The next person who asks me if I'm disappointed that Mike Holmgren was run out of town on a rail by Jimmy Haslam before Holmgren could 'finish the job he was hired to do' runs a pretty solid chance of getting punched in the face. I'm not disappointed in anything other than the fact that Mike Holmgren didn't have the class or decency to quit accepting a salary when he quit actually giving a damn about his job which, as far as I can tell, was before he actually took it.

I was excited when Holmgren seemingly bailed us fans out of the malaise that symbolized Randy Lerner's decade of half-assed 'leadership'. I was thrilled when Holmgren came to town and talked about the passion of the fans, the history of a proud franchise and how he looked forward to putting Cleveland back on the NFL map.

I was an idiot.

I conveniently set aside the fact that Holmgren was a disaster when he had front office power in Seattle. I conveniently set aside the fact that the Seahawks got to the Super Bowl nearly a decade ago only when Holmgren ceded his decision-making authority and focused solely on coaching. I launched into a brown and orange tinted campaign on behalf of Holmgren and his vision when he hired all the unemployed Bob Lamonte clients he could gather up and called it a single minded organizational vision rather than what it was, which was pure, unadulterated cronyism.

I was even okay when Holmgren set the franchise back another year and retained Eric Mangini for a 5-11 season that preceded the Pat Shurmur hiring. I thought it was a football man giving a football man an opportunity to prove his worth and keep his job.

Turns out that was really the first indication that Holmgren just wasn't cut out for the job. Especially after he fired Mangini after a 5-11 season because that "wasn't good enough" and then pledged his undying loyalty to Shurmur after his pal went 4-12 last year.

10-28.

That's what the savior puts on the board in terms of wins and losses in his sad term as CEO of the Browns. 10 wins in three seasons with his hand-picked GM, his hand-picked head coach and a quarterback from Texas taken in the third round of Holmgren's first draft that he just had to have.

That's not good enough. That's especially not good enough when you consider where the Browns have drafted over the last few years and that there's not one, sure-fire All Pro or elite player on the roster that Holmgren and his boys are responsible for building.

The man flat-out butchered his tenure here. From the Mangini mess to the way the Colt McCoy concussion fiasco was handled and everything before, between and after, Mike Holmgren didn't clean up messes as much as he caused them.

Three years into the Holmgren era and the Browns should have bottomed out and begun the rebuilding process. Three years into the Holmgren era and the Browns are still a laughingstock and, worse yet, looking at likely another three years before they're not. And that's if the QB this regime reached for pans out and the RB that cost them three picks to move up a spot and take actually is the player they envisioned.

I will say this about Holmgren: he's an opportunist. Not when it comes to draft day or building an organization, but he can smell a great situation like it's a fine steak and he jumped all over the situation he found here in Cleveland. He quickly identified that there was an owner here (and by 'here' I mean somewhere in Europe) who wanted nothing to do with the team he inherited from his old man and who wanted nothing more than to hire a big name, larger than life football guy who people could rally around. Didn't matter what the cost of that guy was, Randy Lerner was eager to pay it (and probably more) so that he could ostensibly wash his hands of the team and

the town and give more time and attention to who would play not in his defensive backfield but rather at the defensive midfield position for Aston Villa.

Holmgren smelled blood and an easy pay day and he took it. I can't blame him for getting a sweetheart deal and tens of millions of dollars. I'd have done the same thing. But unlike Mike, I'd have had the decency to at least wear a mask while I robbed that reclusive old man of $50million (or so).

Heath Evans, the former Seahawk/Patriot/Dolphin and Saint, was on Cleveland radio a week or so ago and said the feeling around the league was that Holmgren was simply cashing checks for years. That the Walrus had taken to showing up to work in Seattle at the bright and early hour of 10am or so on many days when his counterparts across the NFL rarely leave the facility during the season. Evans went on to guarantee Holmgren would not see the end of his contract in Cleveland because of this perception and the perception that there was too much confusion and battling for prominence from his coaching staff. Evans said how hard it was for a RB to pick up the Seahawks blocking schemes because Holmgren would tell a player one thing, the RB coach would ask for it done another way and the OL coach would add yet a third line of coaching that did nothing but confuse the players trying to learn blitz pick-ups. In fact, Evans went so far as to say that was likely a reason that Trent Richardson was having trouble staying on the field on 3rd downs despite being every down back at Alabama and being highly regarded as a blocker and receiver. He said Richardson was better taught at Alabama and that he was likely having trouble because of coaches' communication issues as opposed to any short comings of his own.

Nice, huh?

Holmgren was a football coach (and a good one) for many years. That makes it even harder to understand how he could hire Shurmur, in a season plagued by no OTAs and lockouts, and burden Shurmur with the dual role of offensive coordinator. Is it any wonder the coach looks like he's on his last nerve and seems overmatched? It's because he is on his last nerve and is over matched. His CEO and friend set him up to be exactly that, much like that CEO dropped a doe-eyed, weak-armed QB that he personally selected into the pits of hell and then abandoned him when James Harrison used him like a piñata. Much like that CEO drafted him an immobile pocket quarterback who had a patch work offensive line in place and no one to throw to.

No, I'm not at all sad to see Holmgren's career end in disgrace. And I'm only sad to see it end in failure because that failure affects all of us Browns fans and will for years to come. Of all the miserable football seasons and regimes the Browns have cobbled together over the years the Holmgren era will go down, in my mind, as the worst of the bunch. Because the man we thought would end the losing and stop the punch lines was the biggest loser and the biggest joke of them all.