

(English translation of the PÚBLICO newspaper review)

## Resting Bull

*Bruno de Almeida gives a fighter the microphone for his life. Great character; great film.*

Boxing and cinema go well together, and (for the young readers) we're not even talking about "Raging Bull": they already did before that. There is something in fighters that makes them great film characters. Something in the fighter's life – and in the ring: a man alone against another man – which transcends beyond the sport. The ring is a stage: there in action is, and in narration, is some sort of tragedy. In short, that's what cinema sees when seeing a fight.

In short, that's what Bruno de Almeida saw when he meet Bobby Cassidy. Ex-fighter, active between the 1960's e 1980. He never made it to world champion - "and after all these years it still bothers me". He won and he lost, he hit and got hit enough times to explain what it feels like (physically and psychologically) to be close to a "knockout", and to say to those who feel bad about hitting his opponent that "then, don't be in it".

Cassidy is the opposite of the stereotype that makes of fighters brutal men: he is articulate; he talks about boxing with a flow between the technical and the philosophical, between the sport and the way of life. With enthusiasm and sadness but without "bullshit", without embellishing things and without cheap poetry. He doesn't need anyone to tell him about his own tragedy, he's the one telling us: a difficult childhood, an alcoholic mother, a violent stepfather. Without rage, without a motivation behind every punch a fighter doesn't have a motor.

Cassidy is now close to his seventies – and besides the sadness of never having won the world championship – he is at peace with himself and with his life. Bruno de Almeida gives him the opportunity of telling us his autobiography. "Bobby Cassidy, Counterpuncher" is that above all: the story of a life told in the first person. At home with his sons, or at the gym, Cassidy narrates episodes, remembers fights to great detail and describes complex thoughts. And sometimes he has epiphanies: he quit boxing on an impulse, when he looked at the clock in Times Square and it read 4 o'clock (without explanation, as if it was evident: 4 pm on the Times Square Clock, time to leave boxing). Times Square: the story of Bobby is also a New York story, and for Bruno de Almeida, which was (and perhaps still is) a New-Yorker, that matters. The 60's, the 70's, the 80's, the underworlds of boxing, of the shylocks, of the nightclubs, and of the mob, has if the life of Bobby Cassidy where a film by Martin Scorsese, de Spike Lee or James Gray.

But Bruno de Almeida got there before them and didn't need to recreate anything (to the feel the times he's got photos and film excerpts of the fights) only to offer Cassidy a microphone for the monologue of his life. Divided between 10 rounds (numbered in the editing), has if it was a real final boxing match. Apparently there are no opponents at sight, neither the director or the audience is put in that position. But, as Cassidy well knows, a fighter fights, above all, against himself. The rest is entertainment. Beautiful character in a beautiful movie.

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