

"Mohamid Ali Never Kept his Mouth Shut"

BY PAT / SALTY

IN THE 1960'S AND 1970'S BOXER MOHAMID ALI WAS A VERY CONTROVERSIAL AND POLARIZING FIGURE IN AMERICA.

PEOPLE EITHER LOVED HIM - OR HATED HIM. BUT WHAT HE WAS TO EVERYONE WAS - NEVER BORING.

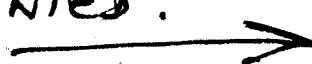
OL' SALTY FOUND HIM VERY ENTERTAINING, ONLY WITH THE WISDOM THAT CAME WITH TIME ~~BECAUSE OF HIS ACT~~ - DID I FINALLY REALLY UNDERSTAND THE MAN.

WHEN I WAS JUST A KID I DIDN'T. LIKE MANY, I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST A BULLY - A JERK AND A LOUDMOUTH. THAT'S BECAUSE - AGAIN, LIKE MANY OTHERS - I TOOK HIS WHOLE WRESTLER LIKE ACT ("I AM THE GREATIST!") LITERALLY. I THOUGHT HIS ACT WAS REAL. WHEN IT WAS - OBVIOUSLY, IN HINDSIGHT - ALL JUST THAT, AN ACT.

A BIG LOUD OUTRAGIOUS PUBLIC ACT MEANT TO:

- A) DRUM UP INTEREST IN HIS FIGHTS (#)
- B) INTIMIDATE HIS OPPONENTS MENTALLY AND,
- C) COVER UP HIS OWN PERSONAL INSECURITY AND PUBLIC SHYNESS.

IT WAS WHAT IT WAS - AND THIS IS WHAT IT WAS. LIKE MANY, I USE TO ROOT FOR HIM TO GET HIS ASS KICKED BY WHOEVER HE FOUGHT. LIKE MANY, I WAS USUALLY DISAPPOINTED.



(2)

BECAUSE HE HAD SPEED, POWER, AND "RING SMARTS" AS A BOXER.

AND USUALLY WON BECAUSE OF IT.

Oh, he COULD GET HURT - HIT HARD, EVEN KNOCKED DOWN - IN A FIGHT.

BUT WHEN KNOCKED DOWN HE ALWAYS GOT UP - QUICK.

he HAD A GREAT TRICK he used TO EMPLOY whenever he REALLY GOT HURT BY AN OPPONENT - A TRICK THAT USED TO WORK FOR HIM EVERY TIME; he WOULD GO INTO A BIG

OVERACTING ROUTINE whereby he WOULD EXAGGERATEDLY wobble his LEGS AND ROLL his head side TO side AS IF he WERE PANTOMINING A wobbly DRUNK -

AND his OPPONENT (WHO HAD JUST HIT him AND HAD him IN REAL TROUBLE!) WOULD INVARIABLY BACK OFF!

("Duh - WAIT! he's ACTING - IT MUST BE A TRICK!") JUST LONG ENOUGH - A SECOND OR TWO - FOR ALI'S HEAD TO CLEAR; I WOULD BE SCREAMING AT THE T.V.; "he's REALLY HURT - FINISH him OFF YOU FOOL!!"

TO NO AVAIL.

his BAFLED OPPONENT WOULD ALWAYS FALL FOR THE TRICK ALI PULLED AND BACK AWAY JUST LONG ENOUGH TO ALLOW ALI'S HEAD TO CLEAR - ~~AND~~ AFTER WHICH ALI WOULD END UP WINNING THE FIGHT. AS I SAID, THE GUY HAD REAL RING SMARTS... XX