the pizza winner, you can see his nose hairs, that's how sharp the new video board is. Fans have never looked so detailed and wrinkly.

Boise State vs. Nevada, October 19

Hawkins' departure took everyone by surprise, even personal biographer David Augusto. In the dark of night, Hawk stole out of town for the head coaching job at De La Salle High School, muttering something about "Bigger isn't better, better is better" and fawning over the refreshing lack of intramurals at the high school level.

Where will athletic director Gene Bleymaier turn for the next Boise State coach?

Trials seem to flock to Bleymaier, like moths to a flame or Vandal graduates to an Arby's job fair. The man is a juggernaut of tribulation. Two years ago, the NCAA came down hard on Boise State's lack of institutional control and sleepovers, and Bleymaier saved his job by spinning the controversy into an income stream: Buster Bronco air mattresses and blue-and-orange Murphy beds. Last year, he

came under fire for naming the new Football Complex after Burgles McFlurry, an old high school friend he owed a favor. Now he must find a replacement for Dan Hawkins.

The hits just keep coming.

As always, Bleymaier rises to the task. He finds a head coach within the week and preps him for a debut against Nevada. Who is the new hire? Bleymaier's not saying. Instead of announcing the new hire with an introductory press conference or a widespread media release, Bleymaier is going to milk every last ounce of marketing opportunity from this one. The new coach will be revealed as the Broncos take the field against the Wolf Pack.

Is it defensive coordinator Pete Kwiatkowski? Certainly he deserves to be considered. Did Bleymaier go back to the well and pluck an old-timer like Houston Nutt or Dirk Koetter? No thanks on the first, sure thing on the second. Or maybe Gene B. found a new diamond in the rough, an up-and-comer that no one has ever heard of? Rumor has it it's a girl.

Bronco Nation is giddy with anticipation. Nevada takes the field to a chorus of boos and derisive Kaepernick acrostics. Boise State's players enter next, to raucous cheering and several failed attempts at a "Boise!...State!" chant.

Next is the coach.

Dry ice covers the blue turf.

Fireworks shoot into the air from the base of the tunnel.

“Hello My Baby Hello My Darling” plays from the PA.

A shadowy figure emerges.

It is riding a golf cart.

Lou Holtz!

Mountain West championship game: Fresno State vs. Utah State

The city of Boise is on fire.

Not literally, that would be dangerous. It is a figurative fire. A fire of emotions. The undefeated Boise State Broncos have been shunned from the Mountain West championship game, forced to stay at home and watch their Netflix while others play for the conference title. Doesn't seem fair, does it? Well, according to the NCAA infractions report, them's the breaks.

Turns out, Dan Hawkins fled Boise so quickly because he had an inkling he might have done something wrong. Can you pay for a weekend retreat to a Tony Robbins seminar for all your players? Can you mail potential recruits a 10-CD set of the best of Bon Jovi and a free sample of HerbaLife (call Hawk to order)? Turns out no, you cannot.

The student-athletes are the real victims here---and the Mountain West championship game television audience. The 7-5 Bulldogs and the 7-5 Aggies play to a near stalemate of field goals before Fresno punches in the game's only

touchdown late in the fourth quarter to win. Derek Carr hoists the Mountain West trophy and pops the collar on his championship polo shirt. Sigh.

Vegas Bowl: Boise State vs. Arizona

It was nice of the NCAA to send a card. It was the least they could do.

When word got out that the violations against Boise State had been dropped--- something about the NCAA investigator assigned to the case being a secret Somali pirate without scruples or an American work visa---the NCAA backtracked just as fast as it could. It reinstated all the Boise State wins it took away. It send that nice card, an e-card with a jewel-faced basset hound and the word “Whoopsiedoodles” in Word Art over the dog’s head.

They even got Boise State into the Vegas Bowl to say sorry.

Head coach Lou Holtz was kind of looking forward to the offseason because, man, this coaching thing is a lot of work for a 100-year-old. When Holtz looks across the field at Arizona’s Rich Rodriguez, he sees himself 50 years younger and 50 pounds heavier. He wants to grab Rodriguez by the shirt lapels and tell him, “Get out now before you’re hosting a studio show with Mark May and debating the strength of schedule of MWC teams for no apparent reason.”

The Broncos sleepwalk through the Vegas Bowl---*another* Vegas Bowl, thanks for nothing NCAA---knowing full well that their undefeated season should have

netted them more. Like a BCS bowl. You really think 9-3 Purdue is a better fit in the Orange Bowl than Boise State? Gah, someone fix college football please.

The future

Dan Hawkins is back. After a season-and-a-half at De La Salle high school, Hawkins was let go for being too New Age (his interpretation of the firing) and not winning (the school's official reason). Good thing Hawk is best friends with Gene Bleymaier and that former Bronco head coach Lou Holtz retired to a Florida golf cart community last year.

Speaking of Bleymaier, the Bronco athletic director is at it again. He has finally secured naming rights to Bronco Stadium. The grand opening of the Doritos Locos Taco Supreme Stadium is scheduled for Week One of the 2018 season when Boise State opens against the College of Idaho.

Three-quarters capacity is expected to show.

The rest will watch the game through the live feeds of everyone else's Google Glass.

Timeline 6: The Darkest Timeline

The football disappears.

Someone stuffed the football up his shirt, and now no one knows where it is. Was it Joe Southwick? No, too svelte. Cyborg Jay Ajayi? Not likely. Conjoined Charles Leno-Paradis? Possibly.

Referees decide that the only fair way to determine who gets possession is to do an XFL-style sprint for the football. Shane Williams-Rhodes and Kasen Williams line up at the fifty-yard-line, the ball at the 20. At the referee's signal, both men take off for the ball, sprinting across the Washington Stadium wasteland. It turns out, each hired a Tonya Harding goon to take out the other. SWR swerves around his attacker, Williams runs the other direction in fear. Boise State ball.

Welcome to the new NCAA.

Cyborg Ajayi takes the handoff on the next play and bulldozes ahead for 10 yards, literally, he has a bulldozer shovel for legs. Kids these days and their robotic cosmetic surgeries. It's getting a little out of hand if you ask us old-timers!

Joe Southwick, 100 percent human, lofts a beautiful pass through a cloud of drones and ozone and smack into the waiting arms of Matt Miller on a Segway. Touchdown. Extra point by zombie Dan Goodale is good.

One-eyed Coach Pete stares confidently from the sideline. Too bad Nick Patti was framed for murder. He would have loved this.

Boise State versus Southern Miss, September 28

NCAA president Craig James has issued a decree: "All football teams must play on green grass, the way nature intended and the way God prefers, I know because we had lunch the other day, at Panera, he ordered the soup. That is so like God!"

No fancy turf colors. No fancy fake grass. If Boise State is not in compliance by kickoff of the Southern Miss game, in 15 minutes mind you, the full wrath of Craig James will be felt. He will disband the team and reassign players to work the phones at his Presidential campaign headquarters. Yes, President of the United States. This is the darkest timeline.

Quickly, the two teams move across the river to Julia Davis Park. The park grass is soft and lush and filled with dog poo. This is no place to play a football game. There are senior citizens in paddle boats not more than thirty feet away. The Discovery Zone bathrooms cannot accommodate 35,000 people. Think of the strain on the plumbing!

One-eyed Coach Pete begins the game with ten straight running plays, hoping to wear this Southern Miss team down so we all can just go home. Craig James issues a decree: No more running.

Joe Southwick takes to the air. The end zones, marked with picnic blankets, soon fill with Boise State players spiking footballs. Craig James issues a decree: No more touchdowns.

Zombie Dan Goodale begins his assault on the scoreboard, kicking field goals left and right, through the oak tree goal posts.

Football in a park. How ludicrous.

They would never have to do this garbage at Idaho.

The flagship university of the West, Idaho enjoys the problems of the 1 percent. Too much donations. Too much fan support. Their 90,000-seat Kibbie Dome is always full. Nothing less than excellence for the defending national champions and head coach Bill Belichick.

Boise State @ Colorado State, November 2

All of Boise State's Dutch players have been deported. Every player born in a Catholic hospital has been extradited to The Vatican. Matt Miller, Boise State's leading receiver, has been placed in an iron lung.

It would appear that Boise State's only ally is Mountain West commissioner Karl Benson. Together, one-eyed Chris Petersen and tattoo-sleeved Benson come up with a plan to fight back against the reign of terror of Craig James. Did you know James replaced the Heisman Trophy statue with a bronze bust of himself

shirtless? Did you know that SMU gets 12 straight byes into the four-team BCS playoff?

The madness has got to stop. Benson and Petersen decide that the Colorado State game will be their chance to make a statement. The Broncos will field the BSU swimming and diving team plus some local Boise bloggers with college eligibility. It will be a thumb to the nose of the college football literati. It's basically a boycott.

The swimmers and bloggers beat Colorado State by 30.

The local bloggers score a garbage time touchdown.

Mountain West championship game

Craig James has canceled the Mountain West championship game because it interfered with a fundraising dinner for his Presidential campaign. The night's entertainment: A roast of Mike Leach.

The Mountain West awards a de facto championship to Boise State. Craig James issues a decree: No de facto championships.

Poinsettia Bowl: Boise State vs. Navy

Losing half his roster to deportation and assorted made-up violations, one-eyed Coach Pete turned in one of his best coaching performances, leading the Broncos to a 10-2 regular season and a berth in the Poinsettia Bowl against Navy.

NCAA commissioner Craig James loves the military, as any Presidential candidate would. He also hates Boise State, so he gives Navy the okay to play the game using actual weapons and military equipment if needed. Navy parks a battleship in the Qualcomm Stadium end zone. Dear Commissioner laughs hysterically. One-eyed Coach Pete wills out a 3-0 double overtime win.

The future

As America gets used to a Craig James POTUS and the country's sewer rats raise huzzahs nationwide, James appoints trusted Craig James dog Dog to the role of NCAA president. What is the NCAA like under the leadership of a weimaraner? Rather aimless, but so much better than it was under Craig James.

Every school has had to adopt a canine for a mascot, which is how we end up with the Boise State Beagles versus the Tulsa Golden Shih Tzus in the Doorbell Bowl. One-eyed Coach Pete has moved on to bigger and better things, like head coach of the NFL's new moon franchise. In his place, the Broncos have turned to one-eyed Jared Zabransky to lead them.

Zabransky and the Beagles win the bowl game handily, and the next night, two-time defending national champion Idaho wins a third straight title, just in time for the Earth to be consumed by fire.