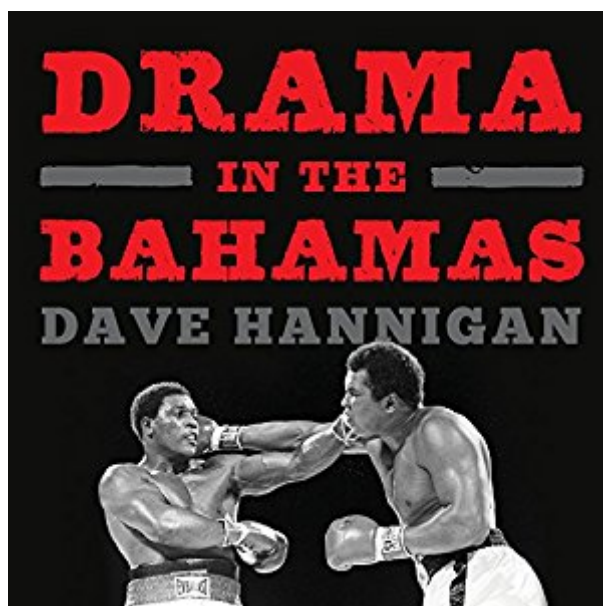


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# Drama In The Bahamas: Muhammad Ali's Last Fight



## Synopsis

On December 11, 1981, Muhammad Ali slumped on a chair in the cramped, windowless locker room of a municipal baseball field outside Nassau. A phalanx of sportswriters had pushed and shoved their way into this tiny, breeze-blocked space. In this most unlikely of settings, they had come to record the last moments of the most storied of all boxing careers. They had come to intrude upon the grief. "It's over," mumbled Ali. "It's over." The show that had entertained and wowed from Zaire to Dublin, from Hamburg to Manila, finally ended its 21-year run, the last performance not so much off-Broadway, more amateur theater in the boondocks. In *Drama in the Bahamas*, Dave Hannigan tells the occasionally poignant, often troubling, yet always entertaining story behind Ali's last bout. Through interviews with many of those involved, he discovers exactly how and why, a few weeks short of his 40th birthday, a seriously diminished Ali stepped through the ropes one more time to get beaten up by Trevor Berbick.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Great book of behind the scenes of all the players

As boxing books goes, this is one of the very best. No one really knows why Muhammad Ali, a wasted, completely depleted fighter, went into the ring one last time with a legitimate top-10 contender. Even in his sorry state, with next to no training, Ali went the full 10 rounds and (on my card at least) did enough to deserve a draw. But the book is not simply the retelling of a fight, it's

much more than that. It's a glimpse into the corrupt sport of boxing, the machinations behind the scene, the lies. The book is also the story of Trevor Berbick, a troubled individual, more fit for a mental institution than a boxing ring. A book about what boxing really is, a sport where leeches, unrepentant about consequences, willingly sucks the last drop of blood from a marvelous man (Ali) in order to make a buck.

More often than not, the last fight in the career of a championship boxer is a sad occasion. That fighter believes he has enough left to win that fight and maybe even be on track to regain the championship or win it in another weight class. In 1981, that was the situation for Muhammad Ali. At least publicly, he believed that despite his loss in 1980 to Larry Holmes he could become a four-time champion and would be on his way back by defeating Trevor Berbick. That didn't happen as Ali lost the fight, and as this well-written book by Dave Hannigan illustrates, Ali was not as focused on the fight as one would think for a person who wants to reclaim the title. Also, the book details the many blunders that promoters made in preparation for this fight, as several times it seemed that the fight would not happen. The book explores nearly every aspect of the events that led up to the bout on December 11, 1981 and there were many obstacles. It was clear from the start that the promoters were short on money and had trouble finding a locale for the fight. Even the one that was ultimately picked in the Bahamas was makeshift, cramped and uncomfortable for the fighters (the undercard included Thomas Hearns and Greg Page). While he didn't write a lot of words describing this particular issue, one of the better illustrations of just how much of a fiasco the whole event turned into was when Hannigan wrote that there was a lack of new boxing gloves for the fighters. This shortage was severe enough that Hannigan mentioned that trainers were requested not to cut off the laces when removing the gloves from the fighter's hands so that they may be used again. For a major boxing event, this was one of the sadder tales. But none were sadder than that of Ali, who was a shell of the great fighter that he was and this is the best writing in the book. The press, TV networks and most other promoters wanted nothing to do with the bout as they did not want the public to see Ali in this condition. They wanted to remember him as the brash young man with the quick moves and devastating punches. Also, Berbick's rise to contender status by the time this fight took place is also well-documented by Hannigan. Much like the publicity, Berbick wasn't forgotten, but he certainly played second fiddle to Ali, whose loss made for a sad ending to an excellent career. This book is one that all boxing fans should add to their bookshelves.

One of the best books on Ali (along with "Sucker Punch" and the recently published book on Ali and Malcolm X). A story of a fighter in decline, an aspect of his life we rarely hear about. I maintain that Ali would have remained an out-spoken (though slightly mellowed) loudmouth had he not lost his speech in his early 40s. Nevertheless, yes, I concede he was indeed one of the most captivating, if not racially divisive figures in modern sports history. (To call him a civil rights activist might be a fashionable, but do the homework first in the above-mentioned books. The fact remains he was anti-MLK and anti-mixing of the races, going so far as to proclaim this view in a 1975 Playboy interview, severing ties with Malcolm X under orders from Eliza Muhammad. He was not a "conscientious objector but proscribed by the Muslims to fight. Again, the evidence is replete.) But those are my gripes over a figure I feel has been undeservedly haloed, revered as a god, a man for all races, so excuse the rant. Back to the point, this is not only an important book in its chronicling the decline of a man who pushed himself despite just about everyone pleading that he not fight again, but a necessary indictment against a sport I at once love but the abolition of which I concede is long over due. This I apply to any sport - including football - where the brain is jostled around the skull - ain't no helmet that'll help with that. A great read, a must for any Ali, boxing, or sports fan.

Great book. Sad in a way, but most fighters take the road of not wanting to leave the sport when they have to. However Ali put up a good fight. The last fight of the "Greatest", a must read!

After being handled in his fight against Larry Holmes Ali has a difficult time getting a boxing license. This chronicles the long winding road to him getting back into the ring, as well as the story of his opponent. Engaging, B/W photos.

Delivered a little late from the seller but an interesting read for my Ali collection.

great book. i really enjoyed reading it and i am glad it was written.

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