

TIME

The Greatest

MUHAMMAD ALI
1942 - 2016





Ali, after defeating boxer Cleveland Williams in a 1966 fight

Cover Story

The Greatest

How Muhammad Ali, whose fight extended far beyond the ring, became an American icon

By Robert Lipsyte 20

Viewpoint On the strength of his convictions, Ali rewrote the rules for black athletes

By Kareem Abdul-Jabbar 18

The Swagger of a Lion The story behind the photo that helped define a champion's image 60

On the cover: Photograph by Philippe Halsman—Magnum

6 | Conversation

▶ The Brief

News from the U.S. and around the world

9 | Was it terrorism? **EgyptAir Flight 804's** unanswered questions

10 | Outdated airplane **black boxes** are being updated—slowly

11 | Meager results in latest **U.S. jobs report**

12 | Debate continues over the role boxing played in Muhammad Ali's **Parkinson's**

15 | Ruchir Sharma on **Latin America's** taking a rightward turn

16 | Joe Klein on **Hillary Clinton's** haymaker against Donald Trump

▶ Summer Movie Preview

What to see

46 | The season's onscreen teams include a new set of **Ghostbusters**, an ocean's worth of fish in **Finding Dory** and two women who are **Absolutely Fabulous**

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The Greatest, over TIME

When Muhammad Ali first appeared on the cover of TIME in 1963, he was still Cassius Clay. Although he had won an Olympic gold medal, there were few signs he would become, in many ways, a bigger legend outside of the ring. He was the subject of three more covers over the next four decades. **Here is an excerpt from that 1963 cover story:**

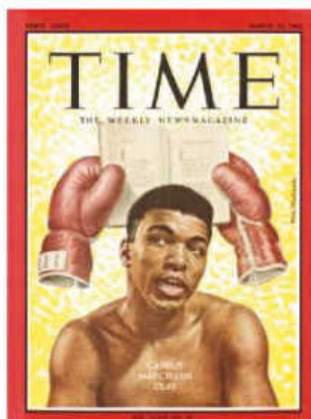
DREAMS CAME EASY IN LOUISVILLE'S WEST END. "Why can't I be rich?" Cassius once asked his father. His father touched him on one pecan-colored hand and said, "Look there. That's why you can't be rich." But at 12, Cassius got his "wheel." It was a shiny \$60 bicycle, and he proudly pedaled off to a fair at the Columbia Gym downtown. When the show was over, the bike was gone. In tears, Cassius sought out policeman Joe Martin. "If I find the kid who stole my bike," he said, "I'll whup him." Martin told him that he'd better learn how to box before he went out looking for a fight, and offered to let him join the boxing classes he ran in the gym. Cassius never did get his bike back. But six weeks later, he got in a ring with another 12-year-old, a white boy, and beat him. Then he knew everything was going to be all right. The salesman in the Cadillac showroom downtown got a big laugh at the little Negro, face pressed against the glass, gazing wistfully at the glittering cars inside. "All Cassius talked about was money—turning pro," says Martin. "At first, I didn't encourage him. A year later, though, you could see that little smart-aleck had a lot of potential."

'IF I FIND THE KID WHO STOLE MY BIKE, I'LL WHUP HIM.'

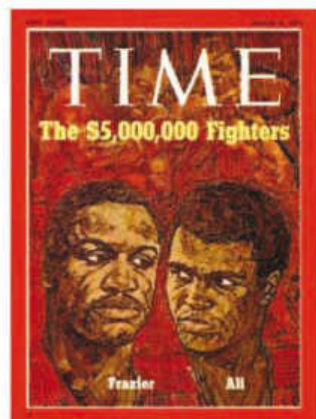
—ALI, TO POLICEMAN JOE MARTIN

Cassius skipped rope for hours to toughen his legs, flailed away at a heavy bag to put power into his punches, sparred with his own mirrored image to quicken his timing and reflexes. There was one terrifying moment at 15, when he flunked a preflight physical. "Heart murmur," said the doctor. But nothing came of it. Cassius rested for four months, then started fighting again. On weekends, he wandered about like a nomad, taking on all comers in amateur tournaments all across the U.S.

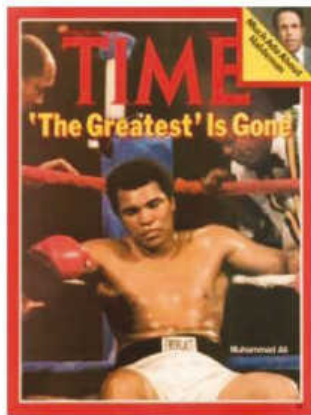
Cassius' permanent record at Louisville's Central High School lists his IQ as "average," but when he graduated in 1960, he ranked 376th in a class of 391. He only got into trouble once. He hit a teacher with a snowball and was called to stand up before a disciplinary board. He was terribly sorry, he said. Then he calmly told all three of them he was going to be the heavyweight champion of the world. □



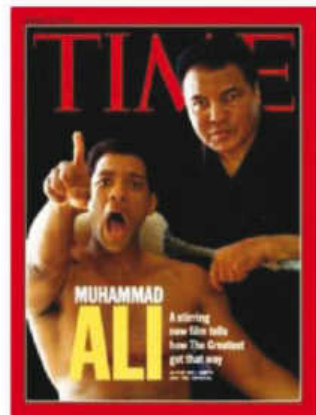
March 22, 1963



March 8, 1971



Feb. 27, 1978



Jan. 28, 2002

COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

This week's cover story is written by Robert Lipsyte (far right), an award-winning author and veteran New York Times journalist who has covered Ali throughout his career. Lipsyte has also written a 96-page, softcover book for TIME, which includes more historic images and memorable moments from Ali's life. Look for it in stores and online at Amazon.



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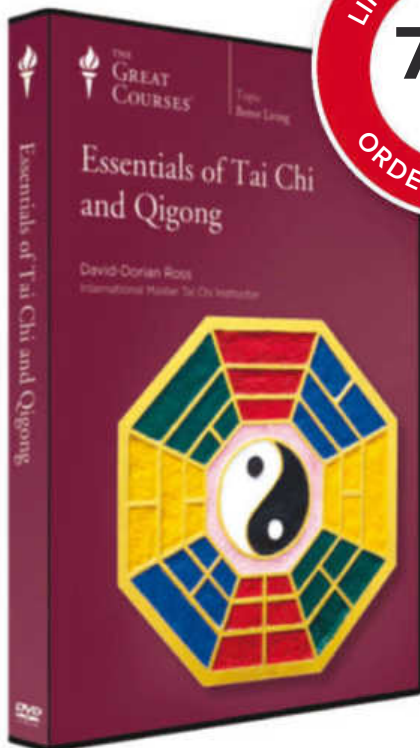
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The Brief

'THAT SUCH MYSTERIES PERSIST IN A CONNECTED WORLD CAN SEEM BAFFLING.' —PAGE 10



Although parts of EgyptAir Flight 804 have been found, the cause of the fatal crash is still a mystery

After EgyptAir Flight 804, an eerie silence from terrorist groups

By Karl Vick

PERHAPS CLARITY ON THE MAY 19 crash of EgyptAir Flight 804 will surface with the aircraft's black box, which sensors have located on the Mediterranean Sea floor. But weeks after officials from Cairo to Washington speculated that the plane went down at terrorists' hands, no terrorist group has taken responsibility.

That's unsettling all by itself. ISIS and al-Qaeda tend to make their claims promptly. And even when they don't, specious claims bubble up from obscure groups trying to seize the spotlight. This time: nothing. In the vacuum, terrorism specialists are weighing the possibilities, few of which are reassuring:

1. It wasn't a terrorist attack. No claim may well mean no bomb. "Why bring down a plane if you're not going

to take credit for it?" asks Clint Watts, former executive officer at West Point's Combating Terrorism Center. He finds "somewhat reassuring" the plane's departure from Paris' Charles de Gaulle, an extremely security-conscious airport, and how late into the four-hour flight it went down, over international waters. As much as the absence of suspicious names on the passenger list, those facts argue against the presence of a suicide bomber, because usually, as Watts says, "you get in the plane, you reach altitude, you detonate it."

2. It was a bomb, but smuggled aboard by means the terrorists hope to use again. The private intelligence firm Stratfor dubs this the "more sinister," if less likely, explanation. It's happened before: in December

1994, Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, tucked a homemade bomb with a timer into the life vest under his seat on a Philippine Airlines flight, then left the plane. When it detonated on the next leg of the flight, Yousef made no public claim of responsibility—because the bomb was a test run for planting explosives in the same way aboard 11 U.S. airliners crossing the Pacific. The plot was discovered when a bombmaker accidentally set fire to a Manila apartment. That discovery led to new security warnings instead of disaster. “In a worst-case scenario,” Stratfor cautioned in a briefing about EgyptAir Flight 804, “we may have a competent bombmaker on the loose with knowledge of how to get a bomb onto a plane, and the authorities have no idea what method he is using.”

3. Some new group did it, and wants to lay low. The absence of claims from ISIS and al-Qaeda “makes me think it might be a new group, or a splinter of a group,” says Jonathan Schanzer, a former U.S. Treasury terrorism analyst. The likeliest group would be “an indigenous organization, maybe in Egypt,” he says. Targeting EgyptAir, a parastatal company closely identified with

the government, amounts to striking a blow against President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, who alienated millions of Egyptians when he deposed his elected Islamist predecessor and outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood. Schanzer notes that a similar crackdown on Islamists in the 1990s energized both the Islamic Group and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (which later merged with al-Qaeda). Now, as the Brotherhood has been forced underground, history may be repeating itself. Samuel Tadros, a Hudson Institute analyst, says numerous small groups have sprung up from the Brotherhood to answer Egyptian-state crackdowns, but “they have specialized in low-level violence,” like throwing Molotov cocktails at police and toppling electrical towers. Taking down a plane would be a huge leap, he says.

4. Finally, it might even have been a lone wolf, whose presence among the 66 dead would at least explain the absence of a claim. The hope is that the black box will reveal data or pilot conversation that shifts speculation further into the realm of fact. “It’s just very odd,” Schanzer says. “Every day that goes by, it conjures up more thoughts—and scary thoughts.” □

Airplane black boxes are badly out of date

Weeks of hunting for the flight data and voice recorders from EgyptAir Flight 804 have prompted renewed calls to update the way airplanes gather and transmit information. Advocates want to move past an aging black-box system that was introduced in the 1960s—decades before real-time data streaming became a ubiquitous part of life.

Governments, airlines and pilots have all resisted changes. Airlines argue that it would cost too much, and pilots say streaming could be an invasion of their privacy. Since planes cross borders, aviation officials from around the world need to agree on new technology.

But experts believe changes are years or even decades overdue and that recent crashes have made that painfully clear. The hunt for



black boxes is a race against time, since batteries for their locator beacons last only 30 days. After that, flight data and voice recorders fall silent, making any efforts to find them hugely difficult, especially when planes fall to the bottom of the ocean, as is likely the case with the EgyptAir flight. Despite an international hunt, the black boxes are still missing from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which vanished between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing in March 2014.

That such mysteries persist in a connected world can seem baffling. Indeed, the aftermath of a 2009 Air France crash—when it took nearly two years to recover the black boxes—

pushed some governments to suggest several changes. These included designing data recorders to eject automatically in a crash, float on the ocean surface and transmit data from locator beacons at lower frequencies, allowing the sound to be detected from farther away.

Change will come slowly. The European Aviation Safety Agency has issued new regulations requiring black-box batteries to last 90 days, but that rule won’t go into effect until 2019 and will affect planes operating out of Europe. In March, the U.N. agency in charge of air travel issued new regulations that will roll out between now and 2021. They will require planes to transmit their location once a minute in distress circumstances and to extend the voice recordings from the cockpit to 25 hours. Black boxes currently record only the last two hours of the flight—frustrating efforts to trace events that may have started earlier. —Vivienne Walt

TRENDING



SPORTS

The Spanish tennis player **Garbiñe Muguruza** upset **Serena Williams** to win the **French Open on June 4**. Muguruza, who lost to Williams in the Wimbledon final last year, became the first Spanish woman to win a Grand Slam since Arantxa Sánchez Vicario in 1998.



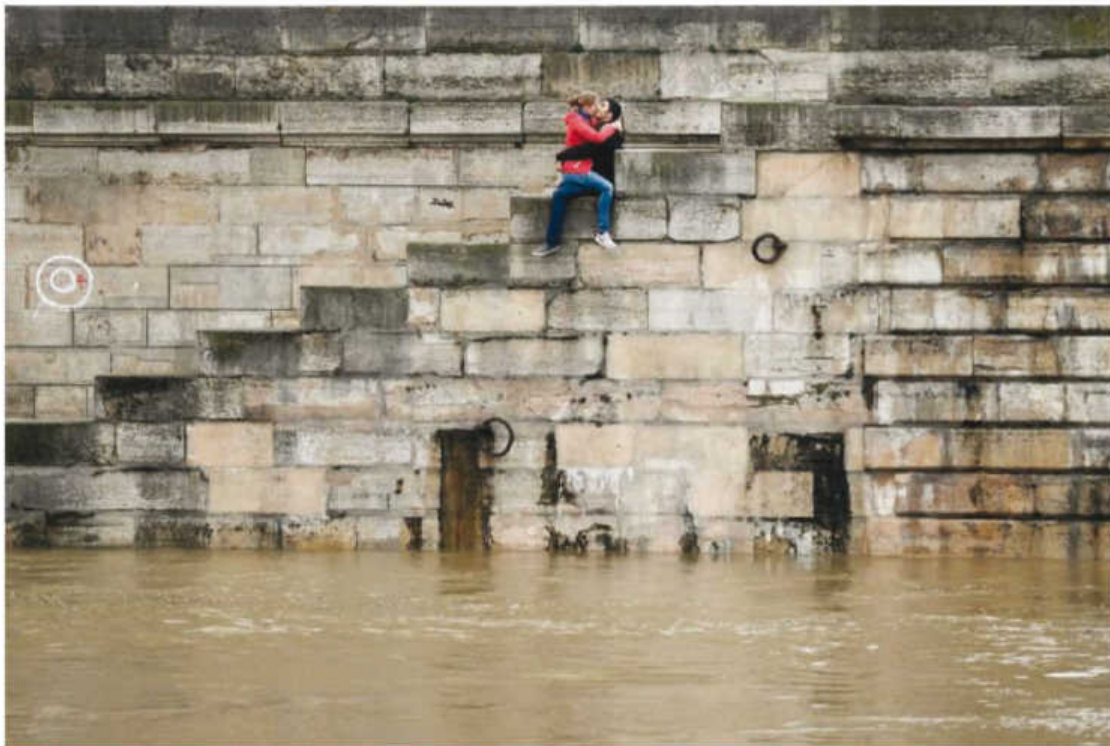
ARCHAEOLOGY

Scientists discovered that the **dagger buried with Egypt’s King Tutankhamun** was made with iron from a meteorite. Italian and Egyptian researchers analyzed the metal in the dagger—found in 1925—and traced it back to a meteor that struck 150 miles (240 km) west of Alexandria.



RELIGION

In a papal decree published June 4, **Pope Francis** established legal procedures to remove bishops who mishandle sex-abuse cases. Critics have long argued that bishops shuffle priests accused of abuse to different parishes rather than reporting them to the police.



BURSTING ITS BANKS A couple kisses along the Seine River in Paris on June 1 as waters rise from days of heavy rain. The river peaked at its highest level in almost 35 years—nearly 15 ft. (4.5 m) above normal—causing the Louvre Museum to close and conservationists to move a trove of artworks stored in the basement to higher floors. French officials said the flooding had killed at least four people and injured 24 others. *Photograph by Charles Platiau—Reuters*

EXPLAINER

What a disappointing U.S. jobs report means

ANOTHER U.S. JOBS REPORT, ANOTHER ROUND of shock and disappointment. On June 4, the government reported that employers added a paltry 38,000 workers in May—far fewer than the 155,000 expected. While the unemployment rate dipped to 4.7%, the number of job hunters is at its lowest since 2007 because 458,000 people gave up on finding work last month alone. Lack of confidence in the recovery could have a near-term economic impact. Here's how:

UNCERTAIN RECOVERY There's a chance May was just a statistical blip; the report has a margin of error of 100,000 jobs and classified 35,000 then striking Verizon workers as unemployed. Other indicators have been positive, such as rising gross domestic product and a bump in average hourly earnings. Even so, the monthly jobs gain was far below the past two years' average of 240,000.



STEADY INTEREST Federal Reserve officials indicated that they would hike interest rates for the first time since December (and the second time in over seven years) at the mid-June meeting if employers continue adding jobs. But since the Fed looks to employment rates as crucial economic indicators—and Fed governor Lael Brainard called the latest report “sobering”—the decision will likely be put off until July.

'THE ECONOMY, STUPID' The economy typically affects swing voters, and a dour picture drives votes away from the incumbent party. So the latest report doesn't look good for Democrat Hillary Clinton. Seizing on this, GOP candidate Donald Trump called the numbers a “bombshell.” Yet since voters care most about wages, which are still rising, any political effects of the report aren't clear-cut. —JULIA ZORTHIAN

◀ *Fed Chair Janet Yellen had signaled a possible rate hike in June but will likely wait until later this year*

DATA

WEB TRENDS

Kleiner Perkins venture capitalist Mary Meeker's Internet report has become one of Silicon Valley's most anticipated annual events. She parses broad data to illustrate tech's big trends. Here's a look at top findings for 2016:



Approximate number of global Internet users; growth is flat at about 9% year over year



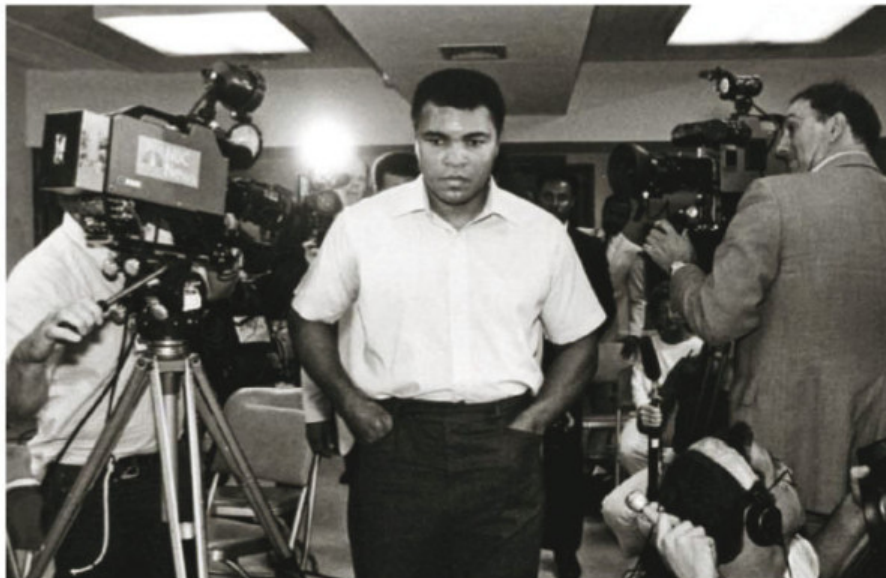
Percentage of users' mobile time spent in just three apps: Facebook, WhatsApp and Chrome



Number of UberPool rides since 2014; ride sharing is poised to lower car-ownership rates



Total value of U.S. web advertising—yet tech firms haven't cracked the code on lucrative mobile ads



Ali's family believes boxing was not the cause of his Parkinson's

THE BRAIN

The role of boxing in the death of Muhammad Ali remains unclear

By Alice Park

FOR MUHAMMAD ALI, WHO DIED AT age 74 after suffering from Parkinson's disease, there couldn't have been a crueler condition to haunt his later years. For the self-proclaimed Greatest, known for his ability to float like a butterfly around his opponents, Parkinson's slowly stole his capacity to control his own muscles and put a stop to his once voluble commentary on everything from his opponents to his religion to race.

But how much of what made him great—those three decades of hit after hit to the head—contributed to his condition? His family believes boxing wasn't the cause, that the cruel intrusion of Parkinson's was the result of his genes and his exposure to pesticides while training outdoors.

They may be partly right. There are genes associated with a higher risk of Parkinson's, though it's not clear if Ali possessed them. And some studies point to toxins from pesticides that target the delicate motor nerves in the brain. But there is also undeniable evidence that repeated trauma to the

brain can damage those same neurons.

Since the 1920s, doctors have known about the correlation between a career in boxing and a series of symptoms that include slurred speech and tremors. The connection was compelling enough for them to dub the syndrome *dementia pugilistica*. It's now known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), and scientists today have a deeper understanding of how trauma to the brain might contribute to Parkinson's as well as to other brain diseases like Alzheimer's. (CTE is still hard to diagnose; for now, it can only be done posthumously.)

"Almost everybody in the neurodegenerative-diseases world believes the reason Ali wound up

'Researchers have found that people hit in the head repeatedly are more likely to develop Parkinson's.'

DR. MICHAEL OKUN, medical director, National Parkinson Foundation

with Parkinson's is because of brain trauma over the course of his career," says Dr. Robert Cantu, professor of neurosurgery at Boston University and a leading CTE researcher.

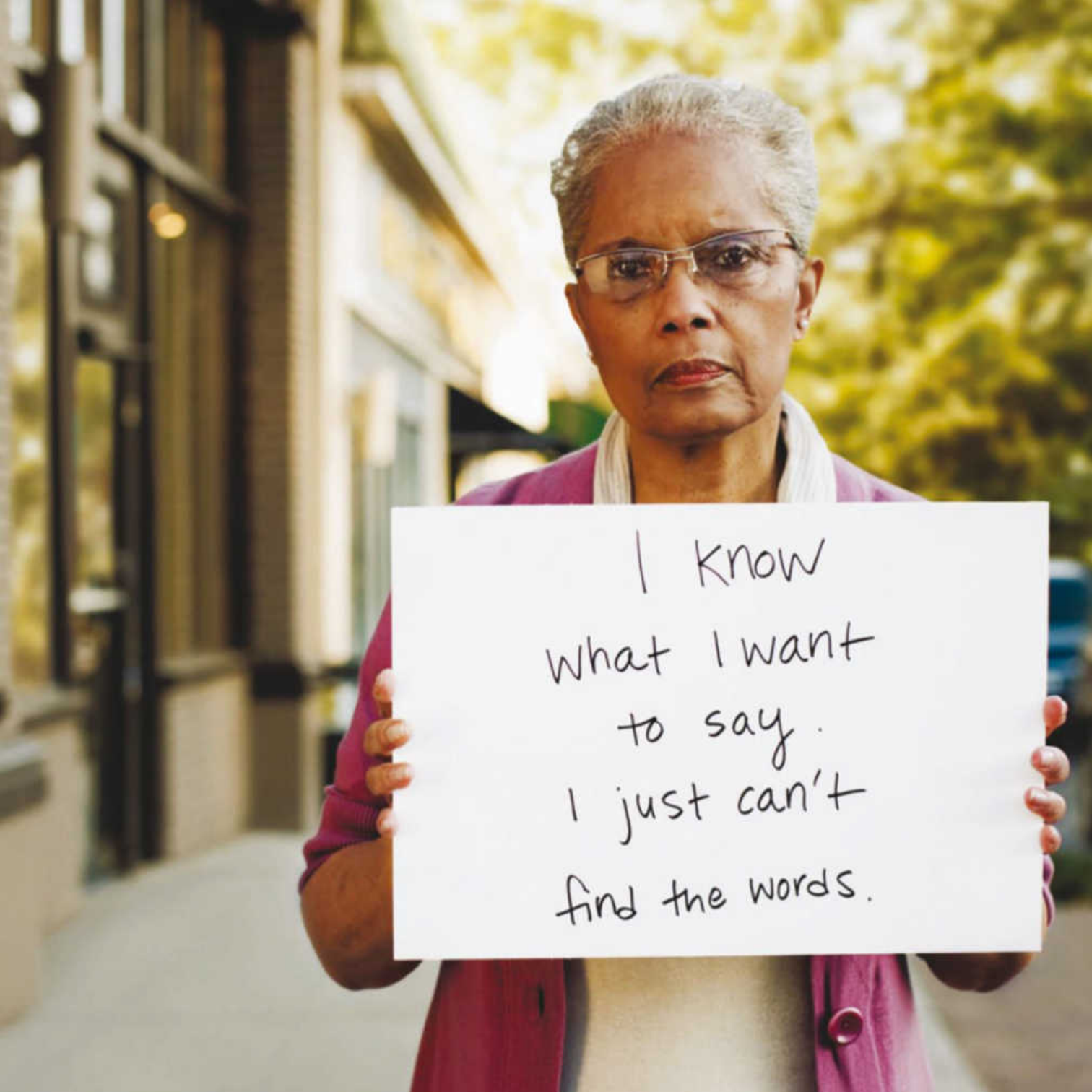
Proving that hunch is more challenging. So far, about a dozen studies have concluded that repeated head trauma is a risk factor for Parkinson's. But Dr. Michael Okun, medical director for the National Parkinson Foundation, notes that "there is still a big gap in our knowledge. Researchers have found that people hit in the head repeatedly are more likely to develop Parkinson's, so there is something to it. But to assign causation is still too premature."

Scientists do not fully understand how the buildup of proteins in the brain—like one called tau, a telltale sign of Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases—is triggered when the brain is injured. It's likely that no single answer will ever explain what the occupational hazards of boxing do to the brain. There is a chance that head injuries could magnify or accelerate underlying problems and contribute to the progression of Parkinson's, the same way it's possible that exposure to pesticide chemicals could play a part.

Both may have been the case with Ali, who was already showing signs of Parkinson's—slurred speech and uncoordinated movements—before his last fight. And the punches to the head from that fight could have heightened any damage that had already occurred.

What will clarify these questions are studies of brain tissue from people like Ali, who both experienced repeated brain trauma and developed Parkinson's. But those studies don't yet exist. It's expensive to follow people over the many years it takes for Parkinson's to develop, but the National Institutes of Health recently begun a study looking back at the medical records of people who developed Parkinson's. Much more research will be needed to know with any certainty if there is a causal link between head trauma and brain disorders.

Perhaps that's yet another legacy Ali will leave. Having raised awareness about Parkinson's, as he did in his later years, his death may inspire ever deeper studies into the terrible condition that claimed his life.



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to say.
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Thanks to economic turmoil, left-wing Latin American countries are turning right

By Ruchir Sharma

ON A TRIP TO SANTIAGO LAST YEAR, I CAUGHT UP WITH Sebastián Piñera, the ex-President of Chile. Piñera's center-right party had been defeated in 2013 by a leftist opposition that offered more social spending and higher corporate taxes. Chile's turn under the new President, Michelle Bachelet, reflected "the long history of Latin America," Piñera said, with a hint of frustration. "When times are good, countries turn to the left, and when times are bad, they turn to the right."

It was not long after our conversation that Latin voters started to turn right, reversing the "pink tide" of the past decade that had seen socialists rise to power in a dozen Latin American countries, mainly on the back of powerful commodity exports that had supported high levels of social spending. That changed in 2015 as global commodity prices plunged. Economic growth turned negative, and inflation averaged 15%, the highest since the crises of the 1990s.

Those bad times soon triggered the fall of one left-wing government after another. Since last November in Argentina, where zero growth and 25% inflation led to the defeat of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, leftist governing parties have suffered setbacks under Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador and Ollanta Humala in Peru, culminating last month in the suspension of President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil.

THE FALL OF THE LEFT in Latin America has been attributed to everything from machismo to colonialism, but I'd suggest there's a more global story at play. In my new book, *The Rise and Fall of Nations*, I note that the political rhythms of countries follow a cycle that mimics the circle of life: crisis gives birth to reform, which triggers a boom, which inspires complacency, which kills reforms and leads to a new crisis. In the years since 2008—and the worst global economic crisis since the 1930s—the world has been in the grip of a largely unrecognized revolt against seated rulers, with incumbents losing as many as two out of three elections globally.

What has happened in Latin America is in part anti-left, but its gut aim is to throw the bums out. The common thread is zero to negative growth with high inflation—up to 100% in Venezuela—and a population fed up with a regime grown stale after a decade or more in power. When they suffered their recent setbacks, Morales' party had been in office for 10 years, Kirchner's for 12 years, Rousseff's for 13, Maduro's for 17. Even the most promising movements tend to grow complacent with time, running out of ideas and the will to reform.

In the wake of a crisis as damaging as 2008, nations come

POLITICAL CYCLES



In his book, Sharma shows how slow population growth is eroding economic growth, as well as which countries in the world are particularly ill-equipped to deal with a coming debt bomb



Argentine President Mauricio Macri has settled nearly \$10 billion in unpaid debts, lifting the country out of default and restoring its access to global credit markets after a 15-year absence

to a fork in the road. Some turn to reformers, others to populists making false promises. After the crises of the 1990s, Venezuela turned to Hugo Chávez, who pushed an experimental socialism under which Venezuelan incomes continued a half-century of decline. Others turned to reformers, like Álvaro Uribe in Colombia.

Today the world is at another decision point. In the U.S., despite relatively strong economic growth, frustration over stagnant wages and a fear of immigrants has fueled the rise of populists like Donald Trump. In Europe, the angry right took over the Polish government last year and nearly took the presidency in Austria last month. The center has held in big countries like Britain and Germany, but far-right parties have moved from marginal to less marginal.

WHILE LATIN AMERICA is plagued by more severe economic problems than the U.S. or Europe is, politically the news is more encouraging. In Argentina, Mauricio Macri got started with big-bang reforms. He eased capital controls, export taxes and subsidies on power and water. He vowed to restore the independence of the central bank, which is critical for fighting inflation, and settled the nation's unpaid debts.

From Argentina to Brazil, business leaders are celebrating the arrival of new governments. This is good news, because they are mostly pragmatic reformers, not angry populists. The newcomers have the bad luck of arriving amid a historically weak global recovery, and face the challenge of reviving growth in hard times. But the fortunes of a nation are most likely to turn for the better when a new leader rises in the wake of a crisis, and today voters are throwing the bums out everywhere. That is a promising shift in the circle of life, particularly in Latin America.

This piece is adapted from Sharma's The Rise and Fall of Nations. Sharma is the chief global strategist and head of emerging markets at Morgan Stanley



With a withering attack on Trump, Clinton at last turns a corner in her White House bid

By Joe Klein

“I GAVE THIS SPEECH YESTERDAY IN SAN DIEGO,” HILLARY Clinton started, but could not finish—the crowds in Garden Grove, and later in San Bernardino, Calif., were cheering, loudly and with a tremendous sense of relief. She had finally proved her worth as a candidate; she had trounced Donald Trump, brilliantly, with high-class mockery and disdain, on the most important aspect of the presidency: his fitness to serve as Commander in Chief—not just his ridiculous attempts to articulate a foreign policy but his flagrant ignorance of the world and his reduction of all issues to schoolyard bullying. House Speaker Paul Ryan endorsed Trump at about the same time as Clinton began speaking. But her remarks were so potent that Ryan’s sad concession—a moment that will embarrass him in perpetuity—couldn’t commandeer the news.

Why? Because Clinton used blunt, confident language for a change. There was almost a Thatcherite clarity to her attack on Trump’s foreign policy ideas: “They’re not even really ideas, just a series of bizarre rants, personal feuds and outright lies.”

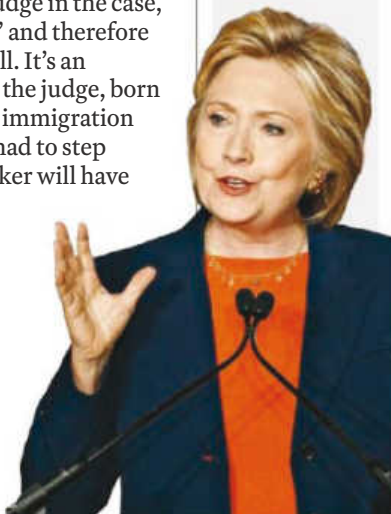
This was a scolding for the ages. Clinton attacked from a height and with a depth that none of Trump’s Republican opponents were ever able to attain—and he was clearly taken by surprise; his initial response was lame. He criticized the way she read from the teleprompter. (Actually she was pretty good.) The Clinton attack came during one of the toughest weeks of Trump’s campaign, a week when the Trump University fraud allegations went viral, a week during which Trump exposed himself as the crudest of racists, attacking the judge in the case, Gonzalo Curiel, for being “of Mexican heritage” and therefore incapable of presiding fairly. “I’m building a wall. It’s an inherent conflict of interest,” Trump said—as if the judge, born in Indiana, would naturally be in favor of illegal immigration simply because he was Latino. Even Paul Ryan had to step away from that one—a contortion that the Speaker will have to perform again and again between now and November.

BECAUSE WE KNOW THIS NOW: Trump is unable to “act presidential.” He has won the Republican nomination, but he simply cannot summon the dignity or restraint that his new status requires. And we know this too: Clinton knows how to get under his “very thin skin,” a body part more relevant to the job of Commander in Chief than the various

CLINTON ON TRUMP

—
“There’s no risk of people losing their lives if you blow up a golf-course deal. But it doesn’t work like that in world affairs.”

—
“He says he has foreign policy experience because he ran the Miss Universe pageant in Russia.”



other appendages that were introduced during the sordid Republican primary process.

In San Diego, she raised an issue that not even Mitt Romney or Ted Cruz had taken on: Trump’s mental stability. “I’ll leave it to the psychiatrists to explain his affection for tyrants” who have no love for the United States, she said. Indeed, Trump’s soundness of judgment, his very sanity, seemed to be shattering under the pressure of the attacks on his alleged fraudulent university. And Clinton increased the pressure on him in her speech, sentence after sentence, example after incredible example of Trump’s arrant foolishness: his support for the Tiananmen Square massacre; his admiration for Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un; his shifting, and feckless, positions on ISIS.

THE SAN DIEGO SPEECH is a marker, a moment when the 2016 presidential campaign changed. Win or lose in California, Clinton proved herself the candidate best able to make the case against Trump. The confidence of her rhetoric should have sent a message to Bernie Sanders: It’s time for you to suspend your vanity campaign—there is serious business to focus on now.

Clinton certainly seemed a candidate transformed on the day after her San Diego speech. She joked with audiences about Trump; she laid out her proposals with quiet assurance. She didn’t need to oversell; her rhetoric—often too hot, too stacy in the past—was calm and factual, as if she’d finally realized that all she really needed to do was be a rational grownup with an active sense of humor. The more she plays the Thatcher role, the more Trump will seem the petulant child he so clearly is.

The race will twist and turn over the next five months. Clinton will have bad weeks. She still has obvious weaknesses as a candidate and as a human being. But she’s always been able to take a punch, and now, finally, she has demonstrated the ability to land a haymaker. □



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Muhammad Ali became a big brother to me—and to all African Americans

By Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

WHEN I FIRST MET MUHAMMAD ALI, HE WAS performing magic tricks on Hollywood Boulevard. I was a freshman at UCLA walking along the street with two of my school buddies when we saw him strolling with a small entourage, doing sleight-of-hand illusions for fans who came up to him. This was 1966 and Ali, only five years older than me, had already made his mark as the youngest ever heavyweight champion. The next year, he would be stripped of his title after announcing he would not submit to being drafted into the Army because “I ain’t got nothing against them Viet Cong” who “never called me nigger.” Half the world would chant his name in praise; the other half would sharpen pitchforks and light torches.

And here he was, casually walking down the street as if he hadn’t a care in the world, delighting people he didn’t even know with his magic. His magic wasn’t just the simple tricks he performed, but his ability to draw everyone’s attention to him, whether he was in a crowded room or on a busy boulevard. And once he had their attention, he never disappointed them. No matter how many people were around, he was the only one you looked at. He exuded confidence, a sense of purpose and an undeniable joy, as if he knew that he and the world made a pretty good pair.

Being a big fan, I shyly approached him to say hello. If he knew who I was, he didn’t let on. He was friendly and polite and charming—and then he was gone, moving down the street like a lazy breeze, a steady stream. A force of nature: gentle but unstoppable.

The three of us walked away jabbering giddily about how cool it was to have met the champ. But to me that meeting was much more than running into yet another celebrity in L.A. I’d admired Muhammad since I was 13, when he and Rafer Johnson won gold medals in the 1960 Olympics. Rafer dominated in the decathlon and Muhammad triumphed as a light heavyweight boxer. To me, they were the epitome of the skill, power and grace of the black athlete, and they inspired me to push myself harder.

Muhammad’s influence on me in those formative years, from when I was 13 to when I

met him on Hollywood Boulevard, wasn’t just related to athletics. He had not only conquered the boxing world through his undeniable dominance in the ring, but he had mastered the art of self-promotion unlike anyone since P.T. Barnum, who once said, “Without promotion, something terrible happens ... nothing!” Muhammad cannily ensured that something would happen by playing the court jester. He bragged relentlessly and shamelessly—and in verse! He riled up some white folk so much that they would pay anything to see this uppity young boy put back in his place.

THAT PLACE, for blacks of the time, was wherever they were told. Sure, athletes and entertainers were invited to sit at the adult table, but for everyone else, the struggle was still in its infancy. Once at the table, opportunities for blacks opened up everywhere. So if you were smart and wanted to maintain a successful career, you kept your dark head down, mouth shut, and occasionally confirmed how grateful and blessed you felt.

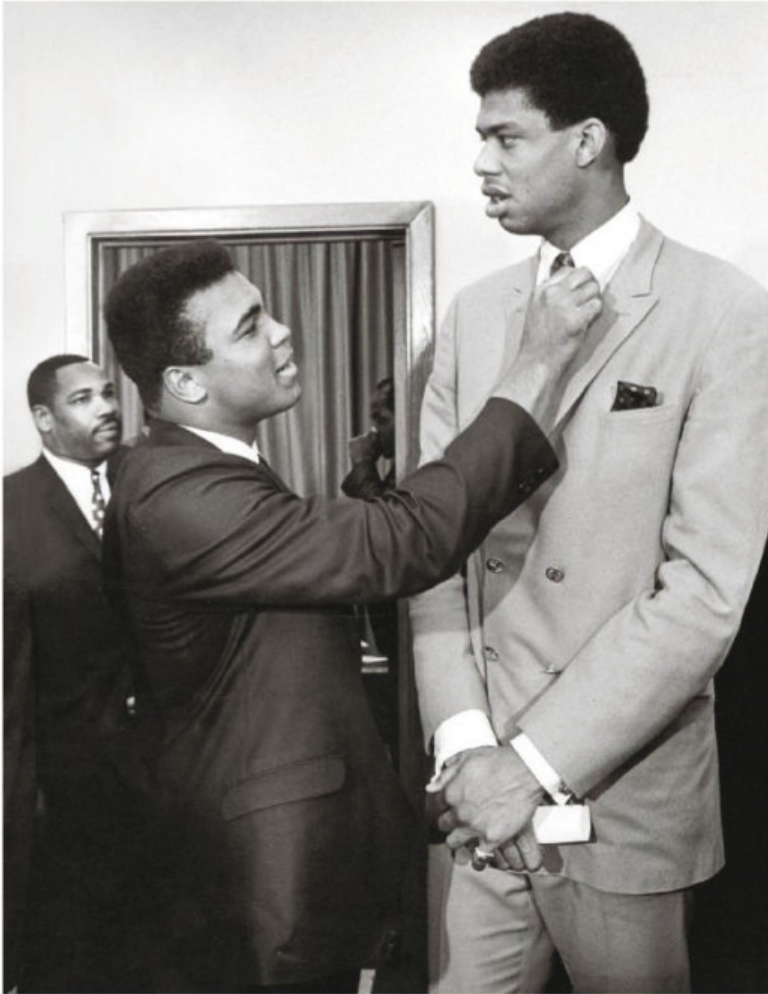
Not Muhammad.

He was a fighter, whether in or out of the ring. In the ring, he was as much businessman as athlete. Out of the ring, he was a champion of justice—and a terrible businessman. His conversion to the Nation of Islam in 1964 would eventually lead to his being stripped of his heavyweight title in 1967, when he refused to submit to the draft during the Vietnam War citing religious grounds as well as the fact that “my conscience won’t let me go shoot my brother, or some darker people.” This caused him to be sentenced to prison for five years, fined \$10,000 and banned from boxing for three years, his license to box being revoked in all states. (In 1971, his conviction was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in an 8-0 decision.) He didn’t fight for three years during his physical prime, when he could have earned millions of dollars, because he stood up for a principle. While I admired the athlete of action, it was the man of principle who was truly my role model.

The next time Muhammad and I met was at a lavish Los Angeles party mostly attended by college and professional athletes. Members of various UCLA and USC teams were there, as were some of the Dodgers. I saw Muhammad floating like a butterfly through the party, only he wasn’t stinging anyone like a bee—he was flirting with all the women and charming all the men. He was like a magnet moving through a crowd of needles.

Like a typical gawky and insecure freshman,

While I admired the athlete of action, it was the man of principle who was truly my role model



I drifted off on my own to check out the musical instruments the band had abandoned when they took a break. My dad was a jazz musician and brought me up around a lot of other musicians, so I had a passion for music even though I had no discernible talent. I started hitting the drums, working up a nice beat, when suddenly Muhammad Ali was next to me strumming a guitar. Muhammad's personal photographer, Howard Bingham, immediately swooped in, posed us, and snapped an image of us jamming.

After that evening, Muhammad took on a big brother role in my life. He invited me to attend a meeting in Cleveland to discuss his protesting the draft. Basketball legend Bill Russell was there, along with NFL great Jim Brown and a lot of other Cleveland Browns players. In the early

Ali and Abdul-Jabbar at a June 1967 meeting of athletes in Cleveland to discuss Vietnam draft protests

days of the draft, there wasn't as much opposition to the war. People of color were among the first to protest, because it seemed as if we were the first to be drafted and sent to fight. Those too poor to afford college, which came with a student deferment, had little choice. As the draft extended to include more white, middle-class boys, opposition to the war grew in popularity. But despite our passion, we few athletes were unable to do anything significant to fight the draft. We left feeling powerless, especially knowing that had Muhammad allowed himself to be drafted, he would have never faced combat and would have still earned his millions. Instead, he would face the punishment for his convictions alone.

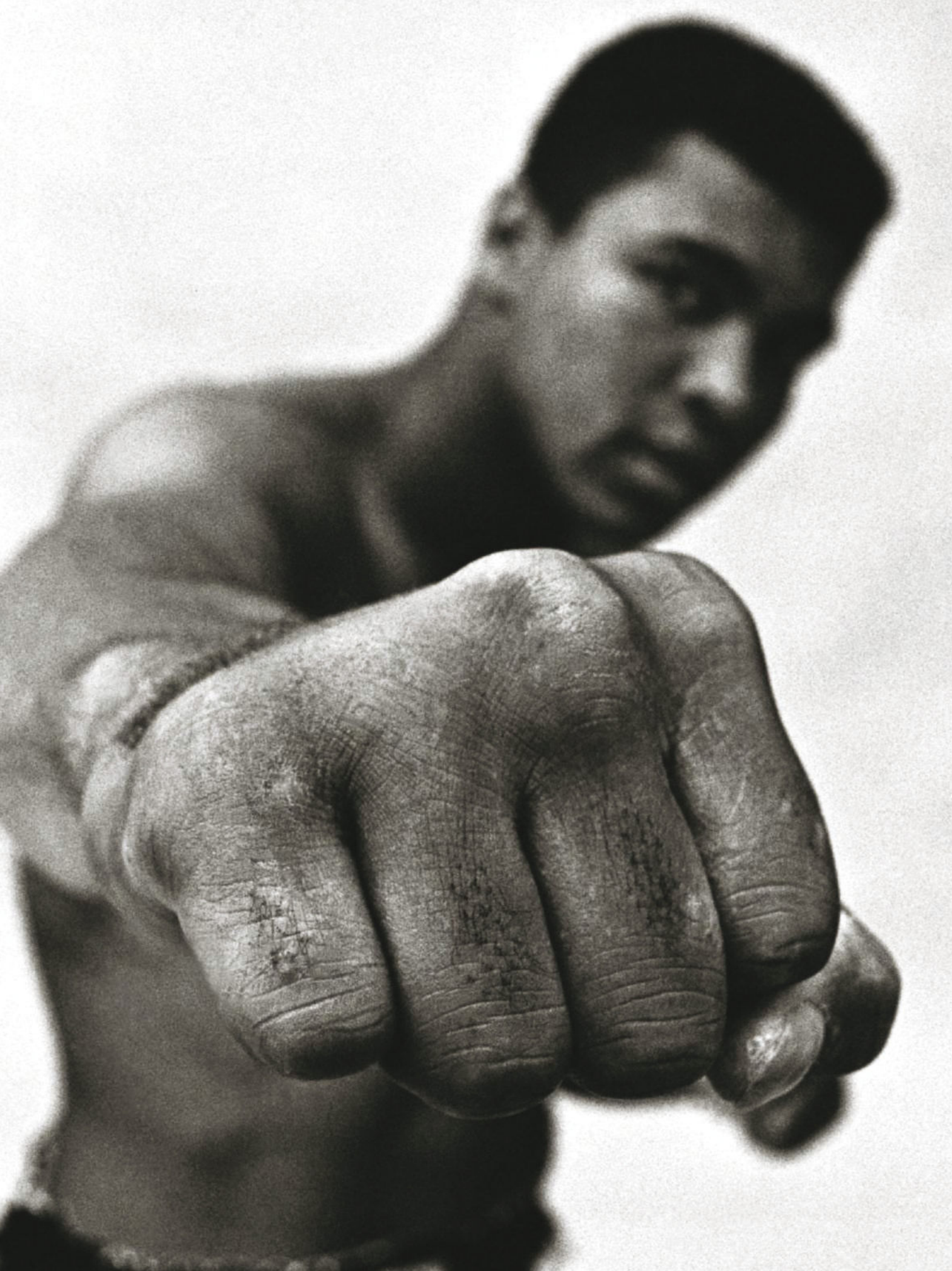
That's when I realized he wasn't just my big brother, but a big brother to all African Americans. He willingly stood up for us whenever and wherever bigotry or injustice arose, without regard for the personal cost. He was like an American version of the comic-book hero Black Panther.

DESPITE OUR MUTUAL AFFECTION and respect, Muhammad and I were not always on the same path. While still a college student, I went to hear him speak in Harlem. Afterward, he took me to dinner to meet Louis Farrakhan, a leader within the Nation of Islam. I had been the object of enough recruitment dinners to know where this was going. Even though I had no intention of joining, my regard for Muhammad was so great that I chose to attend. However, my burgeoning involvement with Islam was strictly a spiritual quest, while the Nation of Islam seemed more of a political organization. I wanted to keep my pursuit of social justice separate from my pursuit of religious fulfillment.

Muhammad was not offended by my refusal to join. (In 1975, he left the Nation of Islam to embrace Sunni Islam.) Throughout the years we disagreed on other social and political issues, but none of that ever interfered with our friendship. We supported each other in the books we wrote, the charitable events we hosted and some of the causes we championed.

Most young people today know Muhammad Ali only as the hunched old man whose body shook ceaselessly from Parkinson's. But I, and millions of other Americans black and white, remember him as the man whose mind and body once shook the world. We have been better off because of it.

Abdul-Jabbar is a six-time NBA champion and league Most Valuable Player



MUHAMMAD ALI | 1942–2016

ALI

CHAMPION. OUTCAST. HERO. LEGEND.

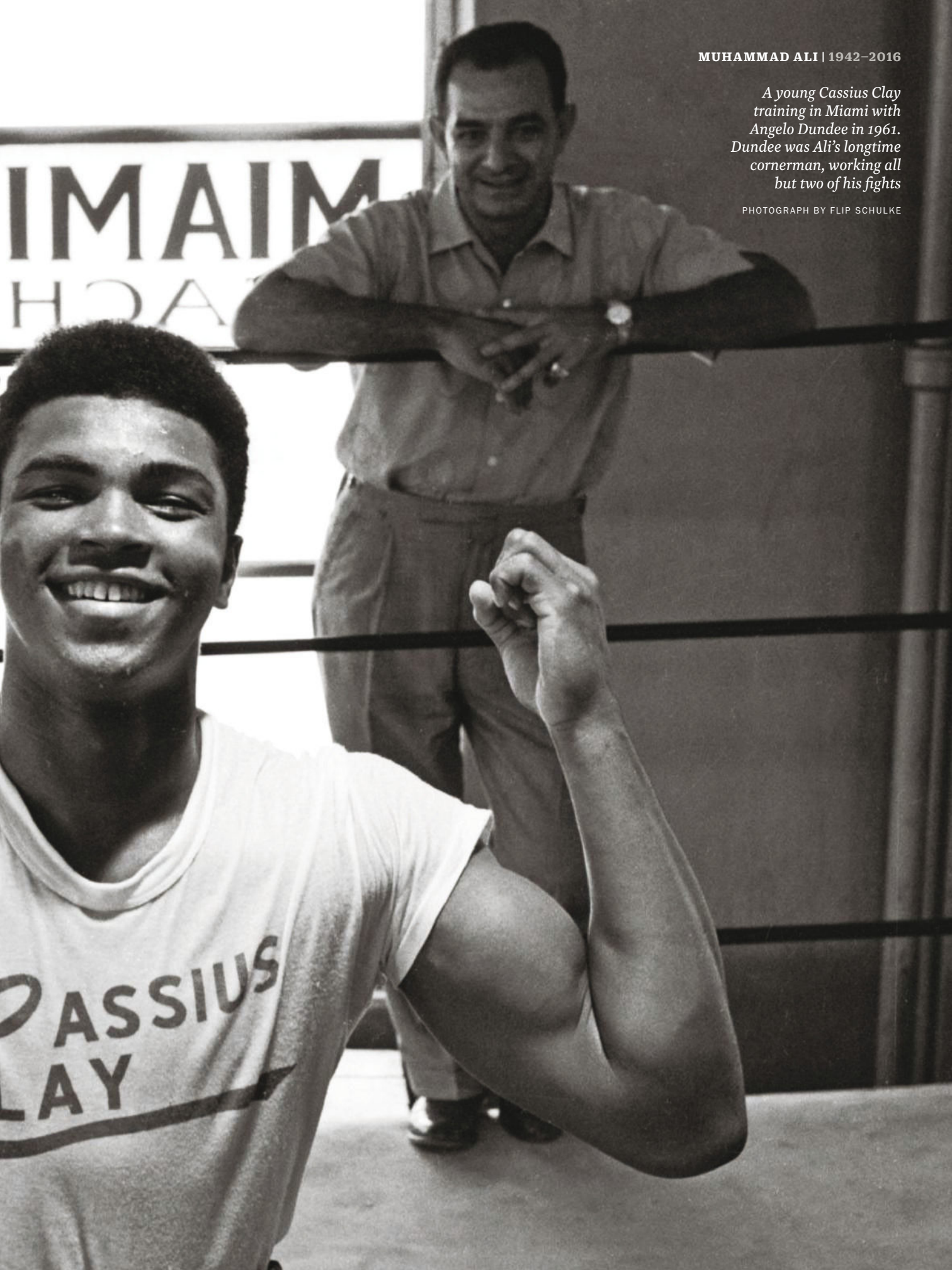
BY ROBERT LIPSYTE



MUHAMMAD ALI | 1942–2016

A young Cassius Clay training in Miami with Angelo Dundee in 1961. Dundee was Ali's longtime cornerman, working all but two of his fights

PHOTOGRAPH BY FLIP SCHULKE

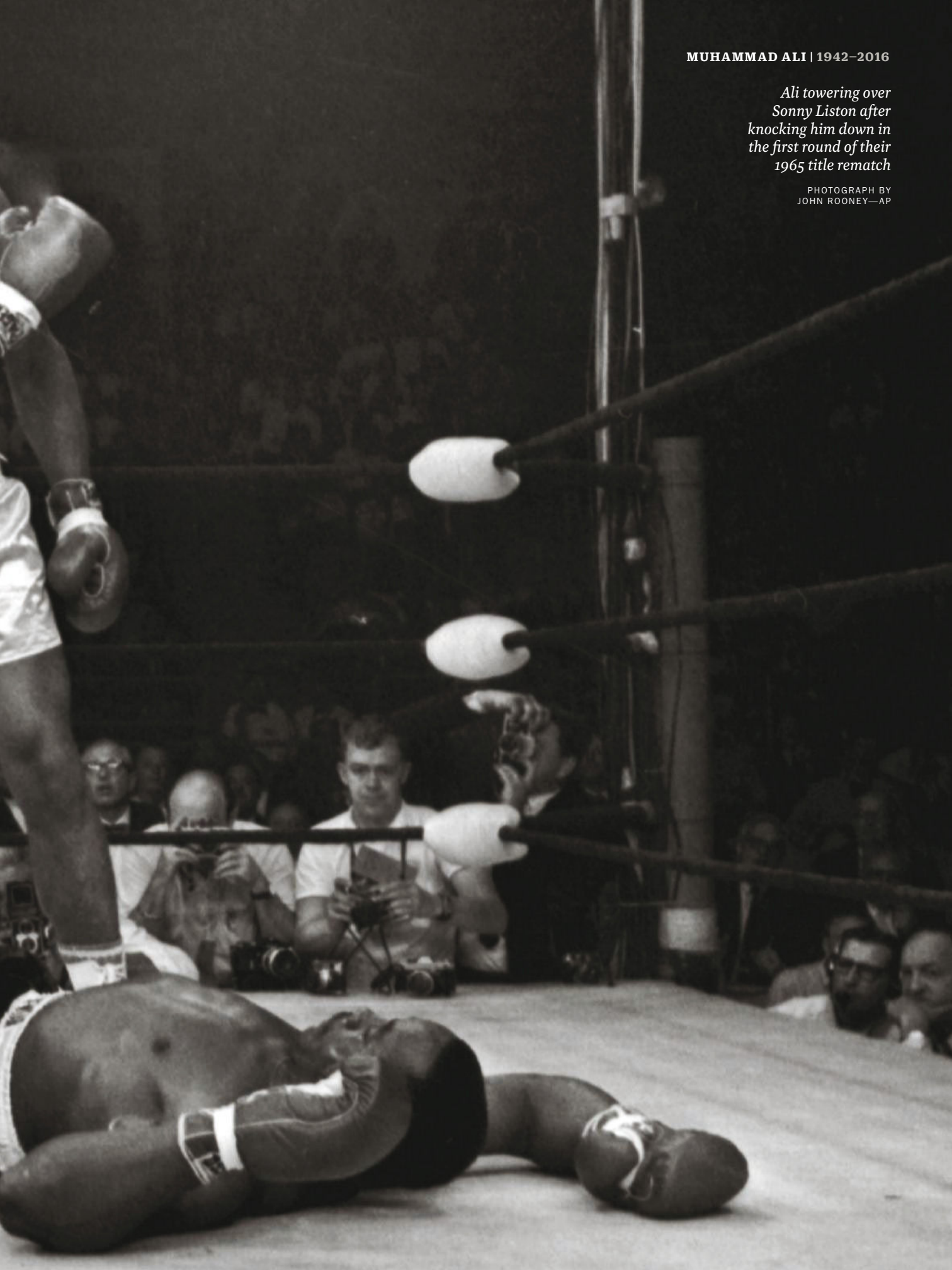


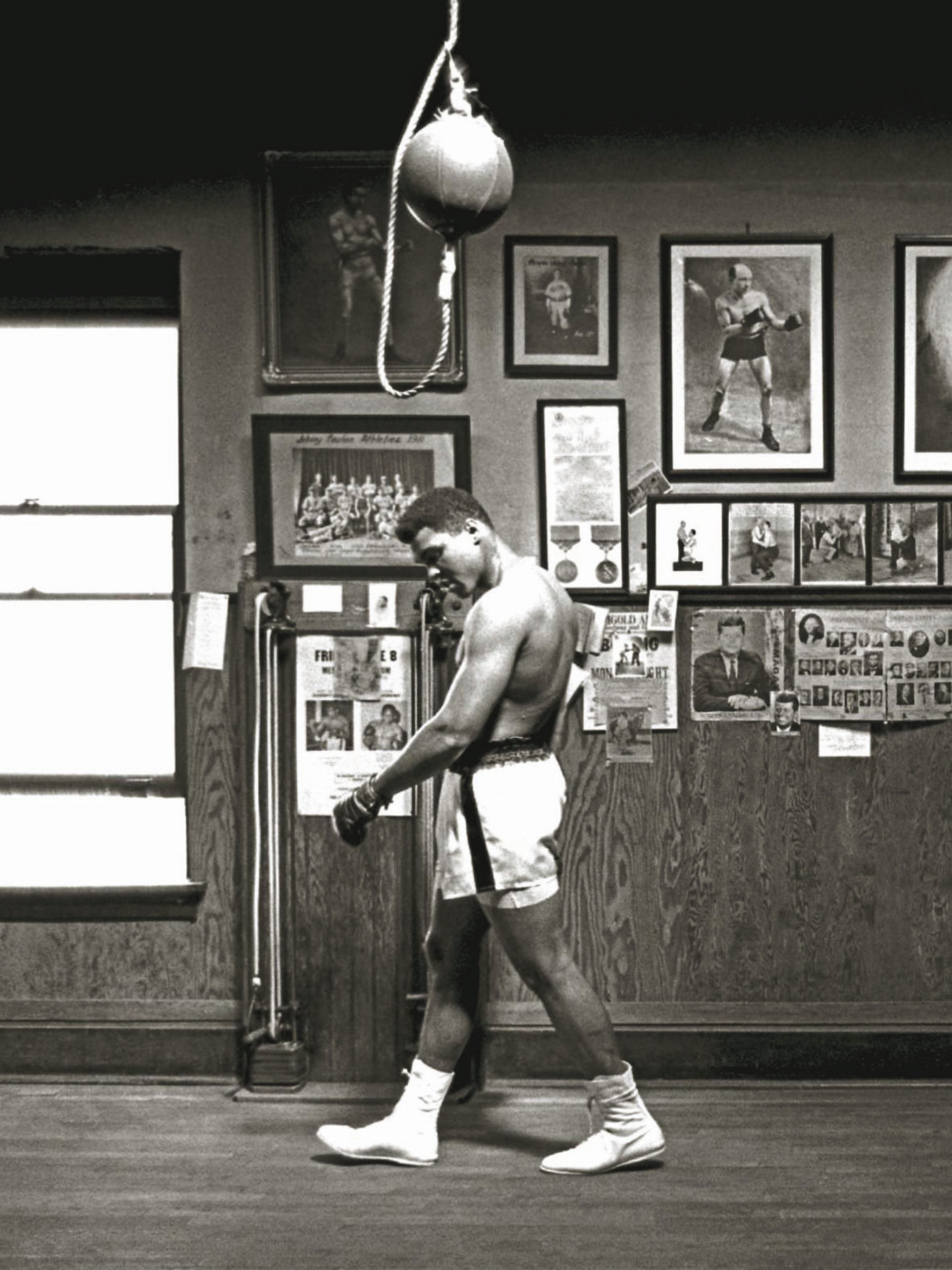


MUHAMMAD ALI | 1942-2016

*Ali towering over
Sonny Liston after
knocking him down in
the first round of their
1965 title rematch*

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOHN ROONEY—AP





*Ali, reigning world
heavyweight champion,
training in Chicago in 1966.
He is the only man to win
the title three times*

PHOTOGRAPH BY
THOMAS HOEPKER—MAGNUM



I LIKE TO THINK THE '60S BEGAN ON FEB. 18, 1964, THE DAY THE BEATLES AND I MET CASSIUS CLAY.

THE BEATLES WERE ON THEIR FIRST AMERICAN tour, and they had been taken to the Miami training camp of Sonny Liston, the heavyweight champion of the world, for a photo op. Liston took one look at the four mop-topped Brits in their matching white terry-cloth cabana jackets and refused to pose with “those little sissies.” So the photographer scrambled for second best. Stuffing the lads back into the limo, he headed for Clay’s training camp, the Fifth Street Gym.

Because the *New York Times*’ boxing writer didn’t think the fight between Clay and Liston was worth his time, a kid reporter had been pulled off rewrite and sent instead. Everyone knew Clay had no chance, so my instructions were stark: as soon as I arrived in Miami Beach, I was to drive my rental car between the arena where the fight would be and the nearest hospital until I knew the route cold. The *Times* didn’t want me wasting any deadline time getting lost on the way to the intensive-care unit.

I had the route down by the time I got to Clay’s gym. He wasn’t there yet, but these four guys my age were, and they were stomping and cursing because security guards had herded them into an empty dressing room to wait. Had I any sense of who they were (or would become), I might have been more reticent in pushing my way into the room too.

I asked for their predictions for the fight. They said that Liston would destroy the silly, overhyped wanker



who had no business fighting for the title. Then they began cursing again and banging on the walls.

Suddenly the dressing room burst open, and Cassius Clay filled the doorway. The Beatles and I gasped. He was so much bigger than he looked in pictures. He was beautiful. He glowed. And he was laughing.

“Hello there, Beatles,” he roared. “We oughta do some road shows together. We’ll get rich.”

The Beatles were quick studies. They followed Clay like kindergartners. You would have thought they had all met before to choreograph their capers. The band bounced into the boxing ring, frolicked, dropped down to pray that Clay would stop hitting them. They lined up so he could knock them out with one punch, then fell like dominoes. They formed a pyramid to reach his jaw so one of them could pretend to sock it.

A master of shaping his public image, Ali hammed it up with the Beatles in Miami before his 1964 title fight against Sonny Liston



Once the Beatles left, Clay worked out, then walked back to the dressing room for a rubdown. As he stretched out on a table, he beckoned me. We'd never spoken. "Who were those little sissies?" he whispered.

Seven days later, Clay beat Liston to claim the title. He was 22 years old, one of the youngest heavyweight champions of all time as well as one of the best, the most charismatic and the most controversial. With the triumph over Liston, Clay's trajectory was set: a hero and a villain, then a principled warrior and, finally, a beatified legend, at once misinterpreted and beloved.

THE EPIC ADVENTURES of the future king of the world began with a mundane event: his bicycle was stolen.

Twelve-year-old Clay had left his new Schwinn on a Louisville, Ky., street corner while he gorged on free

popcorn at the annual Home Show. When he returned, the bike was gone.

Someone told him there was a police officer in the nearby Columbia Gym. Clay ran down and was spellbound: boys, black and white, were slamming bags, jumping rope and sparring in front of mirrors as bells clanged and men yelled, "Time!" Joe Martin, an off-duty white cop who coached young boxers, listened patiently as the boy ranted: "Somebody stole my bike ... when I find him, I'm gonna whup him, I'm gonna."

"Do you know how to box?" asked Martin.

Martin would recall that Clay was skinny and "ordinary" as a fighter at first. But he quickly found, as Clay's pro trainer Angelo Dundee would find years later, that the youngster was impossible to discourage, "easily the hardest worker of any kid I ever taught."

'HE'S PART OF THE REASON WHY AFRICAN AMERICANS TODAY CAN DO WHAT WE DO IN THE SPORTS WORLD. WE'RE FREE.'

—LEBRON JAMES, FOUR-TIME NBA MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

The crude but crowd-pleasing slugger soon became a neighborhood celebrity. Gang members respected him, teachers overlooked his unsatisfactory schoolwork, and perhaps most important for his confidence, he gained recognition within his father's large and accomplished extended family of teachers, musicians, craftspeople and business owners. The family traced itself back to the statesman and abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay, who freed his slaves. One of them named a son Herman Clay, who in 1912 named a son Cassius Marcellus Clay, who in turn named his firstborn, on Jan. 17, 1942, Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr.

Years later, when I asked Muhammad Ali about his lineage, he bridled. He was a new member of the Nation of Islam then, dogmatic in his anti-white rhetoric but mindful of his family's pride in its heritage. Finally he said that if there was any white blood, "it came by rape and defilement."

Ali's father instilled in him the sense that he would have to make his way by following white-man rules, at least until he was big enough to make his own. He started making them quickly. Despite resistance from trainers and coaches, Ali evolved a style that probably ruined many other fighters who didn't have his speed and talent. Few could get away with holding their fists at their waist as he did, or with avoiding punches by pulling back instead of "slipping" them, leaning to one side or the other so they passed harmlessly over a shoulder. His style often led people to believe he couldn't take a punch.

As a teen in Louisville, Clay's boundless enthusiasm, self-promotion and confidence led him to Dundee's hotel room. He had heard that the famous trainer was in town. Dundee remembers getting a phone call that went something like: "This is Cassius Clay, the Golden Gloves champion of Louisville, Ky. I'm going to be the heavyweight champion of the world. I'm in the lobby. Can I come up?"

The 15-year-old was invited up. And Dundee was soon his trainer. Clay tended to have that effect on people. Fellow students at Central High remember a big puppy who sweetly and tentatively hit on girls who dismissed him as not very bright and least likely to succeed. But they did enjoy watching him do his daily roadwork, trailing the school bus and shouting that prediction of becoming champion of the world.

He made the U.S. Olympic team for the 1960 Rome Games and was a sensation, a handsome, outgoing 18-year-old light heavyweight with a dazzling smile and a motormouth. He chased the willowy beauty Wilma Rudolph, winner of three gold medals in track, until she couldn't stop laughing. He took pictures with





Ali relished attention from fans, like these kids surrounding him on Chicago's South Side in 1966

his box camera. When a Soviet journalist digging for controversy asked about racial segregation in America, Clay said, "Tell your readers we got qualified people working on that, and I'm not worried about the outcome. To me, the U.S.A. is still the best country in the world, including yours. It may be hard to get something to eat sometimes, but anyhow I ain't fighting alligators and living in a mud hut."

He would later regret that quote and attribute it to ignorance, but as it flashed around the world, he became a symbol of what was right about America and sports, especially in the U.S., where anti-communist sentiment and racial unrest were coming to a boil. Here was a descendant of slaves grateful for the advantages of democracy, said the pundits; he wasn't agitating to vote or sitting in at lunch counters. He was just knocking down commie boxers with those hammering fists. Did you notice how straight he stood on the medal stand after winning his gold as they played the U.S. national anthem?

But back home, he was, in his own words and others', the "Olympic nigger." When he was refused service at a restaurant in segregated Louisville, he said later, he threw his gold medal in the Ohio River. This was not true. The medal was stolen when he left it unattended. Like the bike.

After Rome, Dundee steered Ali prudently through 19 mostly underwhelming professional opponents. The fighter's rhyming predictions ("This is no jive/Moore will go in five") delighted us younger reporters. Older traditionalists, who insisted on the gravitas of pugilism, were not amused.

Tickets were moving slowly before the championship bout with Liston. Clay shouldn't even have been there. His greatest accomplishment up until that point was appearing on the cover of *TIME*, more for his looks, personality and doggerel than for his ring record. The odds were 7-1 against him, a prediction that no poetry could counter, even lines as compelling as:

*Yes, the crowd did not dream
When they laid down their money
That they would see
A total eclipse of the Sonny*

(Just how much of his doggerel did Clay actually write? Certainly less than he claimed. Dundee has been accused of lending a pen, as has Drew "Bundini" Brown, his assistant trainer in charge of morale, and even various sportswriters. But the best lines, including the ones above—part of a much longer verse—were written by a well-known comedy writer, Gary Belkin, for an album that Clay recorded, *I Am the Greatest*.)

The promoters blamed the weak sales on the reports

of Clay’s ties to the Nation of Islam and his friendship with its most famous spokesman, Malcolm X. Malcolm was in Miami in the week leading up to the fight. According to Manning Marable’s exhaustive *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, he agreed to stay out of sight until fight night in exchange for a front-row seat.

At the time, Malcolm was on the outs with the Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad. Clay did not seem to be aware that he’d soon have to choose, with deadly results, between the two men.

With boundless exuberance, Clay tried to hype the gate, talking his trash (before it was known as such)—“Liston even smells like a bear. I’m gonna give him to the local zoo after I whup him”—and repeating his (as it turned out, accurate) prediction: “He will go in eight to prove that I’m great, and if he wants to go to heaven, I’ll get him in seven.”

Clay’s critics would later point to that confidence as proof the fight had been fixed. Commentators, though, characterized his posturing as that of a scared boy whistling to keep up his spirits. Later, Ali admitted he had been scared of Liston; in fact, Malcolm had to calm him by saying Allah would not allow him to be beaten.

While Liston’s glare reduced the press pack to bland and timid questions, Clay’s affability emboldened us. “Exactly what are you going to do,” asked a Boston sportswriter a few days before the fight, “when Sonny

Liston beats you after all your big talk?” Clay, sprawled on his dressing-room table, blowing kisses at his reflection in a mirror, replied, “The next day I’ll be on the sidewalk hollering, ‘No man ever beat me twice.’ I’ll be screaming for a rematch.”

Right up until he stepped into the ring on the night of Feb. 25, 1964, there were whispers that Clay, terrified, had fled the country. But the first intimation that he might not have to be rushed to intensive care came the moment he stepped into the ring. The gasp in the arena when the two fighters met for the referee’s routine instructions was not in response to Clay’s being there but to his superior size. Wasn’t this supposed to be David vs. Goliath?

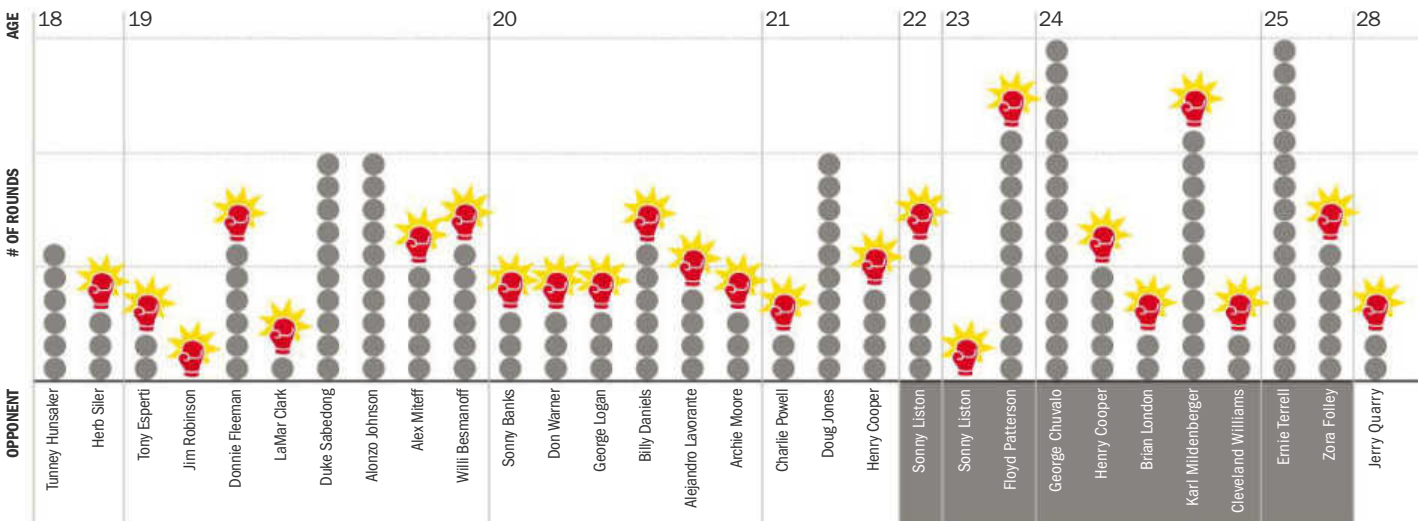
If it was, the kid had no end of smooth stones to fling. From the start, he peppered the champion’s head with lightning jabs and straight rights. By the third round, he had opened a nasty gash under Liston’s left eye that would require stitches. He was in control throughout, in trouble just once. In the fifth, he was temporarily blinded by a substance that might have been purposely smeared on Liston’s gloves. Clay, thinking he was being poisoned, screamed, “Cut the gloves off!” Dundee, experienced and cool, washed out his eyes and pushed him back, saying, “Daddy, this is the big one. This is for the title. Get in there.”

Clay danced until his eyes cleared, then battered

THE SCORECARD

22 years. 61 fights.
56 wins. 37 knockouts.

● WIN ✨ KNOCKOUT
● LOSS [Title bout]



Liston with a fresh barrage. Liston slumped on his stool and didn't come out for the seventh round. The champ had quit. Clay leaned over the ropes to shout at the press, "Eat your words. I am the greatest! I ... am ... the ... greatest!"

There were rowdy celebrations in Miami Beach that night, but the new champion enjoyed quieter revels. He shared vanilla ice cream with Malcolm and a few Muslim friends. The next morning, Clay confirmed his membership in the Nation of Islam.

SOON HE WOULD RENOUNCE his "slave name" and demand to be called, in the Black Muslim manner, Cassius X. And then, in what Marable describes as an attempt to subvert Malcolm's influence on the young convert, Elijah Muhammad bestowed a new name, Muhammad Ali, which he said meant "worthy of all praise most high."

The press mostly refused to honor the name change, trying to finesse it by calling him, simply, "Champ." He was routinely described as "ungrateful" to a system that had made him famous and rich (though corporate endorsements stayed out of reach). At the least, he was described as "brainwashed" and "misguided." Jimmy Cannon, the influential columnist who had once written that "Joe Louis is a credit to his race, the human race," called Ali's ties to the Nation of Islam

"the dirtiest in American sports since the Nazis were shilling for Max Schmeling as representative of their vile theories of blood."

The undisputed heavyweight champion of the world—at a time when that title had significance—was turning his back on mainstream religion, politics and commerce. He was making a powerful statement in the turbulent 1960s as race riots swept cities, voter-registration workers were attacked and murdered in the rural South, and the Vietnam War was expanding. To both supporters and critics, Ali was now seen as an outspoken agent of change. And he was increasingly seen as the mouth and muscle of the American counter-culture, often in ways he did not fully understand and might not have approved of if he had.

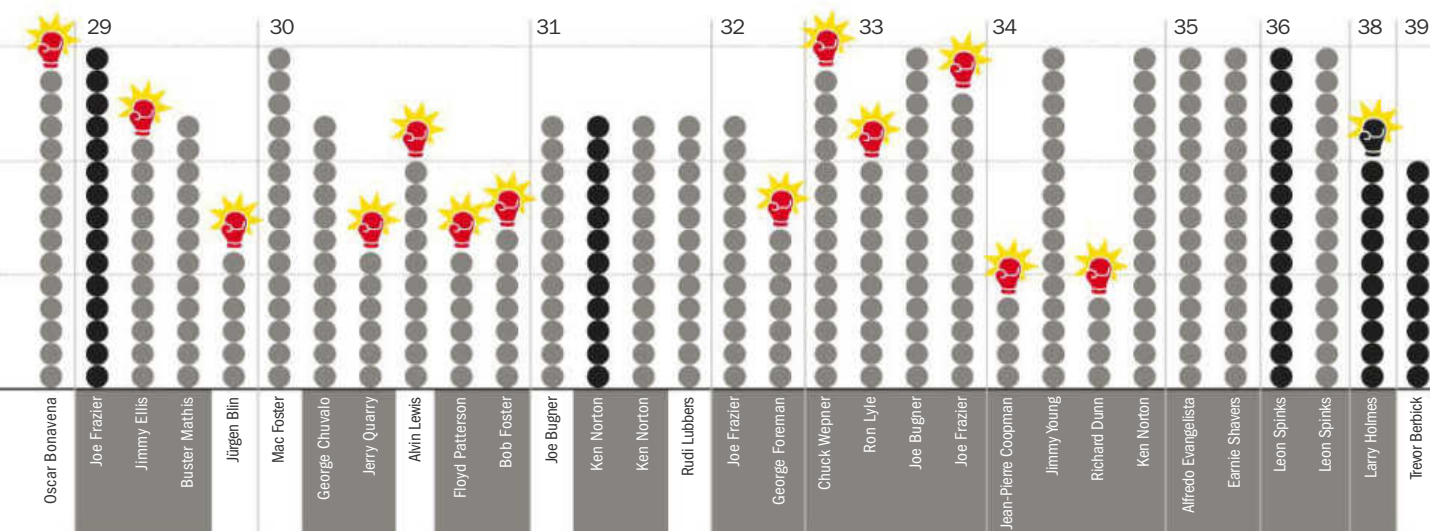
Ali went into training for his rematch with Liston amid the rumors that the first fight had been fixed, including a scenario in which Muslims had threatened to kill Liston if he hurt their man. Another rumor had the Mafia ordering Liston to tank the fight because of his return-bout clause, which promised a larger payday.

The 15 months between the two title fights with Liston were tumultuous for the new champ. He married a pretty Chicago cocktail waitress, Sonji Roi, a single mother a year older than he.

The union was brief; Roi was not a Muslim and had

'HIS BIGGEST WIN CAME NOT IN THE RING BUT IN OUR COURTS IN HIS FIGHT FOR HIS BELIEFS.'

—ERIC HOLDER,
FORMER U.S.
ATTORNEY
GENERAL



'NOT JUST AS SKILLED A POET ON THE MIKE AS HE WAS A FIGHTER IN THE RING, BUT A MAN WHO FOUGHT FOR WHAT WAS RIGHT. A MAN WHO FOUGHT FOR US.'

—PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

plans of her own, which included weaning her husband from the sect.

The divorce was one example of Elijah Muhammad's hold on Ali. Another was Ali's choice of the sect leader over his "big brother" Malcolm.

When Ali and Malcolm crossed paths in Ghana in the spring of 1964, the "little brother" not only snubbed Malcolm but also mocked his new beard and "funny white robe" to a New York *Times* correspondent. He added, "Man, he's gone. Nobody listens to that Malcolm anymore." According to Marable, these were words "he would later regret."

I'm sure Marable was right. Talking to Ali about the incident on several occasions years later, I found him at a rare loss for words. He didn't want to talk about it. He mumbled something about being wrong, being young, being afraid. He would tell his biographer Thomas Hauser that "what Malcolm saw was right, and after he left us, we went his way anyway."

Malcolm was deeply hurt by Ali's turn away from him. I think he must also have known that their friendship offered a certain level of physical protection. As long as he was under the champ's aegis, he would not be punished for his Nation of Islam apostasy.

On Feb. 21, 1965, Malcolm was gunned down in a Harlem ballroom, where he was about to make a speech for his new organization. That night there was a fire in Ali's apartment, and he briefly went into hiding, saying that he thought he had been targeted too.

Three months later, Malcolm's murder was the shadow over Ali's first title defense, the rematch with Liston. Rumors of a carload of gunmen from New York heading toward Lewiston, Maine, to avenge Malcolm by shooting Ali made police officers, reporters and fans jittery. But the closed-circuit-TV promoters were probably thrilled that ticket sales would soar if fans anticipated a title fight *and* an assassination attempt. And they added to the spectacle by announcing a one-night, \$1 million life-insurance policy on Ali.

On fight night, the security was ludicrously inconsistent. Police searched women's handbags while local kids climbed into the shabby ice-hockey arena through the windows. Liston seemed the least concerned of all. "They coming to kill him, right?" he said.

The fight officially lasted 1 min. 52 sec., some of which was because of confusion in the ring. In that first and only round, Ali tagged Liston on the jaw with a short straight right—his third good punch—that knocked Liston down. At that point the referee, former heavyweight champion Jersey Joe Walcott, lost control of the bout. Ali was not immediately sent to a neutral corner. The timekeeper seemed to lose the

count. Liston was down, all right, but was he really out? Some called it a "phantom punch" because they never saw it. Others claim it was the perfect punch. I was at ringside, sitting beside Howard Cosell, who had a TV monitor. We watched the punch over and over until we thought we saw it.

It wasn't a bad metaphor for the emerging image of Ali, a 23-year-old holy child, simple and complicated, on his way to becoming the most recognizable face on the planet. If you looked at him hard and long enough, he would come into focus as whatever it was you wanted him to be.

WITH THE UNBEATABLE LISTON BEATEN, Ali set out to establish himself as the indisputable champion by knocking off all contenders. First up was former champ Floyd Patterson. Patterson approached the fight as a crusade for Christianity and America. Ali had returned from a trip to Africa saying he was "not no American. I'm a black man." He inveighed against "the spooks and ghosts" of the white man's religion that enslaved black folks by promising them "pie in the sky when you die by and by," thus distracting them from trying to "get it down on the ground while you're still around."

Patterson declared, "The image of a Black Muslim as a world heavyweight champion disgraces the sport and the nation. Cassius Clay must be beaten and the Black Muslim scourge removed from boxing." The invocation of his so-called slave name particularly riled Ali.

The social, political, economic and cultural winds swirling around the Ali-Patterson fight were briefly stilled by the disgusting exhibition of the fight itself. Patterson was game, but he had no chance. Ali mocked and humiliated and punished the former champ. The crowd called for the ref to stop the slaughter, or for Ali to be merciful and knock out his opponent. But Ali just kept jabbing and jabbering, "No contest, get me a contender ... boop, boop, boop ... watch it, Floyd." The referee finally stopped the 15-round fight in the 12th.

By now, Ali had settled in to the personae that would shape the perception of him for years. For the government, he was a dangerous example of an anti-establishment sports hero just as it was depending on the loyalty of American youth to support an expanding war. Conservative working-class patriots, the pool that traditionally supplied so many soldiers, called Ali a coward and an ingrate. College students and antiwar liberals revered him as a brave rebel. Radicals, like Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver, saw him as a rousing example of the "autonomous" black man who is beyond government control. The boxing establishment, meanwhile, was concerned that Ali was

stepping outside its control.

The contenders who lined up to fight Ali didn't look more promising than Patterson. If the young champ were to be defeated, it would have to be outside the ring, not inside it. And he gave the opening.

In 1964, Ali was granted a 1-Y deferment from the draft ("Not qualified under current standards for service in the armed forces"), leading some to wonder if it had been a gift from the Louisville draft board to the local pillars who owned his contract. Others speculated that Ali had been deemed mentally unstable or homosexual, because he certainly seemed smart enough to serve.

Two years later, he was reclassified as fit to serve, which some thought was a response to that contract's end. As it turned out, those 1964 tests had determined he wasn't smart enough. Ali had struggled to answer the questions, especially the math, and his Army IQ was listed as 78, well below the passing grade. He was retested, and failed again. Two years later, Ali hadn't suddenly become smarter. The Army had just lowered its standards to meet its quota of fresh, young bodies.

The champ was humiliated. If he blithely told reporters, "I said I was the greatest, not the smartest," he had always been embarrassed by a weak high school academic record and poor reading skills. On several occasions, he admitted to me that he had never been able to complete an entire book, including the Quran.

That humiliation was the main reason he first said, "I ain't got nothing against them Viet Cong." He may have been the most quotable athlete of all time, and most of his utterances were joyous. But his most famous quote was explosively polarizing.

Three months after he poked Patterson apart, the country was pulling apart. On television on Feb. 17, 1966, Senate hearings raged over the war in Vietnam. Sharp political lines were being drawn, but Ali was oblivious. As a swarm of reporters descended on his rented Miami bungalow for his reaction to the reclassification, I watched his mood change over that long afternoon. It began with bewilderment and morphed into questioning.

As fellow Muslims, many of them World War II and Korean War veterans, arrived, Ali grew more manic. They told him that "cracker sergeants" would see he was shipped to the front lines and snickered that they would drop grenades down his pants. News trucks continued to roll up. Interviewers, sensing his anger, provoked him further, like with the question, "Do you know where Vietnam is?"

"Sure," he mumbled, though he didn't sound sure. "Where?"

He shrugged. I would have shrugged too. This went on and on. It was dusk when a newcomer with a mike asked the same question for the hundredth time: "What do you think about the Viet Cong?"

And that was it: "I ain't got nothing against them Viet Cong." The sound bite that would help define the '60s, the headline that made him simultaneously hated and beloved—and that he would repeat in various versions and come to believe—was not on that day meant to be a political declaration. It was just the whiny response of a worn-out and exasperated young man.

The adverse reaction was so quick, it felt as if politicians, boxing commissions and older sportswriters had been lying in ambush for that quote. The vaunted Red Smith wrote, "Squealing over the possibility that the military may call him up, Cassius makes himself as sorry a spectacle as those unwashed punks who picket and demonstrate against the war."

Despite the storm, Ali was a busy champion, with seven more title defenses in 12 months. He said he didn't want to go to jail for refusing to be drafted if his conscientious-objector claim was denied, but the alternative—joining the Army and giving exhibitions for the troops—was worse. "What can you give me, America," he said in a tone as bleak as the sky, "for turning down my religion? You want me to do what the white man says and go fight a war against some people I don't know nothing about, get some freedom for some other people when my own can't get theirs here?" His voice deepened. "Ah-leeeee will return. My ghost will haunt all arenas. Twenty-five years old now. Make my comeback at 28. That's not old. Whip 'em all."

It would turn out to be his best prediction.

On April 28, 1967, Ali refused induction. Boxing commissioners, who are mostly political appointees, withdrew their recognition of his championship and refused to license him to fight in their state or municipality. Ten days later, he was arrested and released on bail. Thus, he was effectively stripped of his livelihood before he was convicted of any crime. On June 20, after 20 minutes of deliberation, a jury did convict him. The judge imposed the maximum sentence: five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine. He would go into exile, but never to prison.

That summer he married a tall, striking 17-year-old Muslim woman—Belinda Boyd, who changed her name to Khalilah Ali—and dropped out of public view. But his influence was growing. Athletes, particularly black athletes, were inspired by his story to stand up for equality in their sports and in the larger society. This was most dramatically epitomized by the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics, which derived much of its

'IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANY ONE MAN COULD DO EVERYTHING HE DID, COULD BE ALL THE THINGS THAT HE BECAME IN THE COURSE OF JUST ONE LIFETIME.'

—GREG FISCHER,
MAYOR OF
LOUISVILLE, KY.,
ALI'S HOMETOWN

energy from what was seen as the persecution of Ali. While the movement began with black football players and track athletes, it would eventually influence the baseball players who demanded free agency and the white tennis players who forced an end to the sham of amateurism.

Whites who heard Ali on the college-lecture circuit—his main source of income during his exile from the ring—were getting a window on social, political and religious issues as well as on black attitudes. Blacks were finding a symbolic leader. Ali himself, able for the first time to concentrate on current events and prodded by the questions asked by his audiences, began to more fully understand his views on the war in Vietnam, religious persecution and civil rights.

He channeled his thoughts into sweeping statements. On being banned from the ring, Ali said, “You read about these things in the dictatorship countries, where a man don’t go along with this or that and he is completely not allowed to work or to earn a decent living.”

His take on race relations might have been considered simplistic, but it was direct and strong: “The white race attacks black people. They don’t ask what’s our religion, what’s our belief. They just start whupping heads ... So we don’t want to live with the white man, that’s all.”

What he wanted, he said, was a black homeland. “We were brought here 400 years ago for a job. Why don’t we get out and build our own nation and quit begging for jobs?”

During this period, the sportscaster Cosell was critical in keeping Ali’s name alive. He interviewed him on TV and used him as a commentator on fights. Without ever directly endorsing Ali’s opinions, he defended Ali’s right to have them. As a lawyer, Cosell maintained that Ali’s constitutional rights had been violated when his title was stripped without due process. His support helped Ali through a difficult time.

I was present at one poignant reminder of how long a fall from a throne can be. Ali was the mystery guest on *What’s My Line?*, a popular TV show in which blindfolded panelists tried to deduce a guest’s identity. It was Ali’s second appearance on the show. In 1965, his identity had been discerned in minutes. In 1969, he remained a mystery all the way to the buzzer.

IT WAS THE STARRIEST FIGHT NIGHT in Madison Square Garden’s history. After regaining his boxing license in 1970, Ali was set to face Joe Frazier, the man who had claimed his crown. Frank Sinatra was ringside, shooting pictures for LIFE magazine, and

Ali taunting Joe Frazier in 1971, before the two undefeated champions faced off in the “Fight of the Century.” Frazier won in 15 rounds

Burt Lancaster was behind a microphone, broadcasting to the closed-circuit-TV audience. Ethel Kennedy, Hugh Hefner, Marcello Mastroianni, Abbie Hoffman—they were only the supporting cast.

The stars were the two undefeated heavyweights, each with a legitimate claim to the championship. Nothing like this had ever happened before.

Each fighter was guaranteed \$2.5 million, a record, but ultimately a bargain for the promoters. The Garden was sold out (the top ticket price, \$150, was unprecedented, and the resale market was getting \$1,000). It has been estimated, perhaps extravagantly, that 300 million people worldwide saw the fight and that it grossed more than \$18 million.


Beyond the glitter and the gold was an intense drama. Some saw the Fight as Ali’s triumphant return from exile to reclaim his rightful throne. Others felt that Frazier, honest workman and blue collar patriot, would close the book on the treasonous con man.

“After a while, how you stood on Ali became a political and generational litmus test,” Bryant Gumbel told Ali biographer Hauser. “He was somebody we could hold on to, somebody who was ours. And fairly or unfairly, because he was opposing Ali, Joe Frazier became the symbol of our oppressors.”

Frazier was also the standard bearer for the boxing establishment. In a press release for the Fight, the Garden declared of him, “Not since the days of Joe Louis and Ray Robinson and Floyd Patterson has a black man brought so much dignity to boxing.”

The Fight was possible because the mood of the country had changed during Ali’s exile from the ring. By 1970, more and more Americans felt free to say that they too had nothing against them Viet Cong. Ali’s appeal of his conviction for draft evasion had reached the Supreme Court, and related decisions offered indications that he would win. Meanwhile, the radicals’ cry of “Black Power!” had been translated by black civil rights leaders, politicians, entertainers and business owners into real clout.

Ali, inactive for 3½ years, had beaten a solid white heavyweight named Jerry Quarry in his first comeback bout and needed one more warm-up. A match in New York City at the Garden would be the perfect run-up to the Fight. But at first the New York State Athletic Commission refused to license him. Not until the NAACP Legal Defense Fund prepared an eye-opening list of convicted felons who had been licensed to fight by the



TRAINING HDQTS.
FOR
JOE FRAZIER
HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPION

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FOR WHAT
I DO.'**

**—DWAYNE WADE,
12-TIME NBA
ALL-STAR**

commission did a federal court order that politically appointed body to issue Ali a license.

On Dec. 7, 1970, six weeks after stopping Quarry, Ali scored a 15th-round technical knockout over Oscar Bonavena at the Garden. Because he knocked Bonavena down three times in the last round, people tended to forget how much trouble he'd had with the tough Argentine power puncher through the previous 14. Was he really ready for the Fight—and the second act of his career—scheduled for March 8, 1971?

Verbally, he was. Ali started with a poem that ended, "This might shock and amaze ya, but I'm gonna destroy Joe Frazier." Then he cranked up the vicious jabs. He said, "Anybody black who thinks Joe Frazier can whup me is an Uncle Tom." And then, "Joe Frazier is too ugly to be champ. Joe Frazier is too dumb to be champ."

There was no way to justify Ali's calling Frazier a tool of the white man, much less mocking his dark skin and thick lips by describing him as a "gorilla." Defending the taunts as routine ridicule of the ghetto made no sense coming from a self-righteous religionist of Ali's grandiosity. The derision was even more despicable if it were a means to boost ticket sales, putting commerce before decency. No wonder Frazier carried a grudge for years.

"I never liked Ali," said Frazier long afterward. He admitted that it hurt to be demeaned by a man he had tried to help during his exile, even lending him money.

Ali understood that winning would not be enough. He would have to forge beyond into the bloody hell storm of Frazier's fury. He would have to prove, at any cost, that he was as much man as Smokin' Joe, that he could stand toe to toe and slug it out with the slugger. Ali was making a devil's bargain: a finesse fighter who had relied on speed and deception—and who was clearly rusty—was going to mix it up with a fearsome banger willing to take three punches to deliver one.

It was not until years later, when Ferdie Pacheco, Ali's longtime doctor, talked to Hauser that we came to realize just how much Ali had lost in his exile. His legs and hands had suffered the most. Before each bout, Pacheco injected his fighter's fists with drugs, including cortisone, to numb the pain. Where once Ali's quick, dancing movements had been his first line of defense, now he could be hit.

That was a mixed blessing. Ali learned he could take a punch. He became braver—and lazier—allowing opponents and even sparring partners to hit him. He said he was toughening up his body and head. But he was also absorbing lifetime damage, which was about to be accelerated during 15 of the most grueling, pitiless rounds that the sweet science had ever seen.





Ali gazes at his 2½-week-old daughter Laila in 1978. Laila, the eighth of Ali's nine children, became a professional boxer

The crowd had expected Frazier to come out smokin', trying to bull Ali around the ring, offering up his own rugged face in sacrifice to an eventual victory. He did not disappoint. Ali's strategy was a shock, though. Everyone had expected him to dance, to jab and spin, to stick and run, to make Frazier chase him. But he did not run. After the first two rounds, Ali planted his feet and fought. His idea was to stand against the ropes and let Frazier bang against his arms and shoulders until he was all punched out. Ali underestimated Frazier's strength, conditioning and sheer will.

In the third, Frazier landed a solid left to Ali's face. Ali shook it off, then told Frazier, "God wants you to lose tonight." Frazier mumbled back, "Tell your God he's in the wrong house tonight."

Through the middle rounds, Frazier drove the momentum of the fight, moving inexorably forward to hammer Ali with his left hook. Ali scored with jabs to Frazier's face. "It was horrible watching their features change," said the referee, Arthur Mercante.

Frazier dominated most of the later rounds. In the 15th, he landed a left hook on Ali's jaw. Ali went down. He jumped right up, but by then it didn't matter. The three official scorecards were unanimous in the decision—11 rounds for Frazier and four for Ali.

The physical toll was evident. Frazier's face was misshapen and skinned. Ali, for the first time in his career, looked as if he'd been in a fight. His face was lumpy and blotched, his body marked and sore.

Pacheco remembered that back in the dressing room he had to help clothe Ali, who was "like a drunk; he just lay there limp." At a hospital, X-rays of Ali's swollen jaw were negative, but Pacheco wanted him to stay overnight for observation. Ali refused because "he didn't want anybody saying Joe Frazier put him in the hospital." Frazier, meanwhile, was admitted for internal injuries.

Both men won that night. Frazier had emerged from Ali's shadow. He was the undisputed champion. Ali's "heart," his courage in the ring, had never been tested; now it was no longer suspect. There was no question that he could take it. That, combined with people's grudging admiration for his sincerity, his willingness to sacrifice money and career for principle, started him on a path to widespread public redemption. (Three months later, there was legal redemption: the Supreme Court reversed his 1967 draft-evasion conviction.)

The morning after the Fight, with a serene expression on his beaten face, Ali entertained waves of media in his hotel room. They all seemed more concerned about the loss than he did. I stayed for hours in that room,

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—THE REV.
JESSE JACKSON

marveling at his mood. Didn't he know he was over, that from now on he would be considered an "opponent," a has-been? How could he be so ... philosophical? I thought about the first time I'd met him, before the Liston fight in Miami, when he told a reporter that if Liston won, Ali would be out on the sidewalk the next day hollering, "No man ever beat me twice."

During a lull between waves of reporters, I reminded him of what he had said that day. He nodded, closed his eyes and began to chant, "Fight him again ... I'll get by Joe this time ... I'll straighten this out ... I'm ready this time ... You hear me, Joe? ... YOU HEAR ME? ... Joe, if you beat me this time, you'll really be the greatest."

Frazier, though, remained undisputed heavyweight champion for less than two years. Another unbeatable monster had arisen. In 1973, George Foreman knocked Frazier down six times in the first two rounds before their fight was stopped. Foreman—huge, implacable—was now the champ. It was generally assumed that the fighter who would beat Big George was still a child.

Ali, who was 31, had hoped for a rematch with Frazier to reclaim his title. Now his future looked like an endless procession of good-but-not-great fighters he could dominate for excellent paydays and very good fighters who would climb over him on their way to Foreman. The conventional wisdom was that Ali's dream of a return to the throne was dead.

Nevertheless, he kept busy, with 14 fights in three years. He beat Patterson and Quarry again as well as his old boyhood pal and sparring partner Jimmy Ellis. He took on all comers, losing only once, to Ken Norton, who broke his jaw. Six months later he avenged the loss. And he did fight Frazier again, at the Garden, this time winning a unanimous 12-round decision. People close to Ali noticed that he was taking more punishment.

ALTHOUGH HE WAS NO LONGER THE CHAMP and his life with Khalilah and their four children was a frequent subject of feature-story idealization and his own rhapsodizing, Ali was relentlessly promiscuous. Pacheco described him as "bountiful in his pelvic generosity." He would often have sex with a half-dozen women on the same day, according to members of his inner circle. Ali didn't want to disappoint any of them; in his view, his pelvic generosity wasn't much different from his munificence toward autograph seekers. Members of the Ali circus noted that the women he pulled into the tent were of all sizes and ages, though they all maintained he never had sex with white women. Ali told Hauser that his promiscuity was wrong but understandable. He was just so pretty!

Ali in Chicago in 1966, the year he declared himself a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. The controversial stance cemented his polarizing image

Eventually, there was no one left to fight except Foreman, against whom, boxing experts agreed, Ali stood no chance. Foreman was then Liston-like, boorish and brutish, a far cry from the man who later found God and became a cuddly and lovable grillmeister.

But there was another dangerous character on the boxing scene: Don King, an ex-con from Cleveland. King, who had killed two men in the line of his duty as a leading underground numbers banker, was a familiar figure at fights before he began promoting them. Tough, wily, intimidating—and with an electrified Afro and the gift of gab (his catchphrase: "Only in America!")—King worked his way into Ali's circle. He was adept at playing the race card. Why would a black boxer fight for white promoters when he could give business to one of his own kind?

Litigious and shameless, King settled cases with Ali, Mike Tyson and numerous other fighters after they sued him for cheating them out of money and contractual rights. But that was only after he made his bones as a promoter in 1974 by pulling off one of boxing's most storied events, the Rumble in the Jungle. Who better to deal with Mobutu Sese Seko, dictator of Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of Congo)? King negotiated a record \$10 million purse for Foreman and Ali, guaranteed by the Zaïrean government.

And so it came about, like the telling of a tall tale, in the dark stillness of the hour before dawn, beneath a waning African moon. Foreman, the favorite, shrugged his cannonball shoulders and stared balefully at his challenger. At 25, he had never been knocked off his feet in a prizefight, and he was heavier than Ali, who at 32 was considered to be in the twilight of his career.

But as they met in the middle of the ring, Ali smiled and softly said, "You have heard of me since you were young. You've been following me since you were a little boy. Now you must meet me, your master."

Millions around the world tuned in on closed-circuit TV. In the stadium in Kinshasa, thousands began to chant, "Ali, *bomaye*"—Ali, kill him.

As Ali waited for the opening round, Bundini's voice cut through the swelling roar of the crowd. "Remember what I said: God set it up this way. This is the closing of the book. The king gained his throne by killing a monster, and the king will regain his throne by killing a bigger monster. This is the closing of the book."

At the bell, the two big men charged to the center



'MUHAMMAD ALI, THANKS FOR GIVING ME STRENGTH AND A LOVE OF SELF WHEN I COULDN'T MUSTER IT.'

—VIOLA DAVIS,
ACTOR

of the ring. They paused, then warily began to circle each other. Ali delivered the first punch, a solid right to Foreman's head. Foreman lunged forward. Ali grabbed him around the neck and pushed his head down. Foreman was enraged. No one had ever hit him so hard, so early, then dared to test his strength by grappling with him.

A few minutes later, Foreman drove Ali into a corner and began to pound him. The crowd groaned. Ali was trapped. Experts at ringside buzzed. Ali wasn't dancing, merely bobbing from side to side. Foreman had prepared to battle a moving target. A mechanical fighter who couldn't adjust easily to unexpected tactics, he just kept poking away at the stationary Ali, landing blows where they could do no real damage. The ropes Ali leaned on helped cushion the force of the punches. Except for a hard shot to his head in the second round, he didn't seem to be getting hurt. And when he struck back, quick jabs and rights connected with Foreman's head. Ali taunted the champion: "You are just an amateur, George. Show me something. Hit me hard."

By the fifth round, Foreman's face was swollen from the jabs and he stood on heavy, slow mummy legs. Frustrated, he decided to go all out for a knockout. He unleashed a barrage of thundering blows, his best shots, crunching rights and wicked left hooks. And still Ali stayed upright, leaning against the ropes. Foreman was breathing hard, his punches finally losing power, his mind losing confidence. He paused.

And Ali pounced. His hands a blur, he fired punch after punch, thunderbolts. One right cross almost turned Foreman's head around.

In the eighth, Ali unleashed what some consider his finest punch ever. Saved up since he was 12 for the thief who stole his bicycle, he now used it for the pretender on his throne. First, three good rights and a left. Then the bomb, a right-hand sledgehammer.

Foreman leaned forward from his waist as if he were folding up. Then he pitched onto the canvas. Ali had killed the monster, closed the book and regained his championship.

Then he fainted.

Back on his feet in seconds, he yelled at the press, "What did I tell you?"

Ten years after Clay beat Liston, America responded to the champion Ali. There were parades in Chicago and New York City, and a visit to the White House.

"The championship," Ali said one night in a mellow mood, "is top of the world."

And did he ever enjoy being back on top. He would wander out of his hotel or stop his car to appear on a city street or in a shopping mall, watching out of the

corners of his eyes as passersby stopped, turned, did a double take and whispered, "Is that . . .?" And then, convinced by his welcoming smile that indeed it was, they stampeded toward him, shouting, "Ah-leeeee." He opened his arms to them all.

I was with Ali once on a high school football field near Daytona Beach. He had just finished a joke-a-poke exhibition match for charity and was back in the motor home he used as a dressing room. He shoed everyone out, then leaned from the doorway to survey the crowd until he had picked out three foxy young women, whom he invited in. A few minutes later, two emerged from the trailer's entrance. Ali grinned at us as he closed the door again.

I watched as the motor home began to jiggle on its springs. The champ was floating and stinging. "Don't write about this," said Dundee. One of the press agents added, "Not if you ever want to interview him again."

I gave the ultimatum a few minutes' thought on the flight home. After more than a decade, my access would be over. That would be too bad. I felt a little sad. Goodbye, Ali, thanks for the ride.

The *New York Times Magazine* titled the piece I wrote "King of All Kings." It ended with the jiggling motor home. I should have known better. The next time we saw each other, a few months later, Ali rushed over and said, "King of all kings. Right!" Then he invited me to come listen to him some more.

ALI DEFENDED HIS TITLE three times before meeting Frazier in the third of their classic matches, the Thrilla in Manila, another King promotional masterpiece, this one for the dictators of the Philippines, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. Many people regard the 1975 fight as not only the best of the three but one of the best of all time.

A head-turning presence in Manila before the event was Veronica Porche (later often spelled Porsche, with her blessing), a willowy beauty Ali had met during the American promotional tour for the Rumble. In Manila, Ali took her to a reception at the presidential palace, and when President Marcos said, "Your wife is quite beautiful," Ali responded, "Your wife is beautiful too." The ace *Newsweek* correspondent Peter Bonventre, who had been struggling with whether to mention Veronica, now felt he had no choice.

Twenty-four hours after the piece and its follow-ups appeared, Khalilah was on her way to Manila. She stayed just long enough to scream at her husband, throw hotel-room furniture and threaten to break Veronica's back if she ever saw her, before storming out and returning home.

The actual fight was even more grueling, 14 rounds in late-morning temperatures that approached 100°F. Ali started strongly, then lay on the ropes through the middle stages as Frazier piled up points. In the waning rounds, Ali sprang back and took over. The bout was stopped before the 15th, after Frazier's trainer looked at the swollen-shut eyes of his fighter and refused to allow him to continue. Ali was on the brink of quitting too. Later, he'd say that the fight was the closest thing to death he'd ever experienced. "They were fighting," said the Newark *Star-Ledger's* Jerry Izenberg, "for the heavyweight championship of each other."

As expected, Khalilah and Ali divorced, and he married Veronica, with whom he had two daughters, including one, Laila, who would grow up to be a boxer like her father. In the next few years, Ali published a mediocre, intermittently truthful autobiography, *The Greatest*, and starred in its movie version; appeared as an ally of Superman in a DC comic; and endorsed a roach killer. There were also some forgettable fights.

By then, Pacheco was worried not only about Ali's physical condition but about his psychological state as well. "Ali is now at the dangerous mental point where his heart and mind are no longer in it," he said. "It's just a payday. It's almost as if an actor had played his role too long. He's just mouthing the words."

But actors don't routinely get smacked in the head. After a brutal fight with Earnie Shavers, a journeyman he once would have handled deftly, Ali said in a slurred voice, "Got hit so hard, my ancestors in Africa turned over in their graves." And then, in a stunning upset, he lost his title to Leon Spinks, an Olympic light-heavyweight champion with only seven professional bouts. Spinks was shorter and lighter than Ali. No one, including Ali, had given Spinks much of a chance; the champ showed up pudgy and unprepared to box 15 rounds with a man 12 years younger. Spinks won by a split decision, but it was still a win.

Seven months later, Ali took the title back from Spinks, making him the first to capture the heavyweight championship three times. It was time to close the book. To the great relief of those who cared about him, he retired.

Ali in retirement was depressed by his deteriorating physical condition and the loss of attention. He did not become the world's greatest movie actor, but he did star in a TV miniseries, *Freedom Road*, with Kris Kristofferson, playing an ex-slave who becomes a U.S. Senator after the Civil War. The New York *Times* review began, "A glaring distinction of *Freedom Road* is that it takes Muhammad Ali, certainly one of the more vibrant personalities of this century, and makes him dull."

Nor did he become the world's greatest businessman. Ali participated in a number of shaky financial ventures, and nothing much came of any of them. Worse were the shady deals in which his name was used. In one, an Ali associate made phone calls mimicking his voice in an attempt to initiate legislation that would enrich them both.

Ali's hopes of becoming a roving champion for peace and goodwill were derailed by an official assignment. President Jimmy Carter sent him to Africa to gather support for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, a response to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Ali was surprised and hurt by his reception in Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya and Senegal, where local politicians and journalists asked why he was letting himself be used as a Cold War propaganda tool. When he did a diplomatic shuffle, allowing that he might be wrong and needed to rethink his mission, the State Department quickly shut him down and sent him home.

Ali moved with Veronica into a seven-bedroom mansion in the Hancock Park section of Los Angeles. There wasn't enough money coming in to sustain the lifestyle for very long.

Financial pressures made Ali vulnerable to King, who still saw a cash cow fat for slaughter. In 1980, King matched him with the reigning champion, Larry Holmes. Even Holmes, who had once been a sparring partner, had misgivings. He loved Ali. Ali looked fine. But his gray hairs were dyed black, and a slimmer silhouette was the result of a debilitating diet; after ballooning to 250 lb. he too rapidly dropped to 217 lb. In the ring, he was sluggish. Holmes won every round until Herbert Muhammad and Dundee stopped the fight after the 10th. Sylvester Stallone—who had modeled his character Rocky on an Ali opponent, Chuck Wepner—said it was "like watching an autopsy on a man who's still alive."

Ali fought once more, in December 1981, in the Bahamas, against Trevor Berbick. He lost the decision in 10 dreary rounds.

There were more medical tests, mostly inconclusive. His trembling and slurring were attributed to Parkinson's syndrome, not disease, as if no one wanted to deal with such a formidable diagnosis. The various theories of causation included exposure to toxic chemicals in his training camp in Deer Lake, Pa. Few beyond Pacheco would discuss the devastating impact of so many traumatic blows to the head over so many years.

The joyride was over. Bundini and then Ali's loyal cook, Lana Shabazz, died. Cosell renounced professional boxing in 1982 as brutal and sleazy. When

'TOO MANY PEOPLE GO TO THEIR GRAVE WITH THEIR MUSIC STILL INSIDE THEM. MUHAMMAD ALI LIVED THE GIFT OF LIFE TO THE FULLEST.'

—THOMAS HAUSER, ALI'S BIOGRAPHER

Cosell died in 1995, Ali told the Associated Press, “I have been interviewed by many people, but I enjoyed interviews with Howard the best.” Ali now seemed like no more than a chapter in history, a subject for “Where are they now?” features or all-time rankings of heavyweights. (He was rarely listed lower than third, and usually at No. 1.)

The comeback began in 1982, very privately. Ali was 40 and suffering through a difficult parting with Veronica when he was reunited with Yolanda Williams, a 25-year-old sales representative at Kraft working on her MBA at the University of Louisville, who had had a crush on Ali since she was 5. Lonnie, as Williams is known, was disturbed by his condition at their first meeting. “He stumbled on the street,” she told Hauser. “He was despondent. He wasn’t the Muhammad I knew.”

She quit her job, moved to Los Angeles and transferred to UCLA. And she began to take care of Ali. In 1986, they married. Lonnie became a Muslim and the full-time manager and curator of the man and the legend. She helped him take charge of his finances and re-emerge as a public figure.

Their first major project together, Hauser’s best-selling oral history, was published in 1991. It put Ali back on the celebrity radar. The critical and commercial success spawned more Ali-Hauser books and a procession of Ali appearances that slackened only as his stamina waned.

Five years later, with a trembling hand, he lit the torch to open the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. One of the millions of hearts touched that night belonged to Foreman, who told Stephen Brunt in the book *Facing Ali*, “Ali really kind of elevated himself for me when he did the torch thing. Someone has something like Parkinson’s, they’ll just stay in the house and hide. They’ll say, ‘I don’t want them to see me like this.’”

“I felt so proud of him. Muhammad Ali did a lot for the world when he did that. You’ll never know how much he did for people who generally hide themselves. To see him do it and not be ashamed.”

In 1999, Ali became the first boxer to grace a Wheaties box. In 2003, the art publisher Taschen produced a \$7,500 book on Ali, a 75-lb. valentine to his life and legend. In 2005, the Muhammad Ali Center opened in downtown Louisville, and President George W. Bush, calling Ali the greatest boxer of all time, hung the Presidential Medal of Freedom around his neck. A year later an entertainment company, CKX, announced that it had paid “\$50 million for an 80% stake in Mr. Ali’s name, image and likeness,” according to the *New York Times*. The company also controls Elvis’ image.

Hauser saw many of these moments as eroding the legacy. He was offended (as was I) by the way the 2001 movie *Ali*, with Will Smith in the title role, “sanitized” the man and “rounded off the rough edges” of his tumultuous journey. There was a backlash to the makeover of Ali’s image, mostly in recent years from right-of-center critics who saw him as the false icon of hypocritical liberals. Even a well-known African-American academic, Gerald Early, editor of the *Muhammad Ali Reader*, tried to reduce his stature. He wrote, “Ali, despite all the talk of his brilliance, was not a thoughtful man. He was not conversant with ideas. Indeed, he hadn’t a single idea in his head, really. What he had was the faith of a true believer ... a grand public stage, an extraordinary historical moment, amazing athletic gifts and good looks.”

Such criticism provided a counterpoint to the hagiography of the movie, the Ali Center and his corporate sponsors. The metamorphosis of Cassius Clay (brash and uneducated, yet a daring anti-establishment warrior) into the late-life Muhammad Ali (nonthreatening, passive, a wounded champion of peace and kindness) was hard to explain to a generation that had never seen him at his fiery best. It was easier to trot out a one-dimensional saint for commercial and ceremonial occasions than to teach young people about a great athlete of principle who taught the world to be proud and brave.

WHAT IS IN DANGER of being lost in the sanitized version of Ali is the deeply American story of a black man whose journey from a boyhood in the Jim Crow South to international acclaim took him through a religious conversion, a political education and a conscious decision to sacrifice comfort and wealth for his convictions.

Ali himself was rather modest in his demands on his posterity. In a 1975 *Playboy* interview, he offered how he would like to be remembered: “As a man who never looked down on those who looked up to him and who helped as many of his people as he could ... I guess I’d settle for being remembered only as a great boxing champion who became a preacher and a champion of his people. And I wouldn’t even mind if folks forgot how pretty I was.”

For half a century, whether or not we wanted to go, Muhammad Ali took us, Beatles and all, for a wondrous ride in which we made him a symbol of the resistance to war, of the racial struggle, of the individual standing up to establishment pressure.

Along the way he made us laugh, curse, cheer and cry. Most important, he made us brave. □



Ali, seen here in 1998, once said he wanted to be remembered “as a man who never looked down on those who looked up to him”





SUMMER
MOVIE
PREVIEW

SUMMER'S LEADING WOMEN

The misogynist outrage over the *Ghostbusters* remake has made it the must-see movie of the season

BY STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

ILLUSTRATION BY WE BUY YOUR KIDS FOR TIME

ALMOST EVERYONE ASKS, “WHY remake a great movie?” But very few, outside of those who stand to make money off such an enterprise, ever ask, “Why *not* remake a great movie?” Maybe it’s smarter to think of movie remakes as cover songs, works that test the power of the original without necessarily dissolving it. “One of the ways songs survive is that they mutate,” cultural critic Greil Marcus has written. “Pop songs are always talked about as ‘the soundtrack to our lives,’ when all that means is that pop songs are no more than containers for nostalgia. But lives change, and so do soundtracks, even if they’re made up of the same songs.”

Ivan Reitman’s 1984 *Ghostbusters* has become a fetishized talisman, a picture viewed and reviewed for years by children who are now, ostensibly, adults. Some of those fans don’t believe it deserves the chance to mutate, as director Paul Feig learned when, via Twitter in October 2014, he announced that he was remaking the film with “hilarious women.” Immediately, a small but vocal group of disgruntled *Ghostbusters* purists responded by trying to zap the idea with their proton packs. The braying intensified in January 2015, when Feig announced that Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones would play the roles originally filled by Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Ernie Hudson. Some tweets were bracingly direct: “Lazy Hollywood film making ‘let’s make a ghostbusters remake but with women!’ Only soccer moms and feminist bimbos will watch that trash.” Others may have required creative parsing of grammar but still registered as clear expressions of dude anger: “And by the cast as ‘all female’ & ‘reboot’ also must makes it seem



like just a weak gender pandering than actual effort.”

On July 15, audiences will get to see the new *Ghostbusters* for themselves, but the trail of tantrums its director and stars have had to navigate is a long and winding story on its own. There were more trolling tweets when Sony released

the first trailer for the movie, in March. At about the same time, Feig’s casting choices met with a different sort of criticism: some observers felt that Jones’ role as a New York City MTA worker was a racial stereotype. Jones defended her role, asking, “Why can’t a regular person be a Ghostbuster?” but still found herself fending off attacks on Twitter.

In the early days of the outburst, Feig refused the bait. But in late September, he lost it, responding to individual examples of rampant Twitter jackassery first with measured language—“God, you’re tiresome, dude”—and later with the outrage of a reasonable guy driven to madness by idiocy: “You’re an ass. Oops, did I say that? #drunkentweet #notreally #sickofthehaters #enough #freedom #onvacation.”

Feig has since apologized to members

Ghostbusters director Paul Feig’s first response to trolls was measured: ‘God, you’re tiresome, dude.’





They ain't afraid of no ghosts: McCarthy, McKinnon, Wiig and Jones were Feig's dream team to reinvent the 1984 comedy classic

requisite feminine qualities, she can't be President, either.

It's a grim landscape. That's why Feig's fiery defense of both his project and his actors—he also came out in Jones' defense when the criticism of her *Ghostbusters* character became nasty and personal—means more than it would in any other year. And maybe, just maybe, it marks the beginning of the end of the tyranny of fanboy culture. If we accept that social media represents not the taste of the masses but that of an angry and extremely vocal minority, then there's no need to allow that minority any stake in what movies get made, or in how those movies get made. Even so, studios care deeply about how moviegoers respond on social media to a film. Feig's lashing out may have seemed intemperate to some, but it was really the best thing he could have done. If part of a filmmaker's job is to fold in the face of bullying, we're truly lost. Movies are made by directors, not mobs. You could also argue that all Feig did was express a version of the resentment that simmers inside most of us perennially, and not just when we're talking about moviemaking: Why should idiots ever be allowed to call the shots?

Anyway, the anti-remake creeps have made Feig's version *the* movie to see this summer. Plenty of people will go hoping that it will be funny. A smaller, more hostile group will go just so they can carp about how bad it is (no matter how good it might be). Either way, tickets will sell. Meanwhile, Feig, who has made it his mandate to forge space for women in comedies such as *Bridesmaids*, *The Heat* and *Spy*, has struck a victory against Internet morons. He even had an answer for the ranters who claimed that remaking *Ghostbusters* with women would "ruin" their childhoods: "It's so dramatic," he told *Variety*. "Honestly, the only way I could ruin your childhood is if I got into a time machine and went back and made you an orphan." If Reitman's *Ghostbusters* had any value in the first place, it will live on no matter what. □

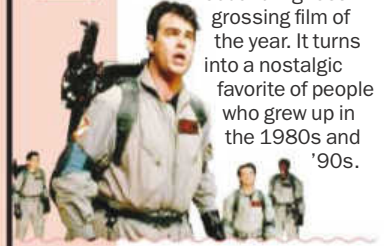
of the "geek community," acknowledging that not all fanboys are raging misogynist goons. It's a measure of the weird world we live in that Feig would have to state the obvious and then apologize anyway. But it would be a mistake to think of his retaliatory strike as a lapse in judgment, when it really amounts to a mini cultural victory. We're living in pissed-off times. Two of our three potential presidential candidates are running on the fumes of American anger. Bernie Sanders hasn't weighed in on *Ghostbusters*, but in a short video posted in January, Donald Trump made his confusion explicit: "And now they're making *Ghostbusters* with only women. What's going on?" One of the charges often leveled at Hillary Clinton is her lack of warmth, which makes the rules here doubly confusing: a woman can't be a Ghostbuster, and if she's lacking certain

SLIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Blow-by-blow in the social-media melee surrounding *Ghostbusters*

JUNE
1984

Ivan Reitman's *Ghostbusters* opens, later becoming the second highest-grossing film of the year. It turns into a nostalgic favorite of people who grew up in the 1980s and '90s.



OCT.
2014

Bridesmaids and *Spy* director Paul Feig announces that he will helm a *Ghostbusters* remake and that it will feature "hilarious women." The first wave of social-media outrage begins.

JAN.
2015

Feig announces his cast: Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones. Fans of Reitman's *Ghostbusters* take to Twitter, accusing Feig of "ruining" their childhoods and "pandering" to "feminist bimbos."

SEPT.
2015

Having reached his limit, Feig pushes back on the film's Internet trolls via Twitter: "Enough is enough," he writes to one.

MARCH
2016

Trolls make *Ghostbusters'* first trailer the most voted-down clip in YouTube history. Other critics charge that Jones' "street-smart" MTA worker is a racial stereotype. "Attack me all you want," Feig tweets, "but when you attack and insult my cast, you've crossed the line."

MAY
2016

In an open letter linked to his Twitter feed, Feig apologizes for referring to geeks as "a-holes" in a February 2015 interview but also decries Internet bullying.

JULY 15
2016

Feig's *Ghostbusters* hits theaters.



COMEDY

WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE

The brave pioneers of female irresponsibility are back and on the lam

By Belinda Luscombe



UTTERLY SELF-ABSORBED women are a dime a dozen these days. They're on HBO's *Girls*, inside Amy Schumer and keeping up the reality-show community. But in a way, all those ladies were mentored by Patsy Stone and Edina Monsoon, two of the least responsible and most hilarious characters ever to grace the small screen.

Edina (Jennifer Saunders) and Patsy (Joanna Lumley) burst onto TV in the '90s, fame whores of the first water, allergic to moderation

in alcohol, tobacco, fashion spending and parental neglect. And for three seasons, the British cult show *Absolutely Fabulous*, written by Saunders and Dawn French, was destination viewing in all English-speaking lands and some beyond.

This summer, 21 years after the final episode of the original series aired (though there have been reunions), the two reprobates are back with a movie. Among aficionados, expectations are Christian Louboutin-heel high, which

is partly why it took Saunders so long to write the film. "Once you've had a bit of success," she told a TV-show host, "the last thing you want to do is go and make a flop."

To lure in newbies, the movie is stuffed fuller than a Scott Rudin birthday party with appearances by celebrities, reportedly including Kim Kardashian West, Harry Styles and Jon Hamm.

The world, however, has changed; the duo's former antics would barely raise a well-groomed eyebrow on any

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: THE MOVIE

(July 22)

Edina and Patsy are hounded by paparazzi and have to go underground—by which they mean the French Riviera

of the *Real Housewives* shows these days. What could two women desperate for fame and glamour possibly do to shock anyone anymore?

Well, they could flee the limelight they sought so avidly. And in related news, they could kill Kate Moss. As Edina might say, it's an encouraging start, sweetie. □

MIKE AND DAVE NEED WEDDING DATES: 20TH CENTURY FOX; ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: FOX; SEARCHLIGHT.

MORE LAUGHS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

JUNE 17

Dwayne Johnson plays a CIA agent who enlists his former high school buddy (Kevin Hart) in an adventure to save the world.

WIENER-DOG

JUNE 24

Director Todd Solondz returns to the

dollhouse—this time with Greta Gerwig—to follow one dachshund's series of hapless owners.

MIKE AND DAVE NEED WEDDING DATES

JULY 8

Brothers Zac Efron and Adam DeVine have met their match for wildest, most destructive party guests in Aubrey Plaza and Anna Kendrick, who are only in it for the free vacation.

CAFÉ SOCIETY

JULY 15

A naive Bronx boy (Jesse Eisenberg) heads to 1930s Hollywood for a taste of the good old days in Woody Allen's latest, also starring Steve Carell and Kristen Stewart.

BAD MOMS

JULY 29

Fatigued by the pressures of endless PTA meetings, bake sales, workout classes and the

struggle to have it all, a cadre of "bad moms," including Kristen Bell, Mila Kunis and Kathryn Hahn, wage war against their neighborhood's "perfect moms."

SAUSAGE PARTY

AUG. 12

From the consistently perverted minds of comedy duo Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg comes this extreme, R-rated


animated film about the secret lives of supermarket food products.

WAR DOGS

AUG. 19

In a film based on a true story, a pair of unlikely 20-something military contractors (Jonah Hill and Miles Teller) win a \$300 million Pentagon deal and head overseas to work as high-powered weapons dealers.



A photograph of Jerry O'Connell, a man with brown hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. The background is a bright, slightly blurred indoor setting with a window on the left.

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ACTION

BAT GRIT CRAZY

Margot Robbie gets utterly unhinged with the comic world's baddest supervillain

By Eliza Berman



THE LEGEND OF TARZAN

(July 1)
Robbie's updated Jane Porter is a far cry from the damsel in distress from the original Tarzan novels

AFTER HER STAR-MAKING role in *The Wolf of Wall Street* in 2013, Margot Robbie was convinced she'd never work again. Then best known for stints on the Australian soap opera *Neighbours* and the short-lived ABC drama *Pan-Am*, she'd been handpicked by Martin Scorsese to star opposite Leonardo DiCaprio. She feared the bar had been set too high. "I was worried people would expect too much of me. Like, 'If Scorsese cast her in a film, she must be brilliant!'" she says. "Instead of having the chance to surprise people, I'd disappoint them."

Robbie's fears never came to fruition—quite the opposite. Following Scorsese's consecration, the Australian actor, 25, scored roles in films including *Focus* and *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*. But this summer marks her official coming-out as one of Hollywood's bankable leading ladies, as she steps into two major roles:

first as a refreshingly revised Jane in *The Legend of Tarzan* and then, in her buzziest part to date, as the bonkers baddie Harley Quinn in DC Comics' supervillain convention *Suicide Squad*.

Harley Quinn first appeared as a peripheral character in the animated *Batman* TV series in 1992 and proved so popular that she was quickly incorporated into the comics. An accomplice to the Joker, her alter ego is a psychiatrist named Harleen Quinzel, but as Harley, she's a candy-coated madwoman. "Is she so intelligent that she's pretending to have these behavioral issues to mess with people," Robbie asks, "or is she genuinely crazy and trying to convince herself she's sane? I think she is a bit of both." For Robbie, that inscrutability made playing Harley the most fun she's ever had on set.

As the first live-action depiction of an esteemed evil-

doer, the role carried with it a healthy dose of pressure. So Robbie mined the depths of fan sites to ensure die-hards "would feel the same way seeing her onscreen as they do reading her in comics." It didn't hurt that the role allowed her to reprise the Brooklyn accent she'd mastered for *Wolf*.

Suicide Squad might have been her only blockbuster this summer; Robbie was all set to turn down the role of Jane, who in Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan* novels is the archetypal damsel in distress. "I hadn't read it yet and already said no," says Robbie. But after many discussions with director David Yates, who helmed the last four *Harry Potter* films, she became convinced this was a different Jane, a scrappy and resourceful heroine who does her share of rescuing, even as Alexander Skarsgard's herculean Tarzan extricates her from danger.





SUICIDE SQUAD

(Aug. 5)
As Harley Quinn, Robbie joins a group of villains recruited by the U.S. government

A 19th century jungle dweller and a psychotic pig-tailed psychiatrist may seem a world apart, but both meet Robbie's chief criteria. "All the roles I've played are very strong and very flawed. I look for a really strong point of view. They know who they are or they know what they want—not necessarily both."

Robbie, too, knows what she wants. Rumor has it she's producing and starring in a Harley Quinn spin-off. Her lips are sealed, she says. "But let's just say I'm not ready to stop playing Harley Quinn just yet." That, or the accent's too delicious to give up. □

MORE THRILLS

WARCRAFT

JUNE 10

Duncan Jones (*Moon*) directs this heavily CGI video-game adaptation. Orcs flee their dying homeland to conquer the humans' realm. But a few orcs want to team up with humans instead.

NOW YOU SEE ME 2

JUNE 10

The trickster team of Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson and Dave Franco are back to their beguiling ways—with new addition Lizzy Caplan. Forced to help a rich tech whiz (Daniel Radcliffe) steal a universal decryption chip, the illusionists are under pressure to Houdini their way out.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE

JUNE 24

The aliens are coming. Again. And 20 years after they last tried this stunt, the next generation (including Liam Hemsworth and Jessie Usher) is all grown up and ready to protect Earth from the devastating invasion. Jeff Goldblum returns, along with director Roland Emmerich.

THE SHALLOWS

JUNE 29

Only one guess needed as to what monster rises from the ocean's depths to leave a woman (Blake Lively) terrified, hurt and precariously stranded while



Star Trek Beyond

THE CONJURING 2

JUNE 10

An evil spirit speaking through a young girl draws married paranormal investigators to England. Director James Wan (*Saw*, *Furious 7*) revels in turning the case ever more sinister.

THE NEON DEMON

JUNE 24

A rookie model (Elle Fanning) faces frigid competition in the fashion world, and director Nicolas Winding Refn (*Drive*) hones the unsettling edges of horror in her world of rigidly stylized beauty.

surfing at a secluded beach called Paradise.

THE PURGE: ELECTION YEAR

JULY 1

The annual 12-hour government-sanctioned all-crimes-allowed rampage has arrived. It's your patriotic duty to participate. A Senator (Elizabeth Mitchell) opposed to the gory violence and her bodyguard (Frank Grillo) scramble to avoid the chopping block.

EQUALS

JULY 15

In a sci-fi future where emotions are a result of disease,



The Shallows

relationships of any sort are verboten. Would-be lovers Nicholas Hoult and Kristen Stewart hide longing glances as they weigh defecting to escape mental reprogramming.

STAR TREK BEYOND

JULY 22

Directed by Justin Lin, the *Enterprise* crew returns to explore yet more uncharted space. When a new foe destroys the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, the crew members find themselves dispersed on a frontier planet fighting for their lives as Idris Elba plays the villain. Also starring: Sofia Boutella (*Kingsman: The Secret Service*).

LIGHTS OUT

JULY 22

The hair-raising fear of the dark lasts well beyond childhood. A woman's silhouette appears only in the shadows, but there's nothing insubstantial about the threat she poses.

JASON BOURNE

JULY 29

Supersoldier Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) has his memory back and the

surveillance state battles a hacker who "could be worse than Snowden" in the series' fifth installment. Alicia Vikander and Julia Stiles also star, and Paul Greengrass returns to direct.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

AUG. 19

A boy (Asa Butterfield) grows up on Mars. He longs to explore Earth, so when he finally lands planet-side as a teen he sets off on an un sanctioned road trip with a girl he met online. But his body won't survive long in this new world, and Gary Oldman has to find him before it's too late.

MECHANIC: RESURRECTION

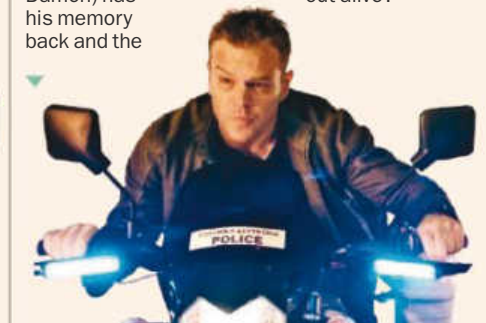
AUG. 26

A hitman (Jason Statham) makes his reluctant return in a sequel to the 2011 action-thriller, joined by Jessica Alba.

DON'T BREATHE

AUG. 26

A group of disabled friends rob a blind man (Stephen Lang), who traps them in his house and turns the lights off. Can they get out alive?



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BEN-HUR
(Aug. 19)
Huston is the fourth actor to play Judah Ben-Hur on film, and the first since Charlton Heston in 1959

TAKING THE REINS

Saddle up for a new take on *Ben-Hur's* brotherly feuding, righteous redemption and, oh yeah, that chariot race

By Eliza Berman

WHEN *BEN-HUR* WAS RELEASED IN 1959, it broke multiple records: it was the most expensive and third longest movie ever made on the largest set ever constructed. Its yield of 11 Academy Awards remains unbeaten. "I think a lot of people go, 'Why would you reimagine that movie?'" says leading man Jack Huston, the former *Boardwalk Empire* star who headlines this new reimagining. Even now, in the reboot era, it's a tall order to tackle such a tentpole of cinematic history.

Well, says Huston, first of all, director Timur Bekmambetov's new *Ben-Hur* isn't a remake of William Wyler's classic film; instead, it's an adaptation—the fourth (to Wyler's third)—of Lew Wallace's 1880 novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. And what is adaptation if not interpretation? "If you got four artists to paint the same landscape, you'd end up with four very

different paintings," says Huston, who comes from a long line of actors including aunt Anjelica Huston. "The thought that once a landscape has been painted by one artist, no one should touch it again—isn't that the beauty of this profession?"

Filling the sandals once worn by Charlton Heston was as physical a challenge as it was psychological. To play Judah Ben-Hur, a Jewish prince betrayed by his Roman best friend and sentenced to death as a galley slave, Huston lost 30 lb. and trained for months to drive a chariot. (Impressively little CGI is employed in the epic finale.) But the high-octane contest would be anticlimactic if not for the emotion driving it. "It's amazing, this fine line between love and hate," says Huston. "You don't really hate anything you don't love, in a weird way." That's a story that never gets old. □

5 THINGS JACK HUSTON LEARNED ABOUT CHARIOT RACING

- 1 Work your way up to the big leagues: Huston started on a seated cart with two horses, eventually building up to a standing chariot with four horses.
- 2 Rely on your non-visual senses: "You can't see anything because there's sand and dust," he says. In the movie, he manages to keep his eyes open.
- 3 Slow down on the corners: "When you take a corner, you drift around it because you're going so fast," he recalls. "It's insane."
- 4 It's the original sport: "It's the equivalent of NASCAR back then," he says. "I'm surprised it's not still in the Olympics."
- 5 Never, ever screw up—if you want to live, that is: "You've got to be rather masterful at the end of it," he warns. "Because one slipup and you die."

HOW TO BE FREE

In *Free State of Jones*, Gugu Mbatha-Raw forges unity for a common cause

By Eliza Berman



IN RECENT YEARS, SCREENS big and small have seen such an uptick in stories about slavery, from *Django Unchained* and *12 Years a Slave* to TV's *Underground* and *Roots* remake, that some black actors have criticized Hollywood's appetite for depicting brutality against black people, citing a lack of imagination for other periods in African-American history. But the British actor Gugu Mbatha-Raw, 33, who stars opposite Matthew McConaughey in this summer's *Free State of Jones*, begs to differ.

"This movie isn't just about slavery," she says. "Often you

see villainous slave owners and victimized slaves." *Jones*, on the other hand, depicts poor white farmers joining runaway slaves to form an uprising. "It's about how people can be united in the fight for freedom," she says.

It's also a surprising romance. *Free State of Jones* is based on the true story of Newton "Newt" Knight (McConaughey), a Confederate Army deserter who led a rebellion against

a South he believed was enlisting poor farmers to fight for the interests of rich men, namely cotton and slaves. (That's according to the movie's telling, anyway—historians still debate his true motivations.) Mbatha-Raw plays Rachel, a runaway slave who joins the insurrection and later marries Newt, becoming one of the few black women to own land in Mississippi.

"I found it fascinating—she lived this double life between

the plantation and the rebels. The courage that must have taken!" says Mbatha-Raw. She got into character by exploring Louisiana's swamplands. "It's helpful to go to the place where my character may have stood—to be out there in the swamps, to smell the magnolia trees. I find that so informative on a sensory level."

Though McConaughey may get top billing, *Free State of Jones* is largely about the role of women during wartime—



SOUTHSIDE WITH YOU

(Aug. 19)
The romantic drama follows young Barack Obama and Michelle Robinson on their initial meeting in Chicago



LOVERS IN CHIEF

As the subject of the upcoming film *Southside With You*, which depicts their first date, the Obamas join a long line of presidential couples to get dramatic treatment.

JOHN ADAMS
Paul Giamatti and Laura Linney as John and Abigail Adams

LINCOLN
Daniel Day-Lewis and Sally Field as Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln

ELEANOR AND FRANKLIN
Edward Herrmann and Jane Alexander as Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt



SERIOUS SPECTACLES

FREE STATE OF JONES

(June 24)

In this true tale of a Southern uprising against the Confederate Army, Mbatha-Raw and McConaughey find love in the fight for freedom

both slaves like Rachel and white Southerners, like Newt's first wife Serena (Keri Russell), left behind by husbands called to war. The Knights' arrangement was far from perfect—Reconstruction replaced the violence of slavery with new forms of cruelty—but it still resulted in whites and blacks living harmoniously, if only in one little corner of the South. Even Serena lived alongside her former husband and his new wife. As Mbatha-Raw says, quoting director Gary Ross's script, "Wars make strange families."

Since crossing over from the London theater scene in 2009, Mbatha-Raw has played characters both from history (like an 18th century biracial aristocrat in 2013's *Belle*) and from the future (she stars in the forthcoming J.J. Abrams sci-fi flick *God Particle*). But the challenges are universal. "Time marches on," she says. "But human beings still worry about the same things." □

THE KENNEDYS

Greg Kinnear and Katie Holmes as John and Jacqueline Kennedy

NIXON

Anthony Hopkins and Joan Allen as Richard and Pat Nixon



GENIUS

JUNE 10

The literary set surrounding book editor Max Perkins (Colin Firth) includes F. Scott Fitzgerald (Guy Pearce) and Ernest Hemingway (Dominic West), but this film focuses on his friendship with author Thomas Wolfe (Jude Law). Nicole Kidman and Laura Linney round out the all-star cast.

SWISS ARMY MAN

JUNE 17

In this polarizing surrealist Sundance hit, Daniel Radcliffe is a reanimated corpse who proves a particularly useful companion for a despondent Paul Dano, who's suicidal after being stranded on an island.

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

JULY 8

When a free-spirited Pacific Northwest hermit (Viggo Mortensen) has to leave the wilderness enclave he's created with his six kids to attend the funeral of his wife (their mother), he and his brood must contend with her disapproving parents and a world that doesn't play by his rules.

THE INFILTRATOR

JULY 13

Bryan Cranston plays federal agent Robert Mazur, who went undercover in 1986 to infiltrate Pablo Escobar's drug cartel, eventually earning the trust of top lieutenant Roberto Alcaino (Benjamin Bratt) and penetrating Escobar's shady criminal underworld.

Florence Foster Jenkins



EQUITY

JULY 29

Billed as the first major movie about women on Wall Street, *Equity* stars Anna Gunn (*Breaking Bad*) as an investment banker guiding IPOs who is denied a promotion and struggling with whom to trust.

INDIGNATION

JULY 29

Logan Lerman plays a working-class Jewish kid from Newark, N.J., who goes to a small Christian college in Ohio to avoid having to fight in the Korean War, in this adaptation of Philip Roth's 2008 novel.

HELL OR HIGH WATER

AUG. 12

In a modern western from the screenwriter of *Sicario*, Ben

Foster and Chris Pine play brothers on a bank-robbing spree with noble intentions of saving the family ranch from foreclosure—and trying to avoid getting caught by Jeff Bridges' weathered Texas ranger along the way.

FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS

AUG. 12

Famed New York heiress Florence Foster Jenkins (Meryl Streep) dreamed of becoming a marvelous singer and performing at Carnegie Hall. But her husband (Hugh Grant) won't let anyone tell her the truth: that she's actually a terrible singer.

HANDS OF STONE

AUG. 26

This biopic tracks Panamanian boxer Roberto Duran (Edgar Ramírez) and his trainer (Robert De Niro) from Duran's humble beginnings to his infamous win, after which he said *no más*.

THE INTERVENTION

AUG. 26

Actor Clea DuVall wrote, directed and produced this Sundance hit, which marks a starchy turn for Melanie Lynskey as Annie, who unites a group of old pals on a weekend trip to break up the unhappy marriage of two friends, intervention-style.

Captain Fantastic



GILL MORE GIRL

After more than a decade, Ellen DeGeneres reprises her role as Dory in the sequel to *Finding Nemo*

By Joel Stein



FOR YEARS, ELLEN DEGENERES complained on her talk show that Pixar kept making sequels for movies other than *Finding Nemo*, the one she was in. “Like, of course they should make a sequel,” DeGeneres tells me, revving up into one of her trademark rhapsodies. “It was more really of a joke—but it was incredible to me that there were all these sequels being made, and *Nemo* was such a great movie. It’s still one of the highest rentals. *Rental?* Do people rent movies anymore? No. But they’re still watching it over and over again, so, yeah, it was kind of amazing to me that it wasn’t being made. And it was kind of a joke.”

That’s the speech pattern—distraction plus frankness plus self-awareness plus cheeriness—that solved *Nemo* writer

and director Andrew Stanton’s problem when writing the original movie. He was struggling with how to create a character with short-term-memory loss who did more than just repeat himself. So when he heard DeGeneres’ ramble on her ABC sitcom, he wrote the comedic sidekick in her voice, changing the fish from male to female. Then he begged her to take the part.

Now the sidekick becomes the star with the long-awaited *Finding Dory*, in theaters June 17. For DeGeneres, it’s a homecoming. “Andrew hired me when nobody else would hire me,” she says. “I had gone back to stand-up because I needed money and I didn’t have another option.” After coming out publicly, she was excited to get such a mainstream act-

ing job. “It was really important for me to show that even though you’re openly gay, you can play different characters.”

So when websites started reporting, based on no particular evidence in the *Dory* trailer, that there were lesbians in the new movie, DeGeneres was surprised. “If that’s what people want, then yes, there are lesbian fish in the movie,” she says. “If people don’t want them in there, they’re not there. Whatever people want. ’Cause you wouldn’t want to take your children to see a movie with lesbian fish, because then they’ll want to be lesbian fish themselves. But if you do want lesbian fish, you’ll probably have to see the movie four or five times to see them.”

The sequel—which, for the record, is devoid of lesbians—

focuses on Dory’s adult search for her parents (Diane Keaton and Eugene Levy) with the help of a reluctant, cranky octopus (Ed O’Neill) along with Nemo and his father Marlin (Albert Brooks). “I always thought of Dory as a tragic character and not a comedic character,” says Stanton about why he wanted to make a *Dory* movie. “You sense that must be a burden, to have short-term-memory loss and be a fish alone in the ocean.”

Normally, letting 13 years go by before releasing a sequel would be an impossible bet for a Hollywood studio. But interest in *Nemo* never waned; besides all those rentals, it was re-released in 2012. “I did worry that if they waited too long,” DeGeneres jokes, “I’d sound like Lauren Bacall.” □



KIDS' FLICKS

THE SECRET LIFE OF PETS

JULY 8

What happens to your pets after you leave for work? Trouble. Of the adorable kind. Fragile vases and animal-control officers are key foils in a film from the creators of *Despicable Me* with characters voiced by Louis CK, Ellie Kemper, Kevin Hart, Eric Stonestreet and Jenny Slate.



Ice Age: Collision Course

PETE'S DRAGON

AUG. 12

No one quite believes that a 10-year-old boy

Kubo and the Two Strings



ICE AGE: COLLISION COURSE

JULY 22

The latest in the franchise is going off planet (yes, in a spaceship) in an attempt to save the world from an asteroid.

(Oakes Fegley) lives in the woods with a dragon, but a wizened woodcarver (Robert Redford) may know the truth in Disney's live-action reboot of the 1977 film.

KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS

AUG. 19

The son of a great samurai, Kubo (Art Parkinson) sets out to harness his magical powers with the help of Monkey (Charlize Theron) and Beetle (Matthew McConaughey) in an adventure from the creators of *Coraline*.

NINE LIVES

AUG. 5

A high-powered dealmaker (Kevin Spacey) is an awful, absentee dad—until pet-shop owner Christopher Walken turns him into a cat. Connecting with his daughter and wife on the feline level finally brings him home.

FINDING DORY

(June 17) Dory (DeGeneres) goes on an underwater adventure in search of her long-lost parents



The Secret Life of Pets



THE BFG

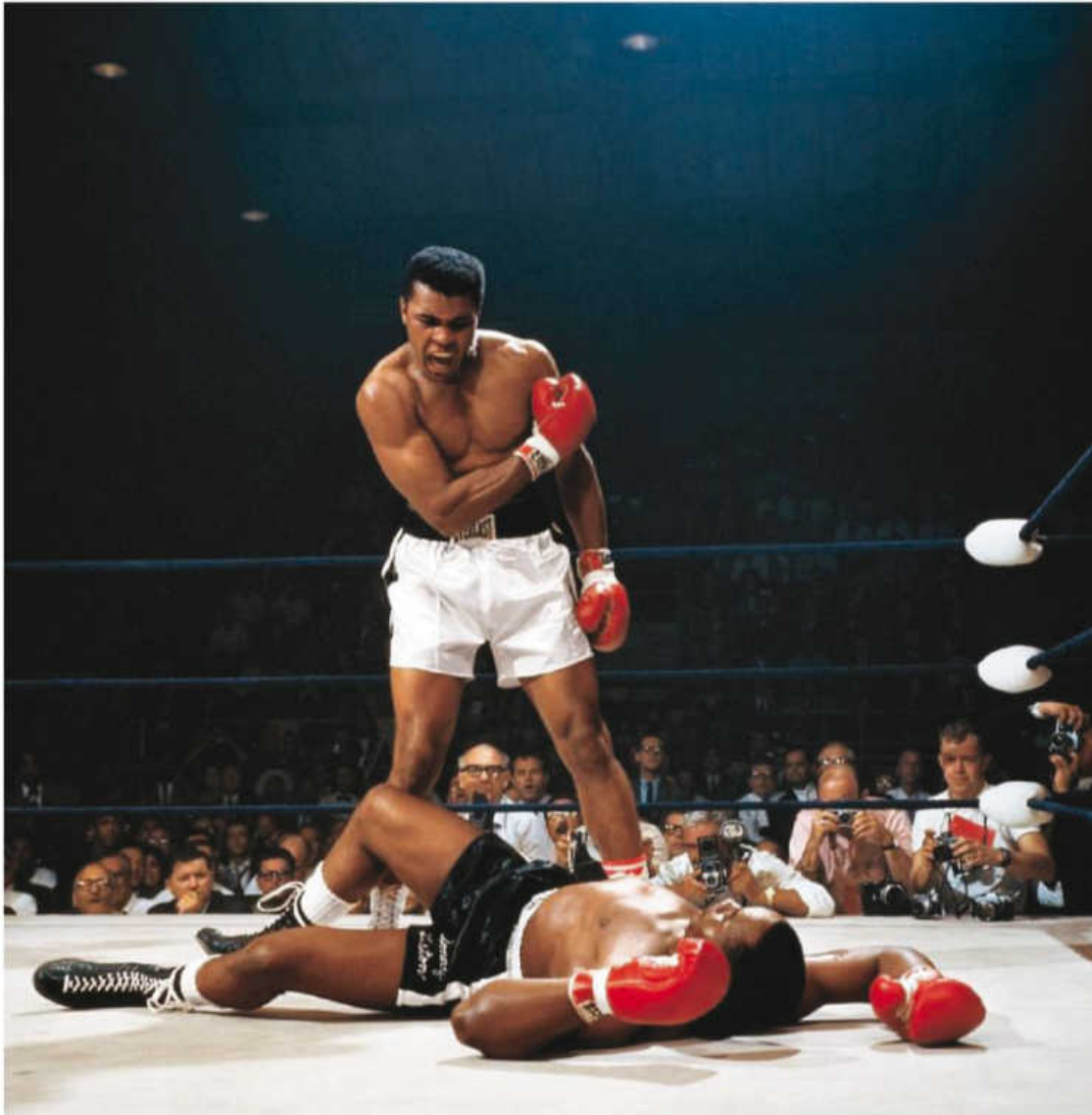
(July 1) Steven Spielberg reimagines Roald Dahl's tale of a giant who collects dreams for humans

THIS BFG IS BOUND FOR GLORY

Mark Rylance makes the best possible Big Friendly Giant in Roald Dahl's rascally classic

Fans of Roald Dahl's pleurably disreputable children's books tend to be fiercely protective, and they're especially distrustful when it comes to movie adaptations. In the case of *The BFG*, directed by Steven Spielberg, they needn't worry: their Big Friendly Giant is in the right big friendly hands, those of Mark Rylance. *The BFG* mixes CGI with live action, and although its hero has been digitally rendered as a gangly, skyscraper-tall fellow, with ears that flare out like sugar-bowl handles, he's still instantly, undeniably Rylancian: those eyes, sad and warm and exuberant at once, couldn't belong to anyone else.

Rylance won an Oscar for his supporting role in Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*, but he has been best known as a stage actor with a shelf full of Olivier and Tony awards. Even so, the shift from traditional modes of acting to working in a green-screen environment didn't faze him. "It's not unlike being in the rehearsal room of a theater," Rylance said in May at the Cannes Film Festival press conference for *The BFG*, just ahead of the film's premiere there. "You just have to use imagination." —Stephanie Zacharek



SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

SO MUCH OF GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY IS BEING IN THE RIGHT SPOT AT THE right moment. And having luck. While sitting ringside on May 25, 1965, in Lewiston, Maine, *Sports Illustrated* photographer Neil Leifer shot what is considered to be the greatest sports picture of the 20th century.

SI had sent Leifer to cover the rematch between 23-year-old heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali and 34-year-old Sonny Liston, from whom Ali had snatched the title 15 months prior. One minute and 44 seconds into the first round, Ali's right fist connected with Liston's chin and Liston went down. Leifer didn't see the punch. Yet he snapped the photo of the champ towering over his vanquished opponent, taunting him. "Get up and fight, sucker!" Ali cried.

The picture barely resonated that week, Leifer says. *SI* chose another shot for the cover. Years later, though, as Ali was embraced around the world for his swagger, defiance and dominance, the renown of the photograph grew as well. The image—like Muhammad Ali—turned out to be about so much more than boxing.

To see a video about this picture, visit time.com/leifer

**'THIS
PICTURE
BECAME
ICONIC
BECAUSE
PEOPLE
WANT TO
REMEMBER
ALI THIS
WAY.'**

—NEIL LEIFER,
PHOTOGRAPHER



Kettle
Cooked



SET YOUR TASTE BUDS ABLAZE *with*
mouthwatering JALAPEÑO FLAVOR.

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Let's
Go
Places



WHAT'S NEXT

With a lower center of gravity, wider stance and new double-wishbone rear suspension, the 2016 Prius is making getaways even more thrilling. An exhilarating ride is what's next.

toyota.com/prius

Prototype shown with options. Production model may vary. ©2015 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

THE ALL-NEW
PRIUS