

Number 52

- Dan Rosenberg

Perception is a funny thing to consider. It's something that makes all of us unique, in a roundabout way. Perception is the way something appears to a single person, and it differs for all of us. Whether a situation, another person, or yourself, the way one perceives anything dictates how he acts.

In our culture, one of the most interesting divides between people is hero status for various figures in our society. It's all about perception, and that's what makes it so interesting. A villain to one is a shining beacon to another, and neither is right or wrong. A trendy example of this is Ray Lewis, linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens, a polarizing and controversial figure.

To some, he is a man who literally got away with murder, a criminal who got off due to his celebrity status. To others he is simply a man who was in a bad situation, and has since made such a positive impact on the world that he is a hero. Of course, neither is right or wrong, and the legacy Lewis leaves will be mixed. But the important thing here is how differently people perceive one man.

The recent Super Bowl had many polarizing figures in it, none more so than Ray Lewis. There is an obvious lesson to be learned from his mistakes, and his career. It's impossible to classify someone as entirely good or evil. A lesson that is hard to learn for many is that sometimes, there is no black and white answer. Not everything in life is so simple; it's just a matter of perception. So often, due to the immediate availability of information, we are quick to make snap decisions. Everything becomes so convoluted that the easiest option is to just assume the worst. It's almost never that easy. And this is a lesson that more should take to heart.

Whether you are enamored with Ray Lewis, or vilify him, there is more to his character; there is more than one element to him. Just as there are two sides to every coin, there are many parts to every man. And so don't forgive him, and don't forget him, but remember Ray Lewis for who he was, as a man and as a player; for what he did, not who he was perceived to be.