

True Stories
Achievement
Stories

Portland Advocate

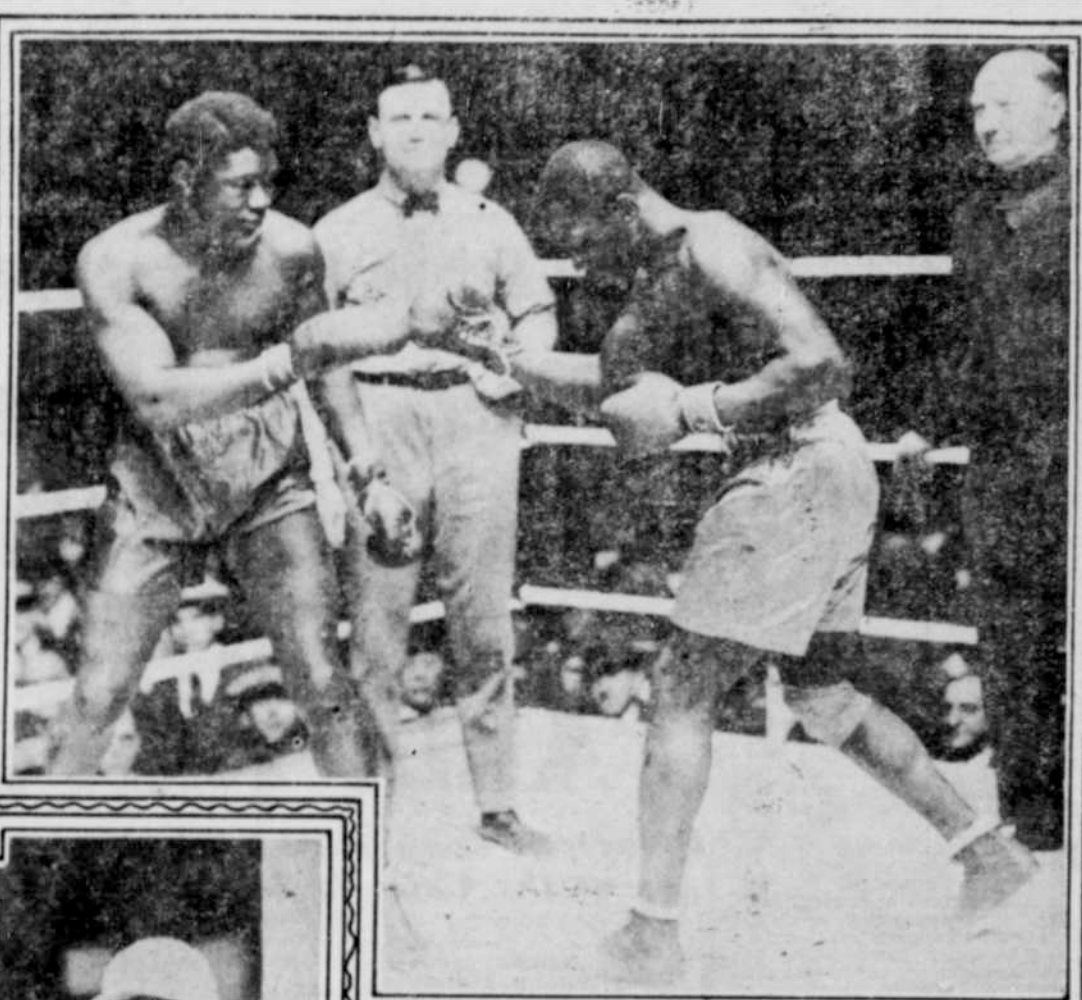
Clean Fiction
Human Interest
Features

W. B. Ziff Co., 688 S. Dearborn St., Chicago,
Foreign Advertising Representatives

ILLUSTRATED FEATURE SECTION—January 25, 1930

Pictures in the Illustrated Feature Section were posed. BEN DAVIS, Jr.,
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IS THE GLAMOUR OF SUDDEN FAME AND WEALTH WORTH THE PRICE?



Harlem Still Silent on the Mysterious Murder of the Picturesque Battling Siki, Who Could Not Resist the Lure of Gay Life.

By
Edward H. Lawson, Jr.

FOUR years ago a man was murdered—shot down in cold blood on one of the narrow streets of Harlem. Today his murderer still roams unmolested and unknown, with only the punishment of his own conscience to pay for the life of the man he killed.

Four years ago, Officer John J. Meehan, in making his nightly round of the cabaret district, stumbled over the body of that man, a gruesome sight, sprawled across the sidewalk in a pool of blood. Two gunshot wounds in his back indicated how he had come to grief. An old pistol was found in the gutter. That was all.

Officer Meehan recognized the fellow almost instantly. He was a big, husky chap, black as a man could possibly be; kinky hair, flat nose, and a chubby, laughing face. No one could mistake him. It was none other than Battling Siki, once holder of several boxing championships and victor over the great French ace, Georges Carpentier.

They removed him to the hospital, but he was dead and nothing could be done. An investigation was started. Who had fired the shots? Nobody knew. Who had heard them? No one. Who had seen the crime committed? No one. Who had stumbled over the body before the policeman? Not a soul. Evidently Harlem was not awakened by shots at four in the morning.

The detectives chose another starting point. Where had Siki been that night? Somehow it leaked out that he had been seen in a certain cafeteria. They questioned the proprietor. Was he drunk? Yep, he was pretty well stewed.

Did he argue with anyone, or start a fuss in the cafeteria. Yes, he had engaged in a drunken



At right is a picture of Battling Siki (Louis Fall), the Senegalese prize-fighter, with the Dutch woman he is reputed to have married in France, and child. Siki was also married in the municipal building of New York City, to Lillian Werner, 30, of 470 West 23rd street, the same address given by the fighter. Siki gave his age as 23 and declared on his license that it was his first marriage.

At right top—Kid Norfolk, American colored light heavyweight champion, earned the decision over Battling Siki, the Senegalese warrior, after fifteen fast rounds of fighting at Madison Square Garden. The photo shows the two battlers posed before the fight, Battling Siki on the left, the referee, and Kid Norfolk, at right.

Above are shown Mr. and Mrs. Louis Fall, Mr. Fall being none other than Battling Siki, the singular Senegalese prize-fighter. Though Siki's wife was said to be white, when the marriage became public, she was an octoroon. Siki is said to have admitted the paternity of the baby, the son of the woman then in Paris, but denied the woman was his wife. He intended to marry her, it is said, but she ran off with somebody else.

brawl with another man. Both had been ousted from the cafeteria. Who were the other men in the brawl? Harlem shut up like a clam. No amount of questioning could break the silence. No one knew. They questioned the widow. She



knew nothing. She offered a single clue, however. Siki had often quarrelled with a neighbor over a liquor bill of \$100 which Siki refused to pay. Perhaps— But that neighbor proved an ironclad alibi.

Falling on all sides, the detectives looked up the fighter's past his-

tory in order to unearth some enemy that might perpetrate such a crime.

Siki, they found, was a boxer, of Senegalese birth. His fighting career had begun in Paris and, after a long series of successive vic-

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