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“Lamar Jackson’s Worth”

To make sure we do not misunderstand: Everything about Baltimore Ravens’ owner, Steve Bisciotti, not offering Lamar Jackson the highest paying contract to date for any NFL player reeks of racism!

This is not the sort of thing that is ambiguous. This is a Joe Friday, “Dragnet” kind of thing. Remove the speculation and dismiss the spin. Everyone! Enter the real world, believing what your eyes can see. If in 2018 you said that he was “more better” for wide receiver—or running back—detach from the conscious or unconscious bias and occupy your enlightened space in 2022. It will be alright.

After the 2021 season concluded with the Los Angeles Rams defeating the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl LVI, attention shifted to DeShaun Watson and all of the machinations which would lead to disciplinary action against another young Black quarterback on the cusp of his athletic prime as a professional football quarterback. Had it not been for the day-to-day reporting all about nothing related to the alleged sexual misconduct, Lamar Jackson’s name would have been at the top of the daily humdrum keeping the focus on the NFL during the 2022 off-season.

In August 2021, the Buffalo Bills signed quarterback Josh Allen to a six-year extension to pay \$258 million—just \$150 million is guaranteed. The chart below contrasts Josh Allen’s performance to that point in his NFL career with Lamar Jackson’s performance through the 2020 season.

Player	Age	W-L	Comp	Att	Pass Yards	TDs	Ints	Sacks	Sack Yards	Runs	Run Yards	TDs
Lamar Jackson	23	30-7	606	947	7085	68	18	68	337	482	2906	19
Josh Allen	24	28-15	836	1353	9707	67	31	92	609	300	1562	25

Lamar Jackson is the best-performing quarterback of all times, the undisputed u-25 GOAT, but he is the lowest-earning starting quarterback of the 2018 draft.

Now compare Josh Allen’s compensation in comparison with other 2018 quarterback first round draft choices. Note that Lamar Jackson is at the bottom of the heap.

Table 1.—Salaries of 2018 First Round Quarterbacks

Drafted	Player	Paid, 2018-2021
7th	Josh Allen	\$38, 114, 794
1st	Baker Mayfield	\$33,048,675
3d	Sam Darnold	\$30,507,708
10th	Josh Rosen	\$18, 661, 992
32d	Lamar Jackson	\$9,758,549

The Baltimore Ravens should conduct a poll asking fans to indicate if they think Lamar Jackson has been underpaid. Here is a prediction about the results of such a poll.

Respondent	Yes	No	Not Sure
Black	96%	4%	0
White	43%	51%	6%
Hispanic	89%	9%	2%

Back In 2018, NFL general managers, coaches, scouts, and owners all agreed that collegiately, Josh Allen played the quarterback position better than Lamar Jackson. Oh, yeah—they made it up and it stuck. Indeed, it was more than simply that Josh Allen was more competent. Those coaches, general managers, and owners all agreed that Lamar Jackson was inadequate—more likely, less than capable—to play the quarterback position in the NFL. The Buffalo Bills owner drank that Kool-Aid, too, and drafted Josh Allen from Wyoming instead of a Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback from Louisville. Only makes sense if you allow for racism. There is this quote, “Only the white man can allow racism to disarm his ability for rational thinking.”

The conspiracy to limit Lamar Jackson began before he entered the University of Louisville. The NFL collaborated and except for Ozzie Newsome, Jackson likely would never have become an NFL starting (“franchise”) quarterback.

In the first weekend of September 2016 I drove from Gainesville, Florida to Auburn, Alabama to check out DeShaun Watson as the Clemson Tigers played the Auburn Tigers in the first game of the season. I intended to check out Lamar Jackson playing Charlotte in Louisville on September 1st. I balked because Charlotte wasn’t strong enough to defend Lamar Jackson at all and I wanted to see Jackson against strong competition. Frankly, I missed seeing Lamar Jackson play ball in college—except on TV. As for Watson, he played lackluster, in my eyes, at Auburn. I saw none of the dynamism I had watched on TV the previous season. I remember thinking that he must be hurt. I know I didn’t leave Auburn thinking I would draft him if I had a first-round pick. I am certain, looking back, Watson had an injury that Auburn did not know about.

As for Lamar Jackson, I already knew.

Yet, I didn't know. I never knew that my own university, the University of Florida, low key, only wanted to make Lamar Jackson a wider receiver or a DB. At that time, I did know that the University of Florida wanted Derrick Henry from Yulee, Florida. I saw Derrick Henry run over my high school, Gainesville High School on a night that I saw Will Muschamp at that high school game. I didn't know Muschamp personally, but I saw him and I was about to go over and insist that we do everything to get this Derrick Henry boy. I didn't go over because Muschamp had his two sons with him. I didn't even know the Derrick Henry's name, had never heard of the boy. I was talking to some old friends when I looked up and saw Henry breaking way for an 80-yard run. A few minutes later he ran a second long touchdown run over the same left side. I knew in an instant that this was the very best running back I had ever seen. No question. I later found out Muschamp was there scouting/recruiting Derrick Henry—only as a defensive end.

It's a true story. In case you don't know: Highly paid football coaches are really not that smart—sometimes.

I first noted Jackson in Louisville as a freshman and even though he was not starting at that time, I could see—even on TV--that he was a rare quarterback who would be indefensible in the NFL. On the first Saturday in October 2016, Louisville met Clemson in Clemson and lost the game 36-42. If you check the box score from that game this is what you will find.

Players	Comp	Att	Pass Yards	TDs	Ints	Runs	Run Yards	TDs
Lamar Jackson	27	44	295	1	1	31	162	2
Deshaun Watson	20	31	306	5	3	14	91	0

That Clemson team beat Alabama for the national championship. The Clemson defense had no answer for Lamar Jackson and Jackson was barely 20 years old in 2016. Only in an irrational world could Lamar Jackson sink to the 32d pick in the 2018 NFL draft.

When DeShaun Watson was taken in the first round—pick number eleven in the 2017 NFL draft—I was very certain that Lamar Jackson would be an early first round draft choice in the 2018 NFL draft. Rather suddenly, after the end of the 2017 season I began to hear very disturbing speculation about Lamar Jackson's unsuitability to play the quarterback position in the NFL. Pundits and commentators joined in the not very silent conspiracy, suggesting that Lamar Jackson would do himself a favor and embarrassment if he opted to play wide receiver in the NFL. Of course, as a wide receiver candidate Jackson would not be considered in the early rounds of the NFL draft and might be allowed to join a team as an undrafted free agent.

I never saw any evidence of Josh Allen's capability to play quarterback at the NFL level, but the white people associated with the NFL were generally in agreement that he was a great candidate for NFL success. It was quite puzzling to me, being completely in the dark about Josh Allen's ability and skill as a quarterback. These NFL experts—including the draft gurus—seemed to have purposely ignored a relatively low pass completion percentage for Allen at Wyoming. This was completely baffling in that for Lamar Jackson the gurus pegged him as an inaccurate passer at

Louisville at 57%. For the experts, Allen's 56.2% against relatively low-grade competition somehow signaled that he would be just fine as an accurate NFL passer. Meanwhile, Lamar Jackson was incorrigible as a passer and while he was at or above 60% for the entire 2017 season except for the bowl game, he was disqualified as "inaccurate."

In Josh Allen's first NFL season, he managed to complete only 52.8% of his 320 pass attempts. In his second season Allen completion percentage elevated to 58.8%. Meanwhile Lamar Jackson improved on his college mark of 57% in his first season, completing 58.2%, increasing to 66.1% in his professional sophomore season.

Internet reports characterized Lamar Jackson's 2021 season as "a struggle." The pundits and commentators were unanimous in convincing the football public that Jackson turned in a subpar performance, particularly when contrasted with his 2019 MVP season. It didn't seem to matter that Jackson played the quarterback position better than ever in 2021 while leading his team to four comeback wins in the fourth quarter before sustaining an injury early in his twelfth game. As often is the case, the commentators manipulated statistics to reflect average or mediocre performance. They were intent to overlook how three of his 13 interceptions happened in a less than three-minute span in a four-interception game which he and the team managed to win anyway. Another pass directly to the chest of a rookie receiver bounced off his hands as the receiver nonchalantly continued running while a Los Angeles Chargers defender dove to the ground to snare the ricochet pass inches from the ground. They did not bother to explain that his deep threat wide receiver dropped three touchdown passes in one game, and another TD pass to his All-Pro tight end was called back because of a penalty called away from the action. The called penalty was not an actual rule infraction. These writers portrayed Lamar Jackson as having "regressed" without using the word. And without believing what their eyes could see.

Even as these articles were being pumped out it was very clear that these pundits and commentators were aiding and abetting the well-conceived playbook which has contributed sufficiently to the early attrition of record-setting Black quarterbacks. In the case of Lamar Jackson, his complete elimination from the NFL is likely unlikely but, if not early attrition, then mitigation of his future salary would benefit the owner of the Baltimore Ravens. Steve Bisciotti has already treated Lamar Jackson as a second-class citizen.

Leading to the start of training camp for the 2022 season, any honest appraisal of Lamar Jackson's record of performance will necessarily lead to Lamar Jackson being paid as the highest paid player in the NFL. The evidence is so overwhelming that had it been proven that the Baltimore Ravens were financially unable to pay Jackson more than Aaron Rodgers, the remaining 31 teams would take up a collection plate to raise however many millions it would take to put Jackson far above the \$51 million Rodgers takes every year from the Green Bay Packers.

The case of Lamar Jackson was given to Black men by white men for the lessons it brings about exploitation. Of course, the NFL is already and from the beginning, the most public of all private, corporate entities inside the United States. Lamar Jackson has to be the most gifted, talented, and smartest person to play the quarterback position. Add to that, Jackson is the hardest-working

individual to ever play NFL quarterback and instantly we have what should have been the most marketable person to be the face of the NFL for the next ten or fifteen years. The NFL had one main disqualifier to bar Lamar Jackson from taking over that elevated position as Tom Brady leaves the field of play. Lamar Jackson—he Black. Unmistakably, Black and not identifying in any way whatsoever with white men. MAGA white men, incapable or unwilling to see. White men who represent the NFL's most favorite demographic—cannot like Lamar Jackson or admire him any more than a white cop observing a Black man in a red Corvette with tinted windows. They do not like Lamar Jackson, and they cannot stand it that their ten-year-old son wants to emulate Lamar Jackson.

Agents—and owners didn't like it when JaMarcus Russell used his homeboys as agents, and they can't stand the idea that Lamar Jackson represents himself. What happens if he is successful?

It's not just the owners who do not want to pay him as the highest paid quarterback in the League. The agents really don't like it that Lamar Jackson is showing all these young brothers how stupid they are for handing off 3% or whatever amount it is to a young Jewish fella who can't even buckle up a chin strap. Ezekiel could tell you. The Jewish agent—white—is connected to the owner—ten of them are Jewish, and white, themselves—are connected to the journalist who may have gotten journalist license from Northwestern and as a reporter for ESPN he is connected to the head coach, the redneck from—well, one of them southern states. Of course, the redneck from Mississippi or Texas is white.

There are many reports found on the Internet where the writer uses football experts to set up the premise repeated in scores, maybe hundreds of pieces with an overall theme declaring, Lamar Jackson is not good enough to be paid like the most elite quarterbacks in this National Football League.

The entire thrust of the articles written about Lamar Jackson in the summer of '22 was devaluing Jackson. In that way, these reporters for ESPN, Sports Illustrated, NFL.com, and all the rest were discharging their responsibilities as surrogates for the establishment, you know what I mean? Yes, the owners, most especially Baltimore's Bisciotti. And of course, they have a nonfiduciary responsibility to average white fan who feels kinship with Donald Trump and the mediocre select group known as MAGA. You must see the contract talks between the owner and Jackson as a real signal that the Ravens' owner as very much intentional when it comes to exploiting Jackson.

There are few euphemistic ways of saying this, but we will put it as succinctly as it can be put—authentically. *If Lamar Jackson was a white quarterback* who had been named an MVP at 22 years old and the youngest MVP ever named to that distinction and he had become the first two-time one thousand yard runner as a quarterback in the National Football League; and except for Dan Marino, if he had exceeded all other quarterbacks in the history of the NFL in combined running and throwing touchdowns in his first 49 games as a starting quarterback; Lamar Jackson would have been chillin' at South Beach on his \$51+ million dollar a year salary long before reporting to training camp, 2022.

As it were, we are into September 2022 without an extension or new contract for the most underpaid player in the history of the NFL.

We are left with these daily reports of speculation about this contract and the filler is the devaluation of Lamar Jackson. No, not like when he was being introduced to this NFL-version of American racism. In that iteration Bill Pollan was the primary spokesman—recommending that Jackson move to wide receiver as if changing from a football position of starting quarterback for which he had been training since high school and as a minor league professional at Louisville to running routes and catching the football instead of throwing the damn ball made any sense at all. Like telling a Harvard Med graduate to switch and become a CNA. Or recommending the Chief Justice should switch out to paralegal or maybe a clerk for the district court judge.

Further in this text, we will highlight this one article as indicative of almost imperceptible—to the untrained eye—micro-aggressions practiced today. Unfortunately, not only are brothers in the game not too hip to the game, but so are major numbers of all the brothers who never played ball but indulge themselves in uninformed soliloquy reminiscent of Stephen A. Smith in barbershops or on blogs all over the Internet.

It's no different than what you see in the political game. The masters of the mindset are controlling the target audience and part of the methodology requires activation of a kind of echo chamber. Inside the loop, the lie must take root and be repeated, almost ad infinitum. The lie must drown out any contrary spirit of disbelief. The basic lie concerning the topic at hand is this: Black athletes playing quarterback are inferior to white quarterbacks playing the game the right way. You should have peeped it long ago. When you first heard it before it became the drumbeat. Did you hear it inside your head white when they said, "the right way?" Right?

Early on—even before McNabb, Culpepper, and Smith in 1998—the first attack against the Black quarterback was the ole "not accurate." I mean, they couldn't just outright say, "He's too dumb to play quarterback."

The propaganda war formed against Black quarterbacks in the NFL is keyed to keep the idea of Black inferiority in place.

In the public relations back and forth, the harmful racist tropes are not only intentional but strategic. Why else would FOXNews publish the following anonymous fairy tale so easily debunked by a look at the facts—at the numbers portraying the performance of an NFL quarterback when the raw performance numbers are so readily available online? These detractors are certain that people will accept the lies and the exaggerated lies and not look up the widely published numbers at espn.com, nfl.com or profootballreference.com (**my Sources**).

Here is an excerpt from a July 25, 2022 FOXNews presentation on the Internet.

*Lamar Jackson won an MVP and won 37 games as the team's starting quarterback since he took the reins in 2018 and is next in line to receive a lucrative contract extension. However, he's still receiving criticism from figures in the NFL. **One anonymous defensive coordinator wasn't completely sold on him or his abilities as a quarterback and suggested he would never be considered as a Tier 1 type of quarterback.***

"If he has to pass to win the game, they ain't winning the game," the defensive coordinator told The Athletic in a story published Monday. "He's so unique as an athlete and he's really a good football player, but I don't (care) if he wins the league MVP 12 times, I don't think he'll ever be a 1 as a quarterback.

"He'll be a 1 as a football player, but not as a quarterback. So many games come down to two-minute, and that is why they have a hard time advancing even when they are good on defense. Playoffs are tight. You have to be able to throw the ball, and he is just so inconsistent throwing the ball. It is hit or miss."

We lifted this excerpt from an article found on the Internet and we cannot imagine a clearer piece of written evidence of the racism used to limit, restrict, and even prohibit Black men from full participation in America's enterprise to achieve significant wealth. This is an example of the more sophisticated forms of propaganda and lies—21st century microaggressions designed to induce low-level anxiety replacing the lynchings of the early 20th century. Similarly, these low-level microaggressions are sufficiently camouflaged to operate against Black men, phantom-style. They (we) don't even know what hit them.

It is worth pulling apart each sentence—each phrase in this commentary—supposedly from two NFL coaches—defensive coordinators no less.

First, the writer mentions in his preface to the coordinators' comments that Jackson is "next in line to receive a lucrative contract." In other words, "I am here to do and say all I can to make sure that Lamar Jackson does not get a contract equal in value to a real, American quarterback." He is putting the reader or the listener on notice that what he is about to say should be understood to denigrate Lamar Jackson as an NFL starting quarterback because, well, he's Black and not a real quarterback.

At bottom, the words are intended to confirm that Jackson is not a good enough passer. To be sure, the writer's task is relatively easy to achieve because this has been a consistent theme concerning Jackson since before the 2018 NFL draft where in the lead-up the NFL and the media joined forces to devalue Lamar Jackson, Heisman Trophy and all. In this most recent iteration of unmerited criticism, the haters refined their attack, stipulating that Jackson, if put in a position where running is not an option because of being behind by multiple scores and time running out, would not be able to help his team make a comeback and win via the pass.

It is such a ridiculously outrageous proposition to make given Jackson’s entire professional performance but especially his 2021 performance. During Jackson whole NFL career—they should play this sound every time he steps on the field:

“All I do is win, win, win, win, win, win.”

“And they stay there!”

We could watch the tape to see how the Baltimore Ravens completed four comeback wins trailing by multiple scores in each—even losing by up to 16 points in the fourth quarter. That is fun because you can see a rather spectacular display of passing prowess. Oh, it’s # 8 for the Ravens. That might be the process for the two defensive coordinators, especially the one claiming Jackson could never be a “Tier 1” quarterback, or that “if Jackson was forced to pass when trailing in the score, the Ravens would never win.” Or we could simply consult a data source such as profootballreference.com and ask, “How many attempts, completions, yards gained passing and running and how many touchdowns and interceptions did Lamar Jackson make when trailing by up to 16 points?”

Jackson's 2021 seasons included six fourth quarter or overtime come-from-behind attempts. He was successful in four of the six. Unfortunately, Jackson lost the first game of the 2021 season for his team by losing a fumble attempting to pass in his first and only possession of overtime. The Las Vegas Raiders scored a touchdown and won the game three plays later. Against the Pittsburgh Steelers Jackson orchestrated a potential game-winning drive but lost the game when Mark Andrews failed to grab a ball with one hand. The Ravens missed that two-point conversion and lost the game 19-20.

More than merely interesting, the writer and the defensive coordinator cited in the article deliberately chose to feed the people a piece of propaganda already proven by Jackson to be patently false. In 2021, circumstances surrounding the Baltimore Ravens demanded that Lamar Jackson throw the football significantly more often than in his previous three seasons. It was not only the season-ending loss of the top two running backs that slowed the Ravens’ running attack, but the unavailability of top-shelf running talent forced Jackson to run more often as well with greater responsibility to gain first downs in the short down and distance situations. The opposing defenses changed defensive strategies against the Ravens and Jackson was forced to throw the ball against extreme blitz pressure, especially during the early portions of games. Injuries to the front five presented additional difficulty and lack of familiarity—offensive linemen unfamiliarity with each other—exacerbated the task of producing more than before in the passing game in the absence of Baltimore’s primary running backs. It was a lot. In those six games, the Ravens found themselves behind in the score ranging from being tied to down -16 in the fourth quarter.

“Lamar Jackson’s Worth”

Table 2.—Lamar Jackson, Ravens 4th Quarter Comebacks 2021

Opponents	Comp	Att	Pass Yards	TDs	Ints	Runs	Run Yards	TDs
Indiana	16	18	185	3	0	5	19	0
Minnesota	18	23	169	1	1	5	39	0
Detroit	1	4	36	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas City	7	9	128	0	1	9	49	2
Pittsburgh	6	7	69	1	0	0	0	0
Las Vegas	4	6	81	0	0	6	41	0
Total	52	67	668	5	2	25	148	2
Total*	52	66	668	5	2	23	148	2

* Less one spike, two kneel downs

Table 2's results reflect a 79% passing completion percentage; 10.1 yards passing per attempt; and 6.4 yards per rushing attempt.

Very few MVP, All-Pro and Pro-Bowl level quarterbacks on what are generally considered good teams, with good defenses find themselves trailing average or better teams by -16, -14, -11, -7, -1, and tied late in the fourth quarter. For Jackson it was six of the eleven games he played into the 4th quarter during 2021. Jackson helped his team win four of the six games. He lost one game when he lost a fumble in his first and only possession of overtime—virtually in the red zone. And, in his game against the Pittsburgh Steelers he brought his team back from 13-20 to 19-20 when his coach opted to try for the 2-pt conversion with 12 seconds remaining.

The second unidentified defensive coordinator emphasized Jackson's performance in the playoffs as his basis of assurance that Lamar cannot pass muster for the label, Top Tier 1. (What is that?!) The claim is so bogus as to be a criminal offense. Of course, we must acknowledge Lamar Jackson very hurtful mistake in the red zone and the pick six against the Buffalo Bills in the 2020 playoffs. That pick six was devastating. However, there were 58 seconds remaining in the third quarter and plenty of time enough for Jackson to lead a comeback. It is not beyond the scope of possibility that Lamar Jackson could lead his team to a victory in that one. However, when we consider his three other playoff games we are confronted with a very serious deficit in the performance of the Ravens' receivers—the pass catchers.

In the 2020 playoff game against the Tennessee Titans, Lamar Jackson ran the ball 48 yards to the end zone and that running touchdown was the difference in the ball game (20-13) Ravens won. Lamar Jackson had won his first playoff game.

The year prior, in the 2019 playoffs, consider Jackson's stat line against the Tennessee Titans.

In this game, Jackson threw a 74-yard TD pass to Seth Roberts on a first and ten at the Baltimore 31 after his team fell behind 0-14. It did not help the Ravens win the game because Roberts dropped a perfectly well-placed ball in his hands at his waist some 18 yards downfield in full stride. There is no DB in range to touch him. Clear path to the goal line. You could watch the

highlights right now. They gon’ take it down one day but you could see usually dependable Willie Snead dropping another pass at the first down marker later in that game. Here’s Lamar Jackson’s stat line in a playoff game at the age of 23 if we put in the six drops and the at least 84 additional passing yards. The pundits refused to point out that Lamar Jackson played a masterful game given the difficult circumstances faced. They could have easily pointed out how often his receivers failed to “help the quarterback out.” As you know, they usually always do. We included yardage from only two of the seven drops in that game, but if just those two balls had been caught, then Lamar Jackson would have gained more total yards—449 passing, 143 running for a total of 592 yards and more than any of the top ten quarterbacks in the history of the NFL playoffs. Even so, when you consider that Lamar Jackson actually did gain 508 yards running and passing in a playoff game at the age of 23 only an irrational person would claim that Jackson is not good enough to win in the playoffs or the Super Bowl. Here is the top 10+ quarterbacks in yards passing and their most prolific game passing in the playoffs.

Table 3.—Top 10+ Career Passing Yards Leaders: Most Yards Passing Playoff Game

Players	Age	Game Outcome	Comp	Att	Pass Yards	TD	Int	Runs	Run Yards	TDs	Total Yards
Lamar Jackson*	23	L, 12-28	38	59	449	2	2	20	143	0	592
Tom Brady	40	L, 33-41	28	48	505	3	0	1	6	0	511
Lamar Jackson	23	L, 12-28	31	59	365	1	2	20	143	0	508
Ben Roethlisberger	38	L, 37-48	47	68	501	4	4	1	0	0	501
Peyton Manning	28	w, 49-24	27	33	458	4	1	1	1	1	459
Aaron Rodgers	26	L, 45-51	28	42	423	4	1	3	13	1	436
John Elway	29	w, 37-21	20	36	385	3	0	5	39	0	424
Dan Marino	34	L, 22-37	33	64	422	2	3	0	0	0	422
Matthew Stafford	23	L, 28-45	28	43	380	3	2	2	1	1	381
Warren Moon	36	L, 38-41	36	50	371	4	2	2	7	0	378
Joe Montana	32	w, 20-16	23	36	357	2	0	4	13	0	370
Eli Manning	31	w, 37-20	21	33	330	3	1	4	10	0	340
Brett Favre	24	L, 17-27	28	45	331	2	2	0	0	0	331
Philip Rivers	37	L, 28-41	25	51	331	3	1	0	0	0	331

*--Includes 7 dropped passes.

For the benefit of Lamar Jackson and the pundits who make money commenting on the most minute details of Lamar Jackson professional life and otherwise, enlightenment begins with assessment of how salaries are determined for the second and subsequent contracts. Lamar Jackson, facing a 5th year without an extension, was due to make \$23 million in 2022.

The NFL and the NFLPA and the United States government cooperate to depress players wages. The contracts are one-sided “agreements” in which the owners hold all the leverage. While quarterbacks take much higher wages from the limited pot of money, they too are inadequately compensated.

Looking back, it seems reasonable to believe that after the initial or rookie contract salaries are determined by performance assessment. In other words, a quarterback is paid for the next four or five or however many future years based on his performance during the first, say, four seasons as a starting quarterback. A quarterback is ranked in a pecking order, by performance, and the highest-ranking player then is rewarded as the highest paid. Once that standard is set, the “junior” quarterbacks facing extensions or new contracts must negotiate a salary, either less than, commensurate with or exceeding the established highest paid player.

The magic in all of this rests with the owners.

For purposes of our discussion, we will stipulate that in 2022 the highest paid NFL quarterback is being compensated to the tune of about \$50 million a year. Both the dollar amount and the designation of best quarterback is a temporal arrangement, informally at least, as agreed upon by the owners. Since we are talking about a certain level of performance, we should be clear that what the owners, the pundits, and commentators who translate all of this to the fans and the public—as well as the players—consistently revise a set of performance measures based on normative expressions of quarterback goodness while suggesting that assessment is based on some set of established criteria.

In plain English, the norm is whoever is tagged as the greatest, whoever receives the highest rankings on live televised games, perhaps. Maybe the most camera-ready quarterback becomes the highest rated quarterback on the field. While the charade goes on, fans most often believe that highest paid quarterback is a result of a fair and balanced assessment of statistical performance because we are all super-aware of who led the league in passing yards and in interceptions.

Most of us are not more than casually familiar with norm-reference tests or criterion-reference tests from our school days. Fewer are aware of how these two significantly different methods of assessment are used to perpetuate mythologies about academic performance in American public schools, particularly to accentuate so-called learning gaps between Black and white students.

The NFL uses this lack of understanding of how the league influences our quarterback hierarchy to depress salaries. In the case of Lamar Jackson, the NFL has manipulated a comparison between Jackson and Kyler Murray instead of Aaron Rodgers.

Perhaps adding fidelity to the quantitative tools provided by the NFL and its subsidiaries would eliminate the misguided designations now used to set quarterback pay. The NFL and pundits are not interested to use QBR or quarterback rating to decide who should be paid the most. Meanwhile, just ahead of the Baltimore Ravens final answer as to Lamar Jackson’s 2022 salary and beyond, we get a glimpse of just how devious it is to offer Lamar Jackson a salary only slightly more than the \$230 million and \$49 million a year that the Arizona Cardinals agreed to pay Kyler Murray. Here is a direct comparison of the two quarterbacks. The comparison is across 46 games because Lamar Jackson has played three more games than Murray.

Player	Age	W-L	Comp	Att	TDs	Ints	Sacks	Sack Yards	Runs	Run Yards	TDs
Kyler Murray	24	22-23-1	1057	1581	70	34	106	771	314	1786	20
Lamar Jackson	24	36-10	805	1256	82	26	96	483	588	3545	21

Clearly, no analytics can be invented which would prove that Tyler Murray, by measure of performance is a better NFL quarterback than Lamar Jackson. How about Aaron Rodgers? Just as a matter of interesting contrast we are going to show Aaron Rodgers first 49 starts and his most recent 49 starts happening during Lamar Jackson’s first (and only) 49 starts.

When we review performance measures for both Jackson and Rodgers, we are forced to acknowledge that Aaron Rodgers has performed at a higher level of competency than Jackson during the most recent 49 games. Rodgers’ ability to protect the football and avoid interceptions and fumbles lost over his most recent 49 games places Rodgers ahead of all 32 starting quarterbacks in the NFL. When compared with Rodgers’ first 49 games, Lamar Jackson’s performance puts him ahead of that early version of Aaron Rodgers. Indeed, Rodgers accumulated two and a half times more interceptions in his first 49 starts than his most recent 49 games started (13). In this most recent 49 games, Rodgers lost nearly half as many fumbles (6) as the eleven he lost in his first 49 games.

We distilled the numbers (Table 4) to compile a comparison between what we think is the best quarterback performance since Lamar Jackson entered the League and became a starting quarterback and we show a side-by-side comparison with the reported GOAT for good measure. Our analysis supports the recommendation that Lamar Jackson is owed compensation at least equivalent to the highest paid, best-performance quarterback, Aaron Rodgers.

When we completed the task of determining an equitable level of annual compensation for Lamar Jackson, we are left with this puzzle: Why were virtually all NFL agents of commentary and the rest of the pundits so uniformly reporting negatively against Jackson receiving compensation in line with the highest paid NFL quarterback, but eager to shift the target to match the compensation agreed to by the Arizona Cardinals for Kyler Murray?

The reporting and the reactions across the NFL landscape concerning the process of Jackson’s contract negotiation is in keeping with the long-standing theme of racism and the extreme exploitation of Black men.

In all of its racist practices, the NFL has been most excruciatingly and painstakingly exploitative and disrespectful toward Black quarterbacks.

Since 1999, when Dennis Green selected Daunte Culpepper with the 11th pick of the 1999 NFL Draft and maneuvered other teams to take Donovan McNabb and Akil Smith with the second and third picks, the NFL has resolutely sought to limit and prematurely attrit Black quarterbacks.

Formerly, Michael Vick received the brunt of disparaging comments and actions to limit his success as a professional football quarterback in the NFL. Lamar Jackson replaced Michael Vick as the NFL's latest whipping boy.

It was evident that NFL was determined to diminish Michael Vick's success. The League, no longer able to continue total exclusion of Black quarterbacks, embarked on a strategy of masterful attrition. Undeniably, the NFL conspired in the most cunning and stealth fashion with law enforcement to eliminate dozens and dozens of Black athletes during the early 2000's and Michael Vick became the lead defendant and subsequent convicted felon. Michael Vick was prosecuted and incarcerated by federal authorities when the local Virginia commonwealth attorney refused to pursue the case because he knew it was a witch hunt. Since Vick's fall, his rehabilitation and rejuvenation and forced early retirement, one Black quarterback after another has faced early attrition under a variety of pretexts. As of late, Cam Newton was shown the exit door with nary a protest from a single pundit arguing against his early exit. And the NFL never was able to find a violation of law to use against Newton. The League did find willing collaborators in Houston to move against DeShaun Watson. The NFL effectively suspended Deshaun Watson for the entire season without any semblance of due process. After a year suspension the League initiated the suspension process then finalized an eleven-game suspension for the 2022 season and immediately had the NFL media begin advocating that Watson's suspension might and should be extended because he, Watson, did not show remorse.

Along with Patrick Mahomes of the Kansas City Chiefs, Lamar Jackson is one of the two most exciting players in this football League. With both at or below 26 years of age and holding extraordinary accomplishments as professional football players and quarterbacks they would stand to be the replacement for the NFL legends made in the last two decades. Problem is they are both Black. Peyton Manning, Tom Brady, Drew Brees and Aaron Rodgers were white and slow—except for Rodgers. Jackson and Mahomes are stunningly dynamic and fast and oh, so accurate in throwing the football. And so is Kyler Murray. And Black, too. Now, Mahomes got a white momma so for many whites, they identify Mahomes as, well, not Black. Jackson, on the other hand, has met every part of the predictable, racist tropes familiar to the entire country. The lead fake disqualifier for Jackson is that he is too dumb and too inaccurate. Amazingly, like with Michael Vick, Jackson is not a quarterback—he is a running back.

Of course, the juxtaposition of Kyler Murray and Lamar Jackson in this discussion about Jackson's contract extension was almost predictable: Two (Black) running quarterbacks. The analogy doesn't work because the formula requires Jackson to be compared to the highest paid quarterback, not another young Black quarterback who has performed well. As we will see, comparing Jackson to the most well-paid NFL quarterback is inadequate. That very tactic—establishing the pecking order then fitting the quarterback in according to his rank—is a distraction, all by itself.

The NFL can get away with this tactic and not only depress the salaries of all NFL players—let alone the quarterbacks—because fans and the players are not sufficiently aware of what the pool of money that the NFL allots to pay the players. Team doctors and trainers, coaches, team execs

and administrators are not paid from this “fund.” Players have been cheated out of their piece of the NFL pie and they do not necessarily know that. If Lamar Jackson knows this information, he can leverage the Baltimore Ravens to get his cut of the pie—he has already earned it from his once in a century performance for which he was so woefully underpaid.

First, we will review how these players are paid and illustrate how much they should be paid instead of lining the owner’s pockets.

These are pertinent facts regarding the source of revenue used to pay the 1,500 or so players under provisions agreed to by the NFLPA. These rules are highly exploitative of all the players—it don’t matter, Black or white, quarterback or punt returner. These facts can be found in various publications including Forbes Magazine.

- In 2011 the NFL and broadcast partners agreed to a TV contract worth \$27.9 billion. Covering ten years, this contract runs through the 2022 season. In 2021 the NFL concluded contract negotiations with its media partners resulting in a new \$111.8 billion contract covering the next ten years, ending in 2033.
- The most recent CBA established how the players would be compensated with 48.9% of total NFL revenue. As a practical matter, that 48.9% translates to the TV/media contract.

What we have done so far is establish that Lamar Jackson is almost certainly equivalent in performance, to the highest paid quarterback in the NFL. We know that the highest paid quarterback is not Kyler Murray but Aaron Rodgers. While doing this review we should look closely at the previous Baltimore quarterback, comparing Joe Flacco’s measures of performance with Jackson’s over the most recent 49 games as the Baltimore starting quarterback. This should help us understand how much greater Jackson is than his predecessor. Also, it provides clear evidence of how underpaid Lamar Jackson was during his first four seasons in the NFL.

Table 4.—Selected Quarterbacks Compared to Lamar Jackson
After First, Most Recent 49 Games Started

Player	W-L	Comp	Att	Pass Yards	TDs	Ints	Runs	Run Yards	TDs
Joe Flacco+	24-25	1236	1936	12213	62	43	76	178	6
Lamar Jackson**	37-12	852	1329	9967	84	31	615	3673	21
Aaron Rodgers*	29-20	1084	1676	13343	92	32	198	940	13
Aaron Rodgers**	39-10	1094	1631	12442	111	13	117	433	7
Tom Brady*	36-13	1013	1638	11085	76	41	128	220	2
Tom Brady**	37-12	1259	1942	14006	107	32	84	121	8

+Last 49 games started as a Raven

*First 49 games started

**Last 49 games started

According to Spotrac.com Joe Flacco earned \$73 million in his final four seasons in Baltimore (2015-2018). Since being relieved of duty mid-season, 2018, Flacco played in three different cities and has earned \$22 M in Denver, Philadelphia and with the New York Jets. Spotrac tracks Lamar

Jackson earnings, too. In his four seasons with the Baltimore Ravens, Lamar Jackson has earned slightly less than \$10 million, \$9,758,549. Even as players remind themselves and each other that it is a business, it is not. When the Baltimore Ravens do not increase the pay of its best player at the earliest possible date and the owner simply pockets the difference between what Flacco made in performing so much less competently than the rookie, I call it what it is—highway robbery. Forcing the Baltimore fans and Lamar Jackson to tolerate uncertainty in any way about Jackson being rewarded for being the League MVP, and the most prolific player by measure of quarterback performance in the history of the game is disrespectful to both the fans and to Jackson. To negotiate anything less than the highest paid contract in the NFL is plain disrespectful after Jackson performed to the tune of 37-12 and the greatest number of wins under age 25 in the history of all the starting quarterbacks in the 100-year history of this NFL. To so far exceed the performance of the so-called GOAT, Tom Brady, and the most recent MVP, Aaron Rodgers, and not be instantly compensated at that level at least is downright disrespectful.

In allowing the Baltimore Ravens to pay Lamar Jackson so little money and to draw out a decision to not pay him as the best player in the League when he has already demonstrated by his level of performance as more competent than the popularly designated best quarterback over comparable time in the league is further disrespect and it is wrong. It is not simply that the NFL is a business, it is exploitative. If the NFL had a commissioner or if the NFLPA had a president, they would be call out the Ravens for the worst in business practices and asserting that these are not best practices. They should be afraid that members of the Congress might—finally—investigate the NFL for anti-trust violations.

• \$2.79 Billion = one year of current TV/media contract (2011-2022)
• 2023-2033 deal increased from \$27.9 Billion to \$111.8 Billion – a 300% increase
• TV/media deal is guaranteed money. It represents the 48.9% cut for players of total revenue.
• Aaron Rodgers top earner at \$50 Million/year
• \$50 Million is .0179211% of \$2.79 Billion
• \$111.8 B is value of TV/media contract (2023-2033), \$10 Billion equal one year of TV/media contracts.
• \$179 Million is .0179211% of \$10 Billion
• During the life of this contract, the top QB should earn \$179 M per season.

Lamar Jackson’s offer to the Baltimore Raven, includes a generous hometown discount and by option year will require a salary commensurate with the 2021 level of pay for the top quarterback in the NFL.

Year	Signing Bonus	Salary	Comment
2022	\$59 Million	\$23 Million	
2023		\$77 Million	
2024		\$108 Million	
2025		\$139 Million	
Totals	\$59 Million	\$347 Million	4 years/\$407 Million
2026		\$179 Million	player option

As they say in the Pentecostal church that I go to, “That’s not where the story ends.”

The Baltimore Ravens and the owner, Steve Bisciotti are liable for severely underpaying Lamar Jackson. Under any application of antitrust law, the Ravens, the NFL and the NFLPA are severally liable.

Lamar Jackson has not only led the Baltimore Ravens in passing yards and passing touchdowns and been one of the leaders in both categories over the past three and a half seasons—49 starts—but he also been the Ravens’ leading rusher. For Baltimore, Lamar Jackson led the team in run attempts, yards running, and touchdowns scored. In 2021 he led the team in rushing yards while playing just 11 games, playing only one snap into the second quarter of game 12. Not only did he lead the team in rushing in that abbreviated 2021 season, but Jackson led the team in 2020 and 2019. The only season that Jackson did not lead the team in rushing was his rookie season, 2018, when he started only the last seven games. Even then he was second in rushing with 695 yards to Gus Edwards’ 718.

- Jackson was one 30 yard run shy of leading the team in rushing four straight seasons.

This is an amazing achievement. Even more amazing is the Baltimore Ravens refusal to make a big deal of this amazing reality. On a team whose entire identity is based on running the football, the leading rusher is the guy who was so drastically underpaid as the starting quarterback and the leading passer. Lamar Jackson held down three jobs on minimal pay for four years: 1) starting quarterback; 2) leading passer and 3) lead runner. The Baltimore Ravens will refuse to adequately compensate Lamar Jackson for holding down two and three jobs. But it is no different than if the CEO comes in and his CFO did not show up and went to work for another corporation—a competitor—and the CFO must fill that position. If he takes it upon himself and he does the job better than the CFO who left, he will only get paid for it if he demands it from the board of directors.

NFL owners are typically not concerned about winning football games—they win financially. The competition on the field does not determine if they think of themselves as winners or losers because they are going to win—dollars—in concessions.

However, they must at least pretend to care about winning games. In just four seasons, Lamar Jackson has proven to be the most influential quarterback in the history of professional football in terms of winning and losing. The way in which Jackson has used his own running ability to help win games is unprecedented. Once again, no quarterback has run the ball to help his team win football games with greater expertise. Pundits and commentators and announcers broadcasting the games have routinely tried to diminish Black quarterbacks by labeling them “running quarterbacks.” Most of the football public is misguided in thinking that a real or a franchise quarterback does not run the football. Following historical pattern, white people in any field eventually begin to try and mimic what Blacks are doing. As for the NFL, white quarterbacks have run the football forever. With the advent of Black quarterbacks, an artificial prohibition against

running the football and the extreme emphasis on passing or throwing the ball only crept in after the NFL/AFL merger. We are now at the stage where pundits speak favorably about white quarterbacks who run, as if only the white quarterback can remove the stigma of being a “running quarterback.” Implicitly, the pundits have now elevated the best white running quarterback— Josh Allen—to the top of the quarterback heap. They rank Allen above Jackson, citing the fact that Allen has the most rushing touchdowns since he entered the League in 2018. Allen is a proven player, a formidable competitor at the quarterback position but it is so fake to suggest that he has performed at a level beyond Lamar Jackson. We do include Allen in this group of quarterbacks who ran or run the football with very good results. Lamar Jackson—once again—is the outlier: Jackson has only lost one game in which he ran for at least 100 yards or scored at least one touchdown on the ground. This is an extraordinary level of athletic talent and skill—and competitive zeal. There is that one exception in the playoffs against the Tennessee Titans.

Table 5.—Won-Loss Records for Lamar Jackson and Selected Quarterbacks
With >100 Yards Rushing and 1+ Run TDs

Player	Games/ Started	100+ yards	90+ yards	One TD	Two + TDs
Lamar Jackson	58/49	10-0	15-0	15-1	4-0
Michael Vick	143/115	8-2	11-4	20-5-1	5-0
Cam Newton	148/144	0-0	0-1	31-22-1	7-3
Josh Allen	61/60	0-3	2-3	17-4	4-1
Steve Young	169/143	0-1	0-1	23-6	6-1

The record says there are at least 10 NFL running backs making at least \$6 million per year heading into the 2022 season.

Table 6.—Lamar Jackson and Current Running Backs Sequenced by Yards Gained, 2018-2021,
\$6 Million/year or More Salary

Player	Games/ Started	Run Att	Run Yards	TDS	Yards per Att	Run Att per TD
Derrick Henry	55/51	1115	5563	55	4.99	20.27
Nick Chubb	58/51	908	4816	36	5.30	25.22
Zeke Elliott	63/62	1086	4772	34	4.39	31.94
Dalvin Cook	52/51	944	4466	37	4.73	25.51
Jonathan Taylor	32/30	564	2980	29	5.28	19.45
Joe Mixon	52/50	986	3938	29	3.99	34.00
Lamar Jackson	58/49	615	3673	21	5.97	29.29
Alvin Kamara	57/42	792	3510	39	4.43	20.31
Christian McCaffrey	42/42	664	3152	28	4.75	23.71
Austin Ekeler	56/37	560	2552	19	4.56	29.47

I found this excerpt on one of the many Internet websites reporting NFL news:

Christian McCaffrey signed a four-year contract extension in the 2020 offseason. The deal was worth a little over \$64 million and included a \$21.5 million signing bonus. McCaffrey also received \$38.2 million in guarantees, which includes his full 2022 salary (\$8.4 million). Since signing the contract, McCaffrey has played just 10 of a possible 33 games for the Panthers and been on the field for only 543 snaps.

To the ten highest paid running backs found in the article we added Lamar Jackson. Then we extracted the four running backs being so highly paid in part because of their skill in the passing game. Of that group, recognize how Lamar Jackson is second in rushing yards. Also recognize that Christian McCaffrey gained the least number of yards of all these men while getting paid the most. McCaffrey is also the biggest loser among these highest paid runners. Why? It only makes sense if we know that racism is at work. McCaffrey is being paid the most when his numbers say he is the least productive because he the only white running back right now, who can play that position. Remember—he is not a bad player; he is a good player. He is not playing at the level of the best running backs and should not be paid more than Derrick Henry and Nick Chubb—and the rest. But if he is paid \$16 million a year for being a mediocre to average running back, then Lamar Jackson should definitely insist on getting at least that same \$16 million as the Ravens’ leading running back and one of the best in the league running the ball.

Table 7.—Dual Threat Running Backs and Lamar Jackson—Running, Passing, Receiving

Player	Running						Receiving (Passing for Lamar Jackson)			
	Games/ Started	Att	Yards	TDS	Average	Ratio	Att	Comp	Yards	TDs
Joe Mixon	52/50	986	3938	29	4.0	34.0	174	141	1035	8
Lamar Jackson*	58/49	573	3714	21	6.5	27.3	1329	852	9967	84
Alvin Kamara	57/42	792	3510	39	4.4	20.3	376	229	2437	15
Christian McCaffrey	42/42	664	3152	28	4.7	23.7	326	277	2364	12
Austin Ekeler	56/37	560	2552	19	4.6	29.5	320	255	2447	21

*Minus kneel downs

Addendum to Lamar Jackson contract: Add \$16 million for each of the years 2019-2021 for the total of \$48 million to be paid the second year of the contract--2023. A performance clause to be added requires a future payment of \$16 million for any year Jackson leads the team in rushing.

Be Ready When He Come

Lamar Jackson could be the catalyst to make sure that a lot of young brothers get WOKE. All that marching and protesting in the street and what? At the end of the day—yes, we had to use the cliché—every young brother must provide for his family. Whether an entrepreneur or a laborer for someone else before transitioning to entrepreneurship, every man should demand the full value for what you are trading. If all you have to trade is your labor, then demand the highest amount of dollars possible. If the boss don’t want to pay your price, sell your labor somewhere else or pay yourself for your labor.

We must look to our ancestors for the great examples of how to live our lives. Where else? There is no greater example than Muhammad Ali. Ali refused to be punked. In some sense, Ali's was perhaps a greater principle. For our children's sake we should all refuse to bow to a boss who devalues our labor and underpays us especially since he has shown the willingness to overpay the white man right next to us doing the same job. His agenda is too often sustaining the yoke of Black inferiority and he believes in that by any means necessary. We cannot join his fight. We must fight for righteousness.

The key is "I was looking for a job when I got this one." Never be afraid!

Inescapably, the most enduring principle of all is my belief in my own self-worth and my own human dignity. Black men must meticulously devote ourselves to living out that principle and delivering the lessons of that kind of existence to our children. Never overlook the actions of white men directed to you attacking your self-worth or your human dignity. Always be ready to fight for your own sense of self-worth and dignity.

Be ready when he come.

Lindsey "Rob" Robinson
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