The average American gains one to two pounds a year throughout much of adulthood. Thus, a 23-year-old male college graduate might set out into the world looking like a streamlined welterweight, but a decade later—after having a couple kids, reporting to a sedentary desk-job, and logging in major couch-time watching SportsCenter—finds himself a fleshy super middleweight. Another 10 years, and he'll be pushing the cruiserweight limit.

Now take boxer Guillermo Jones (32-3-2, 25 KOs) of Colón, Panama, who takes on Wayne "Big Truck" Braithwaite this Saturday on Showtime at Cleveland, Ohio's Gund Arena. He puts us Americans and our petty weight gain issues to shame.

Guillermo began his pro career in 1993 as a 23-year-old welterweight—though calling him "streamlined" seems an understatement; at 6'4'' he looked almost as freaky as when Manute Bol donned boxing trunks. The human beanpole collected 17 wins (15 by KO) with no losses. He then moved up to jr. middleweight and had success there, earning two title shots; he drew against, and then lost a controversial split decision to, then WBA champ Laurent Boudouani. After that, he skipped middleweight, fought four times at super middleweight and once at light heavyweight, winning all his bouts.

In 2002, Jones fought cruiserweight Tim Williamson on ShoBox. Williamson was an undefeated puncher but lacked Jones' experience. The Panamanian, whose nickname is "El Felino" (The Tiger), was awarded a split decision victory. He decided to make his home in this division, even if it meant he was putting on double your average jelly-bellied American.

Last May he stopped Kelvin "Concrete" Davis in four rounds. Before that, he lost a split decision against the undefeated prospect/contender Steve Cunningham. He also drew against the rugged Englishman Johnny Nelson. This is a harsh lineup by anyone's standards. The 21-1 (17 KOs) Braithwaite and the two-fisted assault he usually administers will be no exception.

Thursday morning Jones took a call from *The Sweet Science* as he relaxing in his hotel room. He sounded low-key and confident. Considering his limited English (and this reporter's nonexistent Spanish), he negotiated questions with aplomb.

"I know he's aggressive boxer," Guillermo said of the Guyanese Baithwaite, who confirmed last spring that a Big Truck has no chance against a French Tank (Jean-Marc Mormeck) when meeting head-on. Still, Jones knows his opponent will be "very strong and hits very hard."

"This is my time," Jones said in a near whisper. "The weight [gain] is natural. My punches feel good at this weight. I don't think he will be more strong than me the night of the fight." When he places his shots, the man on the receiving end has "got to go to the ground."

Boxing guru Johnny Bos thinks Guillermo has become a better puncher at his present mass (he averages about 195), than when he was showing more rib than Kate Moss. When asked to

comment on how their two styles might mesh come Saturday, Bos blurted, “What a f***ing horrible awkward f***ing fight. God!” Pressed for a prediction, he said, “If you have to ask me, I’d have to say the ‘The Truck’ is too strong for him.” (But he believes Braithwaite would be wise to drop down to 175 and go for the bigger money there.)

If Bos is wrong about what we’re in store for this weekend—and it’d be nice if he were—it should be noted that he isn’t too familiar with Jones. His being unfamiliar with any fighter is *rare* … Jones’ accomplishments notwithstanding, he is a rather unknown commodity.

The ever-growing man from the land that birthed Duran, slipped into third person and assured, “Guillermo Jones is very well for this fight.” And why should we doubt him? Boxing makes fools of us all. Who among us expected Ricky Hatton to pummel Kostya Tszyu, Roman Karmazin to outwork Kassim Ouma, or Humberto Armando Soto to flip the script two weeks ago and make Rocky Juarez look like the unknown late replacement?

Go get him, Tiger.