It's hard to be sure who is more deluded these days, Roy Jones, Jr. or his father, Roy Jones, Sr. One thing is sure though. The apple didn't fall far from the tree.

Saturday night the 40-year-old Jones will fight former super middleweight champion Jeff Lacy at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi for reasons that are difficult to fathom. One is going nowhere and the other is following his lead, so if there is a point to this fight it is well hidden from view.

The fight is of such little importance that they couldn't find a cable network to buy it and hence are trying to sell it themselves on pay-per-view. Don't be in a rush to order it. There's little chance the phone lines will be swamped on Fight Night.

Yet Jones announced recently that he has finally figured out why he was knocked cold by Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson and bloodied and beaten up by Joe Calzaghe and it had nothing to do with the fact he now is qualified to fight for the AARP title as well as the WBC's.

"I was holding my hands up by my face, in a defensive mode,'' Jones (53-5, 39 KO) said sounding amazed that this was the case. "I needed to get back to being Roy Jones with my hands at my side, acting cocky and throwing punches from all angles. Only problem I have is it may add 10 years to my career and I don't want that.''

Neither does most of the boxing world, not that he's noticed.

Insulated by a cocoon of handlers and misinformers, Jones seldom hears the truth and sees it even less frequently. In his world, it's still 2003 and he's still the first former middleweight champion in 102 years to win a portion of the heavyweight title. He's still Super Roy, not Aged Roy.

Since then much has changed for Jones however, but not in his mind or in that of his father, who will be back in his corner Saturday night and has been with him throughout his training camp in California, PA. alongside his long-time trainer Alton Merkerson.

Father looks at son and sees the kid he raised to be the best boxer in the world. Not so long ago he saw an aging fighter beginning to slip but that was before he was re-admitted into the inner circle. From that vantage point he sees a different guy. A rejuvenated guy. A guy who never should have lost to anybody.

"Roy Jones, Jr. should have never lost to Joe Calzaghe,'' father said about son. "I don't want to take anything away from Joe (just before he, of course, began to) but Roy fought out of his element.

"He didn't do the things he was known for. You know you don't take snow skis to the desert.''

Good point, I guess.

Say what they will, Roy Jones, Jr. lost those fights because he's nearly Roy Jones, senior. He was carrying his hands high in those fights because he was getting hit in the face if he didn't and he was not getting hit in the face because his hands were high. He was getting hit in the face because there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Jones was a fighter who lived off his reflexes and his creativity. Those gifts, plus superb conditioning, made him a middleweight, super middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight champion. They made him the pound-for-pound best fighter in the world for a number of years. They helped him earn millions of dollars and allowed him to develop a side act as an HBO analyst.

Now they are gone, as happens to everyone including even Sugar Ray Robinson. What is left is a guy who had best fight with his hands high because if he doesn't he'll end up cut and battered and on the defensive, just like he was against Calzaghe, or worse, he'll end up on his back, which is where Tarver and Johnson put him.

Might Lacy do the same? That's unlikely because the 32-year-old former 168-pound title holder is more shot than Jones and even when he wasn't he would have been no match for him.

Where Jones was agile and creative, Lacy was plodding and predictable. He could punch but to land the kind of shot that can turn things his way Jones will have to cooperate. Of course, if Jones intends to fight with his hands down as if he was still 25 he will be cooperating, which is the only thing that could make this event remotely interesting.

Lacy (25-2, 17 KO) has predicted a knockout, insisting that Jones will not hear the last bell. Sadly, he already hasn't. That bell tolled the night Calzaghe slapped him silly, slashing open his eye and beating him by a landslide after Calzaghe first had to get up off the canvas in the first round following a flash knockdown.

That he did said more about how far Jones has fallen than it did about the height to which Calzaghe had risen. Saturday night it seems likely Jones will avoid a repeat of that fate because Lacy was never the force some tried to say he was in his prime.

The larger question is do Jones and his father really believe the things they are saying? If not they can probably run this scam a while longer, fighting opponents on the edge of the game without having to take much risk, which was always one of Jones' specialties.

But if they do, they are cruising for a bruising. Unfortunately for Roy Jones, Jr. he's the only one who will feel them when that time comes.