

Inglorious Basterds - Chapter III

Written by {ga=davekolonich}
Thursday, August 27 2009 7:00 PM -

Perhaps his best work yet, Quentin Tarantino's sprawling WWII epic *Inglorious Basterds* offers an eclectic mesh of classic American war movies, spaghetti Westerns and vintage pop fiction all encased within the most celebrated of the film savant's creations, his own alternate universe. And in watching this soon to be classic, Dave Kolonich couldn't help thinking of our own beloved Basterd Browns. Although it's been done before and despite his disdain for sequels, he couldn't help myself. So without further adieu, here is Chapter Three of *Inglorious Basterds* - Cleveland Edition. Perhaps his best work yet, Quentin Tarantino's sprawling WWII epic *Inglorious Basterds*

offers an eclectic mesh of classic American war movies, spaghetti Westerns and vintage pop fiction all encased within the most celebrated of the film savant's creations, his own alternate universe. This time around, Tarantino creates a reality which is littered with references to archaic German film stars and features a revisionist historical ending revolving around the exploits of a Jewish refugee and her beloved theater.

Tarantino manages to fill the screen with some great kinetic action and has possibly given us his best and most meaningful dialogue to date, yet while seemingly challenging the audience's sensibilities and morality throughout. Who are the heroes and villains in this film? Which side do the Basterds line up on? As many critics have questioned, is this film a "revenge fantasy"? Or, as Tarantino often comments on own his work...is it "just a movie"?

Or, perhaps a better question..."who cares"? It's phenomenal.

Regardless of whatever social commentaries you can attach to *Inglorious Basterds*, it is a film experience not to be missed. Despite its length, I could have easily watched three more hours...which I guarantee exists somewhere in a digital cutting room floor.

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OVERMATCHED

If Christoph Waltz does not receive at least an Oscar nomination for his work as

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the wonderfully evil, self-preservationist "Jew Hunter" known as Col. Landa, then...well, I don't actually watch the Oscars, so who really cares? Anyway, Waltz is far and away the surprise of this film. His portrayal of a character who is a cross between every evil Nazi character ever depicted on-screen and Jerry Lundegaard from *Fargo* creates perhaps the most interesting acting performance in a long time.



The opening scene of the film highlights Landa's cunning, as he alternates between appearing suave and charming, before showing a cold, cruel manner when he finally gets what he wants. In trying to break down a French dairy farmer,

Waltz's character runs verbal circles around his overmatched foe.

In terms of the Browns, I think Eric Mangini's recent dealings with the Cleveland media offer a similar example. For example, does any member of the Cleveland media know exactly what's wrong with Shaun Rogers at the moment? We still haven't seen Rogers play in a preseason game so far...and it is very likely that we won't anytime soon. But of course, if Rogers' injury was something serious, the new Boss of Berea would just come out and [tell us](#) ...right?

Or, in other words...it is very likely that Shaun Rogers will become the first NFL player in the history of the league to miss an entire season "with a leg."

As for some other mismatches...where to begin? Since the focus after the Packer game was aimed at the liability that is the Browns pass defense and lack of pass rush, let's pick another area. How about quarterback?

Although it's been beaten to death, obviously either Brady Quinn or Derek Anderson will ascend to assume to starting quarterback job....possibly sometime in 2010.

However, for now the two young quarterbacks will most likely keep alternating starting assignments until the team runs out of games. While the competition has been incredibly even and loudly unremarkable, perhaps a better *Inglorious Basterds*

reference would include a helpless German officer on the receiving end of a Louisville Slugger, courtesy of Sgt. Donowitz...now substitute the winner of the QB derby's future career prospects - and not as Ted Williams reincarnated.

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As I've stated several times before, the winner of this year's QB battle is ultimately the loser in the long run. For two largely unproven quarterbacks who are essentially auditioning for their Eric Mangini-led Browns future, is 2009 really the showcase you've been waiting for? Does the prospect of Mike Furrey being your only reliable receiver get your blood pumping? Or, how about the recent reports of a Day Two draft pick being counted on to replace your odometer flipping veteran running back?

And then there's the right side of the offensive line. Much like Donowitz, it's unlikely that the Browns opponents will show either DA or Quinn much mercy in 2009.

BASTERDS AND CASTOFFS

A lot of critics have explicitly compared *Inglorious Basterds* to the likes of *The Dirty Dozen*

,
The Great Escape

and various other WWII movies of the 1960's. In terms of tone, *Basterds*

blows away these two venerable titles, simply based on Tarantino's dialogue and inventiveness. However, the direct comparisons between

Inglorious Basterds

and

The Dirty Dozen

are too recognizable to ignore.

Much like *The Dirty Dozen* assembled a militia of convicts to carry out a secret mission, the *Basterds* fill a unique, non-traditional role during the war, serving as a sort of terrorist group, devoted solely to the destruction of the Nazis. While serving slightly different purposes, each group retains a strand of similarity, in that each features characters who have been essentially cast off from mainstream military society.

In terms of the Browns, certainly we have seen our share of castoffs arrive on the shores of Lake Erie (or through the terminal gates) in the past several months. Since the arrival of Eric Mangini, the city has undergone a Green Renaissance. Along the ranks of the defense, the Browns will be heavily relying on three such castoff *Basterds*: Kenyon Coleman, Eric Barton and Abe Elam.

So far in the preseason, it appears that Coleman will help upgrade a traditionally weak run defense. While not as athletic in terms of pass rushing compared to premier 3-4 ends, Coleman holds up well in engagement and should be a vast improvement over last year's banged-up substitutes. As for Barton, despite his age, he looks like he can still contribute in the NFL. Depending on how his aging body holds up in 2009, Barton may very well be the answer the team has been searching for inside for years....at least until a better prospect arrives via the draft.

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According to [some media](#) , Abe Elam is simply the "key to the Browns Defensive fortunes." No pressure there. Elam's preseason play has been a mixed bag, symbolic of his overall talents as a safety. In Green Bay, Elam was beaten deep by Donald Driver, but against Detroit, Elam played closer to the line and was impressive in run defense.

However, the real "key" throughout the season will be the overall

depth in the secondary. If injuries pile up around Elam, our best safety talent will not be able to grow into a potential playmaker.

MARKED FOR LIFE

Perhaps no other film ending in recent memory leaves such a vivid impression as that of Lt. Aldo Raine carving a swastika into an unfortunate (and unnamed, in case you haven't seen it yet) victim's forehead. This blending of cruelty, dark humor, justice and wonderful irony leaves a true Tarantino fan satiated, but left with a desire to venture back into Nazi-occupied France to see the Basterds collect on their promise of Nazi scalps.

As it relates to the Browns, there are some players who will probably never become "Mangini guys." Call these players the "anti-Basterds", but the likes of Brodney Pool, Eric Steinbach, Jamal Lewis and Ryan Tucker will probably see their last action with the Browns in 2009.

Much like the rare few who survive the Basterds with only a permanent mark of their Nazi existence, the likes of these four players will forever carry the stain of Romeo Crennel.

Perhaps the best example of these future ex-Browns could be Brodney Pool, who has reportedly suffered yet another concussion, thanks to a special teams play against Detroit. Of course, in the interests of clarity, Cleveland media haven't been updated on Pool's condition, thanks to Mangini's secretive nature regarding injuries, but there was some clear evidence that Pool was knocked silly.

Regardless of Pool's physical condition, his is a curious case. Considered a top young talent coming out early from Oklahoma, Pool has essentially retained his project status throughout his career. Every time it appears that Pool is on the verge of breaking through and fulfilling his promise, he suffers an injury setback...much like last week. With depth at the safety position already alarmingly thin, Pool's inconsistency, or his Romeo Crennel stamp gleaming from his forehead, could have destructive effects on the Browns defense in 2009.

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Steinbach's inclusion in this list results more from Eric Mangini's past mandate for beefier, more physical offensive line play - qualities that Steinbach seemingly does not possess. However, whatever friction appeared from Mangini's decree, it has appeared that Steinbach has dedicated himself to fitting his new coach's vision for the Browns line. However, with the possibility of an uncapped salary year (both in terms of having no top or bottom) in 2010 looming, it is likely that Steinbach could be taking his Phil Savage/Romeo Crennel era skill set and playing elsewhere.

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The same could be said for Jamal Lewis. And, [according to some](#), this could be transpiring sooner than we think. Based on James Davis' third quarter explosion against the Lions and work with the first team offense in recent days, it appears that Lewis' workhorse days are a thing of the past. However, considering Lewis' advanced age and recent foot injuries, his demise could be a much more natural occurrence than what is currently being reported.

And if anyone could truly fit the mode of a Basterd, it has to be Ryan Tucker. In *Basterds*

universe, Tucker would be a lifer serving his third term. Unfortunately for Tucker, and for Browns fans who enjoy witnessing a legitimate running attack, it appears that our elder statesman of the line may not survive the final roster cuts. Tucker's recent track record of injury problems has left him scarred in another way...which is a shame, considering the quality of player he is.

However, much like in war and movies, or war movies, there will be casualties. As for me, I will be anxiously awaiting the hours of cut scenes found on the DVD release...which should be released sometime in 2010, when the Browns version of *Inglorious Basterds* will look much different.