You just know that somewhere deep down inside, Larry Dolan and son Paul are smirking and nodding their heads in cocksure self-righteousness.

Yes. They. Did.

Somewhere in the Dolan family's Freudian subconscious, that banner is hanging overhead. There's a giant stage and laser show, Larry and Paul are mugging for the camera along with Chris Antonetti in a scene that was previously worthy of a trio of NBA superstars who decided to congregate to the south of here roughly a year ago.

They shocked the world. They broke all the taboos. They crammed a nice, big sweat sock into the gullet of every naysayer who said it would never happen.

The Dolan regime, previously the poster child for ultra-conservative small market baseball practices, just traded the sensible golf shirt and khaki slacks of farm-system development for something with a lot more leather in it. They signed off on a trade that sent Alex White and Drew Pomeranz, their system's two best pitching prospects in over a decade, to Colorado for Rockies ace Ubaldo Jimenez.

It's risky. Maybe even reckless, for a team with such a slim margin for error with every transaction. But it's brash and bold, and everything the general public thought the Dolan regime would never embody.

The Dolans have owned the Indians for 11 years. Perhaps Jimenez is the midlife-crisis sports car of their ownership. Perhaps they tired of years of hearing fans and media peg them as cheap and clueless, or risk-taking lightweights, perpetual lemonade-sippers in a sport with no salary cap, where you need to be able to hold your liquor to make any headway in building a perennial winner.

That's not the perception anymore. The Dolans, and Antonetti, have made The Move. The single brushstroke that will say more about Antonetti's tenure as general managers than probably any other transaction he'll make, or could hope to make, as GM of a small-market team. The trade that could very well define the Dolan Era.

It's difficult from a public relations and competitive standpoint to ship off veteran stars such as Bartolo Colon, C.C. Sabathia, Cliff Lee and Victor Martinez – the trades that previously headlined the Dolans' ownership. But you're still trading for the future. You still have the cushion of knowing that the trade's verdict is still years away.

The Jimenez trade puts the Indians on the other side of the equation. This trade has to pay dividends now and in the very near future. By the time the next presidential election rolls around in 15 months, we'll have a pretty good idea of whether this move was a stroke of genius or an unmitigated disaster.

Somehow, it doesn't seem that there is going to be much middle ground between those two outcomes.

The trade really was crime of opportunity – the extremely rare and perfect confluence of a team offering up an established front-of-rotation pitcher signed for two more years to a club-friendly contract, at a point in time when the Indians just happened to have the trade ammo to outbid the big-market bullies.

But the cost of taking advantage of that opportunity is only beginning to add up.

By making the trade, the Indians are firmly drawing a line in the sand at October 2013. That's the end of their Mayan calendar, at least with this cast of characters. They have three cracks at trying to get to the playoffs, get to the World Series and win it, before Jimenez, Travis Hafner, Asdrubal Cabrera and Shin-Soo Choo are all eligible for free agency – and in the case of everyone but aging Hafner, you'd have to assume significant pay bumps. The kind of raises the Indians haven't historically paid.

That means the assumed core of this team could potentially walk away after the 2013 season. And, barring a new infusion of prospects, there won't be a cavalry riding to the rescue from Columbus and Akron in short order. The next rebuilding project figures to be long and draft-oriented.

If you are Larry and Paul Dolan, you didn't just make a bold move to prove that you could do it. By trading away the front end of your farm system for Jimenez, you signed up for supporting this team with every resource at your disposal for the next two-plus years.

The Dolans aren't off the hook by finally signing off on the blockbuster that brought an established star to Cleveland. Quite the opposite. They're on the hook now more than ever.

If Antonetti wants to trade like a big-market GM, and the Dolans want to greenlight moves the way big-market owners do, they have to follow through. That means Antonetti keeps his foot on

the gas pedal, aggressively pursuing trades and free agent signings at every turn, doing everything in his power to build the shell of talent around the team's core. And it means the Dolans bankroll it, giving Antonetti the financial freedom to sign quality veterans in or near their prime years to multiyear contracts, or make trades that add up to a competitive gain but possibly a financial loss.

For the next two years, before the wave breaks and we're back to a full-scale rebuilding project, Antonetti and the Dolans have to play the part that the Jimenez deal suggests. They have to behave like a win-now, competitive team that gets into the fray with Yankees, Phillies and Red Sox, attempting to hang with them on the field, in free agency and on the trade market.

That's not to say it's Albert Pujols or bust on the free agent market. But the days of signing Orlando Cabrera on the eve of spring training and calling it an offseason are gone for now. Quiet offseasons are not acceptable anymore – particularly if the Indians continue their slow burn and end this season as a sub-.500, third-place team.

If the Dolans fail to support the Jimenez trade with more trades and free agent signings, the net effect is going to be exactly the opposite of what they likely thought the Jimenez trade would prove to the fan base and media critics. Not only will they be branded cheap, clueless and whatever else, they'll be the owners that frittered away two-plus years of Ubaldo Jimenez, and left the minor-league cupboard bare to boot. Nothing on the table, nothing in the oven.

As Cleveland fans, we're used to going hungry. But even we don't need a full-scale famine.