

## Journey Of James Toney Pt. 1 ? ?Pops Arthur

Written by David A. Avila  
Monday, 23 August 2010 19:00

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Anger drove James "Lights Out Toney into the prizefighting game as a youngster. Pure unadulterated seething fury was released when he first began to box.

That anger never truly disappeared but many people came into Toney's life like his first pro trainer Gregory Owens, wife Angie and later John "Pops Arthur who all helped cool the volcanic personality until necessary.

It's necessary now.

Toney enters the Octagon to face legendary mixed martial arts fighter Randy "The Natural Couture in that fighter's preferred MMA style. Ultimate Fighting Championship 118 takes place on Saturday Aug. 28, in Boston. It will be televised on pay-per-view.

Not many people know the "real James Toney except for those who spent many days with the devil-may-care prizefighter who's known for being one of the craftiest boxers who ever graced the ring.

Freddie Roach knows all about Toney's anger. Pops knows it too. But one other ally on Toney's side is calmness in the ring. He uses anger and calmness to balance his attacks and defensive shields while trading blows against some of the best boxers in the last 22 years.

Both anger and calmness will be critical when stepping inside the Octagon against different styles of fighting.

A former college football defensive back, Toney knows all about tackling and the need for balance. But in the last two decades bringing down opponents has been primarily done with his fists.

In a few days both the boxing world and world of mixed martial arts will see if Toney can traverse into a fighting style that allows him to effectively use against the wrestling skills of Couture.

"There's cage tactics, there's ground fighting, there's a lot of things that don't happen in boxing that are going to happen in the cage, Couture said of Toney's willingness to step in the Octagon.

It wasn't a last-minute decision that Toney made to participate in MMA. For years he and "Pops Arthur watched UFC fight cards and discussed what most people call ultimate fighting.

Arthur may look like a gray-haired gentleman but in his day he fought in the so-called "death matches in Thailand and other parts of Asia. In those fights, everything and anything was allowed including biting, gouging, low blows, and sometimes death was the result.

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"I fought in over 250 of those fights, said Arthur who has been a part of Toney's team for more than a decade. "One time I fought this giant guy and he got me in this bear hug and was squeezing the life out of me. I took a bite out of his jugular and blood was streaming all over the place.

Arthur has been Toney's secret advisor throughout his MMA training and had previously served as his corner man for boxing too. Both are very close and discuss everything from sports to business.

"He's like a son to me, says Arthur.

Whenever Toney is training there is Pops Arthur. Both are very close and if Toney listens to anyone its Pops.

"Pops was in real martial arts sudden death matches. Not this bull---t, says Toney. "He's like a father to me.

Arthur also worked as an under cover agent for drug enforcement agencies and has scars from bullet wounds to the head and massive scars from a shotgun blast to his chest to prove his participation. Still, after all of those battles, Arthur is a calm and calculating person not easily sparked.

A lot of Arthur's coolness has rubbed off on Toney. While fighting it's difficult to see emotion on Toney's face as he moves in to hurt his opponent. Whether absorbing big blows from much bigger guys or adjusting to speed, its all the same to the 10-time world champion boxer.

"James is going to surprise a lot of people, Arthur says calmly. "A lot of people are going to be surprised.