

## Pensacola Dreamin'

Written by Rick Folstad  
Wednesday, 04 December 2002 21:00

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Who is this guy and why is it so easy to believe  
him? Seems like he's in the wrong line  
of work. Instead  
of throwing punches, he should be baptizing babies or handing out  
free lunches at church or finding ways to help  
poor widows pay the mortgage.

John Ruiz is the WBA heavyweight champion of the world, though  
he gets about as much respect as the runner-up in  
the frat-house Ping-Pong tournament.  
Outside of the Boston area and the Latino community, it's not  
John Ruiz, it's John Who?

He goes 36 tough rounds with Evander Holyfield and all he gets is his  
name mispronounced.

And now he's going to fight light-heavyweight champ Roy Jones  
Jr., a smaller guy with fast hands and a faster mouth  
who thinks he's the best thing to come along since  
remote control and chip dip.

Ruiz and Jones are supposed to fight March 1 in Las Vegas, though I  
wouldn't bet the wife's fine China on it happening.  
So far, their fight has been nothing  
but rumor, innuendo, posturing, denial and back peddling. And  
that's just Roy Jones' side of it.  
On a teleconference call Tuesday, Jones said the  
reason it took him a dog's life to finally agree to the fight was promoter  
Don King, who apparently had a few issues  
to settle. Deals had to be cut, promises  
had to be made and broken. Palms had to  
be greased.

"Don't make it seem like I was the one who was holding out, because  
that is not me and those are not my points (what size  
ring and gloves will be used),." Jones said. "My points are  
little things that are going to matter 10 years from now.  
It was not Ruiz, it was dealing with  
Don King. If it had just been between me and Ruiz, the deal  
would have been done a long time ago."

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Sure, Roy.

As easy as it is to take shots at King, you have to figure the pouting party in this month-long soap opera was Jones. Like he said three times during the teleconference, "Roy makes the final decision."

Later, Jones said nothing was going to get in the way of the fight because "Roy Jones and John Ruiz want this fight to happen, and they'll come together and make it happen."

Obviously, Jones gets a kick out of referring to himself in the third person. Let me give it a try.

The writer thinks Roy Jones is a superbly gifted fighter but an arrogant SOB and the writer hopes Roy gets his Pensacola butt kicked, though the writer also thinks Jones will be too quick for Ruiz and that's why Roy decided to fight him in the first place.

"I don't know if I'll continue to fight as a heavyweight (after the Ruiz fight)," Jones went on. "It depends on how I feel."

Whatever.

Asked how he might react to getting hit by a heavyweight - someone 40 or 50 pounds heavier than the fighters he's used to facing - Jones sounded like a carnival barker trying to sell tickets.

"That's what everyone wants to see," he said. "That's why you're just going to have to watch it."

Gee, thanks for the insight, Roy.

Suddenly, Jones decided he was done with the questions and the teleconference.

He said it was nice talking to everybody and he hung up .Click.

Roy? Hello?

You have to hand it to Jones. He makes it easy to cheer for Ruiz.

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"This is a big challenge for me,"  
chat with the press.

Ruiz said when it was his turn to

"I get a chance to show the world I can  
slugging it out like he did with Holyfield). It's  
going to be a great fight. His quickness

also box (instead of just  
against my strength."

The big question? Aside from a hefty payday,  
fighting Jones?

what does Ruiz gain by

If he wins, he beat a light-heavy.

If he loses, he lost to a light-heavy.

"The only thing I have to gain is  
look good doing it."

a win," Ruiz said. "And I want to

Will they respect him then?

"I don't think I will receive (respect)  
I'm still the heavyweight champion," Ruiz  
said.

until 10 years down the line when

That might just work.