

# "YOU GOTTA FIGHT DIRTY"



By **FRITZIE ZIVIC**  
as told to Myron Cope

**The trouble with boxing today is that there aren't enough good, dirty fighters. So says this expert, who parlayed an educated elbow and a well-aimed thumb into a world title, and wishes only to spread the good word**

**E**very so often I come across compliments in the newspapers or magazines such as "Fritz Zivic wasn't the dirtiest fighter in the history of boxing; Greb was dirtier." Or "Zivic was always careful never to throw a foul blow, unless he knew exactly where it was going."

It's nice to be remembered. Of course, there are people who would say being remembered as a dirty fighter is not the best of compliments, but then we each have our own set of values and, as Dan Parker once said, I am a model of Zivic Virtue.

The point is, boxing was my *business*. And it is a dirty business, inside the ring and outside.

I'm not knocking it. I made a lot of money (which mysteriously has escaped me) and I enjoyed fighting. But when you fight for a living, if you're smart you fight with every trick you know. If I hadn't known nine zillion of them I never could have won the welterweight title from Henry Armstrong, who knew just as many.

Fighter, manager, promoter—I've held all three jobs. So maybe I'm qualified to give a little one-semester course here in Advanced Butting, Heeling, Thumbing and Elbowing, plus a few side lectures on the Financial Necessity of Occasionally Holding Up an Opponent, and other valuable related subjects.

Look at the three best fighters of all time—Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Harry Greb. All wonderfully dirty fighters. Look at the three best champions of our day—Rocky Marciano, who was one of the best after-the-bell punchers I ever saw; "cute" Archie Moore; and alley-fighter Sandy Saddler. To them the book is something you could clout a guy with if you had it ready.

They called Dempsey's right hand Iron Mike but Jack once told me his best weapon was his double left—a left to the groin followed by a left to the head. That's the very weapon he knocked out Jack Sharkey with. I got the movies in my house.

A lot of old-timers claim Jack Johnson was the best fighter in history. Fat Luke Carney, who managed me, worked Pittsburgh Frank Moran's corner when he fought a 20-round title bout with Johnson in Paris, and to Luke's dying day he claimed he never saw anybody like Johnson. Johnson stood erectly in front of Moran, taunting him: "C'mon, Frankie, hit that nigger. C'mon, Frankie, hit that nigger." It worked fine.

When Moran went after him Johnson would catch his blows on his forearm, then push him gently on the shoulders and suddenly slash his face with down-and-out wrist-action punches. He would grab Moran by the biceps and squeeze them in his powerful hands until Moran's arms ached. After the fight Luke had to put Moran in an epsom salts bath for hours. He had welts all over his body and face. "I never saw a face slashed up like Frank's," Luke told me.

Neither fighter got a cent for the bout. The promoters ran off with the money. Like I said, boxing's not the sweetest business in the world.

Harry Greb, who held the middleweight and light-heavyweight titles, is recognized as the dirtiest fighter there ever was, which kind of rankles me. I mean, I'm willing to settle for being called the second dirtiest, but Greb's ranking means I'm not even the dirtiest fighter to come from my neighborhood in Pittsburgh. Greb came from right up over the hill. My older brother Jack tells me if you lifted your leg high enough Greb would hit you on the bottom of the foot. Why, Greb once bit a good-sized chunk right out of an opponent's shoulder.

I wasn't so bad myself, if I do say so. Else how could I have won the welterweight title from a champ like Armstrong, who often purposely missed you with his left hook so he could bring his elbow across your face?

Today Armstrong is a preacher on the West Coast, I understand, but let me tell you about the Armstrong I boxed on October 4, 1940, in Madison Square Garden.

The first round, Armstrong was very busy; they called him Perpetual Motion and it was a good name for him. I've seen better fighters and better punchers but no fighter with that style. Hardest guy in the world to hold in a clinch. He'd put his head against your chest and push you. All the time he'd be digging his hands and elbows into your body.

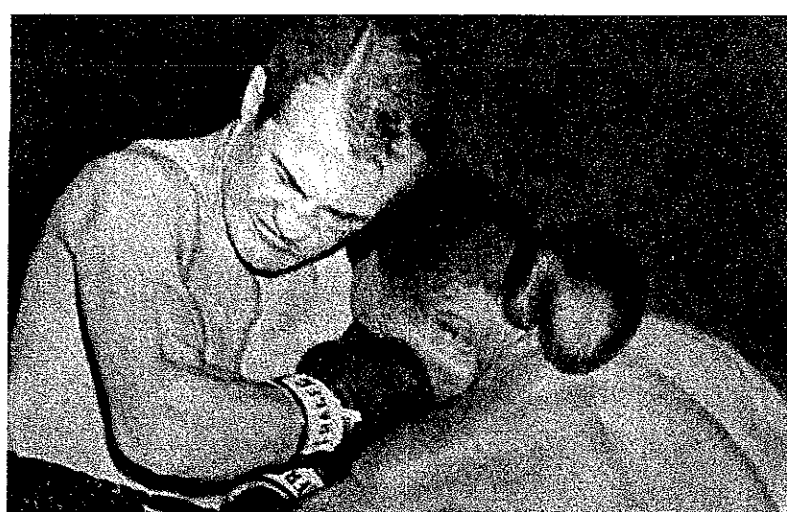
Well, like I said, he was very busy in the first round. He hit me low, choked me, butted me, thumbed me. Arthur Donovan was the referee. He didn't warn Armstrong once. Well, I got a terrible going over for three or four rounds. I was thinking about the Cadillac I would buy if I won the title and I didn't want to lose any rounds on fouls. I mean, he was the champion, he was Mike Jacobs' favorite—they might go a little more strictly on me with the rules than on him.

But finally, after the sixth round, I said to myself, I can't go 15 rounds like this. It was my first 15-round fight and boxing Armstrong was like boxing three fellows, that's how busy he was. So when the seventh round began I walked out and hit him with a left hook right in the groin. I did this a few times and Donovan noticed I was changing my style, you might say. He pulled us apart for about five seconds and I'll never forget what he said: "Boys, if you want to fight like this it's okay with me."

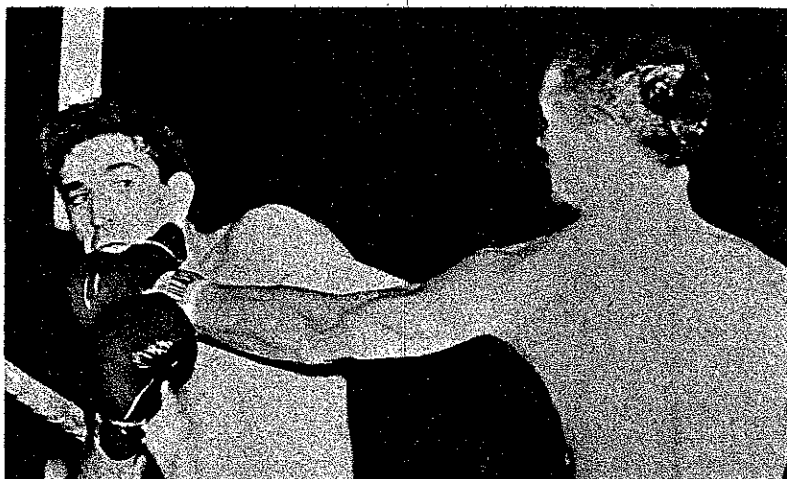
Wonderful referee, that Donovan. That was all I wanted to hear.

I pulled up my trunks and went to work. I hit him low; I said, "Pardon me." I butted him; I said, "Pardon me." I must have said "pardon me" five or six times before the seventh round ended. Along about the ninth or 10th, we went into a clinch and Armstrong said, "The hell with that 'pardon me' stuff, cut out the fouling."

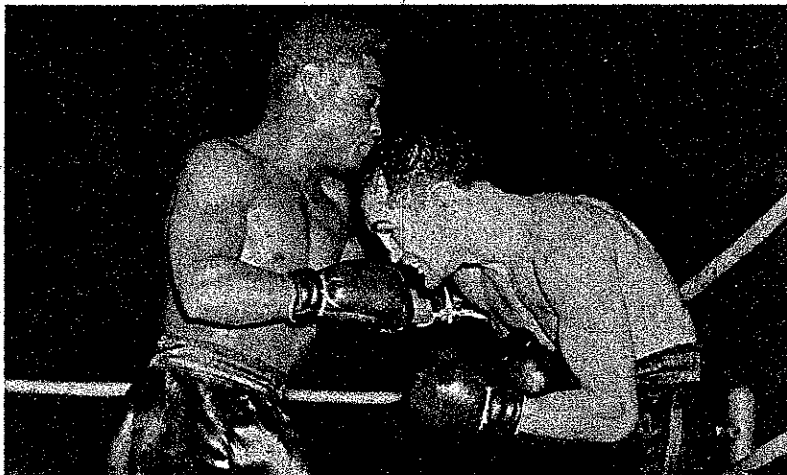
Well, to make a long story short, I finished strong and



Zivic shows Oddie Harris how to use an educated thumb.



Kenny LaSalle's chin is steadied prior to knockout blow.



Henry Armstrong receives a lesson in Advanced Butting.

Billy Arnold is taught a secondary use for glove laces.



Before I go any further I think I better explain a few good, sound principles of dirty boxing.

FIRST PRINCIPLE:

This is the last punch the referee sees. He may miss the first one if you throw it quickly as in the double left favored by Dempsey and most of the smart fighters. The soundness of this principle is never better appreciated than when the last punch knocks out the other fellow. Even if the referee saw the first one he can't very well take a knockout away from you.

SECOND PRINCIPLE:

Know when and how to foul and what each foul is good for.

A blow to the groin is not really a painful punch because of the protective cup. It stings. Practically always a punch below the belt is meant to make the other fellow lower his guard, or to fluster him so he loses his head for a few seconds maybe. In order to deliver a painful low blow one must bring it up from the floor-up and under the cup. This is so vicious a punch I did not care to use it. But Bunny Davis gave it to me twice in the famous fight in which he went berserk, a fight I'll have more to say about later.

Continuing the second principle, a smart fighter never pulls his head back after butting. If he does his opponent can step right in and butt him back. And believe me, anybody who took a chance on letting me butt him back was stupid, because I was a natural-born butt man. In fact, I didn't really know what a natural I was until ten years after I started fighting. In 1941, in my third fight with Johnny Barbara, he butted me under the left eye, and the eye pained me for several days. I went to see a specialist. He turned me over to an assistant for X-rays, and when the assistant gave the picture to the specialist he looked at it real funny like. Then he looked at me, then looked back at the picture. Finally, he said to his assistant, "Take another picture."

Well, I was scared stiff. I didn't know what was the matter with me. When the doc looked at the second picture he studied it for awhile, looked at me, then at the picture again and finally said, "I'll take the next one myself."

I didn't know what to think. I was half crazy. After the doc had studied the third X-ray for the longest time, he finally placed a hand on my shoulder and said, "Son, I've X-rayed a lot of heads in my time but yours is without a doubt the thickest I have ever seen. It is two and one-half times as thick as any head I have ever X-rayed."

Many's the time I butted a man and expected to see blood running down over my eyes but my head never bled. I have scars under my eyes and on my nose from fighting but I haven't got a mark on my forehead. Anyhow, to get back to the technique of good butting, I might add that the best place to butt a man is over the eye. That's where he'll cut easily, if he hasn't got a head like mine. Jake LaMotta was a funny kind of butt man. He'd butt you over the temple. He did almost all his butting when he had you on the ropes. [Continued on page 60]

dropped him just as the final bell rang. I got the decision and the title. The moral-of course, some people won't call it a moral—is that if I'd boxed him according to the book I wouldn't have won the title.

Now I see a lot of fighters who really stick to that book. They jab, they hook, they throw combinations—but what do they know about the educated elbow, the well-placed thumb, the forehead that knows what it's good for? My God, some of these fighters today think faces are for tying gloves! They don't need Julius Helmand for a commissioner. They need Emily Post.

I watched guys try to fight Rocky Marciano off with the Marquis of Queensbury book. It just goes to show how simple they are. Even Queensbury was a louse. His own son walked up to him in the street in broad daylight and took a punch at him. Why, I read where the guy even moved his mistress into the same house his wife was living in.

You can't become a champion when the champion is hitting you in 30 places with 30 weapons and you're hitting him in three places with three weapons. Even today you can't. Sure, there have been clean champions. But Joe Louis was a one-in-a-million puncher. Gene Tunney did it by keeping in such good condition he wasn't like a human being.

For every Louis and Tunney there have been a dozen fellows who didn't have great natural ability but made money by learning the tricks. Jake LaMotta, who was very strong in the respect that he could pull you around the ring, he and Paddy DeMarco had the kind of punch if they sweated a fly I'd lay 6-5 on the fly to get up and swat back. But they became world champions by using their heads—and I don't mean just for thinking.

I don't know. Maybe you got to have a twisted mind to respect that kind of fighter. If I have one you can blame it, like the psychiatrists say, on my childhood. I grew up in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh, a real tough neighborhood. It was also called The Strip and the part I lived in they called Irish Town. I remember my first day of school the kid sitting in front of me—this was his second year in the first grade—he sees there's a new boy behind him. He turns around and says, "What's your name?"

"Ferdinand," I says. He punches me in the nose and I punch him back. The next day I changed my name to Fritz. Being Croatian in Irish Town didn't help any and to make matters worse, my brothers Pete and Jack were fighters, so naturally all the kids were looking to beat me up because I was the littlest. So I learned to throw bricks. Got to be the best brick thrower in Irish Town. I'd see those kids coming and I'd start throwing. I could throw on the run and hit a kid on the head at 30 yards. There was one kid I must have knocked out 38 times. I ran into him recently and he said, "You see this scar on my forehead? Those were the days, Fritz."

That's what I mean. When you fight, you fight. Losing doesn't help your health, and in boxing it certainly doesn't help your bank account. You don't carry over a grudge with the other guy but when you fight, you fight.

## "You Gotta Fight Dirty"

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He'd grab you by the arm and you'd turn aside and he'd butt you on the temple.

### THIRD PRINCIPLE:

*This is kind of odd advice on dirty fighting, but—know the rules.*

The rules, for example, say the fighters are to touch gloves before the bout and at the start of the final round. Guys who touch gloves in between are going out of their way for trouble. I fought Vinnie Vines in '43 in Madison Square Garden. In the first round we got tangled up in a clinch and when he stepped out of the clinch he extended his gloves to me. I reached out and hit him a right hand on the chin. Knocked him out.

That's boxing. The winners make the money, the losers make the excuses.

Same as the glove-touchers are the I-wuz-fouled fighters—the fellows who turn to complain to the referee that they are being fouled and wind up being worse than fouled.

Take Lew Jenkins, the former light-weight champion. I was boxing Jenkins in Pittsburgh back in '42. Now Jenkins had a bad habit of spreading his feet far apart, about twice as far as the ordinary fighter. Something like a batter in baseball. Well, as soon as I see him spread those feet I move in and wham!—I step on his toes, but hard. He calls me a damn Yankee and a lot of other filthy names. I know he has a hot temper to begin with, so I step on his toes again. This time he turns his head to complain to the referee, which I am expecting and hoping he'll do, and I reach over and hit him with a right hand on the chin and down goes Jenkins.

Same thing in the second round. I step on him, he turns to the referee, I knock him down. Well, he gets up hollering 'bloody murder. What filthy names he calls me! Anyhow, to make a long story short, I give him a terrible going over until the referee, Ernie Sesto, stops it after the ninth round.

I loved to fight Jenkins. Not only because of that stance he had but because he had a neck about a size nine. He looked like a rooster. When I wasn't stepping on his toes I was giving him a choke job.

After that Pittsburgh fight the next time I heard from Jenkins was three or four years later. He was in service by then and was passing through Pittsburgh. My phone rang at 5 in the morning and he's on the line yelling, "Get outta bed, you bum! Come on downtown and let's have a drink." Always calls me when he's in town now. He tried to kill me and he knows I tried to kill him, but he always calls me when he's in town.

Both Lew and I were champions but neither of us have an address on Easy Street today. People figure a fellow wins a title, he's set for life. Let me tell you, as

a result of winning the title I automatically picked up another manager who got 25 percent of all my earnings as champion. Eddie Mead was the guy. Mead was Armstrong's manager.

You make the deal and give him the 25 percent so you can get the title shot, and you figure, okay, it's part of the game. But my, what troubles I had with that Mead. About four days before the title fight he called me up to an office in the R.C.A. Building. I went up to the office with three friends—Louie Stoken, Monk Ketchell and Bobby Quinn. Monk is boss of the Allegheny County police force now and Bobby was my trainer. They waited outside the office while I talked to Mead.

"You know, you can't win this fight," Mead says to me, and I says, "What do you mean, I can't win this fight?"

He says, "Well, Armstrong will probably knock you out and you'll get all busted up and cut up and you won't get too much money anyhow."

I says, "What do you expect me to do? If I lose the fight it won't be the first fight I lost, and if I win it, it won't be the first fight I won. Anyway, I think I can lick him in spite of what you say. What are you getting at?"

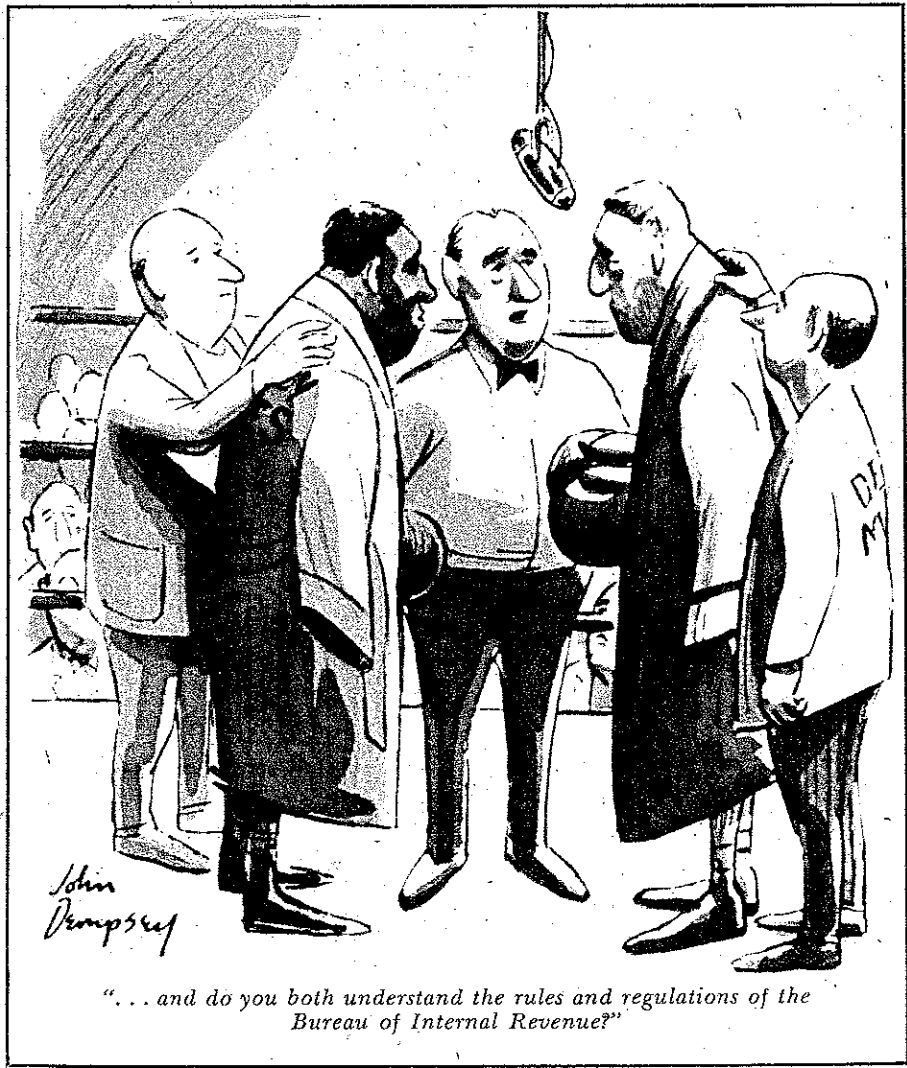
Well, he says he will give me \$15,000

in small bills the day before the fight, just to make sure I don't hurt myself in trying to win. "Nobody will know anything about it," Mead says.

Well, I don't positively say no and I don't say yes. I realize that if I tell him it's nothing doing Mead might have Armstrong get hurt in the gym—you know, a fake hand injury or something that will take him out of the fight. At that time the fight didn't mean a whole lot. I was a 4-1 underdog. They could call off the fight and let it go a few months and then let it just disappear altogether.



What I did was to keep a fellow named Johnny Schwartz watching Armstrong in the gymnasium every day, to make sure he didn't get hurt and there wouldn't be any fake. Finally, it comes the day of the fight and coming down from the weigh-in Mead comes by and takes me by the coat, gives me a little tug and says, "You made a mistake, kid. You're gonna get hurt tonight."

So the fight came off and Mead had to be satisfied with 25 percent of me. As champion, I got 50 percent of all earnings clear, Mead got 25, and my manager, Luke Carney, got 25. All expenses came out of their end, so you can bet I made the most of that. I was welterweight champ but I lived like the welterweight,





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middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight champs put together.

Still, I didn't care for the idea of paying Mead 25 percent when I could be clearing 75, so after I had fought 11 times as champion and had paid Mead something like \$26,000 I asked him to sell me his piece.

Well, we negotiated back and forth two or three days and finally agreed on \$10,000. I had a title defense coming up in about three weeks against Freddie "Red" Cochrane in Newark so I made a stipulation with Mead that if I lost to Cochrane the deal would be off. There wouldn't be any point to it anyway, because the original agreement was that Mead would own part of me only as long as I was champion.

Now I knew that Mead was a heavy spender; he played the horses and lived in a plush apartment on Park Avenue. Already he owed me \$3,800 personally. I wasn't going to give him 10 grand that he could spend before the Cochrane fight, so what I did was to give him three post-dated checks good after the fight and spread maybe two, three, four days apart. I told him to hold them in case I lost the fight. As it happened, I lost the title to Cochrane. As soon as I got home to Pittsburgh I got a call from my bank. Sure enough, Mead had deposited the checks in his bank as soon as I had given them to him, and his bank had sent them on to mine.

I told the bank to send them back marked "stopped."

Then I called Mead and bawled him out. He said he was sorry, he made a mistake, and I believed him. I expected

that was the last I would hear of it.

But three or four weeks later a Pittsburgh fight promoter, Barney McGinley, said to me, "Fritzie, there's a fellow in town looking for you. A wrong fellow. He says you owe some money."

I told Barney it couldn't be, but he said if the fellow gets in touch with me I should pay him the courtesy of talking with him if I wished to retain my health. Well, the fellow gave me a call and we made a date to meet in Toots Goldstein's, which is a restaurant where the Pittsburgh sporting set hangs out, sort of a bush league Toots Shor's.

To be honest with you, I was a little scared when I went to see this fellow, so I took along Monk Ketchell, the cop, and Joe Becker, a detective, both real big fellows.

As soon as I saw the fellow come into Goldstein's I knew he was a torpedo. He was a little guy, thin, about 55—real natty dresser, wore a pearl gray homburg. Very dapper. Strictly a professional torpedo.

He wasn't alone. With him was a big guy who I knew to be a member of the Blue Bandana gang, an outfit operating at that time in Westmoreland County, which is a short ways from Pittsburgh.

All right, so I sit down with them in a booth, and sitting down is kind of uncomfortable at that, because I'm carrying a .38 in my belt, though, damned if I know how to use it. I order a beer and the torpedo orders a glass of milk and I ask him what is the difficulty?

He tells me he represents Eddie Mead's creditors; that Mead showed them the checks I stopped and that if I hadn't wretched on the 10 grand Mead could pay

them off. Them, I supposed, were book-makers.

To make a long story short, I explain the Mead business to the fellow, and he says, "Well, that throws a different light on it. I will get in touch with my employers. Meet me here tomorrow, same time."

The next day the fellow told me everything was okay, and that's the last I saw or heard of him. Mead died of a heart attack not long after. I wasn't sore at him. I found out he was desperate. I never did get the \$3,800 he owed me.

But you know, you can't take one thing from boxing—it's one of the most colorful sports there is. And why? Maybe because it's a dumping ground for all kinds of characters. I look back on the years and individuals come to mind: Ray Arcel, a man who conned me into losing a fight but a trainer whose "good press" makes him out a first class gentleman surrounded by thieves. Fat Gene Dargan, a used-car salesman who would rather make \$30 a week working with fighters than \$300 a week selling cars. A referee in Omaha who voted against one of my fighters because the kid floored him with a right when the ref stuck his nose in to break a clinch. Al Weill, Rocky Marciano's manager; Jimmy Cannon wrote if Weill ever gets to heaven he'll pluck the feathers from the angels' wings and sell them for mattress stuffing. Dressing room bribers. Farmer promoters. What a collection!

I'm no bargain either, in case you get the idea I think I am. I carried a few fighters. I'll never forget, funniest experience I ever had—back in '46. I had retired from boxing for the umpteenth time and I hadn't been in the gym for I guess two months. I was smoking a few cigarettes, drinking a few beers. Wasn't in as good condition as I might have been.

Well, one day I ran into Gene Dargan, the used-car salesman, and he said, "Fritzie, I got a fight for you, \$1,500 guarantee. Want to box a fighter named Russel Wilhite in Memphis?"

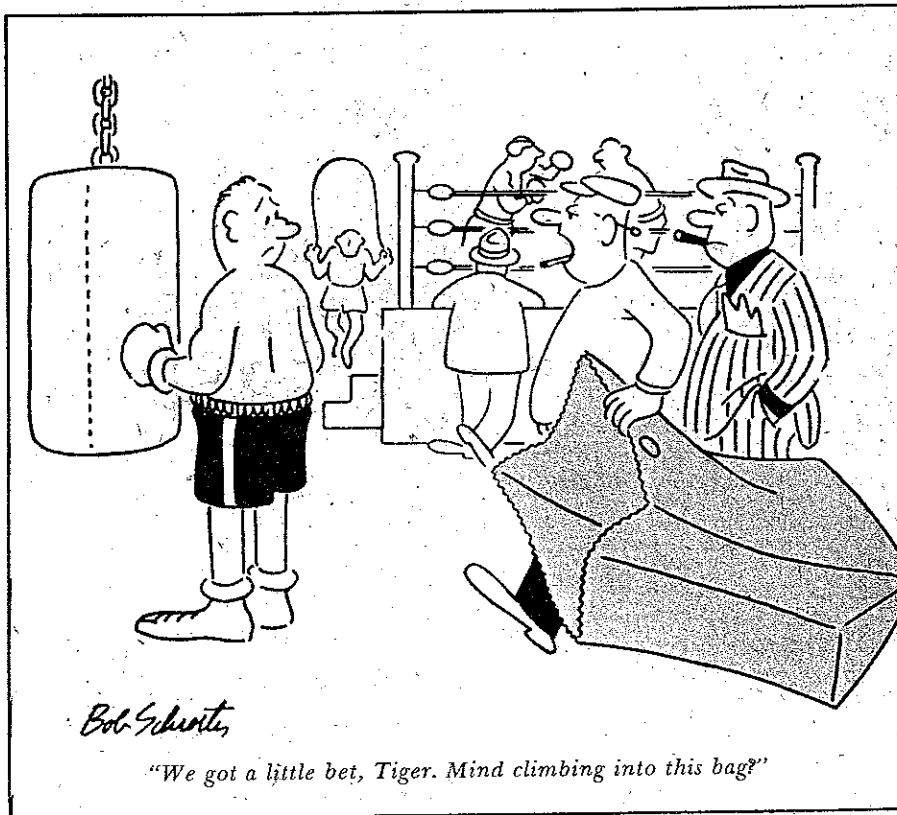
I said to Gene, "With a name like Russel Wilhite, I'll take the fight."

"You in shape?" he asked me.

I said, "I don't have to be in shape. Any fighter with a name like that cannot fight."

First thing, I went and bought a pair of gloves, they were called Sammy Frager gloves. Made by a former fighter named Sammy Frager out of Chicago. Wonderful gloves. They weighed only five ounces and there must have been three ounces in the wrists. I said to Gene, "I'll take these gloves to Memphis. In the shape I'm in, I can't go very many rounds but if I can get away with wearing these little gloves I got a good chance to knock this kid out."

So finally we got to Memphis where we read this Russel Wilhite has had 17 fights up to this time—16 knockouts and one win. I met the kid at the weigh-in. Fine looking boy, 18 years old, a high



Bob Schantz

"We got a little bet, Tiger. Mind climbing into this bag?"



school kid, real good looking. Looked more like a choir boy than a fighter."

Then I looked up the promoter, a typical farmer promoter, you might say. Hadn't been around the game very long. I said to him, "Please do me a favor, please use these gloves tonight."

He looked at the gloves and said, "Son, those are wonderful gloves. How much do I owe you?"

"Not five cents," I said. "These gloves are on me."

The night of the fight was really something. No deputy in the dressing room, no nothing. You didn't even have to wait till you got in the ring to put on your gloves. I taped my hands. I put some white tape on, put some black tape over the white tape, and put some white tape over the black tape. Got my hands loaded pretty good. Then I put on my Sammy Frager gloves.

About a half hour before the fight a fellow came in and called Gene outside. They talked outside about five minutes and Gene came in and said, "Fritzie, that fellow wants to know if you'll accept \$500 to let this kid go ten rounds."

I said, "Why, certainly," because I didn't know if I could hold him off for ten rounds, anyway.

So this guy gave Gene five \$100 bills.

Well, the fight starts and I go out for the first round just testing myself. I guess it's like a ball player or anybody who's been in a business for years and then comes back after a layoff—your natural feeling is very good for the first couple of minutes when you start in again. I'm feeling pretty limber so I go in and hit the kid with a left hook and he starts to go down. I remember the \$500 so I grab the kid and hold him up and dance around with him until he comes to.

Then I hit him on the shoulder and on the chest and I miss him purposely two or three times. Finally, the round is over and I go back to my corner and say to Gene, "What am I going to do? This kid can't fight."

"Well," Gene says, "just take your time."

So I go out for the second round. I don't hit him much and he don't hit me. This goes on for a couple rounds and the crowd is raising the devil. It was a real stinker. I go back to my corner after the third round and I say to Gene, "I better get rid of this kid." But Gene pulls out five bills from his pocket and says maybe I better not. I laugh and go out for the fourth.

But then the referee growls at me, "Come on, Zivic, you better fight or you're not gonna get paid." Well, I was getting \$1,500 for the fight and \$1,500 is worth more than \$500 so I go back after the round and tell Gene what the referee said. Then in the fifth I go out and feint the kid and hit him with a left hook on the chin that knocks him cold. When the referee holds up my hand, oh, does the crowd boo! It was terrible.

Gene and I hustled back to the dress-

ing room and locked the door. Soon as we did we heard a Boom! Boom! Boom! on the door. Gene hollered, "Coming under the door" and he slipped the five bills under.

That Gene Dargan, he sort of took over as my manager after I fell out with Luke Carney, and man, he got me into more situations! He once booked me for three ten-rounders in one week — Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

I said to him, "What're we doing on Tuesday and Thursday?"

I fought three good boys, Ralph Zanelli in Providence, Pete Mead in Grand Rapids and Bobby Britton in Memphis. Got \$1,500, \$2,000 and \$1,500. All three bouts went the distance. Lost the first two but beat Britton.

Nat Fleischer's record book says I fought Zanelli, Mead and Britton four days apart, but even Nat makes errors. Maybe he had trouble keeping track of me because I was such an active fighter. Why, I remember the time in '39 my brother Eddie had a date to fight a fellow named Charlie Bell in Columbus, Ohio, but had a bad ear and couldn't make it, so I said, "We look alike, Eddie, I'll fight for you."

I went down to Columbus but the matchmaker recognized me. He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll explain to Bell's manager what happened to Eddie and if he wants to fight you, it's all right with me."

Well, to make a long story short, the manager said, "Okay, we'll fight you, on one condition—that you don't knock Charlie out for two rounds. After two rounds, every man for himself."

We go out for the first round and I clip Charlie Bell on the jaw and he starts to sag. I grab him and hold him up and do a ballet dance for maybe 15, 20 seconds with him. When he comes around, I grab him, choke him around the neck, spin him around, and give him a pretty good going over. But I keep my word and don't knock him down.

I kept Bell alive in the second round but when we come out for the third I extend my gloves to him, violating my own rule about touching gloves in the middle of a fight. He says, "This isn't the last round."

I says, "It is for you, Charlie," and I reach over and hit him on the chin and knock him dead as a doornail.

I got \$29.40 for the fight.

A few months later I went back to Columbus and boxed a fellow name of Al Costello, another bout Nat Fleischer missed, and knocked him out in a couple of rounds. Got a little more money this time. Got \$39.

I never boxed in Columbus again.

It's like Leo Durocher said—"Nice guys finish last." I was a nice guy for a night myself and finished last. Ray Arcel, the eminent trainer, conned me right into it.

I'm boxing this fellow Norman Rubio in Newark in '42 and before the fight Arcel, who is handling Rubio, comes to

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see me. "Don't bust this kid up, Fritzie, he's a nice kid with a family."

I said nuts to that, but by the time I got into the ring I'm thinking about his wife and kids so I kind of take it easy with him at first. He's a little guy, with more hair on his chest than I had on my head. He's doing pretty good and by the time I wake up to the fact that he has piled up a big lead on me, I can't get started. I'm in a rut. He must have won nine of the ten rounds.

That's what you get, being a nice guy.

Well, the rematch was made for Pittsburgh a few weeks later. I told Arce! before the fight, "I'm going to bust your kid's head open, bite his ear off, cut his eyes, everything." I run out for the first round like a maniac—and the next thing I know the referee is counting over me.

I get up and manage to stay out of Rubio's way for the rest of the round. Then in the second round I go to work. I stick him with my left, hook him, spin him, butt him. Then I really get warmed up. By the ninth Rubio is cut over, both eyes and bleeding. The referee stopped it.

So I wasn't a nice guy. I won.

I'll tell you another sweet fellow I got all kinds of love for. Al Weill, Marciano's manager. Once I fought in Washington, D. C., for a matchmaker named Goldie Ahern. I had a \$1,500 guarantee but the crowd was poor and Goldie asked me to settle for \$750. I figured, well, I might be a promoter some day so I may as well be considerate. I take the \$750. This was a favor to Weill because it was a known fact that he was bankrolling the show.

Years later I bought an outdoor arena, Zivic Arena, with some money my wife

Helen had held out of my pockets for a rainy day and I had a green kid making matches for me. He booked Arturo Godoy, the Argentine heavy managed by Weill, and guaranteed him \$3,500 or 30 percent of the gate. This was fantastic. We could seat only 7,500. When I heard about it I knew we would lose money on the show so I called Weill and asked him to cut the guarantee to \$1,000.

"Your matchmaker made the deal," he said. "A deal's a deal."

I reminded him of a night in Washington when I took half my guarantee to help him out, but the least he would go down to was \$2,500 and we lost money. Again I was reminded: Be a nice fellow in boxing and you get it in the neck.

But of all the nasty things, and at the same time the funniest thing, I saw in the fight game, a referee in Omaha took the cake. I was boxing a main event there and I had one of the fighters I managed in a six-round preliminary. He was a little kid named Mickey Quack, a shoeshine fighter—he'd stand in the middle of the ring with his head down and both arms flailing back and forth like a kid shining shoes. The ref was one of those guys when he tells the fighters to break he has to stick his head between them.

Well, Mickey and his opponent are standing head to head, throwing punches blindly, and sure enough, the ref sticks his head in once too often and Mickey nails him with a right hook. Down goes the ref, on one knee. Right away the crowd starts counting. The ref is kneeling there, shaking it off. Finally, at the count of seven he gets up.

To make a long story short, Mickey

takes five of the six rounds but the ref, who is the only official, gives the decision to the other fighter. Couldn't take a knockdown.

I'm out of boxing now. But I love the business and when I hear Pennsylvania's Governor Leader and New York Commissioner Helfand and the National Boxing Association swearing they're out to clean up the game I hope they mean outside the ring only. Inside, the dirty fighters are the real fighters. Willie Pep, old as he is, would still be featherweight champ if another alley-fighter like Sandy Saddler hadn't come along.

Pep was whipping him going away when Sandy applied a double arm lock that dislocated Willie's shoulder and made him quit in his corner, giving the title away. In their return match they heeled, thumbed, butted, elbowed, wrestled, and took Referee Ray Miller to the floor with them. The sports writers said it was outrageous. Saddler remarked:

"I got a little mad when he heeled me and thumbed me in the eye and stepped on my toes, but after all, he was trying to win and it's all in the game."

Us dirty fighters don't make any bones about being dirty fighters. It's like I told General Phelan, the New York Commissioner, when he was conducting a hearing the day after my fight with Bummy Davis. In the first round Davis had looked at the clock to see how much time there was and I clipped him, knocked him down. He blew his stack and the next round came out and hit me low about 16 times till they stopped the fight and disqualified him. At the hearing Davis told General Phelan I thumbed him. "Zivic," said the general, "what do you have to say?"

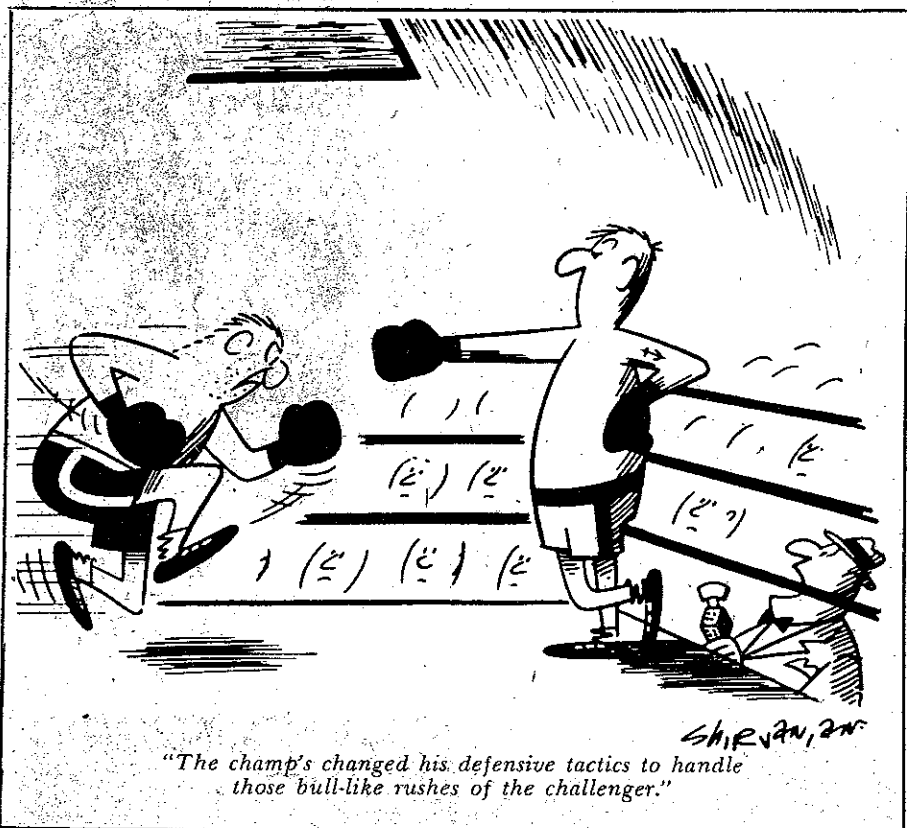
"General," I said, "I'm going to be very frank with you: I deny that I thumbed him for the simple reason that I didn't have to. I knocked him down in the first round and it was an easy fight. But I'll be honest about it—if Davis would have given me a beating I would have thumbed him. I would have hit him low. I would have taken every advantage I could. I grew up in a tough neighborhood and was taught to fight one way."

"Davis," said the general. "We fine you \$2,500 and suspend you indefinitely in New York State."

If I had been a heavyweight I certainly would have liked to try out my philosophy of fighting on Marciano, a fighter who came at you with fists, arms, elbows, head, everything. But he was a wild man in the ring—I mean he was temper dirty, not cute dirty, not scientific dirty. First time he would run at me and miss with that wild right of his, I would get him by the elbow and spin him around. Then I would give him a little choke job, chop him in the groin, and try a little butt on that tender nose he has.

He'd blow his stack. From there on in, I'd have it made.

In boxing a good, dirty man is hard to beat. Usually it takes a better and dirtier man to do it.



"The champ's changed his defensive tactics to handle those bull-like rushes of the challenger."