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After viewing the HBO documentary "Assault In The Ring," one can easily feel assaulted them self for watching it. There's no doubt that boxing fans who saw it we're left with many different intense emotions at its conclusion. The documentary recounts the events prior to and after the junior middleweight fight between Billy Collins jr. (14-0) and trial-horse Luis Resto (20-8-2), which was an under card bout prior to the Davey Moore vs. Roberto Duran junior middleweight title fight at Madison Square Garden on June 16, 1983.

"Assault In The Ring" is the perfect title for that is exactly what happened to the up and coming and undefeated Collins at the hands of Luis Resto and his trainer Panama Lewis. The assault on Collins was he unknowingly confronted Resto on a night that Resto's career was hinging on the fight and both he and Lewis knew it. A win over the undefeated Collins who was just starting to make a name for himself most likely would've gotten Resto ranked and led to another high profile bout.

There was also mention of a meeting before the fight between Panama Lewis and a cocaine trafficker, in which Lewis agreed to help swing the fight in Resto's favor securing a bet he'd place on Resto. The bet scenario is plausible but the fact that Resto needed a win over a fighter like Collins is much more in line with what probably led Panama Lewis into trying to provide Resto an advantage during the fight. Late in the documentary Resto says he knew there was a lot of money bet on him, but didn't know how much. Not that he would've seen any of it if there were.

Resto was a guy with no self-esteem and always says exactly what whoever's talking to him wants him to say. Bet? There was no big bet. The fight was a nothing fight; there'd be no line on it. And even through bookies, there'd be no action to take. The bet theory is bullshit. Plaster hardening in the gloves? The gloves were confiscated right after the fight. You don't think a foreign substance would have shown up? Lewis removed the padding because that's the kind of thing he always did.

Resto wasn't a puncher and usually lost every time he stepped up in class. So with what probably was his last shot to earn a big day as a fighter he closed his eyes and tried to block out of his mind whatever Lewis cooked up to help him beat Collins. What Lewis did was resort to the dirtiest trick in the book via removing the horsehair padding from Resto's gloves.

As a result of Lewis's deeds, Resto gave Collins an almost ceaseless pummeling for 30 minutes with manufactured hands of stone. Resto knew it when he went into the ring that night. He was complicit because he was desperate to win the fight. It's believable that today he regrets what he did that night because of the way it has ruined his life and others too.

It was obvious to see that Resto was in no way a match for a street con like Carlos "Panama" Lewis. Panama is way too sophisticated for Resto in an immoral way outside of the ring. It was also obvious to see that Panama Lewis isn't a real trainer nor is he a boxing guy. He comes off

as a slickster that knows how to build champions, which is a joke. What he can do is take middle of the road boxers and con them emotionally and hope when nobody is looking to sneak them one of his phony magic potions to give the fighter a false sense of strength and confidence. Even Resto fell for it and no doubt embellished the story as the documentary moved forward.

Panama Lewis is a certified cheater and not the evil genius he's portrayed to be in the film. That's inescapable. However, he has no magic potion to bring fighters back from the dead and his little black bottle had no bearing on the result of the first Pryor-Arguello bout. Believe me, if there was something out there that could provide fighters or any other professional athlete an instant infusion of energy when they're spent, everybody would know about it, not just Panama Lewis. If you're a big fan of Alexis Arguello, he doesn't need anyone making an excuse for him regarding his first fight with Aaron Pryor.

However, what Lewis did to Luis Resto's gloves is unforgivable. That wasn't a con-job or a ploy, it was as close to giving Resto brass knuckles as you could get. He came close to pulling it off because even in boxing it's hard to find many who would sink so low in order to win a fight. Billy Collins never thought for a moment anything other than Luis Resto was some kind of a puncher during the fight. Which says something about how tough he must have been not going down once during the 10 round fight. Forget whether or not there was anything on the hand wraps, just the removal of the padding alone had to feel like Collins was getting hit with bricks.

At the beginning of the documentary you can hear Collins promoter Bob Arum saying Resto should be banned for life. Amazing how vehemently Arum would defend his own fighter Antonio Margarito 25 years later when his trainer was caught attempting to wrap his hands with a substance like Plaster of Paris prior to his welterweight title defense against Shane Mosley. Arum's morality play has no boundary.

As usual HBO's production was outstanding. But lets not forget that Resto was paid for his words by the films producer and narrator, and he seemed to enjoy being driven around in a Lincoln Town car and staying at five star hotels, so you can take his words for whatever you think they're worth. As for Panama Lewis, who was also paid, he is not believable either way and was clearly exposed for who and exactly what he is.

"Assaulted In The Ring" revealed nothing really new. No one with a morsel of common sense ever doubted for a moment that Luis Resto knew the padding was removed from his gloves by Lewis. In the end everybody was for sale.

In boxing, almost everybody lies. And in this instance, that was the case.

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