It might seem like an exercise in futility to even pose this question, since the best egg in a rotten batch is still disgusting. But with Pat Shurmur now officially the latest to sink into the quicksand of the Cleveland sideline, it seems a fitting time to formally re-visit the entire rogue's gallery of head coaching mis-hires since the Browns' ill-fated "rebirth" in 1999.

From a field of candidates even less inspiring than the ones we've put in Congress, which head coach of your 21st century Cleveland Browns would now earn your vote as the “best”— or at least, the one who got the most out of the paltry arsenal bestowed upon him? Given a choice between Palmer, Davis, Crennel, Mangini, and Shurmur, who—to put it more bluntly—sucked the least?

Bit of a perverse undertaking, ain’t it? They are, after all, five upstanding gentlemen from diverse backgrounds—unwittingly bound together in a fraternity of colossal failure. None of them won more games than they lost, and none managed approval ratings much higher than Watergate era Nixon or post-inferno Nero. But across the span of 14 seasons, logic would dictate that at least one of these whistle-wearing numbskulls made you feel a little less homicidal than the others.

Memory clouded by a fog of lingering angst? No worries. As luck would have it, all five of the expansion Browns’ head coaches are here today to personally and shamelessly pander to you for re-consideration—like a Presidential debate with more khakis.

*We'll begin, naturally, with the captain of Cleveland's original, re-animated Browns corpse… your head coach in 1999 and 2000… Chris Palmer. Mr. Palmer, thirty seconds.*

**CHRIS PALMER (1999-2000, W/L: 5-27):** Thank you and good evening. Or morning as the case may be. I probably should start by re-introducing myself. I'm Chris Palmer, the bald guy with the glasses. Remember? I coached the Browns for two years. Weird, huh?

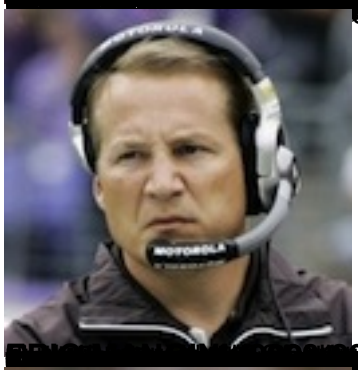
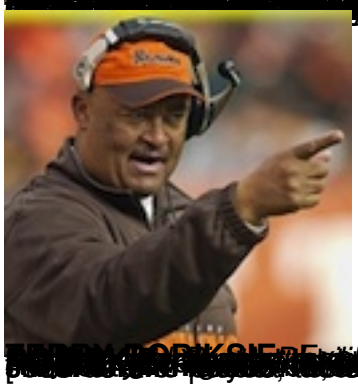
Anyway, Cleveland, I feel like maybe we didn't get to know each other so well the first time around, so let me tell you a little about myself and why I am—by default—the best Browns coach on this panel right now.

So, let's see. I'm an East Coast guy—born in New York, graduated from the football powerhouse known as Southern Connecticut State. You probably never knew this, but I was a Receivers Coach for the run-and-shoot Oilers of the early '90s and the Offensive Coordinator for the Mark Brunell era Jacksonville Jags before I scuttled into your world in 1999. I was also the head coach at Boston University for two seasons back in the '80s, which apparently made me the ideal choice to take on the monumental task of making a contender out of a rag tag crew of castoffs, rookies, and construction workers while the expectations of a whole city rested on my shoulders.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, considering the circumstances, I did a pretty damn respectable job, wouldn't you say? Carmen Policy pulled my name out of a hat, gave me Travis Prentice and Darrin Chiaverini, and said "try not to go 0-16," and I didn't! Sure, my 5-27 record and .156 winning percentage is the worst among non-interim coaches in franchise history. That dirties up a resume a bit, believe you me. But fact is, I'm the coach that shepherded your beloved Brownies back into existence, which ought to at least forgive some of that abysmal football. Plus, I beat the Steelers once, which is actually as many times as anybody else up here. Thank

you.

*Butch Davis, your rebuttal?*

**BUTCH DAVIS (2001-2004, W/L: 24-35):** Thanks, Andrew. Hello, Cleveland. …You know, I have to admire Chris for his positivity and his convictions, but I think we all know that as an NFL head coach, he sucked donkey balls. Consistently, game to game, year to year… donkey balls. It wasn't until I came along in 2001 that everyone in Cleveland realized that their new Browns didn't have to be known as the Clowns, or the Frowns, or the… Wedding Gowns, or whatever. It was me, Butch Davis, who re-introduced the concept of so-so, mediocre football to this town. We committed ourselves to the goal of not being the worst, and sure enough, we didn't suck as much as Chris Palmer's team did. Obviously, the big payoff of this effort was 2002, when we snuck our way into the postseason at 9-7 and looked great for one half of one playoff game. By most measures, that was a so-so season, especially considering we lost to our fiercest rival three times in a row in heartbreaking fashion. But matched up against the other 14 seasons of the New Browns, 2002 was basically a single, sustained orgasm for the entire city of Cleveland. And I'm the guy who took you there. Me and Kelly Holcomb. Kelly Holcomb and I took you to orgasm. So.. when it comes to choosing a best coach, I think you'll see fit to pay me back like any grateful, satisfied client should. Woof woof. Pontbriand FTW! Davis out.

*Alrighty. Romeo Crennel, the podium is yours.*