

Clay Moyle writes: Just came across the following in recently acquired book by Tom Meany from 1955 titled 'Collier's Greatest Sports Stories' and thought it was worth sharing. Interesting that he forecasted the next champ would be someone like Tunney:

“They Call Me a Bum

by Jack Dempsey as told to John B. Kennedy (September 1925)

Sometimes I feel I'd live to give my memory a knockout and really enjoy life.

Jack Dempsey said this after demonstrating that he had a memory with a reach longer than the long arm of coincidence.

I had talked with him six years ago, since which time he had slammed himself into the world's heavyweight championship and he remembered exactly the worlds passed between us at a crucial point in his career.

It was a November night in Madison Square Garden. Dempsey was one of a grab bag full of fighters whose illegal operations in the name of war charity were connived at by the police, for the Frawley Law was dead and the Walker Law unborn.

He had engaged to meet a certain Joe Bond. With Jack Kearns, he entered the packed arena to loud and sustained cheers, and he was about to climb into the ring when Kearns checked him. In the squared circle had suddenly appeared a dark cloud instead of the white foreman Messrs. Dempsey and Kearns had engaged to decapitate. The cloud was none other than Harry Wills' precursor – the illustrious Joe Jeannette, Afric super-sluggier and tax magnate of Hoboken and the Jersey Netherlands.

Jeannette paced the ring like a black angel of destructions, snorting challenge at the amazed white man. The crowd roared cheers at the Negro and emptied its fifteen thousand throats in jibes at Dempsey. Kearns, perfumed and peeved, bobbed about the press seats, strenuously arguing that Dempsey had offered his services gratis to fight a Caucasian named Bond: that he would fight none other.

The hissing of ten thousand serpents singed Dempsey's ears. The Negro's lips curled over shining teeth. Dempsey sprang from his chair for the ring, but a lavender-cuffed hand of Kearns restrained him.

“You stay put,” Kearns barked as shrieks of “Quitter!” “Big bum!” “Yeller dog!” issued from the smoke clouds in the galleries.

Dempsey glowered, black-browed, flushed, a dumb giant stung by mocking wasps. Those nearest him understood, sympathized. If he went into the ring with Jeannette, one lucky punch might spoil his career.

“Sit tight, Jack,” I advised him. “Box Bond or nobody.”

He thrust a bandaged hand into mine.

“I'll fight any white man they put on,” he growled huskily, “but I didn't agree to fight a colored boy.”

As Jeannette leered and the mob howled, he writhed. But between him and the ring stood the slim figure of Kearns. Twenty minutes of screaming and hissing ensued. Then Dempsey, head bowed, was led away.