Great piece from Gary Benz this morning that calls out Braylon Edwards for his latest episode - skipping a team meeting and wearing a non-conforming uniform. In it, he asks ... has a player ever accomplished so little and demanded so much from a team that is so bad? Edwards walks as if he deserves all the riches and privileges that come with being a top-caliber player without having first paid the price. He

It wasn't that many years ago when Wayne Embry was the General Manager of the Cleveland Cavaliers. He made it a priority to draft and sign "high character" guys. That philosophy, while it didn't quite bring a championship to Cleveland did bring us high quality basketball practiced by high quality individuals. In fact, it was the best sustained basketball this town has enjoyed to that point.

It also wasn't that many years ago when Phil Savage, current General Manager of the Browns, rode into town essentially promising the same thing. That philosophy, which hasn't even yet brought respectability, at least has brought us guys like Joe Jurevicius, Kamerion Wimbley and LeCharles Bentley. Unfortunately, when a sport requires as many players as pro football, compromises will get made. That's how you end up with guys like Braylon Edwards.

In case anyone is still paying attention, players like Braylon Edwards and his ilk are killing this team. His latest transgressions were on full display this past Sunday at what's becoming a Cleveland tradition—the holiday beat down. Head Coach Romeo Crennel reportedly benched Edwards for showing up late, again, at a team meeting or two earlier in the week. Edwards also reportedly faces fines for wearing a non-conforming uniform during the game. Edwards was a non-entity on the field dropping still more passes and playing still more uninspired ball. And for his final act, he showered quickly and refused to talk to the media. All this only demonstrated what has long been suspected—Edwards is a low character, me-first coward with absolutely no concept of what it takes to be a team or be a teammate.

The temptation is to simply explain that he's a "Michigan guy" and heck, what can you expect? He grew up playing under LLLLLoyd Carr who, near as we can tell, loses key games and then whines about why his team isn't getting the respect it deserves. In fact, that's actually an apt description of Edwards as well. But it goes well beyond painting Edwards with such a large

swath.

Edwards isn't so much the product of a system but the manifestation of all that is wrong with the modern pro athlete. He wants, as one character told another in the new movie, "Dreamgirls," "all the privileges without any of the responsibilities." That's essentially what Jurevicius said during his rather pointed post-game comments directed squarely at Edwards.

If Edwards isn't quite like his former coach, he's quite clearly one of the biggest prima donnas to wear a Cleveland uniform in many, many years. Rarely has a player accomplished so little and demanded so much from a team that is so bad. Edwards walks as if he deserves all the riches and privileges that come with being a top-caliber player without having first paid the price. He's not even the best receiver on this pitiful team, let alone a premier player in the league. Yet he carries himself as if he's on his way to his 10th Pro Bowl appearance. He refuses to accept any responsibility for making the Browns better. He sets the worst possible examples, both inside and outside the locker room. For a team trying desperately to rebuild itself to the once proud franchise it was, the last thing it needs is guys like Edwards.

Harkening back to Embry and the Cavs, it should be noted that Embry was mocked for his philosophy. Particularly when the Cavs couldn't get past the best player to ever play, Michael Jordan. In fact, those same people, many in the media, made the same jeers at Savage. But the truth is that character counts, particularly in close games. It's exactly why the military conducts basic training. The whole intent is to root out and rid your unit of soldiers of low character who can't be relied upon when the shooting starts. The same holds true in any team endeavor.

This is not to suggest that talent doesn't play a key role or that teams don't win with low-character guys. Talent matters and you can point to countless examples of teams that achieved the ultimate success with unsavory characters. But in the end, character does count. A few examples from this NFL season without even breaking a sweat: The Dallas Cowboys, having sold their soles by acquiring the league poster child of low character, Terrell Owens, are paying the price. In last night's key game against the Eagles, Owens dropped several passes, again, continuing a trend that has caused the Cowboys to ultimately underachieve. The Cincinnati Bengals, a team many figured to be a Super Bowl contender, won't likely make the playoffs. In fact, the only thing they'll lead the league in this year is most arrests during the season. It may be a coincidence, but we don't think so, that the Bengals couldn't convert on a simple extra point with their playoff lives on the line on Sunday. Who's to say that all of the off-field distractions didn't eventually take their toll at that one key moment?

The point is you can only go so far with talented troublemakers. This year's Browns team has been an abject failure. In fact the holes are so huge, that it appears as though they are years away from even playing .500 ball. That being said, if the Browns were smart, and they're not, they'd simply cut their ties with Edwards and soon. He's not worth the trouble that accompanies his limited talent. The temptation will be to hold on to him in order to extract some sort of value from another failed high draft pick. Resist that temptation. He's not worth anything. If some team will give the Browns anything—a bag of balls, a roll of tape, or the unthinkable, a draft pick—take it and don't look back. If no one bites, put him out in the public domain and pray that

one of someone in the AFC North picks him up. Edwards is a loser of the first order and having him on this team will do nothing but eat away what little team chemistry remains.