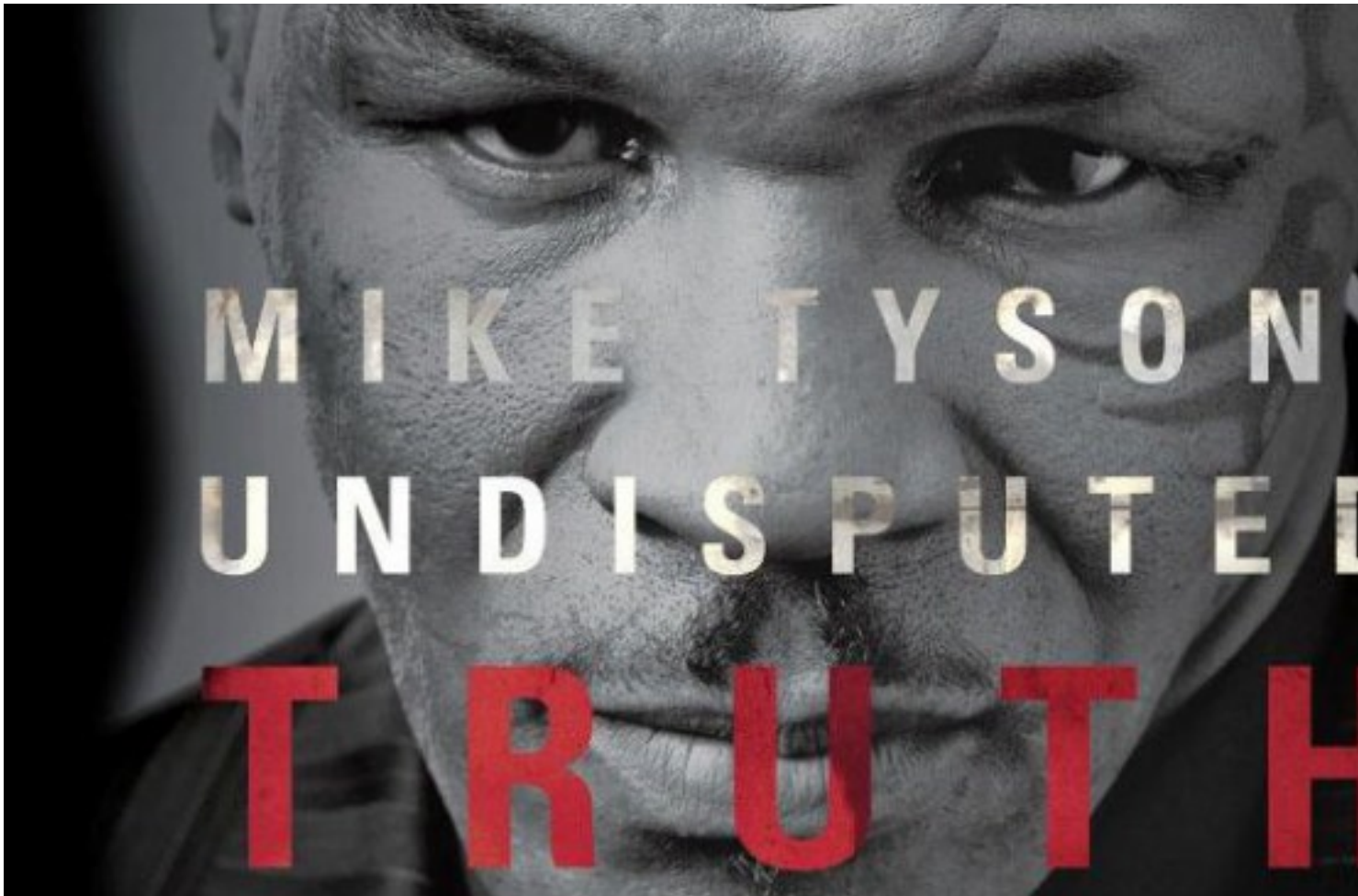


Never Thought You'd See This...Mike Tyson, On Broadway

Written by Michael Woods
Monday, 18 June 2012 15:53



Richard Nixon must be sitting straight up in his grave, as the news that Mike Tyson, the man who once bit off a goodly portion of foe's ear off during a fight, who walked around certain in the knowledge that his end would be Joe Louis' if it was good, or Sonny Liston's if it was bad, is doing a one man show on Broadway, to be directed by Spike Lee.

What does it say about this age that a man can go from walking tabloid headline, from convicted sex offender from cannibalist/pugilist, to the toast of Broadway, in a matter of a couple decades? Have we made such strides in the areas of forgiveness that the dirt-napping Nixon could only marvel at, and wonder why he wasn't born later, so he could've enjoyed a triumphant comeback tour? Or have we reached a level of permissiveness that too-easily allows rogues who once would have slunk away to a dark and quiet pocket of the world for an indefinite period of atonement, a self-prescribed humility quarantine to re-invent themselves, and fairly seamlessly enter into a most-lucrative redemption tour? Not to be a hater, because I root all the time for Tyson, as I have always since he burst on the scene, first as a wrecking ball of fury who also had that seductive contemplative and humble side, which he trotted out right after he finished applying the finishing touches to another cerebrum-rattling KO...but I do sometimes wonder what Desiree Washington, the beauty pageant contestant who went on a date with the

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boxer which went unimaginably awry in 1991, thinks about this transformation in the man who once said, "I try to catch them right on the tip of his nose, because I try to punch the bone into the brain." Is it totally legit? Is a backslide inevitable? Has he served enough penance? Should he have to serve any at all?

Forgive me, it is my nature. On Father's Day, I Tweeted a nod to the people whose fathers left them, who maybe utter silent curses at the void left behind. On Valentine's Day, I shed an invisible tear for the dateless, those perennially on the hunt for a mate, for whom Hallmark and De Beers engagement ring ads on TV inspire jags of depression. Yes, I veer towards a journalistic curiosity and my default setting is skepticism. But for real, I root for Tyson. I identify with him. I pursued some of the same methods he did to blunt pangs of emotion, of feeling. When people have asked me, Is his overhaul for real, I have, in the last couple years, said yes, I think so. He seems humbled, grateful, has proper perspective. The proof has been the absence of police reports, of jackpot car accidents, and streetfights, and civil suits for buttgrabbing and the like. And God, any man who has a baby girl die on them in a horrific accident at home deserves sympathy, no matter what misdeeds they committed in their younger days. So yeah, I do want to put that out there, I don't want it to seem that this column is a driveby shooting of scorn and judgement and holier than thou. It's just, that rape rap...Tyson, to my knowledge, still holds to his version of the truth, which the court and Ms. Washington and a bunch of witness--yes, none of whom were in that hotel room with the two principals when something went down--and I often wonder if that's because his version is the truth...or he can't go all in in his pursuit of serenity and forgiveness.

And I wonder, as I learn that Tyson will do six shows of "Mike Tyson Undisputed Truth--Live on Broadway (July 31-August 5) at the Longacre Theatre on W. 48th St. in NYC, what does Desiree Washington think of all this? I admit, I am looking forward to taking in a performance, and seeing if the most interesting athlete of his era will help me process and clarify my complicated and ever-shifting take on his fascinating life.

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alhmiel says:

Tyson belongs performing on Rikers Island or Sing Sing Prison or Attica not Broadway. Tyson is a degenerate low life unworthy of being around decent people. Sickening to see this rapist anywhere near Broadway.

SouthPaul says:

Mike looks healthy both in mind and body. Looks happy too. Good for him because mental

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illness is a real legit sickness and no doubt Mike had been ravished with some sort of bipolar/manic element.

Radam G says:

The Iron One has done remarkably fantastic. I honestly didn't think that he would make it to 40 years old. He was really whacky back in da day. I thought that some street punk would knife him in South Central Los Angeles or Brooklyn. Dude couldn't stay away from those hoods. Nowadays, he can keep his arse in Sin City's safety on-da-strip areas pretty well. Holla!

SouthPaul says:

True 'dat. A song for Mike:

[url]http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QufAIYg8__8