

Marvis Frazier - The Lost Son

Written by Jim Amato

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The camera rolls and the highlight clip begins. It shows a young, undefeated but green Marvis Frazier dancing while taunting heavyweight champion Larry Holmes. In the blink of an eye Holmes unloads a right hand sucker shot that sends Marvis backward and into a sprawled position on the canvas. Marvis showing he is a true Frazier gamely arises. Quickly Holmes pins him in a corner and pummels him unmercifully till the ref intervenes. The look on Frazier's face isn't so much a look of pain. It is a bewildered, shellshocked look like Ken Norton had after Gerry Cooney had worked him over in a corner. A look that said "What the hell hit me ?"

Now fast forward to another highlight clip. A not quite ready for prime time Mike Tyson is waiting in his corner to do battle with Marvis Frazier. This is considered a good test for Tyson at this stage of his budding career.

The bell sounds and within seconds Tyson is on top of Marvis forcing him into a corner. Then Mike connects with one of the most vicious uppercuts of all time. The punch appears to nearly lift Frazier's head clear off his shoulders. The follow up is needless, Marvis is done.

Today when the name Marvis Frazier is mentioned those two film clips come to mind. Holmes and Tyson both destroyed him. Marvis was just the over hyped son of " Smokin' Joe ". How wrong this is. Truth be told, Marvis Frazier was a very capable fighter.

Marvis boxed not slugged his way to over 50 amateur wins. He was considered the best U.S amateur heavyweight until suffering a shocking one punch, one round kayo loss to James Broad. The kayo punch pinched a nerve in his neck and shelved his career. Corrective surgery started Marvis on the road to his professional career.

Many blame father Joe for changing Marvis from a boxer to a puncher. To try and mold Marvis into his unique slugging style. A style he was not really suited for. They said Marvis was too small to slug with the big brutes of the division. There may be some truth to this. Still Marvis enjoyed some success against much bigger and competent foes.

He would meet Broad in a rematch at the professional level. This was not the fat, sloppy looking Broad most of us remember. This was a big but trim and in shape James Broad. It went ten rounds and Marvis using speed, great defense and accurate punching beat him fair and square.

Marvis would also outspeed and out hustle a bigger and talented Joe Bugner. Joe was no slouch. He had traveled 27 rounds in two fights with Muhammad Ali. Bugner had also gone twelve rugged rounds with Papa Joe.

After the Holmes debacle Marvis won a tough decision over Bonecrusher Smith. In a gutsy performance Marvis got off the canvas to win a close verdict.

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Mike Tyson put the exclamation point on the career of Marvis. The son of Joe never really got his just due. How would he have done if he boxed as a cruiserweight ? How would he have fared against the likes of Holyfield, Qawi or DeLeon in this bastard division ? It is a shame that we will never know.

Please remember Marvis as more than a whipping boy for Holmes and Tyson. Remember him for more than just being Joe Frazier's boy. Instead remember Marvis for his talent and his courage. Remember him as a fighter.