

Get Your Shinebox, Browns Fan

Written by {ga=riverburns}

Thursday, September 06 2012 11:00 PM - Last Updated Sunday, September 09 2012 6:44 AM



We never really got the chance to know much about Billy Batts in Goodfellas, just that he was a "made" guy, who'd been away awhile, that knew Tommy DeVito back when he was still shining shoes. Maybe it was intended as a joke at first, and maybe Batts was really trying to push Tommy's buttons, but he obviously touched a nerve in asking Tommy to go home and get his shine box. At the risk of spoiling a 23 year-old film, and a significant splash of pop culture, I'll remain vague, and state that the [result of Batts agitation was tragic](#) for [all parties involved](#) .

For Billy and Tommy, it didn't have to end that way. Call it poking bears at the zoo or setting fire to a short fuse, but cooler heads could not prevail because of damaged egos or hurt feelings. And, it was over [a joke about shining shoes](#) , a real thing that becomes a sore subject when spoken of with malice. As a lifelong Browns fan, I carry metaphorical shine box of my own, even people who haven't known me my whole life tend to remind me about it.

Certain things, obviously painful memories of Cleveland sports tragedy, do tend roll right off of my back like drips of water on a solid spit-shine. I can handle the truth. Brian Sipe didn't throw the ball in the lake, but people old enough to remember this do tend to be classy enough not to throw it in our faces. John Elway did drive the ball 98 yards with the game on the line, and Earnest Byner was stripped on his way into the endzone at Mile High; Denver fans of all ages like shoving those memories down our throats. Michael Jordan, Edgar Renteria, Tommy Maddox, the 2009 Orlando Magic, and our buddy Jim Gray at a Connecticut Boys & Girls Club; they're all fodder in this conversation too. It's as if the producers at a certain four-letter network snicker at the opportunity to run a montage of back-breaking highlights, but we're numb to the pain at this point. It is history, these things all happened, and the tape does not lie.

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