Written by Rick Folstad
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He's 89 and still passing out good times and good advice, a great ambassador to a violent sport, but a guy you'd buy a used car from without looking under the hood.

You trust him because he lives by the motto, "it don't cost nothing to be nice," and he practices what he preaches.

These last few months haven't been kind to Angelo Dundee. Helen, his wife of 58 years, passed away this past December at the age of 85. Not long before that, Dundee was slowed down by a broken hip.

But he's opened a new bar in Clearwater, FL, watched the second coming of the old Fifth Street Gym in Miami Beach, and he can still tell you the best way to slip a right-hand lead and smother a hook. And he has more than a few good stories to tell.

Just as sharp and maybe a little wiser than he was 40 years ago, Dundee still works with fighters who are looking for help and are willing to listen. Bring him a raw, 6-foot-4 heavyweight with Ali's speed and heart and Tyson's power and sure, he'll work with him. He'd be glad to.

Along with Muhammad Ali, he's worked with 16 world champions in his career, including Sugar Ray Leonard, George Foreman and Willie Pastrano.

Earlier this month, Dundee was the guest on a chat line celebrating the 40-year anniversary of the first Ali - Frazier fight held on March 8, 1971 in Madison Square Garden. It was called the "Fight of the Century," and some of us think it was.

He was asked a lot of good questions by people who obviously knew the fight game. And who knew all about Dundee.

One of the first questions someone asked was, if they were both in their prime, who would win in a fight between Mike Tyson and Muhammad Ali, who Dundee trained for 21 years.

"I'm an expert but I'm a bad picker," said Dundee, who was Inducted into the International

Boxing Hall of Fame in 1992. “And I’m a prejudiced bum when it comes to my fighters. I can’t help it. But Tyson wouldn’t have a prayer. Muhammad Ali would beat Tyson with no problem.

“Muhammad wouldn‘t even get hit by Tyson. Muhammad would keep the left jab going and keep him off balance. It‘s a hard left jab. It was able to keep Liston off balance. Muhammad would give him side to side motion. Muhammad would surround him.“

Asked if he had a favorite Ali fight, Dundee said it was hard to pick because he had so many great fights.

But then he settled on the first Sonny Liston fight, saying it was one of his favorites because no one gave Ali a chance at winning the fight. And at the time, Liston was considered “the baddest guy on the planet.”

But Dundee said he never doubted that Ali could win.

“I think Liston lost because tough guys are concerned when they can’t figure a fighter out. I think Liston couldn’t figure (Ali) out. He thought Muhammad was insane. Ali badgered him all the time, telling Liston he was too ugly to be the champ. He followed Liston around, harassing him and getting into his head.“

Dundee also talked about how he took Ali into the press room in Chicago In September 1962 where Liston was getting ready to fight Floyd Patterson in Comisky Park.

“Ali goes in and takes over the press conference and he wasn’t even in the fight,“ Dundee remembers. “Ali was the first superstar to talk. The talk was a gimmick. Ali was an introvert. I pressed Ali to talk.“

He taught him well.

“Ali was a trip from Day One,” Dundee said. “We had fun all the time. That’s the key. You got a guy in the toughest profession there is. But we had fun.“

Dundee told how he was staying with Ali in the Alexandria Hotel in downtown Los Angeles when Dundee, who was sleeping, woke up to the smell of smoke. So he called down to the front desk and they came up and checked his room out and found nothing. So Dundee went back to sleep. And he woke up smelling smoke again.

“It’s a hotel, you don’t want to fool around,“ Dundee said. “Those old hotels go up like a cinder.”

So he called downstairs again and they came up again and still found nothing.

“See, the thing was, Muhammad had gotten a towel and burned it and was waving it under the door in the middle of the night,” Dundee said. “Stayed up just to goof on me. He kept everything as loose as a goose.“

Learning the importance of winning the crowd came to Ali after he spent a little time with pro wrestler Gorgeous George. On TV to promote their fights in Las Vegas, Ali couldn't get a word in with Gorgeous George working the crowd.

When Ali went to George's wrestling match the night before Ali was supposed to fight, he found a packed house. And he discovered how important it was to promote yourself. And the best way to do that was to talk up a storm.

"I pressed him to do the thing with (Howard) Cosell," Dundee said. "I had worked with Cosell earlier with another fighter and I saw what a genius he was. And I knew he and Ali would be a perfect match."

Asked in what fight Ali was at his very best, and whether there was doubt in his training camp before he fought George Foreman in the Rumble in the Jungle in Zaire, Dundee said his fight with Cleveland Williams in Houston was the best he ever looked.

"He looked tremendous in Houston," Dundee said. "He hit him with seven punches in mid-air."

In Zaire, Dundee said "I felt Ali could beat Foreman. Guys that stand tall and have movement, like Muhammad, they bothered George."

One of the questions was about the Thrilla in Manila and just how close Ali was to not answering the bell for the start of the 15th round against Joe Frazier.

Dundee didn't hesitate.

"That's a fallacy," he said. "When Joe (Frazier) walked back to his corner after that 14th round, he was wobbly. I told Ali to go get him."

It was the Henry Cooper fight where Dundee did some of his finest corner work. In that fight, Cooper caught Ali with a hard left hook and put him down.

"My guy got dropped for only the second time," Dundee said. "That's where the cut glove incident came in. I never cut the gloves. They were a little tight and Muhammad complained, but I didn't do anything because he seemed to be fighting well. But then when Muhammad was having a little trouble, I called the ref over and told him the gloves were tight. So they went to the dressing room to look for some other gloves, and that gave us a little recovery time.

"Now they have a rule that they keep an extra set of gloves under the ring in case something happens with the gloves. I call it the '"Dundee Rule." '

Can't think of a better name.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

AWESOME COPY! No need for me to elaborate. Supersmooth master weaving by excellent Fightscribe Rick Fo. Everybodeee and dey mommas know I luv me some Angie Dundee, The pound-for-pound great trainer of all times. Holla!

the Roast says:

Excellent read. Dundee is boxing royalty. Young Roast sat on the edge of the seat when Dundee said "you're blowin it son!" That fight hooked me for good when Sugar Ray stormed back to stop the brave Thomas Hearns. Those were the days

FighterforJC says:

Does anyone know who Dundee's picking between Mosley and Pacquiao? Hmmm. Lemme guess. He's going with Mosley this time.

dino da vinci says:

Forget Ted Williams, this is the guy we gotta freeze when that time comes. Of course, hopefully, that's not for another 89 plus years. On the very short list of All-Time Great Corner Men. Would love to know what this man knows. A living legend. I could go on and on and on...Go get'em Angie!

astro1 says:

It's a good thing he got Ali to talk. We would have missed one of the all time great trash talkers in the history of sports.

FighterforJC says:

I don't consider Ali a trash talker. Everything he said was pure entertainment.

Radam G says:

As GBGOAT Angie Dundee said GOAT Ali picked up that trash talking game from Wrestler Gorgeous George. And YUP! The GOAT was an entertaining trash talker. I can remember him saying, "I talk dat trash, scare 'em suckas, put runnin'-with-cash butts in dose seats, ears in by dose radios, eyes in front of dose TV sets, and closed curcuit screens. And in da round -- I call -- my opponent will crash. If outerspace invaders land on earth, they will have a change of mind because they'll kno,' their butts I'll thrash -- give da suckas whiplash!"

Holla at quite a bit of the GOAT's smack talk, rhymes, poetry and wisdom on Youtube, BABBBEEEEEE! We live in the time of quickly founding legit syet, so one doesn't have to put up with any fake, phony, made-up BULL****! Da GOAT Ali was da archmegamaster of trash-talking entertaining SPIT!. Holla!