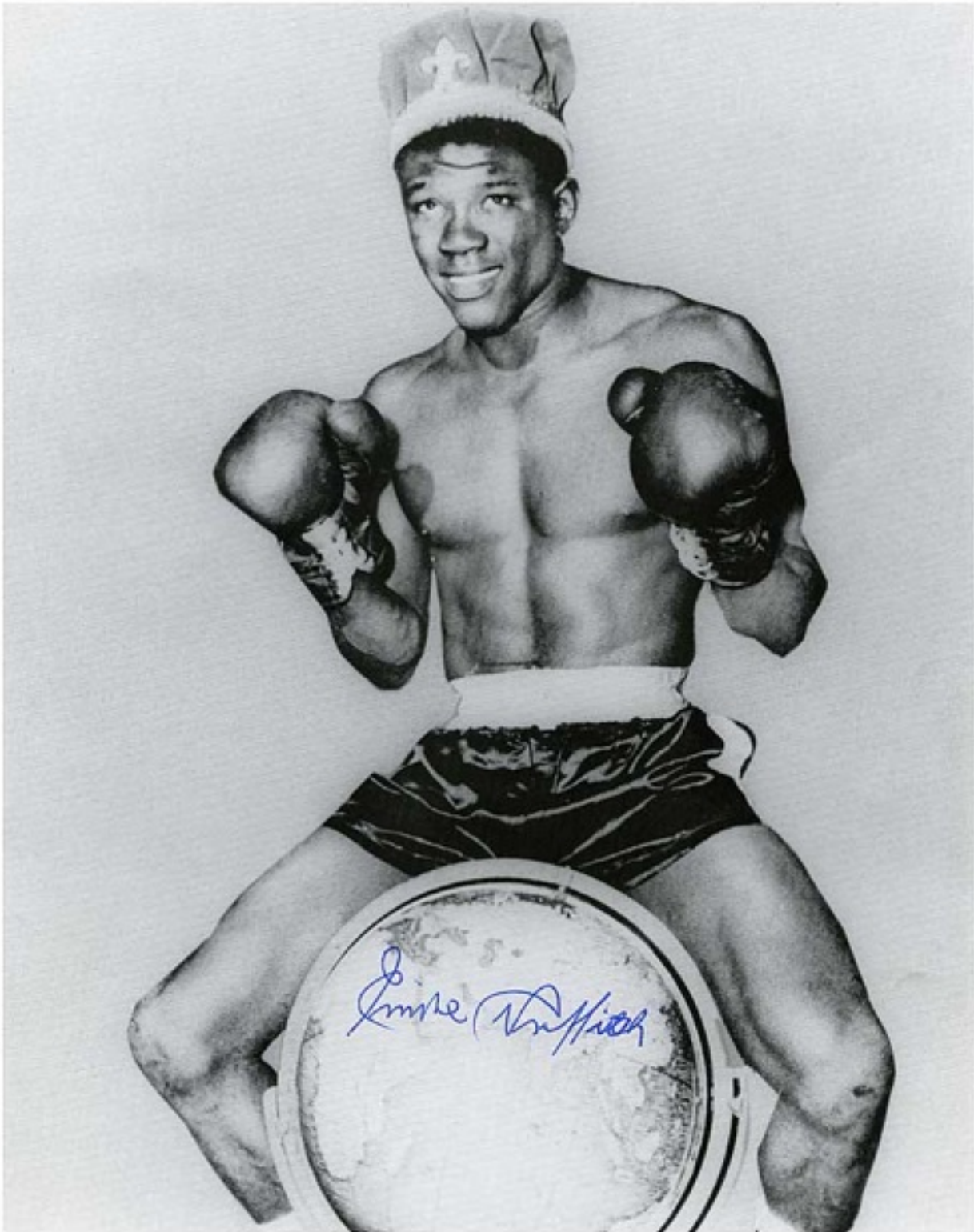


REST IN PEACE Emile Griffith

Written by Michael Woods
Tuesday, 23 July 2013 11:38



Emile Griffith, a supremely skilled fighter from the US Virgin Islands, passed away at age 75, at a nursing home on Long Island.

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A worker at the facility confirmed his passing to TSS.

The fighter held the welterweight and then the middleweight title and was inducted into the New York Hall of Fame, in 1990. But he will likely be best remembered for more sensational circumstances.

In the third meeting between Griffith and Benny "Kid" Paret, Griffith, incensed that Paret had belittled him as a "maricon" before the second bout and more so before the third, Griffith pounded Paret mercilessly in round 12. The ref looked on, frozen on March 24, 1962, as Griffith hamered Paret in a corner. The Cuban sagged, and never woke up. He died from brain injuries ten days later.

The incident stayed with Griffith. "I would have nightmares about Paret," he'd say. "I would dream I met him on the street and I would say hello and he would put out his hand and I would take it and it would be cold and clammy." Sleep could be an opening to nightmares, as he'd jolt awake, screaming in anguish.

People worked to ban boxing in the States after that, and the televised brutality kept the sport off TV for a good ten years afterwards. But though his killer instinct--and yes, that phrase took on a sick quality in context to Griffith post-Paret, it must be noted--deteriorated, his skills were still present. He beat Dick Tiger in 1966 to win the middleweight crown. He lost it to Nino Benvenuti in 1967, but regained the strap six months later from the Italian. He lost the belt to Benvenuti in 1969, in the third and final scrap between the rivals. He received more title shots, one against Jose Napoles and two more, against, Carlos Monzon, but lost those middleweight contests. Griffith came up short in a junior middleweight title challenge, against Eckhard Dage, in 1976. In 1977, he lost to Alan Minter, and hung up the gloves.

It was no secret in boxing circles that Griffith, the five time world champion, enjoyed the romantic company of men, but the boxer danced around the issue for decades. He admitted to Sports Illustrated that he was indeed bisexual, in 2005--"I like men and women both"-- but made many busybodies feel foolish for their judgement by noting that it wasn't that important who he canoodled with. Each to his own, Griffith said.

The fighter leaves behind his adopted son, Luis, and a legacy as a man who serves as a

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reminder of the ultimate price any person can pay in that ring, and as a symbol of acceptance, who helped usher the pushback against homophobia another milimeter forward.

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Bernie Campbell says:

Given the fact that Emile was who he was, you cant assume where any person has tread! You cant profile, you cant assume! People come in all shapes and sizes that are not visible to the eye! This guy was Champion of the World! Evrey person that has crossed his path has attested to what a nice guy he was! Im sure he did more for humanity outside the ring with his courage and honesty than he did inside the ring!

dino da vinci says:

Another Lion has moved on. RIP Champ.

amayseng says:

Rip Emile.

Deep water is correct with the hippa laws and violations.

Agreed again with keeping personal business personal.

Radam G says:

My deepest condolences. Holla!

brownsugar says:

With the movie "Ring of Fire" now close to 20 years old its no secret what Emmett was about.. it would been a missed opportunity not to mention his sexuality so fans of a new generation can be reminded of how things used to be...not that I'm an advocate..but I think the brief eulogy was treated with a fair measure of respect and in compliance with the proper tone you'd expect for passing of an exceptionally gifted athlete.... Nobody else gets any privacy on this site anyway..... I hope Griffith's life was filled with more fulfillment than anguish...my respects go out to the Champs surviving family.

Carmine Cas says:

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RIP Emile Griffith, no one should be judged based on their sexuality, it's what is done in the ring; with times now that goes without saying.

ArneK. says:

Two nice tributes. Here's a macabre piece of trivia: Name the first two individuals to die a violent death IN REAL TIME on national television. The answer, in chronological order: (1) Benny "Kid" Paret; (2) Lee Harvey Oswald. (One could quibble that Paret wasn't exactly dead when the show went off the air, but effectively he was.)

As you can imagine, there was a great hue and cry that boxing ought to be outlawed. Paret's death spawned a "60 minutes" episode that was skewed toward this point of view.

I've known many boxers -- ferocious guys inside the ring -- who emanate a soft, almost feminine side outside the ring. I think this dichotomy is more prevalent in boxing than in other sports, but maybe that's because boxing is more macho than other sports. RIP, Mr. Griffith.

dino da vinci says:

[quote=arneK.;33984]two nice tributes. Here's a macabre piece of trivia: Name the first two individuals to die a violent death in real time on national television. The answer, in chronological order: (1) benny "kid" paret; (2) lee harvey oswald. (one could quibble that paret wasn't exactly dead when the show went off the air, but effectively he was.)

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jfk? Radam G says:

JFK's death didn't show on television, Ddv. His death was seen from an 8mm movie camera that a guy somewhere above the crowd was filming. I learned that in a filming course. Holla!

dino da vinci says:

Thanks Radam.

ArneK. says:

Yo Dino -- Yes, JFK's death preceded that of Oswald by two days, but the TV cameramen weren't shooting film of the motorcade when the incident occurred. I believe that the footage

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that Radam is referencing is the Zapruder film. That terrible moment seemed surreal. Within a few years, sad to say, we were all insensitive to assassinations and near-assassinations: MLK, RFK, etc., to name just two. A terrible time in our nation's history. I'm guessing that "deepwater" is just chumming the water. Why was JFK shot? If we listed every conspiracy theory, this thread would go on forever.

dino da vinci says:

Well, ArneK, let's see if we can make that a reality. I've read where Joe Kennedy requested a lot of favors to get John elected, and not only did the Kennedys renege, they (Robert) went after the very people who assisted in getting JFK elected. And I'm under the impression that as a nation we didn't move heaven and earth to get to the bottom of it.

That said, I'm from New England where John walked on water. It may have been brain-washing or whatever, but I loved John. Robert and Ted not so much.

Deep?

brownsugar says:

Everyone loved John ... he oozed a sense of change and progression from every pore in his body.... as if he alone could enter the breach of the nations infirmity and make us whole again... JFK exuded a passion for the nation that I have never seen in an elected official...Expectations for change were at an all time high... along with the stubborn fear of many who would cling desperately to the broken present... I was only in kindergarten the day he was cut down...I can still remember the solemn sorrow that permeated the entire coutry over the next several weeks.

dino da vinci says:

[QUOTE=brownsugar;34060]Everyone loved John ... he oozed a sense of change and progression from every pore in his body.... as if he alone could enter the breach of the nations infirmity and make us whole again... JFK exuded a passion for the nation that I have never seen in an elected official...Expectations for change were at an all time high... along with the stubborn fear of many who would cling desperately to the broken present... I was only in kindergarten the day he was cut down...I can still remember the solemn sorrow that permeated the entire coutry over the next several weeks.[/QUOTE]

And I know it was played up as such by the Obama camp, but I did get the Kennedy vibe from their entrant. I very much felt that we needed a JFK-type at that point in time, but must add, and I borrow here and paraphrase, he turned out to be no John F. Kennedy.

John F Kennedy was a man's man. JFK had MOXIE.

Now I'm getting all fired up, so I'm going to go into a little further detail and I'm moving my thoughts to the 3rd forum.

Look for JFK.

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Look for JFK.[/QUOTE]

I'll check it out when time permits...

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ArneK. says:

Somehow this thread got hijacked and I guess I had something to do with that. I don't usually put much stock in conspiracy theories, but Bobby Kennedy's actions while serving under his brother as the U.S. Attorney General were indeed odd. His main legacy was the so-called Wire Act, which prohibits the interstate transmission of gambling information, and is still being enforced (mischievously in my mind) today. The oddity here is that his father, multimillionaire Joseph Kennedy, consorted with some of the people that would be negatively impacted by the Wire Act, just as Dino says. I just finished reading (actually more like glancing through it; it's a weighty tome) of David Nasaw's book on Joseph Kennedy, titled "Patriarch." Nasaw refutes the oft-heard notion that Joe Kennedy acquired his investment money via bootlegging, but he does say that Joe "never went out of his way to avoid the presence of unsavory characters." Among other things, the elder Kennedy owned a piece of the Hialeah Racetrack, a winter retreat for many of America's alleged mobsters. In financing his son's successful presidential campaign, Joe Kennedy called in favors from big-city Democratic bosses -- in cities where corruption was rampant I might add. They were none too pleased with Bobby. Was there more to those

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assassinations than what the official verdicts say? I'll leave that to others. I'm done. Now back to boxingI'd conclude with a "holla" but that would be plagiarism.

tlig says:

It turns out Griffith's "adopted son" was also his lover. I don't mean to dump on the man and am definitely not homophobic (anymore..lol) but this arrangement seems odd to me.

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=tlig;34234]It turns out Griffith's "adopted son" was also his lover. I don't mean to dump on the man and am definitely not homophobic (anymore..lol) but this arrangement seems odd to me.[/QUOTE]

Odd? More like disgusting, immoral and illegal. If that's true then this man was a child predator along with many other things.

dino da vinci says:

Before we go a step further, please allow me to contact some people in the NY area who might have some insight. Maybe they met when the young man was 25-30, which takes most of the weirdness out of the situation. It might have been a tax dodge or something...at least that's the way I'm rooting. Hate to believe...

tlig says:

[QUOTE=amayseng;34235]Odd? More like disgusting, immoral and illegal. If that's true then this man was a child predator along with many other things.[/QUOTE]

Seems you are not the only one who feels that way. He met the young man whilst working as a corrections officer at a juvenile facility (after retirement) and the relationship cost him his job.

dino da vinci says:

tlig, how old was the adopted son when they met?

tlig says:

I have no idea, I have tried to get some info on the dude but not much is out there. I'm not even sure how old he is now but they were lovers even before the supposed adoption. His relationship with the guy cost his job at a juvenile facility so draw your own conclusions.

amayseng says:

Deep I concur to all except if it comes out Emile as an adult had a relationship with or pursued a child. That is unacceptable.

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dino da vinci says:

I'm with amay on this one.