Marvin Hagler wasn't normally partial to toad-in-the-hole, rashers, and tea, but he'd been in Old Blighty just long enough to figure out what most visitors to England already knew: That breakfast was the most important meal of the day for at least two reasons – not only was it already included in the hotel bill, but, given ordinary the state of British fare in 1980, that lunch and dinner were likely to be well nigh inedible.

I'd arrived in London the previous night, and when I went downstairs for breakfast, Marvelous Marvin was sitting in the coffee shop with his trainer Goody Petronelli.

I remember asking Marvin that morning whether he thought he could get a fair shake against Alan Minter in England.

A resolute expression on his face, he held up his fists, one after the other.

"This time," he said, "I'm bringing my own two judges with me."

It wasn't by a longshot the last time I'd hear Marvin make that same vow, but to my recollection that morning in London was the first.

Ten months earlier, in November of 1979, Marvelous Marvin had challenged Vito Antuofermo for the middleweight championship of the world. In that fight at Caesars Palace, Hagler appeared to have built up a commanding lead after a dozen rounds, but (on the advice of his corner) boxed so conservatively over the last three that a seemingly certain victory had slipped away as the three ringside judges split three ways on the issue. (One of them, Duane Ford, who scored it 145-141 for the challenger, for years identified himself as "the judge who got Antuofermo-Hagler right.")

The draw, in any case, had allowed Antuofermo to retain the undisputed title.

That Vegas fight card – Sugar Ray Leonard would win his first world title, stopping Wilfred Benitez with seconds left in the 15th – had provided most American scribes' first introduction to Alan Minter. As the World Boxing Council's top-ranked contender, the Englishman presumably loomed the next challenger for the winner. Accompanied to Vegas by his father-in-law and trainer Doug Bidwell, Minter was a ubiquitous presence at Caesars Palace that week, and at one point the late Hunter Thompson somehow convinced himself that Minter was stalking him.

Thompson began to see Minter in his sleep. Once he peeked around from behind the faux Michelangelo's 'David' statue planted in the corridor to see if "that damned Minter" might be lurking in the hallway, and on another occasion when he spotted Minter strolling through the lobby, he'd ducked under a cocktail table at the Galleria Bar to hide from the Englishman.

Minter and Bidwell were inseparable in Vegas that week. One night the English boxer and his

wife's father brazenly strolled through Caesars with matching hookers on their respective arms.

Under normal circumstances, the controversial nature of the Antuofermo draw might have put Hagler in line for an immediate rematch, but, since he held both the WBC and World Boxing Association titles – the only ones extant a quarter-century ago – the Mosquito was first obliged to defend against Minter, and that fight, in March of 1980, produced one of the more bizarre scoring discrepancies in the annals of the sport.

Two judges, including one who scored the fight 7-5-3 (in rounds) for Antuofermo, had it reasonably close. The third, Roland Dakin, scored the fight 149-137, or 13-1-1 for Minter. That one-sided scorecard, coupled with allegations of misconduct on Dakin's part, rendered Antuofermo's rematch position even more compelling than Hagler's.

"When Antuofermo fought Minter, Minter won the fight, but the English judge kept signaling to the British television people after each round," said Hagler's promoter Bob Arum. "When the television tapes confirmed that, the WBC ordered an immediate rematch. As far as I know, the guy (Dakin) never judged a title fight again.

"The English were delighted, of course, because Minter got another payday, but it turned out to be a year after the first Antuofermo fight that Marvin got his shot, and it had to be in England," added Arum. "Basically, it had to be in England because of (British promoter) Jarvis Astaire [effing] around with the WBC."

Marvin had bided his time, keeping busy with a pair of fights in Maine, neither of which got out of the second round. (In one of them he avenged an old Philadelphia robbery by stopping Bobby Watts, who would later become one of his principal sparring partners. In the other he solidified his position in the pecking order by knocking out French contender Loucif Hamani in two.)

Then, late that spring, Hagler had returned to Vegas, where he outpointed Marcos Geraldo in an ABC fight. Although he won comfortably, Marvin's performance was less than dominating, and when Minter busted Antuofermo up and stopped him on cuts in the eighth round of their rematch at the Wembley Pool in June, the comparative performances combined to produce a growing confidence among British boxing fans that Minter represented the real goods among middleweights – and that Hagler, by inference, did not.

By the time he got to England, Hagler's complement of sparring partners had been reduced to two: journeyman Danny Snyder and Marvin's younger brother Robbie Sims, who had made his pro debut earlier that year. Snyder, like Minter, was a southpaw, while Robbie, in emulation of his older brother, was essentially ambidextrous and could produce a fair approximation of the Englishman's style.

Snyder had been in England once before. When Mike Baker challenged another lefthander, Maurice Hope for the WBC junior middleweight title a year earlier, Danny had been the American's principal sparring partner. In a session at the Elephant & Castle a few days before the Hope fight, Snyder accidentally knocked Baker cold. It hadn't been a public rehearsal, but

several eyewitnesses from the seemingly omnipresent London fight mob remembered him, and at Hagler's first workout at Freddie Hill's Gym, on the second floor of a Battersea pub, the Fleet Street crowd spent as much time interviewing "the bloke who knocked out Baker in the gym" as they did the American challenger.

Arum had offered Sims a spot on the undercard, but Goody and Pat Petronelli rejected the idea on the grounds that concern about his younger brother could prove a distraction to Marvin. Instead, Robbie's next fight took place five nights later back in the States, where he knocked out Danny Heath in the first round on Rip Valenti's live card at the Boston Garden, staged to accompany the Holmes-Ali closed-circuit telecast at the old Causeway Street edifice.

Another key member of the entourage – and the third man in the corner during the fight – was Hagler's attorney Steve Wainwright. The scion of one of Brockton's oldest and most prominent families (his father, George Llewellyn, was a former chief prosecutor in the District Attoney's Office, and his older brother, Richard Llewellyn, was a former mayor), Steve was a partner in the firm of Wainwright, Wainwright, Wainwright, Wainwright, & Wainwright. Despite his lofty pedigree, on fight nights Steve manned the spit-bucket, conspicuous in a satin cornerman's jacket with "BARRISTER" stitched across the lapel.

Wainwright was partial to José Cuervo 1800 tequila, which someone had warned him might be difficult to procure in London. As it turned out, it was readily available in most of the better pubs, but as a safeguard against a possible drought, he'd brought along a case of the stuff.

Like much of London, Bailey's Hotel had recently been purchased by oil-rich Arabs. It didn't take Wainwright long to make their acquaintance, and within a day or two he'd conducted a crash-course in the ritualistic art of tequila consumption. In what became a nightly routine, around closing time at the hotel bar Wainwright would be joined by a table full of sheiks in flowing white robes, who would gleefully lick salt from their fists, toss down tequila shooters, suck on limes, and break into high-pitched giggles.

During one such bash Wainwright promised that if Hagler won the world title on Saturday night he would shave his head just like Marvin's.

As a psychological ploy, or so Bob Arum claims to this day, the British promoters had initially assigned Hagler and his party to another hotel, but between the traffic and the all-night noise Marvin couldn't sleep. Bailey's was no doubt considered a demotion, but a blue-collar boxer from Brockton wouldn't have known the difference. Hagler was every bit as comfortable there as he might have been at the more elegant Dorchester just up the street.

Bailey's was located in Kensington, near the Gloucester Road underground stop. Each morning before breakfast Marvin, along with Goody and the sparring partners, did his roadwork in Hyde Park.

Convinced that he'd been the victim of a least a larcenous decision, and possibly a betting coup, Marvin blamed the outcome of Antuofermo I on "Vegas judges," and vowed never again to leave the outcome to the capricious whims of mere mortals, particularly in a town where

hundreds of thousands of dollars might be riding on the outcome at the sports book windows.

Nevada might have been the only place in America where one could legally bet a fight in 1980, but it wasn't the only one in the world. One afternoon in London I went out and surveyed several bookie shops, where I was surprised to discover that Minter was holding firm as an 11/10 favorite. At that attractive price I bet a hundred quid on Hagler.

When I got back to Bailey's that day, Marvin was sitting with Pat and Goody in the coffee shop. When I started to reveal the results of my reconnaissance mission, Marvin abruptly shouted "I don't want to hear it!" and stormed out of the room.

Convinced that the only way he might lose this fight would be at the behest of gambling interests, Hagler was just superstitious enough to believe that advance knowledge of the odds might somehow open the door for hanky-panky.

Although Hagler was an American challenging for an undisputed world championship, Ali was fighting Holmes at Caesars for the heavyweight title a few nights later, so the stateside press contingent was relatively small. Besides myself, Leigh Montville was in London covering the fight for the Boston Globe, as was Frank Stoddard for Hagler's hometown Brockton Enterprise. (Sports Illustrated saved expenses by assigning the fight to its resident Brit, Clive Gammon.) ABC would televise the bout back to the US, but I don't recall seeing Al Michaels or Howard Cosell until the night of the fight.

Another constant presence was Angie Carlino, Marvin's personal photographer. Before he retired to pursue a career as a full-time boxing shutterbug, Angie worked for the MBTA in Boston, saving up his vacation days to coincide with Hagler's fights. Jimmy Quirk, a merchant seaman pal of Angie's whom I also knew from Cambridge saloon society, had arranged his ship-out schedule to coincide with the fight in London.

Antuofermo was there, having wangled a gig as a commentator for Italian television, and most evenings Vito would join Montville, Stoddard, Carlino, Quirk, and me, along with Bernie LaFratta, who had helped Arum package the European rights, and whatever Fleet Street scribes happened to be around, at our adopted headquarters – the Stanhope Arms across the street, where the publican was an affable Irishman named Peter Flood, thus ensuring that the establishment offered yet another London rarity – a decent pint of Guinness.

The five-hour time difference in our favor, along with the British licensing laws then in effect, sometimes made for an odd drinking schedule.

"The beauty of that trip, if I remember right, is that it was the one time in my life I could get drunk twice a day," Montville would recall years later. "We would pound a bunch of beers before the two o'clock closing in the middle of the afternoon, then be back in the bar after watching sparring and writing our stories at night."

Since both Minter's and Hagler's sparring sessions were conducted in gyms located above pubs (Minter made the Thomas A Becket, in South London, his training headquarters), we often got a

head start on the evening session, but somehow the stories got filed.

Another presence who arrived a few days before the fight was Fulgencio Obelmejias, a tall Venezuelan middleweight who had advanced to No. 1 in the WBA rankings and thus loomed the mandatory challenger to the Minter-Hagler winner.

The middleweight championship might have been what had by 1980 already become a boxing rarity – an unified, undisputed title – but the promotional rights were so thoroughly splintered that at least seven men had a piece of the action. Minter's interests were represented by a four-man consortium headed up by Astaire, the Wembley impresario, along with Mickey Duff, Terry Lawless, and Mike Barrett. Arum was Hagler's promoter-of-record, but Rip Valenti, the legendary Boston octogenarian who had staged most of Marvin's early fights, also had a piece of the American challenger, as did Rodolfo Sabbatini, a courtly Italian Godfather whose mysterious interest in the 160-pound title dated back to Antuofermo, and possibly back to Nino Benvenuti.

"There was a tremendous ongoing dispute, me and Sabbatini on one side and Duff and Astaire on the other," revealed Arum. "They were supposed to have a piece of the options on Hagler and I had a piece of the options on Minter. We resolved it by agreeing that whichever guy won, the others would drop out.

"Obviously," added Arum, "Jarvis and Mickey didn't think Minter was going to lose."

Mickey Duff had provided the Hagler party with a van and driver to get them around London. The driver was a lovely kid named John who'd been in enough London club fights that his brains scrambled by the time he turned 21. John was great behind the wheel; he just couldn't remember directions, so Duff had assigned a co-pilot, an old Welsh pug who couldn't drive knew London like the back of his hand.

It didn't take Goody and Pat long to notice that the Welshman spent a lot of time on the phone. The assumption, undoubtedly correct, was that he was reporting everything he saw back to Duff and Minter, but since everyone assumed he was a spy for the opposition, Goody made sure he didn't see much.

At his secluded Provincetown training camp Hagler was famous for putting himself "in jail," spending most of his waking hours brooding in his room as he mentally psyched himself up for the task at hand. Except for roadwork, sparring, and the odd meal in the coffee shop, he followed the same routine in London. It was somewhat surprising then, when a couple of the days before the fight he appeared downstairs and asked Steve Wainwright and me if we felt like going for a walk.

We spent a couple of hours strolling the streets of the British capital. Even though shaven-headed American tourists were a comparative rarity in London back then, Marvin for the most part went unrecognized. At a tourist shop he playfully tried on a London constable's helmet. I still have the photograph of him and Wainwright posing on the sidewalk, the bobby's hat perched on Marvin's head.

At one point we came upon a building site, which gave Marvin pause to reflect on his previous occupation. For most of his boxing career, Hagler had supplemented his income working as a laborer for the Petronellis' construction firm, as had his friend and longtime stablemate, Pat's son Tony Petronelli.

Tony had at one point been considered the more promising of the two. At one point he owned the USBA light-welterweight title, but his career took a right turn when he was soundly whipped in a 1976 WBA title fight against Wilfred Benitez in San Juan, and he never regained his prior form.

As Hagler watched the laborers scurry about the London construction job he revealed, more with amusement than rancor, that Tony had been given a job as a bricklayer, while he was assigned to be a hod-carrier. For years Marvin had reckoned that he had the better job of the two -- until he discovered the disparity in their hourly wages.

Now that he appeared to be on the verge of supporting his family through his boxing career, Hagler confessed an ambition. He and his wife had talked it over and decided that once they had enough money they ought to open a laundromat. The notion of owning a business appealed to him. People who couldn't afford washing machines still had to wash their clothes, he reckoned, and all he and Bertha would have to do would be sit back and watch them plop quarters into his machines.

Among the Hagler fans making the trip to London were a waitress from the Black Rose back in Boston and her sister. Before I flew to London they'd asked me to pick them up a couple of tickets, and Rip Valenti had supplied me with four. The other two would be used by Jonathan Sales, the son of my boss at the Boston Herald, and Sydney Reed, a friend from Dublin who was in London on business.

My wife-to-be came to London a few days beforehand, but since she had to get back to work on Saturday night, didn't plan to attend. The night she arrived she, Sydney, and I started at the Stanhope and drank our way halfway across London before returning from Ronnie Scott's jazz club in the wee hours of the morning.

I awoke the next day to a mystery that endures to this day. Although nothing else was missing from my room – my passport, camera, and typewriter were untouched – the Levis I had been wearing the night before had utterly disappeared. We tossed the room up and down to no avail, and began to wonder whether the maid might have mistakenly removed them. Finally Sarah phoned the front desk, where a very proper British concierge listened to the tale of woe.

"You're saying he lost his trousers?" he intoned.

It wasn't the only pair of pants I'd brought to London, but my wallet had been in the jeans, along with credit cards, a hundred quid or so in cash, and the four tickets to the Minter-Hagler fight.

At the hotel's insistence we even had to file a police report, and got the same reaction from the desk sergeant.

“Your trousers? I see.”

Rip Valenti thought it was the funniest thing he’d ever heard. Since the seat numbers had been recorded, Rip was able to approach Jarvis Astaire and secured replacement tickets, but with the warning that if someone turned up with the originals on fight night it would be left to security to sort it out – which, in retrospect, could have been an unholy mess.

Fortunately, as it turned out, nobody possessing the tickets ever showed up at the fight, and no one ever attempted to use the credit cards. The best we could figure it out, in our haste to disrobe after our night on the town one of us had fired my jeans across the room and in the darkness had managed to throw them right out an open window to the sidewalk three storeys below, where they were presumably collected the following morning by a London dustman making his rounds.

For the rest of his life, every time I saw Rip Valenti the first thing he would ask me was “Did you find your pants yet?”

In keeping with another long-standing practice, two days in advance of the fight – and a day before the weigh-in – Goody ordered up the fan and had John drive him and Marvin over to Wembley to inspect the venue.

“It’s partly to make sure everything’s all right from my standpoint, but mostly to familiarize the fighter,” Petronelli explained. “We talk about how everything is going to go on the night of the fight -- which entrance we’re coming in, where our dressing room is, which route we’ll take to walk to the ring.

“I want him to be as comfortable as possible and to know what to expect so there won’t be any surprises,” continued the trainer. “As we stood there looking up at the empty seats I reminded him that they’d all be full on Saturday night -- almost all of them with hostile British fans cheering for Minter.”

Goody could scarcely have imagined how much he had understated the case.

Possibly because they have been disappointed so often for so long, British boxing fans don’t need much of an excuse for becoming overenthusiastic, and Minter himself abetted the jingoistic frenzy in the run-up to the fight when he appeared at a rally staged by the anti-immigrant National Front and promised that “No black man is going to take my title.” By thus injecting a whiff of racism into the issue, the champion ensured that Hagler’s reception at the Arena would be a nasty one.

The prevalent mood was ratcheted up further by the outcome of the co-feature, which saw a young British middleweight named Tony Sibson knock out previously unbeaten American Bob Coolidge. Around the arena the bloodthirsty engaged in soccer chants. Many of the spectators had arrived bearing Union Jacks, which they brandished like battle-axes. There were even guys dressed in Beefeater costumes.

It didn't help, either, that the concessionaires at Wembley were selling beer by the case. Not even a hard-guzzling Londoner can drink 24 beers in less than three rounds, meaning that by the time the fight reached its premature conclusion, many of the spectators had an abundance of ammunition at hand.

"I remember standing there in the lobby of the arena watching all these skinheads buying cases of beer, hoisting them onto their shoulders, and trudging up the stairs to the balconies," recalled Montville. "I couldn't have anticipated what was going to happen, but I remember thinking that no good was going to come of this."

"I never saw anything like it," said Arum. "It was like a huge, drunken orgy."

The two girls from Brockton had brought along a hand-lettered sign bearing a message of support for Marvin, hoping, no doubt, that it would be seen on television back in the states. Alas, an angry skinhead had seized it and ripped it to shreds before ABC even went on the air.

In contrast to the fever pitch of the crowd, the fight itself was almost perfunctory. Less than thirty seconds had elapsed when a Hagler right jab ripped open a gash below Minter's left eye, and Marvin went to work on the cut, using his fists like the hands of a skilled surgeon.

With the crowd chanting "Minter! Minter!" the champion fought back, and even nailed Hagler with a good left just before the bell ended the first.

Although Minter fought bravely in the second, he was engaged in an uphill battle. And while Marvin was plainly concentrating on the cut, each time he missed the spot he seemed to open up a new one – first, above the left eye, then alongside the right one – on Minter's face.

It might have been close on the scorecards – after two rounds, two judges had Hagler up by a point, while one had Minter by the same score – but by the third the ring looked like an abattoir as Hagler pressed the attack, repeatedly rocking Minter with right uppercuts punctuated by the occasional straight left.

"I always thought in most of his fights Marvin showed too much respect to his opponents," said Montville. "He was cautious in the first Antuofermo fight, and he was the same way against Duran and Leonard. But in this one he fought with an absolute fury. Once he had Minter cut – and that was almost right away – it was as if all the frustrations of his career were being unleashed."

Many of the hooligans were either so drunk or seated so far from the ring they couldn't accurately gauge the extent of the damage to Minter's face, and erupted angrily when the referee, Carlos Berrocal, stopped the fight midway through the third and led the Englishman to his corner to have the wound examined.

When the blood was wiped away, Bidwell surveyed the damage and nodded to the referee to stop the fight. Berrocal officially terminated the action at 1:45 of the third.

“Marvin beat the sh-- out of him, and when they finally stopped the fight because of the cuts, they went crazy and started throwing bottles,” remembered Arum. “In the midst of what should have been a great celebration, everybody was ducking under the ring.”

Initially there was an angry roar, and then a second or two later the first bottle sailed into the ring, bursting and sending up a spray of beer that flashed under the ring lights. It didn’t take long for the rest of them to get the same idea.

As the bottles showered down from the rafters and exploded on the canvas, Pat and Goody Petronelli, Robbie Sims, and Danny Snyder all raced into the ring to shield Marvin from the grenade assault.

Harry Carpenter, the English commentator calling the fight for BBC described the scene as “a shame and disgrace to British boxing.”

It was only later when I viewed the tape that I realized how totally oblivious I had been to my own situation. As the bottles rained down from the rafters I was standing there beside the ring, taking notes. It was only when I looked around and saw that my British colleagues on press row were holding their chairs above their heads like umbrellas that it occurred to me I might be in any danger myself.

“I was holding my Olivetti over my head,” said Montville. “I remember thinking ‘These are Brits. They grew up kicking balls, not throwing them. They might have been aiming for the ring, but some of them were bound to miss, and if they came up short, we were right in the line of fire.”

A wayward beer can from the cheap seats aimed at Hagler, in fact, struck Carpenter on the head. To his credit, the British commentator didn’t miss a beat as he continued to describe the riot.

I quickly glanced toward the upper reaches of the arena where my gang had been seated. At the first whiff of danger, it turned out, Syd Reid had hustled the kids out of the building.

“I remember poor Rip Valenti,” said Arum. “Here Marvin has won the title after all these years, and I had to hold his hand and lead him out of the building. He was trembling.”

Protected by the phalanx of bodies, Hagler was hustled from the ring toward the safety of his dressing room, which was well attended by London bobbies. Antuofermo grabbed me by the arm and pulled me and Montville in the same direction.

As we tried to make our way to safety, a skinhead made the mistake of whacking Vito over the back of the head with a beer bottle. The Mosquito didn’t even blink. He wheeled around and laid the guy out with a picture-perfect right cross.

It may have been the best punch Antuofermo ever threw.

“I always wondered if the guy even knew what had hit him,” Montville reflected. “When he came

to, did he know he'd been knocked out by the former middleweight champion of the world?"

We managed to get through the swarm and into the dressing room of the new champion. A shaken Cosell eventually crawled from his hiding place beneath the ring to interview the new champion.

In the past, Hagler had been so annoyed by Cosell's refusal to call him by his Nom de Ring that he had gone to court and had his name legally changed from Marvin Nathaniel Hagler to Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

Just before they went on the air, Marvin said to Cosell, "Let's go with the 'Marvelous' tonight, OK, Howard?"

Marvin never did get his belts that night. When he departed the arena an hour or two later, there were still remnants of the rioting crowd waiting outside. One of them heaved a brick and smashed the windshield of the car carrying the new middleweight champion of the world.

Once they cleared the building and I returned to my seat, my typewriter was, miraculously, still there, but the Wembley crew had already ripped out my phone line. I had to appropriate one belonging to an already-departed Fleet Street scribe to file my story, and then, in the wee hours of the morning, we managed to flag down a cab.

By the time we got back to Bailey's the celebration was underway. A contingent of Hagler's Brockton friends had materialized in the bar, as had his mother, Mae Lang, and Marvin's stepfather Wilbur. Wainwright had broken out the last of his tequila, and as the giggling sheikhs looked on, had made good on his wager, allowing Marvin's wife Bertha to shave his head right there in the bar. (Shorn of his locks, Steve resembled Cueball more than he did like Marvin, but he retains the Hagler Look to this day.)

Marvin was indulging himself with a pint of ale. Arum was already contemplating his first defense, against Obelmejias. Pat and Goody were reflecting on the comportment of the English crowd.

"We're never coming back to this place as long as we live," vowed Pat.

By dispensation of the sheikhs, the hotel bar remained open all night. The morning light was peeking through the windows of the boozy, smoke-filled room when Danny Snyder and Robbie Sims descended the staircase, carrying an American flag they had somehow appropriated. Arum and I decided to reprise a scene from "The Deer Hunter" and broke into a heartfelt if somewhat drunken a capella rendition of "God Bless America." The entire room, Marvin included, joined in.

We didn't realize it at the time, but we were inaugurating a new tradition. With Hagler facing just one American-born opponent in a seven-bout stretch that began with Minter, the scene would be repeated in venues around the world as "God Bless America" became Marvin's his post-fight celebratory anthem.

By the time the stragglers headed off for bed it was time for the rest of us to open up the Stanhope Arms. We wandered across the road to the pub, where we were shortly joined by a posse of Fleet Street journalists who'd been dispatched to write about the aftermath of the riot.

"That wasn't a boxing crowd," one of them assured me. "That was a football crowd."

Marvin, Pat, and Goody flew back to Boston later that day. I made my own way home via Dublin, and didn't get back to the States until the night of the Holmes-Ali fight. I raced straight from the airport to the Garden, where I watched the closed-circuit telecast in the press room in the company of the Herald's theatre critic, Eliot Norton, and the late Red Smith.

In the coming months Marvin would make his first two title defenses in the same building: The following January he stopped Obelmejias in eight, and in June of 1981 he had his rematch with Antuofermo and busted up Vito so badly that The Mosquito's corner stopped it in the fifth.

Alan Minter only had three more fights, and he lost two of them. A year after losing his title to Hagler he retired from the ring for good after Sibson stopped him in three.

Over the next half-dozen years Hagler successfully defended his title an even dozen times against the likes of Thomas Hearns and Roberto Duran, but when it came for the 13th defense the residual memory of that long-ago night in London once again came into play.

When the Nevada State Athletic Commission announced its slate of judges for Hagler's 1987 fight against Sugar Ray Leonard, one of them was an Englishman, Harry Gibbs. Remembering what had happened that night at Wembley, Pat Petronelli exercised a peremptory challenge and demanded that Gibbs be removed from the panel.

"No English judges," Pat told the NSAC. "We want a Mexican judge."

They got one. His name was Jo-Jo Guerra, and in Hagler's final fight, one most reasonable men thought to have been very close, he gave Leonard 10 of the 12 rounds.

Back in England, Harry Gibbs, watching on television, scored the fight for Hagler.

*(This is a work in progress of a series of boxing reminiscences by George Kimball)*