

## The Vest UnWound

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Tuesday, May 31 2011 11:20 AM -

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Let's approach the Jim Tressel conversation in a little different manner. I have an overwhelming range of emotions and thoughts running through my head so I'm going to use this forum (because I can and because it's healthy for all of us) to express those thoughts and emotions and attempt to sort them out.

I am not going into some lecture or soap-box rant about all the reasons why what Tressel did was wrong and how stupid he was to think he could continue to sweep the Tat5 wrong-doings under the rug.

Instead I will use this as a vent session for our emotional and mental health. I am taking the approach of sorting through the emotional spectrum that one faces when someone you care about passes away from something they could have truly prevented.

WAIT.....WHAT THE \*%\$\*%... DID HE JUST???

I know... I just compared someone dying to a football coach resigning and I get how ridiculous that sounds, but I am not really comparing the two at all. I am simply trying to communicate to you the mindset the article is coming from.

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The range of emotions someone goes through usually starts with being mad or upset and thinking angry thoughts and heads toward recalling great memories and finding appreciation for the departed person. This is exactly what I went through Monday as I drove to work....so here is the deal.

To preface the story, when I go to New York to work, I work there for 7 straight days. That's working 12 hours shifts from 6pm to 6am and at the end of those seven days I come home for 7 days

This morning (afternoon to normal people) the alarm goes off at 4:30 and as I hit the dismiss button on my phone, I did something that I normally don't do: for whatever reason I hit the ESPN app on my phone to see if anything major happened as I slept the day away this Holiday Monday. Normally I would have just got my shower stuff together and jumped in to start the wake up process, waiting until I was at work to get the days skinny.

Imagine my surprise when the screen finishes loading and I see the headline read "The Sweater Unraveled: Tressel Resigns".

I immediately throw the phone down thinking this was a BS dream to wake up to. As I am showering though I begin to have those thoughts that I was not dreaming at all and anger starts slowly bubbling. When I get out the shower I get dressed, not picking up the phone because I was having those DUMB thoughts that go through your head telling me.... if you ignore it, it will go away.

Once I am in the car I just can't take it anymore and I once again look at the phone, only to confirm that it was not a twisted dream or a bad joke...The man who I had always thought was as strong as my 10 year old daughter's thick skull was reduced to a giant pile of sand.

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As I drive to work I quickly realize that I have so many thoughts running through my head that I don't know what I am truly thinking at all.

I decide to do what most crazy men would do and sort through my thoughts on paper in true Laurelwood fashion. Here is what it looked like:

### **Angry**

I am angry because as a resident of Northeast Ohio my one true sports rock has been fractured in a big way.

I am angry because I expect kids to make mistakes but I also expect Jim Tressel to always be the example of how to handle situations the correct way.

I am angry because you Tressel thought he could hit control-alt-delete and nobody would know. Doesn't he watch any good forensic shows?

I am angry because we won a National Championship with Craig Krenzel and the guy who was supposed to bring multiple trophies has only brought agita.

I am angry because I can no longer count on an emotional Saturday high Saturday compensating for an inevitable 'down in the dumps' Sunday.

I am angry because E. Gordon Gee and Gene Smith spoke too early on the matter before fully realizing the gravity of offenses. This only made the stain go deeper instead of washing it away.

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I am angry because kids who make schools and organizations (NCAA & Big Ten) boat loads of money, constantly get in trouble for taking chump change from adults trying to get cool points from their associations with those kids.

I am angry because there is a gigantic portion of fans who think Terrelle Pryor bullied his teammates into doing wrong.

I am angry because some people will try and blame the actions of 20 year olds for the bad decisions of a grey beard.

I am angry because I now have to explain to a 10 year old why it is wrong to sell your own things.

I am angry because I will have to question myself and will always wonder if Mr. Sweater Vest chose not to tell to protect the kids or to protect his legacy.

I am angry because people will remember the scandal instead of the outstanding coach Jim Tressel is.

I am angry because the NCAA expects these kids, some of whom come from nothing, to simply wait for a payday that may never come while turning down the opportunity to help themselves and/or their families right now.

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They want these players to make the altruistic choice of refusing monetary gain when they (NCAA) have long had the choice to correct the ridiculous system in which their champion is crowned. But they don't do what's right because of money.

I mean how crazy is it that not only every other level of college football is decided by a tournament but every other sport in the NCAA is decided by tournament.

Every league of sport crowns a champion that comes out of a bracket except one, and the reason is simply about money...Great example the NCAA is to these kids.

Lastly and probably most importantly... I am angry because Michigan fans have anything at all to smile and joke about even though we have been manhandling them for the last 7 years....It makes me sick to my stomach envisioning the smug little smirks when they should be wallowing in self-pity.

## Thanks

Not too long after the peak of the anger goes away I started remembering what memories Tressel has provided me and the types of football teams he has produced, and this is what those thoughts looked like on paper:

Thanks for turning the tides of O-H-I-O pride back to what it used to be. I was sick and tired of seeing the best talent our state had to offer starring at Notre Dame, Michigan and Penn State while I was growing up. You made it cool again for Ohio high school kids to want to play for The Ohio State University.

Thanks for putting the small traditions of years past back into place for a University that had lost

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it's way tradition-wise.

Thanks for immediately and emphatically understanding that the Michigan game was not just another league game Saturday.

Thanks for insuring that I will die having seen one of my teams stand on top of the stage and hoist up a championship trophy.

Thanks for all the Saturdays you made me forget how bad the Browns were and how much I hated Arthur B. Modell.

Thanks for hosting my high school football team when you coached at YSU. It was a great day.

Thanks for your 106-22 record, 7 Big Ten championships, and 1 National Championship.

Thanks for wiping the Michigan Man smile off of my Navy buddy's face for 7 consecutive years.

For many years he laughed about how Michigan got John Cooper fired...But if you had coached this year you would have been working on running your 3<sup>rd</sup> coach out of Ann Arbor.

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Thanks for aiding in turning many football players who never played in the NFL into productive members of society.

This last one is kind of weird but people, and kids in particular, need to heed the message; Thank you Jim Tressel for being the perfect example of how one mistake can and will define you to many people who have never (and will never) know you as more than name.

Let this be a lesson for all young people in particular....You can be one of the best at something, and be on top of the mountain, but if you make a bad choice it can, and more times than not will, come crumbling down...And if you do think something through and understand the worst case scenario and then that scenario becomes reality, then stand up, look people in the eye and deal with the consequences.

As you can see, I ran through a whole spectrum of feelings after finding out Tressel resigned as the Buckeyes coach. I won't claim rambling through my thoughts on paper took me to some great peaceful place of acceptance on the situation, but it did clear my mind of rambling thoughts and allowed me to begin to understand that change is more than just coming, it is actually here.

I do feel bad Tressel ended up in this situation but I don't necessarily feel bad for him. He had a choice to make once he found out about the situation and he chose to cover it up. Some would say that he was trying to protect the kids; some will say he was protecting himself, but the reality of the situation is that for at least one moment he forgot to protect the truly innocent and put something other than the best interest of the OSU brand and OSU family first.

Jim Tressel will now have a lifetime of nightmares on what was once his and what was once at his fingertips and those types of cold sweats often form scars that seldom heal and that I probably wouldn't wish on my worst enemies.

You can follow me on twitter at @JasonA\_TCF