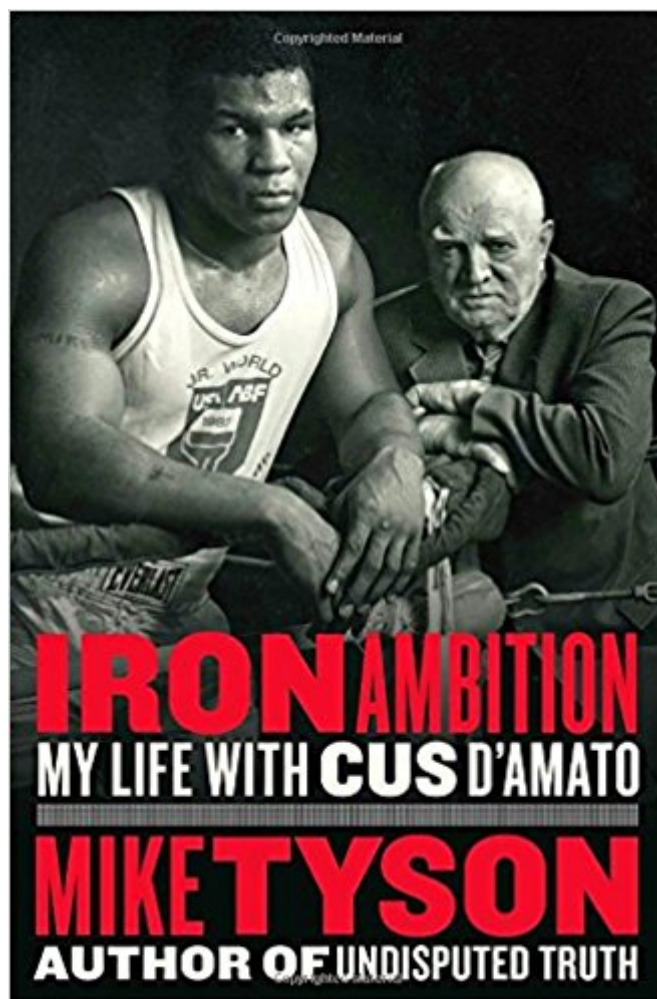




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Iron Ambition: My Life With Cus D'Amato



Synopsis

From the former heavyweight champion and New York Times bestselling author comes a powerful look at the life and leadership lessons of Cus D'Amato, the legendary boxing trainer and Mike Tyson's surrogate father. "[Iron Ambition] spells out D'Amato's techniques for building a champion from scratch." —Wall Street Journal When Cus D'Amato first saw thirteen-year-old Mike Tyson spar in the ring, he proclaimed, "That's the heavyweight champion of the world." D'Amato, who had previously managed the careers of world champions Floyd Patterson and José Torres, would go on to train the young Tyson and raise him as a son. D'Amato died a year before Tyson became the youngest heavyweight champion in history. In Tyson's bestselling memoir *Undisputed Truth*, he recounted the role D'Amato played in his formative years, adopting him at age sixteen after his mother died and shaping him both physically and mentally after Tyson had spent years living in fear and poverty. In *Iron Ambition*, Tyson elaborates on the life lessons that D'Amato passed down to him, and reflects on how the trainer's words of wisdom continue to resonate with him outside the ring. The book also chronicles Cus's courageous fight against the mobsters who controlled boxing, revealing more than we've ever known about this singular cultural figure.

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Customer Reviews

"In this tender and disturbing hybrid of memoir and biography, former heavyweight boxing

champion Tyson examines one of the most unusual characters in boxing history.

Tyson's love for Cus D'Amato is more than apparent, but it doesn't lead him to downplay his teacher's myriad faults. Publishers Weekly (starred review) "The boxing champion, infamous for biting and beating, reveals his soft side in this memoir of his longtime mentor and trainer.... [Tyson] writes respectfully and affectionately [about Constantine 'Cus' D'Amato], though some of the old toughness hangs on.... A belated but welcome homage to a boxing legend who died shortly before Tyson's career took off. Fans of the sweet science will want to have a look." Kirkus Reviews

Mike Tyson is the former undisputed heavyweight champion of the world, and the first boxer ever to hold the three biggest belts in prizefighting—the WBC, WBA, and IBF world heavyweight titles—simultaneously. Tyson's enduring appeal has launched him into a career in entertainment: he was a standout in the blockbuster films *The Hangover* and *The Hangover Part II*, and recently he has earned tremendous acclaim for his one-man show *Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth*. Tyson has launched a clothing company, *Roots of Fight*, and *Tyrrhnic Productions*, which currently has several film projects in development. In 2011 he was inducted into the *Boxing Hall of Fame*. He lives in Las Vegas with his wife, Kiki, and their children. — Larry

“Ratso” Sloman is best known as Howard Stern's collaborator on *Private Parts* and *Miss America*. Sloman's recent collaborations include *Mysterious Stranger*, with magician David Blaine; *Scar Tissue*, the memoir of Red Hot Chili Peppers lead singer Anthony Kiedis; and *Undisputed Truth* with Mike Tyson. His biography of Houdini, *The Secret Life of Houdini*, is soon to be a major motion picture for Lionsgate.

Remarkable to hear nuances about this incredible individual. It got dry in the middle while going in depth with the mob connections, but was a worthwhile read.

How a man's love and devotion to a young person totally changed the trajectory of both their lives.

Cus D'Amato was an amazing human being. This book is worth its weight in gold. This book is highly recommended.

The best book ever. If you want to know more about Cus D'Amato and Iron Mike- don't hesitate, buy this book immediately.

Was already a fan of Mike Tyson, following him over the years it's easy imagining him sitting and writing this book.

Great book!

Behind every great boxer there's a great trainer: for Joe Louis it was Jack Blackburn, for Muhammad Ali it was Angelo Dundee, and for Mike Tyson it was Constantine (Cus) D'Amato. D'Amato obviously featured heavily in Tyson's candid autobiography *Undisputed Truth*, written with Larry Sloman, and the same team now examine the Iron Man's relationship with D'Amato in detail in the equally well written *Iron Ambition. My Life with Cus D'Amato*. Tyson asks how this boxing manager and trainer watched him spar for less than ten minutes when he was thirteen years old and correctly predicted that he would become the youngest ever heavyweight champion of the world and then proceeds to answer his own question by showing that D'Amato was much more than a great boxing coach, who developed the 'peek-a-boo' style of fighting (where both hands are kept in front of the body rather than adopting a stance in which one arm and one foot are placed forward). Tyson shows that D'Amato was a true mentor who built character as much as muscle, and mental discipline as much as physical stamina, believing that fights are won or lost in the mind before the competitors even enter the ring. Tyson has acknowledged that had D'Amato not rescued him from the mean streets of Brownsville in New York City, he might well have suffered an early violent death. D'Amato, the son of Italian immigrants in the Bronx, knew precisely what was at stake, having been nearly blinded and had his own hopes of a career in boxing ended when, aged twelve, he suffered a head injury in a fight with an adult. D'Amato's personal courage was most obviously evident in his professional career, before he took on Tyson, by his taking on the Mob and effectively breaking the monopoly of championship bouts and boxing contracts exercised by the corrupt International Boxing Club. D'Amato diverted Tyson from a life of crime when he took the thirteen-year-old into his home when Tyson left the Tryon School for Boys, a New York State correctional facility, and in 1982, upon the death of the boy's mother, he

became the sixteen-year old Tyson's legal guardian. In just under four years from that time Tyson knocked out Trevor Berbick in the second round to become WBC Heavyweight Champion of the World. Sadly Cus Amato did not live to see this triumph, having died in the previous year. Considering how badly Tyson subsequently went off the rails, both outside and inside the ring, it's interesting but pointless to speculate whether, had Cus Amato lived longer, he might have been able to suppress, or at least channel, Tyson's inner demons. What we have in *Iron Ambition* is effectively an extended love letter from Tyson to his surrogate father. Love is sometimes blind and never more so than with respect to self-love and Tyson exhibits something of a blind-spot in presenting himself as the youngest ever heavyweight boxing champion. When he defeated Berbick, to win the WBC title, the world of boxing had divided into rival organizations legitimising world championship boxing titles. Ironically the youngest ever undisputed world heavyweight boxing champion was another Cus Amato protégé, Floyd Patterson, who won that title aged twenty-one in 1956. Few would now subscribe to the description of boxing as the noble art and Tyson, as much as any man, is responsible for it losing that badge of honour yet in *Iron Ambition* Tyson has painted an indelible and convincing portrait of Cus Amato as a noble soul.

This is the first REAL book on Cus Amato, both his work with Mike as well as an extremely detailed account of his life fighting the mob while taking Patterson to the title. This is a must read. As a fan of Tyson and of Cus, I've been waiting 20 years for this book to be written... ever since reading about how Cus wanted Jose Torres to write his story about how Cus turned Mike into a champion. Well, that book was never written. Instead, Torres wrote *Fire and Fear*, which was NOT what Cus had intended. This is the book Cus wanted written about himself. This is his legacy. Mike has proven himself to be Cus' most dedicated and most valuable student. First he won the title, fulfilling Cus' final prediction, and now, 30 years after his death, Mike has written a biography WORTHY of Cus to ensure his legacy lasts forever. Thanks for writing this book, Mike. It's not just that it teaches us about Cus, but about his beliefs and methods regarding how to transform a weak person into a strong one. This is a book the world needs.

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