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Off The Ropes: The Ron Lyle Story



Off the Ropes

The Ron Lyle Story

CANDACE TOFT



Synopsis

"How do we reconcile this soft-spoken, gentle man with the toughest heavyweight who never won the title?" In a life as tough and brutal as his bouts, heavyweight boxer Ron Lyle - who died in November, 2011 - had already served hard time for second-degree murder before he began his amateur boxing career. Afterwards, he was the supposedly third-rate fighter who had Muhammad Ali beaten for ten rounds in a Las Vegas title bout; the guy who fought George Foreman in a brawl with four knock-downs known, in boxing lore, as The One For the Ages; and the guy who was then arrested for murder a second time. Against a background of the greatest era in heavyweight boxing history, author Candace Toft retraces Ron Lyle's compelling personal journey, which began in the Denver projects as one of 19 children in a religious family. Aged 20, he was convicted for a disputed gang killing and served time in the state penitentiary, where he learned to box. After a meteoric amateur career and an executive pardon, he went professional in 1971 and over the next six years established an outstanding record in the ring. Then, in 1978, Lyle was indicted for murder a second time and - even though he was acquitted - his career was effectively over. The years that followed were filled with struggle, a captivating love story and ultimate redemption. Before his death, he ran a youth centre in Denver, Colorado, that bears his name. *Off the Ropes: The Ron Lyle Story* is an uplifting biography of a singular life.

Book Information

File Size: 850 KB

Print Length: 336 pages

Publisher: Scratching Shed Publishing Ltd (September 10, 2013)

Publication Date: September 10, 2013

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00F481ZSO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #465,314 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #48

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Customer Reviews

It is a testament to both nostalgia and a generation of heavyweights unparalleled in boxing history that there have been three biographies of men who only contended for heavyweight titles in the 1970's. There is "Hard Luck" about Jerry Quarry, and two biographies about Canada's favorite son, George Chuvalo to go along with Candace Toth's fine book about Ron Lyle. The hard-punching Earnie Shavers, another highly ranked title challenger in the 1970's, also wrote an extremely readable autobiography. Lyle's ascent was more dramatic than the other three. After being paroled from prison, he began a brief amateur career. Turning thirty in 1970, he believed waiting for the 1972 Olympics was chronologically too challenging. He moved into the pro ranks with the backing of the Denver fan base. Ron Lyle was a straightforward fighter, and a straightforward man. He wasted little time testing the top end of the talented Heavyweight division. To say he never ducked another fighter is both true and pointless. He both called out and took on the divisions best. Others ducked him. His record is a Who's Who of the division's best in the 1970's. He moved vertically up the rankings until meeting Jerry Quarry, who outboxed him during his own rejuvenated stretch of fighting, suffering his first loss. Lyle fought highly ranked Larry Middleton twice, winning both times, dominated Jimmy Ellis in his last hurrah, and then moved on to some of the most thrilling and memorable wars in Heavyweight history. His fights against Earnie Shavers, Muhammad Ali and George Foreman were all out wars. Ali had regained the title, and while many remember that he fought a number of inept Europeans, Alfredo Evangelista, Richard Dunn and Jean-Pierre Coopman, he also defended his title among almost all ranked fighters of the era. When Ron Lyle got his chance, he fought intelligently, both piling up wide leads on the judges cards, and conserving his own energy. But Ali caught him in the eleventh round and began to put together combinations that hurt Lyle badly. Many thought the referee stopped the fight too soon, with Ali imploring him to spare risking Lyle receiving a beating. Characteristically, Lyle took the loss like the big man he was. Lyle fought until 40, after an acquittal on an unfortunate murder charge in the late 1970's. He lost his way after retirement, but stayed close to boxing. He remained respected, and finally found his passion in mentoring youths through boxing. Lyle passed away in 2012, but this book was written prior to this happening. Lyle overcame many trials to establish himself as one of the more popular athletes Denver has had. I had not read any books by this author before, but she has written a very readable

and compelling treatise of a decent man, and a great athlete.

The story of a man who took a wrong road to trouble, but boxing gave him that second chance. Ron may not have been a champion in the ring, but he excel in the community with his leadership with younger amateur boxers. He'll be sadly missed.

Great book! A great story of self determination and success! A must for any Boxing fan.

Growing following Ron Lyle this is a phenomenal book

I have read every single Kindle book on boxing. I grew up as a fan of Lyle but long forgot the amazing story. Well written and inspiring, if you are a boxing fan read this book.

Interesting details about his career. So close but no cigar. Very sad how his personal life declined. An all to familiar end to a boxers life.

Great book have read it twice

After reading Candace Toft's riveting biography of heavyweight boxing great, Ron Lyle, I came away not only with an appreciation of the sport, but also with an appreciation of Ron Lyle's indomitable spirit - both in and out of the ring. This is more than a boxing story, it's a tale of triumph that goes beyond the record books.

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