

A Letter from the Publisher

From the start, Staff Photographer Neil Leifer's idea had a nice ring to it. With the film sequel *Rocky III* scheduled to open at about the same time that the long-awaited heavyweight fight takes place between Gerry Cooney and defending Champion Larry Holmes, Leifer proposed to exploit the coincidence by having Cooney and Actor Sylvester Stallone pose together. Leifer asked Stallone, who lives in Los Angeles' Pacific Palisades, to fly East. Meanwhile, Leifer booked a suite at the Concord Hotel in the Catskills, where Cooney was training. Stallone slipped into the hotel by a back door—kind of on the sly—and shortly thereafter a two-hour photo session began. Says Leifer: "My biggest problem was trying to make Gerry Cooney look as much like a heavyweight champion as Sly. Rocky Balboa's body is the public's perception of a fighter, while Cooney's is not." The results, as evidenced by this week's TIME cover, are something of a technical knockout. (One piece of equipment vital to the success: the box that the 5-ft. 10-in. Stallone is standing on to bring him into the picture with the 6-ft. 6-in. Cooney.)



Leifer with his heavyweights, Cooney and Stallone

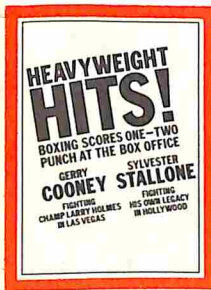
Other heavyweights were involved in the project. Associate Editor J.D. Reed (220 lbs.) prepared for his Stallone interviews by watching some 30 hours of Hollywood fight movies. Says Reed: "Boxing is used as a metaphor for exertion. After watching those movies, I felt like I'd gone 15 rounds with the film business." Reporter-Researcher Elaine Dutka talked to Stallone twice—in New York and with his wife Sasha in their West Coast home. Recalls Dutka: "I was immediately struck by Stallone's intelligence and capacity for self-mockery." Sportswriter Tom Callahan (210 lbs.) and Reporter-Researcher Jamie Murphy were assigned to the Holmes-Cooney confrontation. Callahan set up camp in Palm Springs, Calif., to watch Cooney's final prefight training. One night Cooney looked over at the shaggy-haired Callahan and offered to administer an on-the-spot haircut. Says Callahan: "I figured I'd go along with the joke, so I told him to take a little off the sides and the top.

He did just that." Callahan is not so sure Cooney can cut Larry Holmes down to size. "We don't know what's going to happen on Friday night," says Callahan. That's sport.

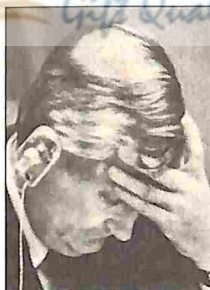
John A. Meyers

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TIME

Reagan at the Summit

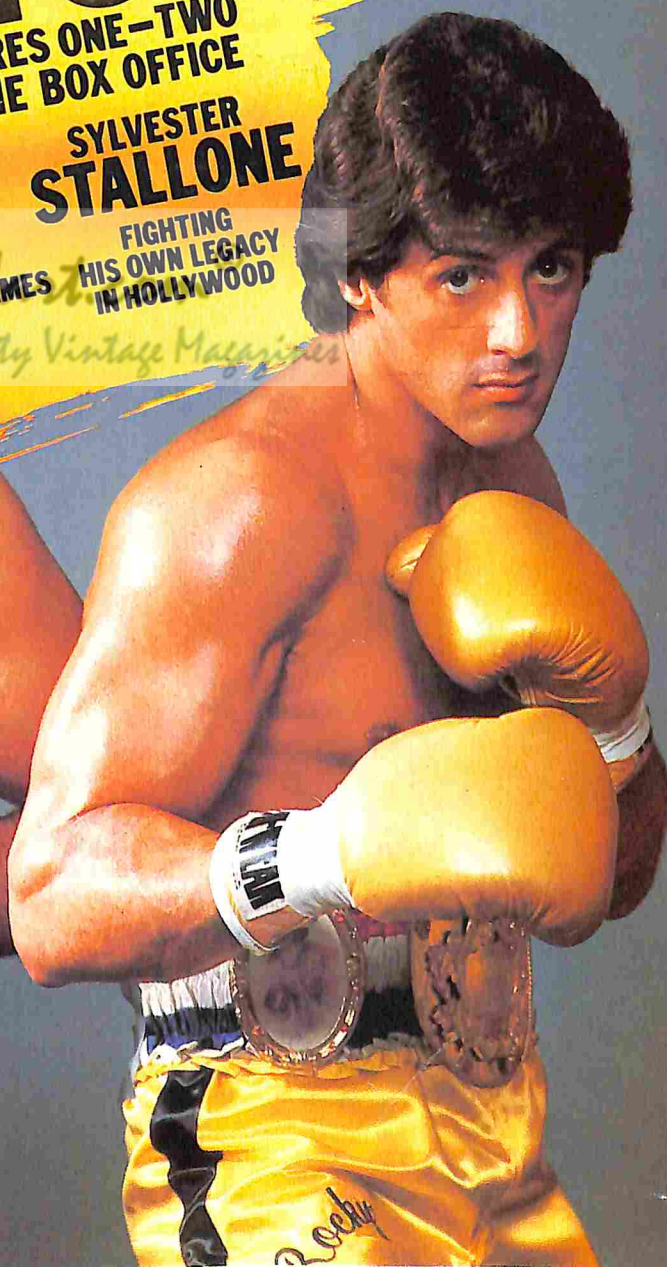
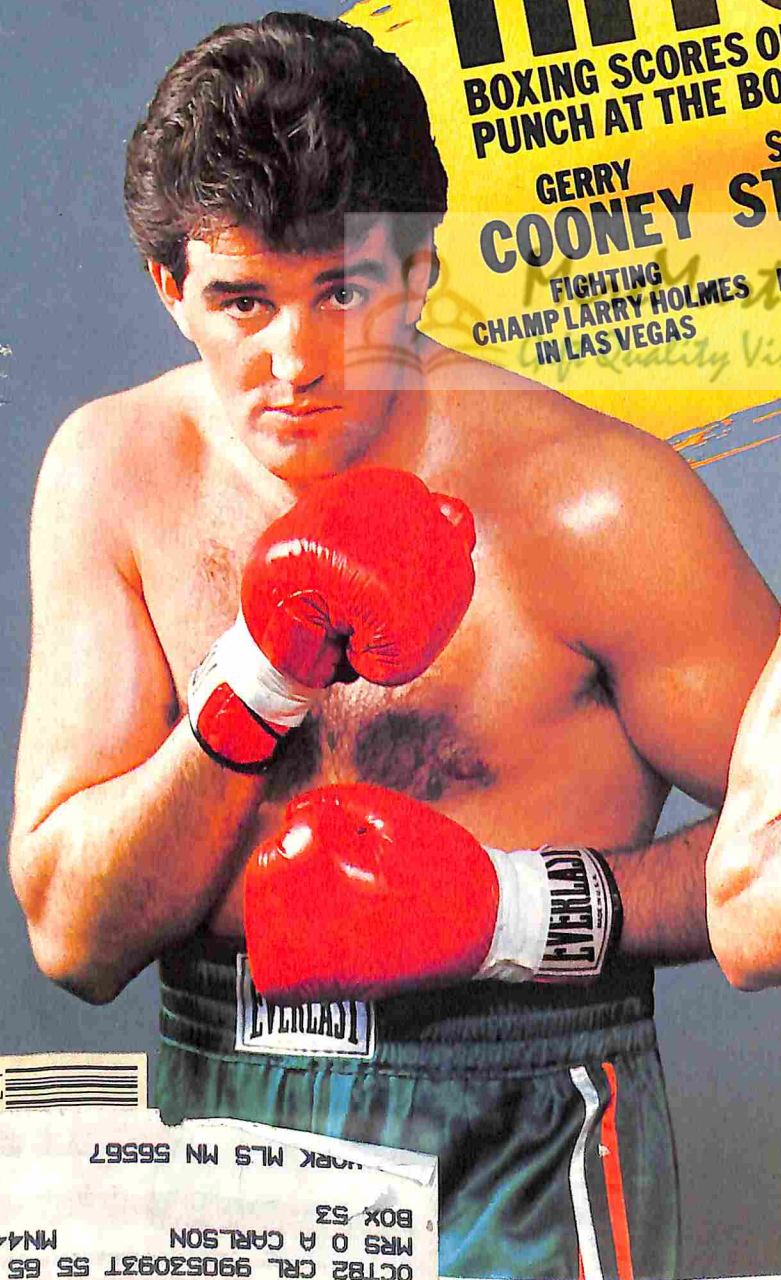
HEAVYWEIGHT HITS!

BOXING SCORES ONE-TWO PUNCH AT THE BOX OFFICE

GERRY COONEY SYLVESTER STALLONE

FIGHTING CHAMP LARRY HOLMES IN LAS VEGAS

FIGHTING HIS OWN LEGACY IN HOLLYWOOD



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