AWESOME stories

MICKY WARD and DICKY EKLUND - TODAY

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At about the time "The Fighter" was released, Micky Ward and his brother Dickie Ekland were interviewed. *The Lowell Sun* has released that video interview on its YouTube Channel. The image, above, is a screenshot from the interview. It is online via *The Lowell Sun*.

During the last fight of his career, as Micky Ward battled Arturo Gatti in the eighth round, HBO's commentators could not stop praising both men:

> *This is incredible!* (Jim Lampley)

> *Even other fighters are moved by the great toughness and resilience of these two fighters, qualities that are every bit as rare as great boxing ability.* (Larry Merchant)

> *It's as if they're not even human!* (Emmanuel Steward)

But, of course, they *were* human - both during, and after, their fights. Especially ... after them.

When "after the fight" turned into "after the career" - and professional boxing was a thing of the past for both Ward *and* Gatti - Arturo (according to a recent book by Jacques Pothier) became depressed. In Brazil, with his wife (Amanda Rodrigues Gatti) and his young son (Junior), the great warrior ended his life on July 11, 2009. Many questions, about what really happened, remain unanswered.

Stunned to hear of his friend's death, Micky regrets that Arturo will not be around to see either "The Fighter" or its sequel (which, if made, would feature their famous trilogy):

> *It's sad that we can't enjoy the aftermath of our fights. We could've been doing a lot of things together, you know? We were just great friends, and it got cut short, tragically. ... I think about him almost every day.* (*USA Today*, interview with Ward, December 9, 2010.)

Ward's everyday life now includes being a role model for young fighters. Like the man who was so important to him - Mickey O'Keefe - Ward owns a gym (in Chelmsford) where he trains young people. He is also part owner of an outdoor hockey rink, gives paid motivational speeches - and - drives a truck for the Teamsters, Local 25 (in Boston).

Dickie Eklund - who wanted to be known as "Dicky" Eklund in the film (so the spelling of his name would match his brother's) - suffers from herniated disks in his lumbar spine (which impinge on his nerves). He's still trying to help young people pursue their dreams, despite his pain. He's a trainer, at Micky's Corner, and some experts think his skills are both intuitive and motivational.

But ... Dickie still struggles with personal issues. He's been arrested many times - even after his release from prison - although he tries hard to focus. He was paid $193,000 for the rights to his story - captured in "The Fighter" - but those funds are long-ago spent.

Dickie's living with his girlfriend, Leslie Stephens, but she's had to call 9-11 on him more than once. He's hoping that his skills as a boxing trainer - and his loyalty to those around him - will help him earn a better living (once the movie is released).

His brother plans to include him in some of his motivational speeches, but no one can really be sure whether such work is a good fit for Eklund. Dickie has a great story to tell - he's overcome much in his hard life - and if he can tell that story himself, Dickie - more than anyone else - will benefit.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
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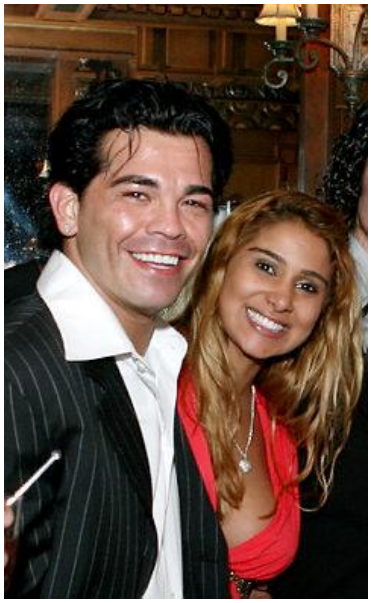
Media Stream



Arturo Gatti - Amanda Rodrigues

Photo of Arturo Gatti and Amanda Rodrigues, online courtesy NY Daily News.
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Dicky Eklund with His Girlfriend, Leslie Stephens

Photo of Eklund and Stephens, by Jeff Riedel. Online, courtesy Men's Journal, March 2011 edition. Copyright Jeff Riedel, all rights reserved.
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Dicky Eklund - The Fighter

Photo of Dickie Eklund, at the gym, by Patrick Whittemore of the *Boston Herald*. Copyright, Patrick Whittemore, all rights reserved.
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Micky Ward - The Fighter

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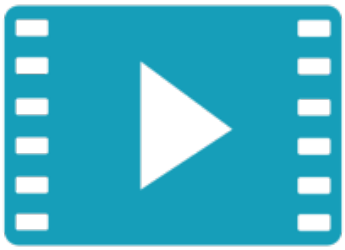

Micky Ward Remembers Arturo Gatti

Video clip online, courtesy YouTube.
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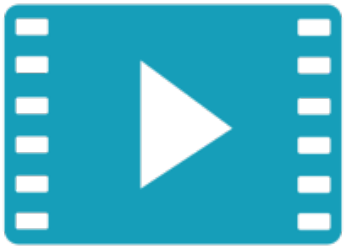

Micky Ward - Helping Young Boxers

Video clip of Micky Ward, online courtesy YouTube.
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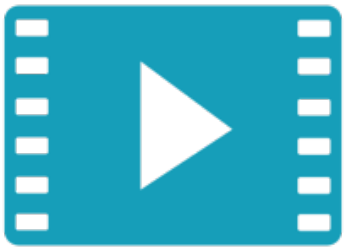

Micky Ward and Dicky Eklund

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