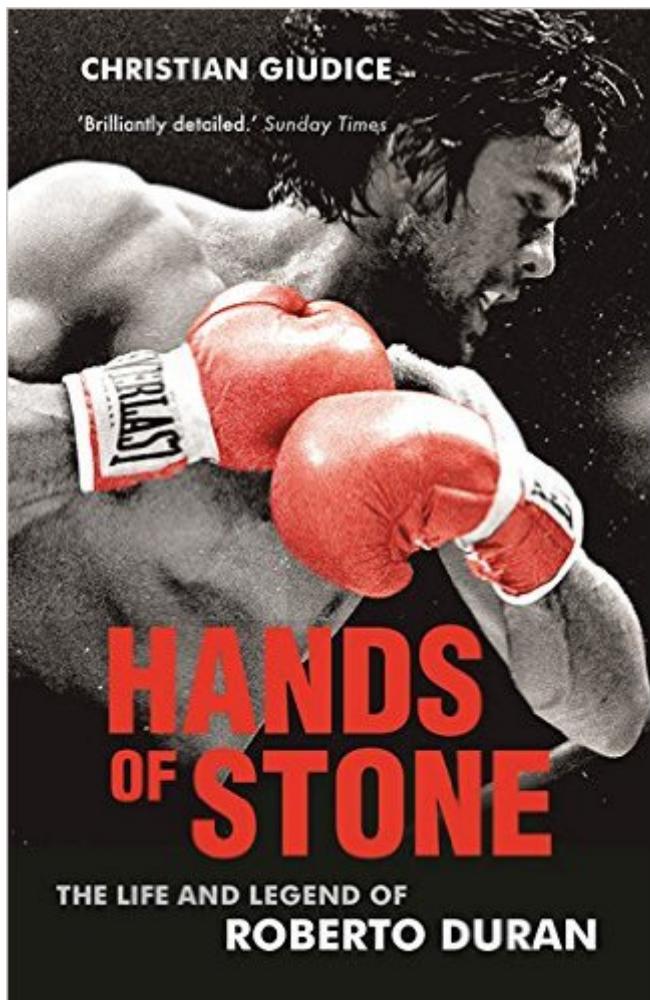


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Hands Of Stone: The Life And Legend Of Roberto Duran



Synopsis

"A riveting read from the first page to the last."The Ring"An extraordinary tale."The Times (London)"A compelling book; at times it's a profoundly detailed reconstruction of Duran's world."Gerald Early, Belles-LettresNow 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 man in history to have fought in five different decades. His bouts with fellow greats like Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns, and Marvin Hagler have gone down in fistic folklore. When he finally retired, in January of 2002 at the age of fifty-two, his professional record stood at a remarkable 104 wins (69 by KO) in 120 fights. They called him Manos de Piedra: "Hands of Stone." Journalist Christian Giudice's definitive, critically-acclaimed biography tells the no-holds-barred of Duran's incredible life, both in and out of the ring. Giudice interviewed the fighter, his family, his closest friends and scores of his opponents to separate truth from myth and fact from fable.Duran was born in utter poverty in Panama and grew up in the streets, fighting to survive. His talent with his fists soon emerged, and he had his first professional fight in 1967. He grew into a fighter's fighter, renowned for his speed, stamina, toughness and skill, but above all for his unquenchable thirst for battle. His hunger to destroy opponents and his willingness to take on anyone, anywhere, made him a huge fan favorite, while his flamboyant lifestyle outside the ring made worldwide headline news.Duran was one of the first Latino fighters to become a mainstream sports star in the United States, and his natural talent, unprecedented achievements, and longevity have left an indelible mark on the world of sport. His life is now the subject a major film starring Edgar Ramirez as the boxer, Robert De Niro as his famed trainer, Ray Arcel, and Usher as Ray Leonard.Christian Giudice is a freelance journalist based in New Jersey. He is also the author of *The Rise and Fall of Alexis Arguello* and *A Fire Burns Within: The Miraculous Journey of Wilfredo Gomez*.

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Customer Reviews

Teachers of fiction often make the point that contradiction makes for colorful, rich characters. Christian Giudice's biography of Panamanian boxing champion Roberto Duran in *Hands of Stone* certainly validates this claim in the realm of reality too. Duran won world titles in four different weight divisions and fought in five decades with a record of 104 wins in 120 fights and 69 knockouts. He is regarded by almost all boxing writers and insiders as one of boxing's all-time great champions. But Duran is still best remembered for his "no mas" welterweight title rematch with Sugar Ray Leonard in the New Orleans Superdome in November, 1980, when he quit at the end of the eighth round. The boxing world has since tried to make sense of Duran's smoldering macho persona, juxtaposed with the unthinkable act of quitting in the middle of a championship fight. To Giudice's credit, he doesn't over-psychologize, and lets those closest to Duran and the fight itself do the explaining. In fact, Giudice lays out his motivation to write the book in a thoughtful introduction - the book evolved as a matter of his own personal pursuit to answer the question of how and why "no mas" happened. What follows is the biography of a man who is not so much complex as he is certainly contradictory. Duran's early days are fascinating. From relatives with colorful classical Greek family names like Socrates (an uncle who had uncommon punching power) and Alcibiades (Duran's younger brother whose tragic death he claims his mother never got over), to stories about his early Dickensian street-mentor Chaflan, and the three different versions of his reputed knockout of a horse at the age of sixteen, Duran's early days in the slums of Chorrillo in Panama City make for great reading.

Roberto Duran fought twice in Cleveland, Ohio, and for all the wrong reasons. On August 9, 1991, he climbed into the ring for his first match after he turned away from Sugar Ray Leonard in New Orleans in 1980. Viewed by many fans and scribes as a washed-up quitter, the Cleveland bout drew passing interest. But it actually began a surprising comeback, culminating in the defeat of Iran Barkley in 1989 and the winning of his last major world title. There was no such storybook ending after Duran opened up on a "tomato can" on December 17, 1992. That victory was part of a decade-long series of bouts - mostly at casino convention centers - which only ended after Duran

suffered severe injuries in an automobile accident and finally retired from the sport. The two Durans the Cleveland fans witnessed are part of the complicated story that author Christian Giudice unwinds in this outstanding biography on a legendary fighter who arguably is one of the greatest pound-for-pound champions ever. Giudice gathers information and quotes from Duran, business associates, family members, (former) friends, opponents, trainers and boxers to oftentimes give completely different recollections on one subject. Truly, it depends on what angle the person is approaching on any given topic, but Giudice takes a step back and let's the quotes do the talking. Duran seemingly had as many personalities as ring victories. He would give the shirt off his back and hand out thousands of dollars at any given time as a modern-day Robin Hood, but was also known to insult his wife when with friends by bragging to her about his extramarital affairs. He valued his legacy of being a great champion, but approached many of his matches with little or no serious training.

To ask most boxing historians who the greatest pound for pound fighter of all time would yield the answer "Sugar Ray Robinson". However, The answer "Roberto Duran" would not draw fierce argument. Starting his ascent as a lightweight, he marched through the welterweight division, up to middleweight, and beyond. He fought until he was 50 years old, and aside from Muhammad Ali, was the most charismatic fighter to ever lace up the gloves. His career reached meteoric heights, culminating in his defeat of then-undefeated Sugar Ray Leonard for the welterweight title, and stunning downturns, punctuating when he walked out of the ring in the middle of his rematch. With feral, relentless intensity, he defeated larger fighters, like Iran Barkley for the middleweight title, younger fighters, like Davey Moore for the light middleweight title, quicker fighters, like Estaban DeJesus for the lightweight title, and stronger fighters, like Pepino Cuevas in a comeback fight. He was a hero to the common man and common fan, and completely fearless between the ropes. With many fighters, the memories of the fights live on, but with Duran, they are joined with the regrets of what if? He missed out on fights with greats like Aaron Pryor, Tony Ayala and Pernell Whitaker and Julio Cesar Chavez as they crossed divisions or each others primes. My suspicion is that a fully trained Duran would have found ways to dismantle them all. The amazing thing about many boxing biographies is that they are written by unknown authors fueled by their passion of the sport and their subject. Christian Guidice is one such author. This book is one of the better biographies I have read.

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