

The highly-anticipated showdown scheduled for Friday night between **Peter Manfredo Jr.** and **Rich Gingras** almost didn't happen.

Following a decisive win over **Walter Wright** in March -- the second fight of Manfredo's most recent comeback -- "The Pride Of Providence" quietly decided that was enough; it was finally time to hang up the gloves and be a full-time husband and father.

Then everything changed in July when Manfredo's close friend, former Rhode Island boxer **Gar y Balletto**, suffered a fall at his home that left him paralyzed from the waist down.

"When he got hurt, it hurt me," Manfredo said. "He might never be able to walk again, so I thought it'd be nice to come back and fight for him while I can still walk, talk and move."

As Balletto continues the fight of his life, doing everything within his power to walk again, Manfredo (39-7, 20 KOs) finds himself in a battle that may very well be the fight of *his* life, a 10-round showdown against the hard-hitting Gingras (13-3-1, 8 KOs) in the main event of "Pride & Power," scheduled for **Friday, Nov. 22, 2013** at Twin River Casino and presented by Jimmy Burchfield's Classic Entertainment & Sports.

Manfredo has faced some of the best fighters in the world, from **Jeff Lacy**, to **Joe Calzaghe** to **Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.**, but Friday's bout against Gingras is a unique challenge at this stage in his career. Manfredo will turn 33 next Tuesday. He's more than a boxer these days; he's a father of three, a devoted husband, and a full-time laborer in Massachusetts. He no longer eats, sleeps and breathes boxing like he did during his heyday when he starred on *The Contender* reality series and challenged for world titles.

Having to balance his life outside of the gym with his life between the ropes makes every

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challenge, especially Friday's, riskier than ever, even if Gingras doesn't have as much experience as some of the elite fighters Manfredo has gone toe-to-toe with in the past.

"This is a young man's game now. That's why I retired," Manfredo said. "I've been in this game 13 years as a pro - all my life, really - and it's tough to do both when you're working a full-time job. You need health care. You need things for your family. To compete at the level I was competing at, you can't work.

"You have to dedicate 100 percent of your time to the sport of boxing. I decided to hang it up and become a full-time dad and worker, but Gary is a friend of mine. There were times when I didn't get along with my old man and he threw me out of the gym. Gary always opened the door for me. He was always a friend.

"As boxers, we all have that side of ourselves where we are brothers. It takes a special person to be a fighter. My heart and prayers go out to Gary and his family. He's in the biggest fight of his life trying to walk again, but if anyone can do it, it's him. I want to go out there one more time and box for him."

Though he may not admit it, this fight is about more than just honoring Balletto. Manfredo has been Rhode Island's most popular, successful fighter since **Vinny Paz** stepped away from the ring and passed the torch more than a decade ago. Gingras, who owns a business in Pawtucket, R.I., and lives in nearby Lincoln, just a stone's throw from Twin River, has a chance to dethrone Manfredo and become the talk of the town. Not on his turf, Manfredo says, and not on this night.

"He thinks he's going to come in there and throw a million shots and wear me out and be too much for me, but it ain't gonna happen," Manfredo said.

"I've seen everything. I've been in there with the best in the world. I have more experience. No matter what he brings, it's nothing I haven't seen. I've prepared myself well. I'm in great shape and I know he's going to be in great shape, too. The best man will win."

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Manfredo admits he originally wanted to face the winner of the July showdown between Gingras and fellow Providence super middleweight **Vladine Biosse**, but that fight ended in a draw. In the interim, Gingras agreed to step up and face Manfredo, resulting in what figures to be a fitting ending to the 2013 Twin River Fight Series.

"He's definitely going to give me a run for my money, especially now that I'm not in the prime of my career," Manfredo said of Gingras. "He's a tough kid. He looks good. He's big, strong - I've got my hands full, but when don't you have your hands full? That's why we fight. Nothing is written in stone."

Neither are Manfredo's retirements. After ending his first retirement in 2009, Manfredo promised he'd walk away again if he lost to Chavez Jr. in 2011. He kept his word for more than a year until he returned for the second time in November of 2012, citing the need to take advantage of his earning potential and provide for his family. Although money is his driving force these days, the passion and hunger always return once that bell rings.

"You turn into a monster. You get that tunnel vision," he said. "I've always said fighters are born, not made. That fighter comes out of you when the bell rings. You can't hear anything or anybody in the crowd and you're focused on what you need to do."

"I'm already in that mindset. I'm dieting. I'm losing weight. I'm kind of mean right now. You change. People at work look at me and notice the change in me. That's just part of being a fighter. The fighter is coming out of me now."

"On Friday, it's all business. I'm good friends with Rich, but I'm going to try to knock his head off just like he's going to try to knock off mine, and when it's over, we'll have a beer ... but I'll have a root beer because I don't drink."

Asked if he has one more fight in him after Friday, Manfredo, who is also aiming for his 40th professional win, said, "We'll see. That's the beauty of this game. You never know. One shot can change anything. I could be in total control, and one shot could change everything. That's the beauty of this sport."

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Win or lose, Jaime Clampitt had every intention of walking away from the sport of boxing following her showdown against Holly Holm in 2010.

"That was going to be it for me," said Clampitt, who won four world titles in the first eight years of her professional career. "It was the culmination of everything I had been through in boxing."

Had it ended differently, Clampitt might've stayed away for good. Instead of riding off into the sunset leaving everything she had in the ring against an opponent considered one of the best in the sport, Clampitt instead returned home to Rhode Island with an empty feeling following a surprising, abrupt ending to her International Boxing Association (IBA) world title bout.

Midway through the opening round, Clampitt and Holm collided in the center of the ring as Clampitt ducked a left cross from Holm, who inadvertently struck Clampitt with her right elbow. Clampitt dropped to one knee and then began writhing on the canvas in pain, suffering a neck injury that left her unable to continue. Holm was awarded with a technical knockout victory.

"I was devastated," Clampitt said. "To have it end like that was disheartening."

As the years passed by, Clampitt found herself preoccupied with an active lifestyle outside of the ring, both as a mother - she now has a 4-year-old daughter and 10-month-old son - and a personal trainer, working with clients from all walks of life at the Striking Beauties female gym in North Attleboro, Mass.

Though her workload increased, her passion to fight never waned. Clampitt (21-5-1, 7 KOs) never really knew when it'd be the right time to return, but she appears to have picked the perfect night as she prepares for her *real* farewell fight **Friday, Nov. 22, 2013** on the undercard of the **Peter Manfredo Jr.-Rich Gingras** showdown at Twin River Casino.

While it's hard to upstage "The Pride Of Providence," Clampitt's fight against **Dominga Olivo** (8-8-1) of Brooklyn, N.Y., on Jimmy Burchfield's Classic Entertainment & Sports' "Pride & Power" card figures to be as highly-anticipated as Manfredo Jr.'s return to Twin River. Clampitt, a Warwick, R.I., resident raised in Saskatchewan, Canada, was a fixture in the Ocean State throughout her career.

In her prime, she captured the International Women's Boxing Federation world title in two separate weight classes and became one of the few females to headline a major fight card in New England, battling fellow Rhode Island **Missy Fiorentino** in a memorable, back-and-forth showdown seven years ago at the R.I. Convention Center. Prior to that, Clampitt achieved nationwide notoriety for her epic bout against

Jane Couch

, which was voted the 2004

Ring Magazine

Women's Fight of the Year. Clampitt avenged the loss three years later by unanimous decision, capturing the vacant WIBF light welterweight world title for the second time.

Clampitt has always been an ambassador for women's boxing, and her return at the age of 37 is even more remarkable now considering everything she's accomplished since her first retirement in 2008. Balancing motherhood and boxing isn't easy - "You have no idea!" she said - but being back in the ring provides a welcomed escape from the everyday responsibilities of raising two children.

"That's always been my sanctuary," Clampitt said. "I started at such a young age, so it's all I've known. I love everything about the sport. Nothing beats the feeling of stepping through the ropes, but I love it all, whether it's the training, being in the gym - as soon as I got back into the swing of things, I felt right at home."

Friday night will feel like old times as Clampitt, Manfredo Jr. and Cranston, R.I., slugger **Arthur Saribekian**

fight on the same card, reuniting a trio of popular, regional fighters who graced Twin River and other venues for years in the early- to mid-2000s.

A decisive win over Oliva, a tough competitor who has faced some of the best in the sport

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through the years, including Puerto Rican southpaw **Amanda Serrano**, may stir up rumblings of a second return fight for Clampitt, but the real world - particularly motherhood - might have other plans for "The Hurricane" beyond Friday night.

"I like to fight," Clampitt said, "but this is definitely it for me."

Clampitt's promise seems genuine. More than anything else, this is about going out on her terms - the fairytale ending she never had the chance to achieve three years ago in New Mexico. How this script unfolds is up to her.

"A lot of people ask me if this is the first step in a long comeback, but, no, it's one and done for me," Clampitt said. "When that final bell rings, it'll really be the final bell for me. I just want to end on a positive note, not only for me but everyone who has been there with me throughout my career, from [CES president] **Jimmy Burchfield** all the way on down. This means a lot to me."

Ticket for the event are priced at \$46, \$61, \$101 and \$161 (VIP) and can be purchased by calling [401-724-2253](tel:401-724-2253) /2254, online at www.cesboxing.com or www.ticketmaster.com , or at Players Club at Twin River. All fights and fighters are subject to change.

In addition to the 10-round super middleweight main event between Manfredo Jr. (39-7, 20 KOs) and Gingras (13-3-1, 8 KOs), "Pride & Power" also features a special six-round heavyweight attraction with Saribekian (23-4-1, 18 KOs) returning to the ring for the first time in more than a decade to face Hyannis, Mass., product **Jesse Barboza** (6-1-1, 4 KOs).

Also on the undercard, Cranston, R.I., welterweight **Nick DeLomba** (2-0) will put his undefeated record on the line against

Carlos Hernandez

(3-2-1, 2 KOs) of Bridgeport, Conn., in a six-round bout and Providence middleweight

KJ Harrison-Lombardi

(2-0-1) will return to Twin River in a four-round bout against

Mike Rodriguez

of Springfield, Mass., who will be making his professional debut. Harrison-Lombardi and Rodriguez faced one another in the amateurs with Rodriguez winning a close decision. Providence light middleweight

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Publio Pena

(1-0, 1 KO) will face

Antonio Marrero

(0-1) of Hartford, Conn., in a four-round bout. All fights and fighters are subject to change.

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