



Fighting Talk: Boxing and the Modern Lexicon

Bob Jones

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From 'A Low Blow' to 'Went the Distance', a fascinating and lively examination of the regular use of terms from the boxing ring in our everyday language. Have you ever stopped to notice how often your local newspaper or favourite magazine uses the terms 'On the Ropes', 'The Gloves Are Off' and 'Knockout Punch'? How often TV newsreaders will say that a politician has "Thrown His hat in the Ring", is a 'Big Hitter', is 'Taking it on the Chin', is 'Down for the Count' or has the 'Killer Instinct'? Knight of the realm, leading businessman, colourful and controversial commentator, and boxing aficionado Sir Robert - Bob - Jones certainly has. Over a period of years he made careful note of how often terms cropped up and then retraced their etymological origins in boxing history. The result is a lively, entertaining, and thought-provoking miscellany of boxing terms that are now part of our everyday English language. Some have strayed far from their original meanings, others are more frequently in use now than at any other time. Jones asks why that might be, and his answers are, well, a knockout.

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