

LEW TYS

by Glenn Minnis



IT'S LUDICROUS

In the end, the skill of the man could no longer measure up to his will.

In the days leading up to his heavyweight title bout with Lennox Lewis, Mike Tyson busied himself by seemingly pushing all the right buttons. It was reminiscent of the days when his sound bites alone were enough to terrify his opponents, leaving them with the daunting task of having to square off against a power they both feared and revered.

But alas, on the night of June 8, in Memphis, Tenn., Tyson's latest barrage of sound and fury proved little or nothing at all, as Lewis pummeled him into the most lopsided defeat of Iron Mike's nearly two-decade long career.

Never have we seen Tyson, whose second wife filed for divorce only weeks before the match, so vulnerable. Never had we seen him, not even during the days leading up to his prison stunts, looking the part of the beaten man.

So, with all around him seemingly dissolving before our very eyes, the question now becomes: What's next for Mike Tyson? A Lewis rematch? A spot on the undercard at the next Wrestlemania? A celebrity box-off against Robin Givens?

Mike himself seemed confused and uncertain after his latest heartbreak.

"I'd like a rematch," he told a throng of reporters immediately after

the bout. "He was the better fighter tonight. I don't know what I'm going to do now."

Well, Mike, if you're truly serious about this whole rematch business, you might want to get your camp in order first.

You see, I for one still subscribe to the delusion that Tyson can get it done. Reclaim his heavyweight crown. Take back the mantle of the baddest human on the planet. That said, I realize a lot must happen between then and now for that to come to fruition.

It goes without saying that the 36-year-old version of Tyson is not the same version of 17 years ago, when he burst on the scene as a wide-eyed teenager, en route to becoming the youngest heavyweight champ in history.

So why is his entourage still using the same tactics? Why has his strategy not changed?

You see, these days, everyone's a

LENNOX LEWIS

The monster that has become Lennox Lewis might be on the verge of coming back to bite the 6'5", 249 pound heavyweight champion.

Translation? Lewis' dismantling of Mike Tyson was so thorough, so impressively destructive, that there might not be another fighter in the entire division right now worthy of squaring off against him.

At least that's the way things are shaping up in the eyes and minds of the all-important pay-per-view buying public. And as we know, perception often becomes reality if enough people share it, a phenomenon that seems to have affected even Lewis.

"I just don't see anyone out there right now that can beat me," Lewis said days after the Tyson fight. "I don't know if I have anything left to prove. I mean, this fight cemented my legacy. What reason would I have to go on fighting?"

That said, Lewis shouldn't be too shocked to learn his number may still be programmed into the speed dials of fight promoters far and wide. Not surprisingly, there's still the hint—no matter how remote—of a few multi-million dollar purses dangling in the air.

Already the likes of Evander Byrd, Ray Mercer and brother Vitali Klitschko were considered victims, ahem, opponents for went on record as saying he some time off before making about whether he still wants

—G.M.

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badass, rendering all Mike's grimacing facial expressions, would-be acts of intimidation, and other thug antics effective only in music videos.

The bottom line is: If Mike Tyson wants to continue fighting, then he has to become a fighter again. That means getting away from being the one-punch, all-or-nothing assassin he was in his younger years and re-learn how to box. It means putting in the kind of hours that it routinely takes to be a world-class fighter.

Easier said than done, you say? Maybe. But one thing is certain, it'll never happen if Tyson doesn't surround himself with more credible handlers.

On the night that he fought Lewis, —the night both men sought to define themselves as the best their era has to offer, Lennox Lewis climbed into the ring with Emmanuel Steward, a legend in his own right, at his side.

Not only was the 57-year-old Steward the longtime trainer of

Thomas "Hitman" Hearns, but a couple years back when Oliver McCall, under Steward's tutelage, knocked out Lewis for the title, Lewis was so impressed he went out and hired Steward for the rematch and he hasn't let him leave his side since.

So who was in Mike Tyson's corner that night? Well, let's see: There was Panama Lewis—a man once barred from boxing for stripping away most of the padding in the gloves of one of his fighters—and Steve Fitch, a smooth-talking, would-be soothsayer who has less credibility than Miss Cleo.

In fact, the only trainer of any consequence in Tyson's corner that night was Ronnie Shields, whose authority was undoubtedly undermined by the circus atmosphere.

Would having someone like Steward in his corner that night have been enough to get Tyson over the hump? Nobody can say, but who could deny the fact that when you're going to war,

it makes sense to have re:
behind you?

Tyson would be wise to these things before he see vent himself yet again. He fully chart his course if he be the demise of Lennox

After the fight, Lewis ta need he felt to discipline just think if Mike could de himself.

There'd be no story to There'd be no "what we g now?" type questions to p Tyson once stood as a pro some sort, a wunderkind s ing all the history books. A ways, that's still the case. W selves, time and time again man, this one-time phenon clear the slate of wasted op and resurrect himself into on many felt he was destin

The clock's ticking, Mike pressure's building. Is the f in you? ●