If Cleveland Browns' president Mike Holmgren intended his mid-year press conference on Tuesday as a means to inform, he missed the mark. Instead Holmgren wittingly or otherwise, raised a few issues and a few eyebrows that probably will cause a whole new bucket of angst to make the rounds.

The basic information passed along was done with the ease of Josh Hamilton hitting batting practice. Colt McCoy? Holmgren put the issue back to the coach, insisting that it was Eric Mangini's decision. Holmgren said he won't push a point of view and offered up that the season is about winning and thus the head coach needs to utilize the players that give the team the best chance of doing that.

There isn't much news in that, certainly. Indeed if you closed your eyes it might as well have been Mangini doing the talking. That's not to suggest those that Holmgren doesn't have an opinion on this or that he won't be sharing it with Mangini. In fact, he admitted that such a conversation will take place. Again, nothing unusual there given Holmgren's background and position in the organization.

Where things got interesting and where Holmgren may have done himself more harm then good was in answering all the questions about his own status.

For now Holmgren seems to be enjoying the challenge of being the captain of a 500 foot ship trying to make a 180 degree turn in a 400 foot wide canal. But he is enjoying that challenge at the expense of what he truly loves to do, coaching football. He categorically refused to rule out a return to that vocation.

As one would expect, that statement immediately got pencils pushing on notebooks at breathtaking speed because of the potential impact that Holmgren's desires might have on

current head coach Eric Mangini. And Holmgren didn't necessarily discourage all of that pondering when he basically wouldn't comment on Mangini's status after this season.

Indeed, if you are at all a conspiracy theorist at heart, you can easily connect some dots here to make the case that Holmgren may not see much of a future for Mangini. One dot was that Holmgren talked about how encouraging it's been that the team has been in every game this season but then talked about how discouraging it's been that the team hasn't been able to win those games. Another was that Holmgen talked about how he'll evaluate Mangini's status at the end of the season. A third dot is that it never seemed to occur to Holmgren in all of that conversation that Mangini already is under contract for next season and thus the assumption should be that Mangini will be back absent some other sort of problem.

There may be something to all of that but you can also take Holmgren's statements at face value and not read any sort of indictment of Mangini into it. All Holmgren really was saying on that front is that he plans on doing what someone in his position should do once the season ends—evaluate all aspects of the operation and figure out the future from there.

In other words, I tend to think that Holmgren didn't intend any of those dots to be connected so that anyone could conclude that Mangini is in any more or less secure position then he was when Holmgren decided to keep him after a mostly disastrous 2009 season. Holmgren surely still believes that continuity more than anything else will be the key to reviving this franchise. Likely his default is that Mangini will be staying absent something compelling happening to change his mind in the season's last 9 games.

That said, it was nonetheless enjoyable to contemplate that Holmgren's words might make Mangini feel the same way that Mangini makes his quarterbacks feel every time he takes a question about their status. Never commit. Never back yourself into a corner without at least one viable exit. If Mangini is feeling a tad uncomfortable with the lack of public commitment to him at the moment, well, he probably has better insight today into how exactly Seneca Wallace and Colt McCoy feel at the moment.

Holmgren also had a fascinating exchange about the direction of the offense, generally, when he pointedly said that he isn't used to an offense that's designed to make so little use of its wide receivers. Holmgren made it clear that he thinks that the receivers on the roster (Brian Robiskie? Mohamed Massaquoi? Chansi Stuckey?) are "better than OK."

That had to get the attention of even the most casual fan because it certainly seems like Robiskie and Massaquoi have regressed. Holmgren noted that the offense is designed to work the middle of the field where slot receivers, running backs and tight ends toil. But that's a little bit of a chicken and egg explanation. Is Daboll's philosophy built around working the middle of the field or is the current offense designed because the outside receivers aren't exactly scaring the opposition? Maybe it's the former but it certainly appears to be the latter.

Beyond these intriguing little matters was the far more interesting discussion on how Holmgren views his commitment to owner Randy Lerner. Pressed to elaborate on his own coaching desires, Holmgren said that his commitment to Lerner was "to get the Browns going in the right direction in my role as president."

That's a pretty amorphous standard and one which he could credibly argue he's probably already met. The Browns are heading in the right direction, slowly, surely. They may not ever arrive but it would be intellectually dishonest to argue that they aren't on more solid footing now than they were a year ago, two years ago.

That simple fact suggests that Holmgren could very well view his mission as accomplished by season's end and return to coaching. The dot connectors could see that as further evidence that Holmgren has definite designs on walking the Cleveland sidelines next season.

But as we say in the legal profession, that assumes facts not yet in evidence. Despite Holmgren's rather passionate views on the value of continuity within a franchise, it's plausible that Holmgren could justify a departure by seeing his role as mostly completed and thus unnecessary, passing the reigns of president and whatever remaining duties there may be to existing general manager Tom Heckert.

Doing so doesn't mean it would come at the expense of Mangini. It's just as plausible, perhaps even more likely, that Holmgren is simply paving the way for his own exit from Cleveland sooner rather than later. There are plenty of teams and their head coaches in seemingly more trouble than the Browns on the moment. Minnesota and Brad Childress come immediately to mind, but then so does Josh McDaniels in Denver and Norv Turner in San Diego.

When you piece the entire news conference together, it's hard to figure actually what message Holmgren was trying to send. In fact, he looked confused about it himself. It's not so much that he was going through the motions so that he could check a box on his "to do" list. It was more like Holmgren had something he really wanted to say but wasn't quite sure himself exactly what it was.

I'm glad, though, that Holmgren at least is willing to go in front of the press on occasion to give his views, however scattered they may be, and not act as if he's in the middle of a particularly painful root canal at the time. It's a sign of leadership which, irrespective of the questions he raised, is something that this franchise has needed for years.