

## JOURNEYMEN

You don't have to win, to be a champion.

Treatment for a Cable Television Episodic Series

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*Journeyman: A boxer who fights, often on short notice, against young prospects or contenders. Often referred to as tomato cans, stiffs, bums, they are expected to take a beating, rather than administer one.*

This is a story about professional boxers. They are not champions or contenders. They may not have ever even been prospects. They are not, nor will they ever be, household names. These men box for a living, but can barely make enough to survive. Most of them have second jobs.

The Journeymen:

Ricardo Solis: Heavyweight. 22-22, 14KO. He grew up in the boxing gym his father owned and has now been passed on to him. As an amateur, he actually was looked upon as a true prospect. His father was a top ten ranked fighter who won his last fight but suffered a terrible concussion dismissed by the attending physician. Driving home from that fight, he collapsed at the wheel and slammed into a pole leaving him confined to a wheel chair and mentally disillusioned. He believes that his son is the undisputed heavyweight champion. Ricardo now struggles with the reality of his lacking skills while still trying to live up to his father's unrealistic expectations of him as fighter. He's reluctant to take another fight because he always swore that if he ever lost more than he won, he would quit the sport forever.

Day Job: Gym owner, trainer.

John Pickman: Heavyweight. 18-16-2, 9KO. He's been in the ring with some of the best heavyweights of recent years, thus, his 16 losses. He's often chosen as a 'first real test' for rising young fighters who, upon beating him, take on another prospect or two before facing a ranked contender.

Day Job: Heating and Air repair and installation.

Benny Whitaker: Middleweight. 12-24-3, 4KO. Least skilled boxer of the group, but loves the sport too much to quit.

Day Job: Lawyer. He could easily work for a large firm if he quit boxing, but prefers his community service work. He often represents other boxers, whether in disputes with promoters and managers, or for breaking the law themselves. He is a strong advocate for creating a unified and federally sanctioned boxing commission, for the betterment of the sport and its' fighters.

Arturo Martinez: Welterweight. 32-22-1, 16KO. A real scrapper who never gives up. Rising young stars love to fight him because he's not a big puncher, but his tough, relentless style of consistently moving forward, always makes for a good fight in which they can look good, by showing off their toughness against someone who doesn't pose a big threat.

Day Job: Scrap Artist: he makes art out of just about anything. Due to the inevitable damage on

his hands from every fight, he must always weigh the amount of his fight purse against the money he will lose from not working on his art while his hands are healing.

Henry Coleman: Heavyweight. 12-8-1, 11KO. He began his career with an impressive 10-0 record with 10 knockouts and was then billed as the next 'great white hope.' As he stepped up his competition, it became clear that this was just another marketing ploy by promoters, choosing his opponents very carefully, including John Pickman, who he barely beat and was the first to expose his weaknesses. But Henry still believes he has what it takes to be a Champion one day and is obsessed with fulfilling this dream.

Day Job: Various... can't hold down a job for too long, due to his belief that boxing is his true calling.

Julio Gonzales: Lightweight. 22-24-3, 9KO. He's in it for the women. Losing is only a failure if he doesn't score with one of the ring-card girls after the fight, showing them much more interest than the guy he's fighting. He's often criticized by his stable-mates because he is arguably the most talented of the group, although you wouldn't know it from his record. They feel that if he had been more focused and took his training more seriously he really could've been a contender. Day Job: Bar owner. Aside from the gym, this is the main hangout for our characters.

The journeymen of this story all live in the same town/city and train at the same gym, leaving town only a day or two before their fights. Each episode will center on one of the main characters and an upcoming fight. Though drama may occur in the ring, the story will focus on events in their daily lives. Other regular characters will include each of the boxer's families as well as cutmen and trainers, promoters, referees, judges, and local boxing fans - all adding to the everyday life of boxing outside of the ropes, and far from the limelight of the sport.

One always wonders what kind of courage it takes to step into the ring and be the recipient of so much punishment. For champions and prospects, big paydays, or the possibility of a big payday, often help to justify this life choice. But what keeps a journeyman going? What kind of courage is necessary to keep taking punishment when it is clear that their lack of skills and aging bodies will never allow for a big payday?

Journeymen are disposable and anonymous in a sport they love, where the only dreams they may encounter, are the ones they help to fulfill of the prospects and contenders that they fight; dreams that once mirrored their own, because no one enters a boxing gym for the first time, with dreams of becoming a journeyman.

But these men are more than just boxers. They are husbands, fathers, sons, brothers and loyal friends. And though they are most often losers in the ring, they have become champions in life.

*Production Note: Bobby Czyz, former World Light Heavyweight Champion and two-time World Cruiserweight Champion, and former boxing analyst for Showtime Boxing, is a personal friend of writer/director Domenic Silipo. He has agreed to become involved in this project as a professional consultant. He would also be key in supplying contacts to real-life journeymen on which some stories may be based, adding to the assurance of a believable account of boxer's lives.*