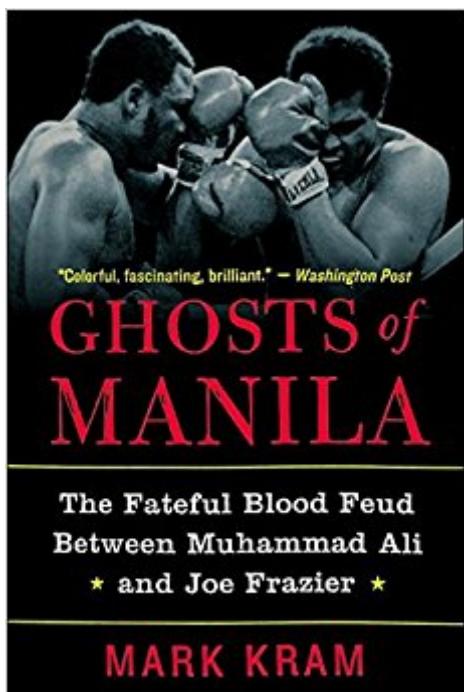


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# Ghosts Of Manila: The Fateful Blood Feud Between Muhammad Ali And Joe Frazier



## Synopsis

When Muhammad Ali met Joe Frazier in Manila for their third fight, their rivalry had spun out of control. The Ali-Frazier matchup had become a madness, inflamed by the media and the politics of race. When the "Thrilla in Manila" was over, one man was left with a ruin of a life; the other was battered to his soul. Mark Kram covered that fight for Sports Illustrated in an award-winning article. Now his riveting book reappraises the boxers -- who they are and who they were. And in a voice as powerful as a heavyweight punch, Kram explodes the myths surrounding each fighter, particularly Ali. A controversial, no-holds-barred account, *Ghosts of Manila* ranks with the finest boxing books ever written.

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (February 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060954809

ISBN-13: 978-0060954802

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 94 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #732,363 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #117 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Boxing, Wrestling & MMA > Boxing #1219 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > History of Sports #1756 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > African-American & Black

## Customer Reviews

Muhammad Ali once admitted to former Sports Illustrated writer Mark Kram that he and Joe Frazier went to Manila for the third of their three epic fights "as champions and we came back as old men." Boxing is a particularly unforgiving sport for old men, especially those--as Kram tells us in *Ghosts of Manila*, his thoroughly riveting account of one of the Sweet Science's greatest rivalries--"with too much pride, heart, and unexamined confidence for their own well-being." Which defines Ali and Frazier's essential characters in a nutshell. Kram begins his saga in the present, looking at the different kinds of isolation that currently surround each man's life, then dances back and forth through time to spar with just who these warriors have been and how they came to be the icons, for better or worse, they became. *Ghosts of Manila* is more than a twin biography, though; it is an often

haunting meditation on how much we project onto our athletes, and how destructive the projections can be. As much as any punishment sustained in three of the most brutal title fights in heavyweight history, the baggage--personal and societal--that Ali and Frazier carried into and out of the ring changed them physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Did Ali earn all the love? Did Frazier deserve all the scorn? To answer the questions, Kram bravely goes toe to toe with Ali worship and Ali's myth. His daring rewards us with knockout profiles of two legends more complex and real than mere iconography might allow. --Jeff Silverman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Kram, who covered boxing for Sports Illustrated for more than a decade, tells the story of Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali's epic 1975 Manila fight, and the bitter and complex rivalry between the two men that preceded it. He begins his story when the men, both black Southerners, are isolated and in retirement. Ali calls Manila "the greatest fight" of his life, while Frazier remains obsessively consumed by his hatred of Ali. Kram is intent on undoing the media "romance history" of Ali as civil rights hero; "hagiographers," he writes, "never tire of trying to persuade us that he ranked second only to Martin Luther King, but... Ali was not a social force." Frazier and Ali began as friends, but professional competition and divergent views on race turned theirs into a rivalry that had a lasting effect on professional sport and perhaps changed the meaning of race, especially for African-Americans, in postwar America. Kram explores the fighters' serial wives and mixed-up families, as well as their shifting, hunting packs of managers and assistants Ali's Black Muslim handlers in particular ("They were into profit and running things like Papa Doc was running Haiti"). Describing the powerful title event, Kram's prose is heavy with metaphors, not all of them helpful ("Ali's legs searched for the floor like one of Baudelaire's lost balloons"), and some of the narrative reads like his earlier accounts of the fights pasted together. Still, overall this is a daring, intelligent and well-observed piece of sportswriting. (May)Forecast: Boxing is reclaiming its popularity. Author appearances in New York and Washington, D.C., along with a 50-city radio campaign, should help this fine book attract attention. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

But I believe we create and control our own reality. Most of us are just passive recipients. Ali imposed his reality on the world. So did Frazier. The after shocks of the clash between these two masters is still resonating today. This is much more than a book about two great heavyweight champions. It is the most insightful book I've read on boxing and about Ali and Frazier. It is an

honest portrayal of two men trapped in their own reality and trying to impose their reality on the other. This book contains the most incredibly descriptive prose that creates visual images of Ali and Frazier that I never previously considered. Their strengths and weaknesses, their success and their failings. We are all victims of the human condition. We want our heroes to supersede and overcome our own limitations. Their fights and their lives were larger than life and the stuff of legend. This book acknowledges this in very creative ways, bordering on poetic mythology. Yet it grounds Ali and Frazier in such a way that you realize you know them much better and who they were. The book is great and fun to read. Absolutely brilliant prose. Read it for the prose of nothing else.

So-far-so-good! Mark Kram delivers a fly on the wall account of an exciting time in our history. The insights and first-hand accounts of which he delivers here is truly challenging as it pertains to the history we/I thought we knew. The early friendship between Smokin-Joe & Ali is an eye-opener for me. And explains the void in culture and social status which they were each subjected to. I am in the middle - and I promise to add to this review as I read & re-read....

It's an unvarnished look at a legend and his supreme rival. Both Ali and Frazier are cast in a different light. The carnage left behind for both men is astounding. We hail the trilogy in sporting terms, but should be mindful of the horror it wrought in human terms. Kram's analysis is insightful and encompassing.

For someone who would have seemed to have so much Ali had so little. How many lives did he leave in his wake? Poor Joe F a man with such class and heart just another victim of the Ali curse. This man had speed and talent but that aside was one big ZERO. Rest In Peace Joe, you deserved better

I've followed Mark Kram (now deceased) at SI for many years, and have found him to an excellent writer. He often finds obscure, seemingly unrelated words and make them work in his many complicated sentences. We all know that Ali and Joe were not saints, but the author makes them come alive with all their warts, and the reader gets a valid glance into their troubled lives. Life is tough anyway, but these guys surrounded themselves with parasites, scoundrels and takers (but that's boxing, right?) and made it even more complicated. I could never understand how Ali got himself involved with Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and the "Fruits of Islam", or how skin color was such a big thing to African-Americans, at least between Ali and Joe. Kram answers some of these

questions. I don't read a lot of books about sports but this one was intriguing and totally interesting. The book is about 10 years old but still worth the buy!

Loved this book. A little too much "prose" In a few places but, for the most part, beautifully written. It's startling. Compelling and rich with history and characters and courage. As another reviewer mentioned, there is much more to this story than you know...and every bit of it is worth reading.

Good book on the relationship between Ali-Frazier, Ali's personal life including connection with the nation of Islam and numerous female marriages and relationships. Specific details on the Thrilla in Manila with many rounds in the fight considered some of the most significant, albeit for the brutality of it, rounds in boxing.

Great account of the Ali Frazier trilogy. The "real" Ali is exposed as well as the demons that followed Smokin Joe. Much of the book is written first hand. The writing itself is very enjoyable.

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