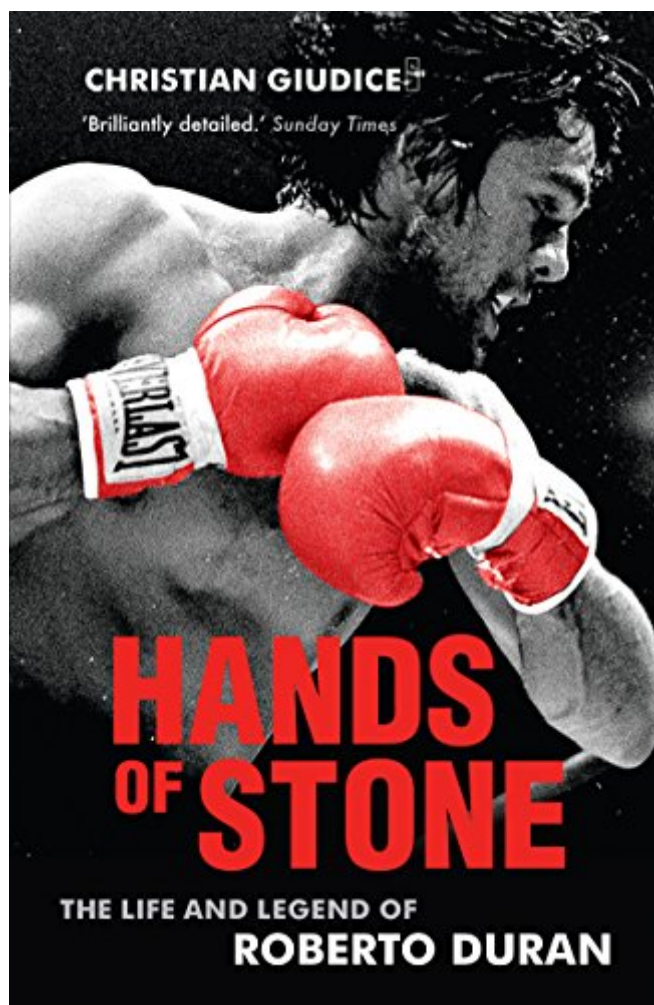


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Hands Of Stone: The Life And Legend Of Roberto Duran



Synopsis

Now the subject of a major motion picture, Roberto Duran is a sporting legend. Often called the greatest boxer of all time, he held world titles at four different weights and is the only professional in history to have fought in five different decades. His bouts with fellow greats like Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns and Marvin Hagler have gone down in fistic folklore and his pro record of 104 wins, 69 by KO, in 120 fights puts him in an elite group of fighters. They called him *Manos de Piedra*: ‘Hands of Stone’. American journalist Christian Guidice has written the first ‘and definitive’ story of Duran’s extraordinary life both in and out of the ring. He has interviewed the fighter himself, his family and closest friends and scores of his opponents to separate truth from myth and get to the heart of one of the most intriguing sports stars of modern times. Duran was born in utter poverty in the Panama Canal Zone, the illegitimate son of a serving US soldier and a local girl. He grew up in the streets, fighting to survive. His talent with his fists was soon apparent, and on one fabled occasion he even knocked down a horse with a single punch for a bet. He grew into a fighter’s fighter, and his willingness to take on anyone, anywhere, anytime and never take a step back made him a huge favorite. From his wild early bouts to his stunning boxing debut in New York, Guidice traces the blazing trail of his career: the controversial title win over Scot Ken Buchanan; his unification of the lightweight crown against great rival Esteban DeJesus; his glorious defeat of Ray Leonard and the subsequent debacle of the No Más encounter; his ferocious comeback and redemption, and the long, eventful twilight of his matchless career. Here also are both the public and private sides of Duran: his volatility, his kindness and reckless generosity, his partying, his links with the notorious regime of General Noriega, and above all his chilling love of battle. *The Sunday Times*: ‘A brilliantly detailed biography...Guidice’s book has successfully done Duran justice.’ *The Ring*: ‘A riveting read from the first page to the last.’ *Daily Star*: ‘A cracking book recording Duran’s glorious career.’ *Boxing Monthly*: ‘A great achievement. If you only buy one boxing book this year, *Hands of Stone* should be it.’ *Liverpool Echo*: ‘An absolute must for all fight fans.’ *Dublin Evening Herald*: ‘A gripping biography. Every page will keep readers enthralled.’ *The Independent*: ‘The dazzling first, and definitive, account of a breathtaking fighter and a remarkable man.’ *The Sun*: ‘A compelling story.’

Book Information

File Size: 945 KB

Print Length: 384 pages

Publisher: Milo Books Ltd (April 27, 2011)

Publication Date: April 27, 2011

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B004YE7ACO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #211,609 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #15

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inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Sports > Individual Sports > Boxing #35 inÂ Books
> Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Boxing, Wrestling & MMA > Boxing

Customer Reviews

I must say, I put this book down twice, and went on to read others, I read a book every other day, but came back and finished it, as I have a very short list of books I never finished. It starts out very slowly and sometimes very confusing, and boring. There were a lot of politics and underhanded dealings that went on, and some of it was illegal and covered up. Roberto Duran fans and followers, will already know about those incidents and understand, that they happened in the first 1/3 of the Duran boxing career. As for myself, I became a Duran fan after the Ken Buchanan fight, and through the other 2/3 of his up and down times in and out of the ring. I watched the 1st Leonard fight on PPV, and cheered as Duran won that fight, in Duran style. I also watched the 2nd Leonard fight again on PPV, and wondered what really happened and why. Duran did not fight or act like a Champion that night. He allowed Leonard to dictate the fight, as if he were the champ. Duran did not stand his ground and make Leonard come to him and fight, instead, he chased Leonard, and allowed the challenger to mock him, until the Un-Duran like ending came about, with the now infamous words.....No Mas. Duran continued on, and won more titles, and even fought Leonard again, another loss, and was part of the 4 Kings legend, Duran, Leonard, Hearns and Hagler. Many of the Champions of the era, ducked Duran, as they fought other beatable fighters instead. As for outside the ring, Duran went through his millions, twice over, as he partied and gambled his money away, making him fight well past his prime. But don't worry, the Hands of Stone, made his mark in the

boxing history books, and those of us, that were lucky enough to get to see him, in his best years, will never forget what he did.

Roberto Duran's boxing career had many high points and low points. Christian Guidance's well-researched biography of the man many considered one of the greatest of all time dug deeply into those points as well as Duran's childhood and life outside the ring. The book also introduces the reader to other people in Duran's life who were important to him but may not be familiar to people who followed the boxer's fights. These included his wife Felicidad and international businessman Carlos Elea, who became Duran's financial backer. While these were important parts of the book, the best parts were Guidance's recaps of the two biggest fights of Duran's career - the two against Sugar Ray Leonard in 1980 that were both characteristic of the best and the worst of his career. The second one in particular, the famous "no mas" fight, was very well chronicled by Guidance through other people that were at that fight and offered their own explanations of why Duran suddenly stopped fighting. Many of the well known theories are given by these people, such as stomach cramps and the humiliation he felt during the fight when Leonard changed tactics and was taunting Duran in the ring. Guidance wrote in the introduction that his curiosity about that fight was why he wanted to write the book. He didn't offer his own opinions on the fight - he simply gathered some of the biggest names in all aspects of the sport and recorded their versions of the events. From writers (Bert Sugar) to trainers (Angelo Dundee, who was in Leonard's corner) were included. The connection Duran felt to his native Panama and the national pride felt whenever he was victorious is also an important part of the book and this was important in how Duran lived outside the ring. He was notorious for not always being in shape until it was close to the date of his next fight - but he would always give everything he had for his country. That is how he is portrayed and is the lasting image I have of him after reading this book. Did I skim? No. Did I learn something new about the topic? Yes - while I did know about the Panamanian citizens' idolization of Duran, I did not realize how strong a connection he felt toward them. The surprise Duran felt when they turned against him after the loss to Leonard was a great section of the book. Pace of the book: Excellent. Positives: The research is thorough and detailed, the fights highlighted are well-documented and the reader learns a lot about Panama and its people in the beginning. Negatives: No glaring weaknesses. Those who read these books just for the recaps of the fights may be disappointed that these don't make up the majority of the book. But while crucial, this is a complete biography of Duran. Do I recommend? YES - for any boxing fan.

This is one of the best biographies I have read. It paints a picture of a great fighter showing warts and all. It also describes the brutality of life in the slums of Panama and what people have to do to survive. Duran himself is a complex character with many faults, but, without a doubt is one of the greatest fighters of all time. He belongs with those "golden age" icons, Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Marvin Hagler, Wilfred Benitez. He held his ground with all, and beat Leonard in his prime, at a time when he was one of the greats of all time. And yet he started off boxing in lighter divisions, and although smaller in size, won 5 championships in 4 weight divisions all the way up to Middleweight, where he defeated Iran Barclay, a man who beat Thomas Hearns twice. A great book and worth reading.

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