

# Undisputed Truth

Mike Tyson, Larry Sloman

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Reviews</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Amazon's Review	1
1.2	Editorial Reviews from Booklist	1
1.3	Praise for Undisputed Truth	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Quotes</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>4</b>

## 1 Reviews

### 1.1 Amazon's Review

See [amazon/Undisputed Truth](#). “A bare-knuckled, tell-all memoir from Mike Tyson, the 1time heavyweight champion of the world – & a legend both in & out of the ring. Philosopher, Broadway headliner, fighter, felon – Mike Tyson has defied stereotypes, expectations, & a lot of conventional wisdom during his 3 decades in the public eye. Bullied as a boy in the toughest, poorest neighborhood in Brooklyn, Tyson grew up to become 1 of the most thrilling & ferocious boxers of all time – & the youngest heavyweight champion ever. But his brilliance in the ring was often compromised by reckless behavior. Years of hard partying, violent rights, & criminal proceedings took their toll: by 2003, Tyson had hit rock bottom, a convicted felon, completely broke, the punch line to a thousand bad late-night jokes. Yet he fought his way back; the man who once admitted being addicted “to everything” regained his success, his dignity, & the love of his family. With a triumphant 1-man stage show, his unforgettable performances in the *Hangover* films, & his newfound happiness & stability as a father & husband, Tyson's story is an inspiring American original.

Brutally honest, raw, & often hilarious, Tyson chronicles his tumultuous highs & lows in the same sincere, straightforward manner we have come to expect from this legendary athlete. A singular journey from Brooklyn's ghettos to worldwide fame to notoriety, &, finally, to a tranquil wisdom, *Undisputed Truth* is not only a great sports memoir but an autobiography for the ages.”

### 1.2 Editorial Reviews from Booklist

“Sharing a title with Tyson's limited-run 1-man Broadway show (soon to air on HBO), this outspoken autobiography simultaneously confirms many of our preconceptions about the celebrity boxer & smashes some of them. Although he came out of poverty & family strife, & although he was following a criminal path at a very early age (he was robbing houses when he was still a preteen & sent to a state reformatory at age 12), & although schooling took a backseat to his fighting career (which also started when he was very young), Tyson does not come across as the semiliterate thug he's so often represented to be. Most readers are familiar with his tumultuous life & career – the bizarre behavior in the ring, the sordid behavior out of it – but what's most surprising about the book is the introspection & self-awareness displayed by this self-proclaimed “trailer park nigga.” Leaving aside the question of how much of the actual writing was done by coauthor Sloman – who's collaborated on several other noteworthy books, including a couple with Howard Stern – it's clear that the voice is Tyson's: it's raw & profane but also smart & witty. Different people have different opinions of Tyson, but he seems to know who he is, & he appears to be OK with that. A fascinating & frequently surprising autobiography.” – David Pitt

### 1.3 Praise for Undisputed Truth

- “A masterpiece ... grimly tragic on 1 page, laugh-out-loud funny on the next, & unrelentingly vulgar & foul-mouthed. Reading Tyson's memoir is like watching a Charles Dickens street urchin grow up to join Hunter S. Thompson on a narcotics-filled road trip – with the ensuing antics captured on video by assorted paparazzi.” – Hector Tobar, *Los Angeles Times*

- “*Undisputed Truth* is raw, powerful & disturbing – a head-spinning take on Mr. Tyson’s life ... Unlike other sports memoirists, he doesn’t pull punches, offering up slashing comments on people who were once close to him. His narrative reminds us of just how far he has come from his rough beginnings, &, in a way, how close he remains to them. He had a punch like a thunderbolt from Zeus, but there have been a lot of big bangers in boxing; Mike Tyson’s came with a pulsating story line like few others.” – Gordon Marino, *Wall Street Journal*
- “Parts of [*Undisputed Truth*] read like a real-life Tarantino movie. Parts read like a Tom Wolfe-ian tour of widely divergent worlds: from the slums of Brooklyn to the high life in Las Vegas to the isolation of prison ... Mr. Tyson’s idiosyncratic voice comes through clearly on the page here – not just his mix of profane street talk & 12-step recovery language, cinematic descriptions of individual fights & philosophical musings, but also his biting humor & fondness for literary & historical references that run the gamut from Alexandre Dumas to Tolstoy to Lenin to Tennessee Williams ... A genuine effort by a troubled soul to gain some understanding of the long, strange journey that has been his life.” – Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*
- “A hefty autobiography that might be the most soul baring book of its genre ever written ... a fascinating look into a life that up until now had already been well chronicled ... It’s raw & profane ... but it is also quite funny.” – *Associated Press*
- “*Undisputed Truth*, which is, without a doubt, 1 of the grittiest & most harrowing memoirs I’ve ever read.” – Flavorwire
- “Most readers are familiar with [Tyson’s] tumultuous life & career – the bizarre behavior in the ring, the sordid behavior out of it – but what’s most surprising about the book is the introspection & self-awareness displayed ... it’s raw & profane but also smart & witty ... A fascinating & frequently surprising autobiography.” – *Booklist*
- “*Undisputed Truth*, is the American dream writ large in raw detail: think *Citizen Kane* scripted by the writing team of *The Wire* ... [it] has a great American novel feel to it ... Tyson could easily be a Tom Wolfe or Norman Mailer creation.” – Austin Collings, *New Statesman*
- “Tyson was ever practiced at delivering the early killer blow; & so it is with this gripping & indecently enthralling autobiography ... Tyson always had a way with words – although much of the credit for this book must go to his ghostwriter Larry “Ratso” Sloman, who not only makes Tyson’s life read like an Elmore Leonard thriller, but gifts him with considerable self-awareness & a memorably pithy turn of phrase ... recounted in gripping, punch-by-punch detail in prose pungent with the reek of blood, sweat & petroleum jelly.” – Mick Brown, *The Telegraph* (UK)
- “Thrilling ... additive ... Sloman brings Tyson’s voice springing off the page with its often hilarious combo of street & shrink, pimp profanity & the ‘prison pseudo-intellectual modern mack rap’ of the autodidact.” – Geoff Dyer, *The Guardian* (UK)

## 2 Quotes

See [TS13].

1. “Fear is the greatest obstacle to learning. But fear is your best friend. Fear is like fire. If you learn to control it, you let it work for you. If you don’t learn to control it, it’ll destroy you & everything around you. Like a snowball on a hill, you can pick it up & throw it or do anything you want with it before it starts rolling down, but once it rolls down & gets so big, it’ll crush you to death. So one must never allow fear to develop & built up without having control over it, because if you don’t you won’t be able to achieve your objective or save your life.”
2. “Man is not mean to be humble, he’s meant to be humbled.”
3. “a man who was friendly with everyone was an enemy to himself.”
4. “You think you know the difference between a hero & a coward, Mike? Well, there is no difference between a hero & a coward in what they feel. It’s what they do that makes them different. The hero & the coward feel exactly the same but you have to have the discipline to do what a hero does & to keep yourself from doing what the coward does.”
5. “The ability to apply the discipline, the ability to do what needs to be done no matter how he feels inside, in my opinion, is the definition of a true professional.”
6. “Your mind is not your friend, Mike. I hope you know that. You have to fight with your mind, control it, put it in its place. You have to control your emotions. Fatigue in the ring is 90% psychological. It’s just the excuse of a man who wants to quit.”
7. “The boxing’s the easy part. When you get into the ring to fight, that’s the vacation. But when you get in the gym, you have to do things over & over till you’re sore & deep in your mind you say, ‘I don’t want to do this anymore,’ I push that out of my mind.”
8. “My style was impetuous, my defenses were impregnable, & I was ferocious.”
9. “God is not going to send someone to hell for my mistakes. So God & I have to deal with my own salvation.”

10. "1 day Cus came to me. "You know, Camille really wants you to do your chores. I could care less if you did, but you should do them because it will make you a better boxer." "How's taking out the trash going to make me a better boxer?" I scoffed. "Because doing something you hate to do like you love it is good conditioning for someone aspiring towards greatness."
11. "MIKE WOULD LIKE TO THANK: Cus D'Amato, my mentor, friend, & general. Because of you, my life has reached heights I could never have imagined. Without you, I don't know where I would be today. My gratitude to you is immeasurable."
12. "He was very vindictive & always out for revenge. He couldn't live without enemies, so he created them."
13. "Confidence was everything. But in order to possess that confidence, you had to test yourself & put yourself on the line. It doesn't come from osmosis, out of the air. It comes from consistently going over the visualization in your mind to help you develop the confidence that you want to possess."
14. "The one who lost & quit, well their demons will follow them to their grave because they had a chance to face them & they didn't. You have to face your demons, Mike, or they will follow you to eternity."
15. "I was a titan, the reincarnation of Alexander the Great. My style was impetuous, my defenses were impregnable, & I was ferocious."
16. "What if I failed & lost? I had been in a million fights on the streets."
17. "Some students would make fun of me, but nobody fucked with me."
18. "In her book, Robin implied that we hadn't slept together, but I actually nailed her the 1st or 2nd night when she came to my hotel. Instead she claimed that we strolled through the mall & played with puppies at pet shops for hours. Can you see me in a motherfucking mall, the heavyweight champ of the world? What the fuck am I doing in a mall?"
19. "Freedom is a very dangerous thing. We ration it very closely."
20. "Burning cocaine is the worst smell in the world. It smells like burning plastic & rat poison combined. A friend of mine once told me, that when you want to know something about anything, put some fire under it. The fire brings out everything. You want to know something about a motherfucker? Put some fire under his ass. Well, when you put some fire under that cocaine, you know what it's made out of."
21. "I had been reading Nietzsche & thought I was a Superman. I could barely spell my name but I was a Superman."
22. "nadir."
23. "You can't give kids a fighting chance if you don't give them a fighting mind."
24. "What kind of bird don't fly? Jailbird! Jailbird!"
25. "But, sir, please let me finish this round & go 1 more round. That's what we normally do," I pleaded. I want to impress Cus. I guess I had. When we got out of the ring, Cus's 1st words to Bobby were, "That's the heavyweight champion of the world."
26. "We sat down & Cus told me he couldn't believe I was only 13 years old. & then he told me what my future would be. He had seen me spar for not even 6 minutes, but he said it in a way that was like law. "You looked splendid," he said. "You're a great fighter." It was compliment after compliment. "If you listen to me, I can make you the youngest heavyweight champion of all time."
27. "used to watch these comic book characters on TV, the X-Men & 1 of my favorites, Apocalypse. Apocalypse would say, "I'm not malevolent, I just am." Cayton & Jacobs wanted me to be friendly with everybody, sociable, but I knew a man who was friendly with everyone was an enemy to himself."
28. "There are animals disguised as human beings out here, you are not sophisticated enough to decipher the two."
29. "if you don't have the spiritual warrior in you, you'll never be a fighter."
30. "The moment the bell rings, & you come in contact with each other, suddenly your opponent seems like everybody else, because now your imagination has dissipated. The fight itself is the only reality that matters. You have to learn to impose your will & take control over that reality."
31. "Cus told me that to be a great fighter you had to get out of your head. He would have me sit down & he'd say, "Transcend. Focus. Relax until you see yourself looking at yourself. Tell me when you get there.""
32. "Cus was a strong believer that in your mind you had to be the entity that you wanted to be. If you wanted to be heavyweight champion of the world, you had to."

33. "Sometimes I'd give my mother a hundred bucks & she wouldn't pay me back. She didn't respect me like that. I'd say, "You own me some money, Ma." & she'd just say, "You owe me your life, boy. I'm not paying you back.""
34. "Later in that tape, the dispatcher kept telling Desiree that she was the victim, she was the victim, & then Desiree slipped something very interesting in."
35. "Hammerle began to ask her about the improbabilities that he saw about the case. "Look, you met Mike Tyson, & you saw him making all of these passes."
36. "My mom's funeral was pathetic. She had saved up some money for a plot in Linden, New Jersey. There were only 8 of us there – me, my brother & sister, my father Jimmy, her boyfriend Eddie, & 3 of my mother's friends. I wore a suit that I had bought with some of the money that I had stolen. She only had a thin cardboard casket & there wasn't enough money for a headstone. Before we left the grave, I said, "Mom, I promise I'm going to be a good guy. I'm going to be the best fighter ever & everybody is going to know my name. When they think of Tyson, they're not going to think of Tyson Foods or Cicely Tyson, they're going to think of Mike Tyson." I said this to her because this was what Cus had been telling me about the Tyson name. Up until then, our family's only claim to fame was that we shared the same last name as Cicely. My mom loved Cicely Tyson."
37. "Tyson came in with a lot of excess baggage. The press has vilified him. Not a day goes by that the press doesn't bring up his faults. This is not the Tyson I know. The Tyson I knew is a sensitive, thoughtful, caring man. He may be terrifying in the ring, but that ends when he leaves the ring."
38. "I was never taught how to handle my celebrity status. I don't tell kids it's right to be Mike Tyson. Parents serve as better role models."
39. "Don't use that word 'can't.' You can't say 'can't.'"
40. "I came home 1 day & there was a white baby in the house. What the fuck is this shit? I thought."
41. "No matter what anyone says, no matter the excuse or explanation, whatever a person does in the end is what he intended to do all along."
42. "If I hide the cuffs, then I'm a bitch. Jim thought that hiding my cuffs would stop me from experiencing shame, but that would have been the shame. I had to be seen with that steel on me. Fuck everybody else, the people who understand, they have got to see me with that steel on. I was going to warrior school."
43. "Because doing something you hate to do like you love it is good conditioning for someone aspiring towards greatness."
44. "Damn, why couldn't I have been with a nonconfrontational kind of white guy?"
45. "Well, I know what I am, & that's what counts more than anything else, because the people don't know what I go through. They think I'm born this way. They don't know what it took to get this way."
46. "As long as I am breathing, your legacy will continue to live on."
47. "'People who are only interested in having fun cannot accomplish anything.' I thought I was stronger than people who were weak & partying."
48. "Cus asked Steve to leave the room so he could talk to me in private. That's when he told me he was dying from pneumonia. I couldn't believe what he was telling me. He didn't look morbidly ill. He was buffing. He had energy & zest. he was eating ice cream. He was chilling out, but I started freaking out. "I don't want to do this shit without you," I said, choking back tears. "I'm not going to do it." "Well, if you don't fight, you'll realize that people can come back from the grave, because I'm going to haunt you for the rest of your life." I told him "Okay," & then he took my hand. "The world has to see you, Mike. You're going to be champ of the world, the greatest out there."
49. "He was certain that I didn't suffer from manic depression. When Halpern called their shrink to see why he had diagnosed me as a manic-depressive, he started backpedaling. He said I wasn't a full-fledged manic-depressive, I merely had a mood disorder, something he called "Boxer Syndrome." That was a new one for Freud."
50. "may have withheld critical evidence, a borderline incompetent trial defense attorney whose bumbling defense may have been more responsible for the guilty verdict than everything else combined & a jury that paid more attention to Tyson's bad-boy public image than to the incompleteness of the case's facts. Garrison's best achievement at trial was his strategy in successfully presenting Desiree Washington as the shy, inexperienced, naive, prim & proper college student that they in fact knew her not to be. Utilizing the full protection."
51. "I spent most of the six weeks."
52. "I couldn't even spell fucking Adidas. But I knew how they made me feel."
53. "Woooo! I loved that shit."

## References

[TS13] Mike Tyson and Larry Sloman. *Undisputed Truth*. Blue Rider Press, 2013, p. 608.