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14. The Cult of Micky Ward in Massachusetts

CARLO ROTELLA

The retired boxer Micky Ward and the movie star Mark Wahlberg, escorted by publicists from Paramount Pictures, were sitting at a round table in a conference room in the Four Seasons hotel in Boston. It was early December 2010; *The Fighter*, the movie about Ward starring and produced by Wahlberg, was about to open. The early reviews were good, and Oscar buzz was mounting, especially around Christian Bale, who played the part of Dickie Eklund, Ward's half-brother. Dickie, a far more sophisticated boxer than Micky, had taught Micky most of what he knew about boxing, but Dickie had squandered his own promise in traditional ways—crack, armed robbery, jail—before embarking on an equally traditional arc of recovery. The canonization in global popular culture that comes with being the subject of a big-time Hollywood movie would square all accounts for Micky, and maybe even for Dickie. “It makes all those days and nights, the b.s., worth it,” said Ward. “The hospital visits, the headaches, everything.”

Ward is from Lowell, Massachusetts, a former textile-manufacturing capital thirty miles northwest of Boston. When I asked him how he expected the movie to go over there, especially its depiction of his mother as blindly favoring Dickie and of his sisters as a crew of baleful harpies, he said, “Some of them were taken aback when they saw what we were doing, but it is what it is.” Wahlberg, who grew up in a large working-class family in Dorchester, stressed the importance of his own local knowledge in assuring Ward and his family that the film would get Lowell right. “I know he took comfort in the fact that I was the driving force behind the movie,” Wahlberg said.



Micky Ward (right) and Mark Wahlberg. Courtesy of Stuart Cahill/*Boston Herald*.

Ward, who was forty-five, was not much heavier than his prime fighting weight of 140 pounds. Straight-backed but relaxed, giving brief answers and smiling occasionally, he had the former fighter's aura of residual force. Consequential blows, given and taken, had worn smooth all his sharp edges. Wahlberg, thirty-nine, the bulkier of the two men, talked in longer, more energetic riffs, leaning forward as he described his long effort to bring the movie to fruition. Wahlberg spent five years developing *The Fighter*, but his desire to play a boxer goes back to his early days in show business, as a viewing of his Marky Mark videos from the early 1990s will confirm.

Wahlberg did his best to defer to Ward, but Ward refused to take over, and, anyway, a movie star's idea of deferring does not preclude dominating the conversation. Wahlberg, known in the business as a former knucklehead who matured into a decent guy who gets things done (for instance, he pro-

duced the HBO series *Entourage*), clearly wanted to be taken seriously, not only as the prime mover behind *The Fighter* but also as a tough customer. He brought up his youthful brushes with the law, and he told me that the boxers who worked on *The Fighter* had not been in shape for long shooting days, but he had been, having trained for them. He interrupted himself at one point to ask why I hadn't written down something he'd said that apparently struck him as quotable. Ward, for his part, said he had nothing left to prove to anybody. He was getting more requests for appearances and endorsements as a result of the movie, but they were no more than icing on the cake. "I'm pretty smart"—*smaaht*—"on how things go," he said. "I don't need a lot lot"—*luot luot*—"to be happy. My wife and my daughter are all set. Comfortable. I'm satisfied with that."

Wahlberg had at least one further ambition for Ward, however. "Next stop is the Boxing Hall of Fame, baby," he said. Ward looked apologetic. If he is elected, it will be as a sentimental favorite or because the movie puts him over the top as a celebrity, not because he was one of the best of his time, let alone all time. He has become a folk hero—in the subcultural niches of eastern Massachusetts and the fight world, and now, thanks to the movie, in the mainstream of global popular culture—not because he conquered all comers but because his name has become synonymous with a set of virtues conventionally labeled "blue collar": heaping quantities of the amalgam of courage and will called "heart," and a working man's resilience and perseverance. Mark Wahlberg may be a local boy made good, enjoying the fame and fortune accruing to an international movie star, but Micky Ward is the toughest guy in town, the prototypical regular guy, celebrated as such in song, in story, and on the cover of the video game *Fight Night: Round 3*.

The cult of Micky Ward, rooted in the Boston area, is one of many local or regional cults that spring up around a sports figure understood to embody virtues especially tied to a place. But, thanks mostly to the movie, this particular cult has gone global in ways that allow us to more easily trace within its form and content the marks left by large-scale flows of resources, power, people, and meanings. To talk about Micky Ward is to talk not only about some really stirring ass whippings, but also about major historical transformations that extend far beyond eastern Massachusetts.

* * *

Let us begin with the ass whippings. Ward, who retired in 2003, was very good, a reliable pro with a solid chin and a picture-perfect left hook to the body, but he wasn't great; he could be had by quicker, trickier boxers, and

by bigger hitters. He never reached the top of his division, he never held a major title, his career record was a respectable but not world-historical 38–13, and he lost two of his three most famous bouts, a trilogy of brawls with Arturo Gatti in 2002 and 2003 that looked like Popeye cartoons, only more eventful.¹

Neither Ward nor Gatti was among the best in their weight class when they fought, and no title was at stake other than a mythical one: champeen throwback to a half-imagined, hazily remembered golden age when Irish and Italian dreadnoughts unflinchingly exchanged giant-slaying blows that would obliterate lesser men of the sort we have to settle for in our own time. The Ward-Gatti trilogy occupies the apex of the fight world, where that subculture registers in the culture at large via HBO, ESPN, video games, music videos, and other avenues that feed exceptional niche-sport content into the mainstream. Ward is widely admired for his part in the trilogy and, more generally, for how he carried himself in and out of the ring, win or lose.

His apotheosis was the ninth round of his first bout with Gatti, the only one of the three that Ward won. Many observers and fans feel that this is one of the great rounds of all time, and certainly one of the best of the last twenty-five years. Ward dropped Gatti with a textbook body shot early in the round, causing the trainer Emanuel Steward, one of the announcers calling the fight for HBO, to declare that Gatti was finished. But Gatti recovered from abject collapse in his usual lycanthropic manner and the fighters traded punches for most of the round. Gatti battered Ward along the ropes for a while, during which Ward gave him a little hard-case nod of acknowledgment that induced near-apoplexy in Jim Lampley, HBO's blow-by-blow man. Then Ward came on again, heaping so much damage on Gatti in the last minute of the round that the announcers once again declared that he was done. He wasn't, of course. Gatti surged back once more, the fight went the distance, and Ward took the win by majority decision.

The cult of Micky Ward is founded on the material fact of the sanctified body that gave and took such memorable punishment. When he was fighting, Ward was trained down not into a pumped showpiece but into a smooth-musled and smooth-functioning mechanism that could soldier on through terrible difficulty. His no-frills fighting style made the most of his outsize appetite for hitting by forcing the action until the other guy had to decide if he had it in himself to go all the way. Ward was celebrated for his unflinching willingness to do what he always did in the gym and then in the ring, to work the body and keep coming and put in a full day of labor on the shop floor inside the ropes, no matter what.

Add to the evidence of the flesh a few supporting biographical facts, chief among which is Ward's strong identification with Lowell, once a famously depressed former mill town and now a recovering depressed former mill town. Also, he had a day job on a paving crew, which, like his accent and his polite and faintly embarrassed public manner, was taken as indicative of authenticity. So were the travails of Dickie Eklund, whose spectacularly rough life was examined in the HBO documentary *High on Crack Street* (1995). Dickie's narrative of recovery and hard-won wisdom parallels the narrative of Lowell's comeback: a long decline, bottoming out in the late twentieth century, followed by a hopeful upswing in recent years. Lowell stands for a particularly working-class kind of endlessly game response to hard knocks—and Micky and Dickie, the steady-working brother and the trouble-seeking wildman brother, respectively embody the light and dark sides of Lowell-style toughness.

* * *

The inner rings of the cult of Micky Ward can be found in popular culture on the regional level, beginning in the local fight world, a niche within a niche. Anyone who has spent any time in recent years at the fights around Boston has seen Ward and Eklund working a fighter's corner, or has seen Ward called up from the crowd into the ring between fights to be introduced as a ringside dignitary. On the latter occasions, Ward often finds himself standing next to Kevin McBride, the Clones Colossus, a hulking heavyweight famous all over town for defeating Mike Tyson in 2007. McBride receives good-natured cheers, but everybody knows he was never much of a fighter and caught Tyson at the tail end of a long decline. But wherever Ward goes in the local fight world, people who think of themselves as regular guys and gals choke up with tribal pride at the sight of him. He exemplifies what they like to think of as true local manhood.

Progressing outward from the Boston-area fight world into the cult as local and regional culture, you pass through articles in local newspapers and regional magazines that attend to landmarks in Ward's postretirement life (running the Boston marathon, the making and release of *The Fighter*, and so on) and arrive at the artifact that most purely expresses particularistic Boston-area pride in Ward: "The Warrior's Code," a paean to Ward by the Dropkick Murphys, an Irish American rock band out of Quincy that is strongly associated with Boston, sports, drinking, labor unions, and American Irishness. The band is best known for another song on the Warrior's Code album, "Shipping Up to Boston," which has been employed as theme music by Martin Scorsese in *The Departed* (2006) and by Jonathan

Papelbon of the Red Sox, two guys from somewhere else who turned to the Dropkick Murphys when they wanted to invest their work with a claim to authentic Bostonness.

Part of the appeal of “The Warrior’s Code” lies in the earnestly labored quality of the performance: the shouted delivery and straining to make pitch, the awkwardness of the lyrics (“You were born to box in a city that’s seen their share”), the stiffness of the clichés (“the quitter never wins”; “a throwback with the heart of a lion”). And part of the appeal lies in the self-presentation of the band, including, in the official video of the “The Warrior’s Code,” the visual rhyme between interpolated highlights from Ward’s ring career and the surging energy of the band and milling fans, which creates a visual claim to peoplehood: we are hard-working regular guys who surge around and do dynamic aggressive things with our bodies, and Micky is our exemplary hero because he’s the one who does that in the most spectacular and powerful fashion.²

The lyrics also cite Lowell’s reputation as a fight town. Like nearby Brockton, or Youngstown, Ohio, it’s known as a place that has traditionally produced capable violent men (and extraordinarily resilient, capable women). The song makes reference to Al Mello, Larry Carney, and Billy Ryan, Lowell boxers of yore whose pictures hang above the bar in Lowell’s Gaelic Club. Citing the placement of Ward’s photo among theirs in that holy location cements the song’s claim for him as a throwback: an exemplar of a traditional kind of working-class masculinity associated with Lowell as a hardboiled mill town. And the final lines of the third verse, “A bloody war on the boardwalk/And the kid from Lowell rises to the bell,” combine with the image in the video of a wincing, gutted Gatti to place the Ward-Gatti trilogy at the center of the claim for Ward as the bearer of an atavistic set of virtues: a combination of heart and craft that the song associates with being from Lowell and, more abstractly, Irishness. That Irishness resonates with the band’s self-presentation, above all the piper in scally cap, honking and screeching with the ancestral beet-faced dignity of the old days and the old ways.

* * *

Fight Night: Round 3 made a start on moving the cult of Micky Ward from niche to mainstream, but *The Fighter* has done it in earnest. The movie’s trailers promise a familiar, easily consumed artifact, a sports biopic with melodramatic highs and lows, idealized good brother and excitingly bad brother, loss and redemption, and actors eager to show off their worked-out bodies. While the film delivers all that, the trailers are also a lie. They

disguise a smart, nuanced movie as a ham-fisted one along the lines of *Cinderella Man* (2005) or the Rocky franchise.

Take, for example, the moment when Dickie admits to Charlene, Micky's girlfriend, that he has blown his own chance at greatness and that they should pull together to save Micky's. "Okay," responds Charlene, "I'll see you in Micky's corner." One trailer positions this clip to suggest that the struggles over Micky between Charlene and his family are resolved in that moment, reducing it to a precursor of his inevitable triumph in the ring, which is all true as far as it goes, but the trailer selectively flattens a more complex and satisfying moment. In that scene, Dickie and Charlene—played by Amy Adams, who for this role has somehow managed to acquire the upper-lip wrinkle of a disappointed aspirant to better things—pitilessly strip each other of illusions. He tells her that she's mistaken in thinking that she's something special because she went away to college. She failed at it, and now she spends her nights in a bar like everyone else in town. She responds with a hurtful shot of her own: Dickie didn't knock down Sugar Ray Leonard, his principal claim to fame; Leonard slipped, and Dickie's just another big-talking crackhead. They look at each other for a moment, two disappointed hometown losers whose dreams of success in the wider world just make them ridiculous, and then Charlene tells Dickie that she'll see him in Micky's corner. But the trailer leaves out the scene's kicker: outside the truce space of Micky's corner, Charlene adds, Dickie can go fuck himself.

The dramatic premise of that scene and of *The Fighter* as a whole turns on the problem of what it means to be rooted in Lowell. Micky has been made hard by his hard-knock hometown and his hard-knock brother, so in that sense Lowell is the source of Micky's edge in the ring, but Lowell also threatens to drag him down into the loserdom that Charlene and Dickie identify in each other. Undermined by Dickie, their mother, and their horrible sisters, who refer to Charlene as "the MTV girl" because she strikes them as having unforgivable pretensions to cosmopolitanism, Micky comes to realize that merely replacing Dickie as "the pride of Lowell" would amount to failure. With the help of Charlene, Micky has to figure out how to separate the usable aspects of Lowell-ness from the toxic elements.

Success, in this kind of movie, means winning a world title. Rushing toward that pinnacle, the script freely abuses the facts of Ward's career: ignoring losses, puffing up victories over lesser opponents, changing records and weights, turning a marginal belt into a major one. This is typical Hollywood fudging, but done here with thematic consistency. What matters is that Micky goes out into the world beyond Lowell and shows everyone that the local ways, the old-school ways, still carry a charge.

That's also the point of the movie's purposeful intertextuality with HBO. The prospect of being on HBO, which the characters regard as the *ne plus ultra* of engagement with the wider world, frames the movie's meta-problem of how to properly represent the quality of Lowell-ness. Even as Micky angles for a big fight on HBO, a camera crew from the cable network follows Dickie around town, making *High on Crack Street*, in which Dickie will serve as Exhibit A for the drug's pernicious effect on the lives of users. The fight sequences visually mimic HBO house style in the '90s (Wahlberg told me that he brought in the director of the Ward-Gatti bouts for HBO to show David O. Russell, the movie's director, how to do it), but the cleverest and most expressive bit of HBO intertextuality is a sound gimmick that comes during the film's climactic bout, a victory over the Irish ham-and-egger Shea Neary for the relatively trivial World Boxing Union light welterweight belt that the movie treats as if it were the crowning achievement of Ward's career. The film samples lines from the HBO announcing crew's ecstatic call of round nine of Ward-Gatti I, which took place after the action of the movie comes to an end, and places them in their mouths as they call the Ward-Neary bout. The substitution winkingly apologizes for misrepresenting Ward-Neary as a bout worthy of being treated as a big deal, and it offers in compressed shorthand a climax to the story of how Lowell shaped Micky Ward into a paragon of old-school virtues who would go on to attain the status of folk hero, worthy of a big-time Hollywood biopic, by losing two out of three brutal fights to Gatti.

* * *

The Fighter has become the definitive artifact of the cult of Micky Ward, the primary bearer of this local set of meanings to the wider world, and it has fused the cult with a larger set of likeminded stories. The recent boom in Massachusetts-made Hollywood movies has included a subset that, like *The Fighter*, devotes significant effort to achieving a local feel. I'm not talking about a movie like *Paul Blart: Mall Cop* (2009), which was shot in the suburbs of Boston but doesn't try to establish any kind of local identity; I'm talking about *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* (1973) and *The Brink's Job* (1978); *Good Will Hunting* (1997), which set the template for Boston movies to come; *Monument Ave.* (1998); *Next Stop Wonderland* (1998); *The Boondock Saints* (1999); *Mystic River* (2003); *Fever Pitch* (2005); *The Departed* (2006); and, with the maturing of the state's film tax credit, a burst of recent productions: *Gone Baby Gone* (2007); *Black Irish* (2007); *What Doesn't Kill You* (2008); *Shutter Island* (2010); *Edge of Darkness* (2010); *The Town* (2010); *The Company Men* (2010); and *The Fighter* (2010), with more on the way.

Massachusetts woos film and TV production as part of its commitment to cultural economic development. The state film office was founded in 1979, and in the past few years Massachusetts has boasted one of the nation's most attractive film tax credit programs.³ Policy moves to ease the way of film production are a classic postindustrial economic strategy. The decline of manufacturing opens up a gap that can be filled in part by new industries, including the production of culture, as the New England mill city becomes a backwater in the industrial economy and acquires a new role in the postindustrial economy. The very fact of becoming a backwater enabled and demanded the policy moves that put Massachusetts back in the center of the cultural action as a hotbed of film production, just as (at least as the cult tells the story) the old-school qualities of Lowell as a fight town, a depressed mill town, helped equip Ward to take cultural center stage as an atavistically tough throwback hero.

You can see the arrival of the postindustrial phase in the repurposing of physical elements and the history of the formerly industrial city, as in the many cases of using old factory buildings to house museums, arts spaces, loft housing, convention centers, and resonant places to eat, drink, and shop—thus maxing out the consumer impact of the arts and culture dollar. This is Postindustrial Transformation 101: mill towns that don't make things anymore must turn to providing services, information, images, history, experiences. Scenes like the long shot in *The Fighter* of Charlene knocking on the door of Micky's apartment with dark factory buildings looming in the background exemplify how Boston-area films exploit the possibilities—for cheap production and for making meaning—opened up by material and cultural conditions that typically hold sway in postindustrial cities.

Lowell, with its textile mills turned into museums, national historical park, and unified branding scheme, has become a regional poster child for such transformation. The slow, difficult, incomplete process of turning Lowell into something other than a depressed place where the mills all closed, the process of grafting an interesting city onto a tough town, has gathered enough momentum that the process itself has become a leading feature of Lowell's identity. That's what Micky was talking about when, in a video interview with the *Lowell Sun*, he contrasted the down-and-out Lowell of the 1980s and '90s depicted in the movie with the "revitalized" Lowell of today, "with the downtown area, and the shops outside, and the cafes."⁴ Dickie, sitting next to him, added, "Lowell's cleaned up 110% from before," then segued without a rhetorical break from urban revitalization to his own clean and sober status. Staking out an identity with Lowell and a relationship to history, the brothers put the bad old days in the

past while also maintaining the link to them that the cult assumes is one principal source of Micky's virtue: that is, they're tough guys from a tough town. The occasion of the interview was the making of *The Fighter*, and they talked about the movie as a nostalgic trip to the tail end of the tough town's golden age of hard times—a journey we can all make, courtesy of the film tax credit.

But to recognize the film tax credit as an example of postindustrial policy explains only why a lot of movies get made in Massachusetts these days, not why some of these movies try so hard to establish a local feel. In everything from obsessively excessive dialogue coaching to minutely parsing local class fractions, they ostentatiously seek to bear the mark of the place in which they were made. Casting calls for *The Fighter* specified boxers and trainers, women with red or blond hair, and residents of Lowell.⁵ At least the aura of the real thing matters. Why?

Begin with the fresh attraction of any local texture at all in a self-consciously globalizing age. As time and space are measured in America, and especially in Hollywood, New England cities like Boston and Lowell are strange, ancient places with distinctive physical forms, exotic folkways, and curious languages, like Jerusalem or the cities of the Silk Road. A movie can cite signs of locality—the qualities understood to make Boston Boston, or Lowell Lowell—to give itself an air of authenticity. Remade foreign material translocated to Massachusetts often makes this move in the most obvious ways: for example, *Fever Pitch*, a remake of a British adaptation of a Nick Hornby book about his obsession with the Arsenal Football Club, reduces Bostonness to being a Red Sox fan. Homegrown stories often do it with more subtlety. There's a priceless moment in *Gone Baby Gone* (2007), which is based on a novel by Dennis Lehane (who's from Dorchester), when a little boy on a bike cuts in front of a car and, despite being entirely in the wrong, yells "Go fuck ya motha" when the driver tells him to move out of the way. It's a moment of pure Boston-style unpleasantness—bad traffic skills, bad manners, nastiness to outsiders, refusing to pronounce the r in "mother"—and it's exactly like a shot of a yak herder or a snake charmer in a movie set in Mongolia or India: a moment that's there for the pleasure of tasting exotic locality. One side effect of globalization is valorizing the irreducible, unmeltable, romantically unreconstructed local.

But I think it's possible to be more specific about the attractions of the local as it shows up in Boston and neighboring cities in movies like *The Fighter*, and in a way that helps explain the power of the cult of Micky Ward. These movies tend to focus on a particular layer of locality: the remnants and by-blows of industrial urbanism, the distinctive ways of living that grew

up in industrial cities, an order that had its autumnal golden age in the mid twentieth century and was undone by, among other large forces, the deindustrialization of the mill cities that formerly drove the rise of America as a world power, and the change in American immigration patterns that decentered Ireland and Italy and recentered on Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and eastern Europe. These are for the most part movies about white ethnics, usually Irish American (like Ward, who fought under the ring name “Irish” Micky Ward), descended from the old “new” immigrants who came to the cities of America, especially on the East Coast, to work in factories, and who fashioned their urban folkways around a familiar neighborhood landscape of factory, saloon, parish church, school, union hall, boxing gym, and the like—the landscape of the urban village. In movie after movie, the camera lingers on the remnants of this landscape, soaring in over the tightly packed roofs of the tough town or the Old Neighborhood, unsteadily tracking the heroes from dive bar to parish church, elegizing the urban order that rose and fell between the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth.

These movies are besotted with the exploration of a masculinity native to such places, and they’re also often violent crime stories, in which the surface crime may be a murder or disappearance or rape or robbery, but the sense of deep crime, the profound condition that is uncovered by the investigation of the surface crime, is wrapped up with the decline and fall of industrial urbanism and its style of manhood. They imagine a shrinking yet still vital cohort of white-ethnic tough guys who are exemplary in old-school ways, and therefore more than equal to the challenges presented by the ghetto, the barrio, and new immigration. In that sense, these movies extend the project of the Rocky series: imagining the continuing potency of the Old Neighborhood in a time when that potency is called into question by succeeding urban orders.

In addition to whatever else they’re about, these movies want to think about what has been lost or salvaged in the aging-out of industrial urbanism.⁶ For both material and symbolic reasons, the urban landscapes and culture of Massachusetts, represented by the triple-decker block or the redbrick factory building or the phantom letter r, have become familiar material with which to do that kind of thinking. And that’s true both for homegrown Boston-area artists, like Mark Wahlberg, the Afflecks, and Matt Damon, and for storytellers from elsewhere, like Clint Eastwood, Mel Gibson, and Martin Scorsese, who seek to refresh their mythmaking powers by converging on Massachusetts, of all places, and on the qualities that are presumed to make Boston Boston or Lowell Lowell.

The cult of Micky Ward participates in the movies' project of simultaneous recovery and elegy. The constant labeling of Ward as a throwback with the heart of a lion celebrates the continuing potency of Irishness, an identity that no longer dominates urban culture as it once did in places like Lowell and Boston, and also marks the passing of that identity's ascendancy on the street. The narrative of do-or-die immigrant striving no longer applies to white ethnics in the ways that it once did. Meanwhile, Lowell, for instance, has filled up with so many do-or-die Southeast Asian immigrant strivers that the Cambodian government opened up a consulate there in 2009. (A second casting call for *The Fighter* specified Cambodian men who speak fluent Khmer.)⁷ The cult sorrows as well as glories in having found one last white-ethnic paladin, a last Irishman standing, who still embodies the connection to industrial urbanism: a steady-working hero who's good with his hands and perseveres even when outclassed, outgunned, badly hurt, or on the wrong side of history.

The cult of Micky Ward is rooted in Lowell, but for all its local groundedness the cult is also eminently portable, packaged in such various forms as the feature film, the YouTube highlight clip, the song, the music video, the video game, the mash-up-able fight calls of HBO announcers. And the essence of the cult can be deposited in different bodies, which is what the fetishized discussion of dialogue coaching, advice from local experts, and apparently Oscar-worthy questing after Boston-area authenticity that surrounded the making of *The Fighter* was all about. Like the seasonal flu, the cult now rides the flows of international cultural commerce, spreading everywhere. This mainstream canonization couldn't happen to a more modest or unassuming guy than Micky Ward, who has the decency to be vaguely embarrassed about it even as he receives it as his due, payment in full for several lifetimes' worth of hard work and hard knocks.

Notes

1. For Ward's boxing record, see http://boxrec.com/list_bouts.php?human_id=3603&cat=boxer, accessed November 5, 2011.

2. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebHIxQ_zhNY. Uploaded December 9, 2007.

3. The Massachusetts Film Office claimed an average annual economic benefit of \$267,225,000 for the tax credit from 2006 to 2009, with \$452 million in direct spending by film productions in 2008 alone (<http://www.mafilm.org/mass-film-tax-credit-by-the-numbers/>). It also claimed that film production in Massachusetts created 4,972 jobs, which would include at least one for Micky Ward, who has worked as a teamster on film productions.

4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9WOnxNFYCo>. Posted September 10, 2009.

5. <http://www.beantownbloggery.com/2009/05/casting-call-fighter.html>. Posted May 26, 2009.

6. I have taken up of other aspects of this general subject in other places. On boxing and postindustrial transformation, see, for example, *Good with Their Hands: Boxers, Bluesmen, and Other Characters from the Rust Belt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). On boxing, place, and local-global dynamics, see, for example, "The Stepping Stone: Larry Holmes, Gerry Cooney, and Rocky," in *In the Game: Race and Sports in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Amy Bass (New York: Palgrave, 2005): 237–62. On film genre and the fall of the Old Neighborhood, see "Praying for Stones Like This: The *Godfather* Trilogy," in *Catholics in the Movies*, ed. Colleen McDannell (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2007), 227–52.

7. <http://www.beantownbloggery.com/2009/06/casting-call-fighter-2nd-call-68.html>, accessed December 20, 2011.

