

Murder on Federal Street: Tyrone Everett, the Black Mafia, Fixed Fights, and the Last Golden Age of Philadelphia Boxing

PHILADELPHIA (April 7, 2023)—Handsome, brash, and flashy, the lightweight southpaw Tyrone Everett was one of the hottest names to emerge during the fervent Philadelphia boxing scene of the 1970s. But his seemingly unstoppable ascent to superstardom came to an abrupt and gruesome halt on the morning of May 26, 1977, on the second floor bedroom of a row home on Federal Street in South Philadelphia. Only twenty-four years old, Everett was discovered dead with a bullet in his head delivered by his girlfriend, Carolyn McKendrick. On the kitchen table were thirty-nine sealed bags of heroin, primed for distribution. The lone witness to the shooting was a gay, cross-dressing drug dealer who, depending on the source, may have been caught in bed with Everett. McKendrick, who claimed she had been repeatedly abused by Everett, would end up serving a prison sentence, but for years the scuttlebutt on the streets of South Philadelphia suggested there were reasons to doubt the official story.

Even for a sport as fundamentally wedded to the sad and sordid as boxing, the untimely death of Tyrone Everett stands out for its head-scratching irresolution and sorrow. In *Murder on Federal Street*, journalist and debut author Sean Nam sheds light on Everett's grim last days, clearing up long-held misconceptions, raising new questions, and, along the way, offering revelatory information, including Everett's

entanglement with the Black Mafia, the harrowing criminal consortium that controlled the dope trade in South Philadelphia during the '70s.

Nam also parses one of the most infamous miscarriages inside the ring, one that continues to trigger heated debates among hard-core fans: the 1976 lightweight title fight at the Spectrum in Philadelphia between Everett and Alfredo Escalera that took place just six months before Everett's death. Everett, to the eternal confoundment of the hometown crowd, lost by split decision. Nam shows how the shoddy proceedings of that night were almost certainly the result of a carefully deliberated frame-up. Indeed, whatever walk of life he was on, Everett was seemingly star-crossed at every turn. As award-winning writer Carlos Acevedo (*Sporting Blood, The Duke*) notes in an astute foreword to the book, Everett suffered from the "crooked overlap" between corruption in the streets and in boxing.

Deeply researched and vividly reported, *Murder on Federal Street* weaves together racial politics, urban history, and sociology to situate Everett in the wider context of a tumultuous era, one marked by civil rights strife and economic depression. The book also takes pains to show how Everett measured up to his Philadelphian colleagues (Bennie Briscoe, Stanley "Kitten" Hayward, Matthew Saad Muhammad, Bobby "Boogaloo" Watts, Eugene "Cyclone", et al.) in a bustling boxing culture now regarded as one the last great regional renaissances in American prizefighting. Interviews conducted with key figures—from Everett's younger brother to his promoter, J Russell Peltz—help flesh out the life of a memorable fighter whose name has been obscured—and distorted—by time.

Murder on Federal Street is a stirring, true-crime account of a modern-day Icarus, whose ambition led him toward a path of distinction but also ultimately his downfall.

Sean Nam is available for interviews.

Advance reader copies available upon request. Please contact Rushcuttersbaybooks@gmail.com

Advance Praise for *Murder on Federal Street*:

“Until now, only hard-core boxing fans were aware of Everett’s story—minus perspective and large chunks of critical and significant facts. Now, thanks to Nam, the picture has gone from cloudy to clear and complete.”

—Steve Farhood, boxing analyst for Showtime, 2017 inductee into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, and former editor of *The Ring* magazine

“[*Murder on Federal Street* is] investigative reporting and storytelling at its finest with a touch of *Goodfellas* meets *Raging Bull*.”

—Harvey Araton, *New York Times* best-selling author

“If there’s a hero [in *Murder on Federal Street*], it’s Sean Nam, whose obsessional reporting and evocative style turn a true story into a noir worthy of a *Gamble and Huff* soundtrack. ...[*Murder on Federal Street* is] a wonderfully nasty business. And for the same unfortunate reasons you might be drawn to boxing, you’ll love it.

—Mark Kriegel, ESPN analyst and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Good Son: The Life of Ray “Boom Boom” Mancini*

“Sean Nam has written a compelling, page-turning history of Tyrone Everett which will appeal to boxing and true crime fans alike. His comprehensive research is mind-boggling, covers everything from urban and racial politics to the boxing scene to the underworld, and his writing is top notch.

—Sean Patrick Griffin, Professor of Criminal Justice at The Citadel and author of *Black Brothers, Inc.: The Violent Rise*

and Fall of Philadelphia's Black Mafia

"In death, as in life, Philadelphia lightweight Tyrone Everett remains a colorful, controversial character whose story deserves the kind of in-depth examination as is so ably provided by author Sean Nam.

—Bernard Fernandez, 2020 inductee into the International Boxing Hall of Fame and author of the *Championship Rounds* boxing anthology series

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sean Nam is a contributor to BoxingScene.com and the British weekly boxing magazine Boxing News. A former boxing writer for USA Today, he is a full member and co-vice president of the Boxing Writers Association of America. He is also a member of the International Boxing Research Organization. *Murder on Federal Street* is his first book. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

ABOUT THE FOREWORD WRITER:

Carlos Acevedo is the author of *The Duke: The Life and Lies of Tommy Morrison* and *Sporting Blood: Tales from the Dark Side of Boxing*. He is the editor of Hannibal Boxing and a member of the Boxing Writers Association of America. From 2009 to 2016, he was the editor of The Cruellest Sport. His work has appeared in The Ring, Boxing News, HBO Boxing, Undisputed Champion Network, Remezcla, and Boxing Digest. His stories "A Darkness Made to Order," "A Ghost Orbiting Forever," and "The Duke of the West Side" all won first place awards from the BWAA. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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