

D'ALESSANDRO FIGHT JAMZ



A FATHER-DAUGHTER MIXTAPE

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SIDE A (1982-2004)

Eye of the Tiger - Survivor • Keep It Up - Snap • Go For It! - Joey B. Ellis • Good Vibrations - Marky Mark • Mama Said Knock You Out - LL Cool J • Till I Collapse - Eminem • Can't Be Touched - Roy Jones

SIDE B (2004-2010)

Round One / Boxing - Kray Twinn ft D&G • It's a Fight - Three 6 Mafia • Born To Win - Papoose • Knock 'em Down - L.I.D.A. • To Be King - Outlaw • Champion - Flipsyde ft Akon • Ready For The Fight - The Young Punx ft Count Bass D

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5698C641FA22CC8E30



The Brawler and Boxer: A Father and Daughter Conversation Victor D'Alessandro and Desiree D'Alessandro (2011)

Desiree D'Alessandro: So how do you feel about me boxing?

Victor D'Alessandro: I'm proud. It's not a usual thing, especially when you're good at it, you know?

DD: If you're good at it, you should be doing it, right?

VD: Yea, but you're a woman. Women usually don't have the mentality to want to do that. It's unusual.

DD: I don't really think about being a woman when I'm boxing. I just think about being strong. I don't really think about "Oh, I have to fight like a woman." I fight like a fighter.

VD: Well, that's what I mean. It's just strange that you have that type of personality.

DD: I don't think it's really that surprising. (laughs.) I love to argue, and we always said I would have made a great lawyer. This is a different way of fighting—literally, as opposed to verbally. Plus I get it from you. When did you start boxing?

VD: Probably when I was six-years-old. My uncle, Valdessari, was a fighter and he used to train in his cellar in Pittsburgh, PA. I used to go over and watch him in the morning. I started dancing around in front of the mirrors with him and then he put me up on milk crates so I could start hitting the speed bags and heavy bags. Then he started showing me some more technique. I was good at it early. I had good balance.

DD: How long did you train with Valdessari?

VD: Probably about seven years, until he was in an accident. He was going to fight for the Middleweight Championship. It was around the days when... back in the old

days. Fifties. He was ranked number one and a Jewish guy held the title that was from Pittsburgh too. But Valdessari blew his knees and had to quit because he couldn't fight anymore. He was unhappy the rest of his life after that.

DD: So were you a brat? Were you a kid that fought everybody and was a bully?

VD: I was never a bully, but when I was in the 4th grade, all the 5th and 6th graders would pick on the younger grades because they were small—you know how elementary school is. I beat up all the bullies in 5th and 4th grade. (laughs.) The ones who were stealing kids' nickles and dimes for lunch money. I got in trouble for it. This one kid, his dad was a cop. He was the biggest bully of them all. I chased him up on his porch and he ran up screaming. His dad came out in his uniform and threw me in his police car and took me home. My dad kicked my ass!

DD: (laughs.) Your parents didn't care about the cause?

VD: Yeah, they just didn't think it was the proper thing to do—fighting everybody every time someone would say something smart to you, push you, or try to bully you...

DD: That's what you'd do? You'd just fight them? (laughs.)

VD: Yeah, that's what I did all the time. It never lasted long. It was like one or two punches and it was over.

DD: Did you ever fight in competition?

VD: I fought in the Boys Club—a recreational center where kids go in the neighborhood who don't have anything to do after school. They had a boxing ring and taught you how to box. I went there in the late fifties. I was probably twelve. I was there for two years. Everyone in the

neighborhood sparred, usually three 3-minute rounds. I never lost.

DD: How many sparring matches did you have?

VD: Probably about thirty.

DD: WHAT?! You said you were there for two years! That's more than a match a month.

VD: Yeah, we fought all the time.

DD: Where else have you fought?

VD: After that, around when I was like fourteen or fifteen, that's when I had my first kid. I got involved in the gangsters and then I went to prison and fought.

DD: When and how did your nickname, "Slick Vic," come about?

VD: I don't remember. They always called me that because nobody could pull anything over me. Like if someone was trying to cheat or steal from me, or if we were in the ring fighting, I'd just start dancing around. You know how you just pick up a name? Mine ended up being "Slick Vic."

DD: So how did you fight in prison?

VD: Well in prison, it was like fighting in a dungeon. Like you see on television because you get hit with elbows and headbutts. They would bring fighters in from the outside.

DD: What was your record?

VD: I was 14-0-0.

DD: WHAT? You never lost?!

VD: I never lost a fight in my life. (laughs.)

DD: (laughs.) How long were you in prison fighting? How did you even get into it? How does someone approach a prisoner

to participate in that kind of activity?

VD: I was in prison almost five years all together. I ran with the Italians. We ran all the gambling in prison—dice, card games, etc. We had a football team, baseball team, etc. and I was one of the only white guys that got involved in all of that because I wasn't afraid. I guess that's why I got involved in fighting too.

DD: It sounds like school with all these sort of teams in prison.

VD: Back in the sixties, they tried to rehabilitate you. Now they just throw you in a cell and lock you up.

DD: So tell me more about your prison fighting experience.

VD: Well, aside from when they brought people in from the outside, I probably had like fifty fights. We fought amongst ourselves everyday—if you bumped into somebody, somebody didn't like you, somebody came in your cell to steal something, or you went through the chow line and looked at somebody wrong. It was a gladiator school. I used to have to wear Life magazines under my sweatshirt in the front, back, and sides. It was like wearing body armor so I couldn't get stabbed.

DD: Whoa. This is the craziest shit I've ever heard.

VD: When you're on the street you don't go in everyday. If somebody doesn't like you or you get in an argument, you put the gloves on, go in the ring, and fight. That's the way it used to be. Now they pull out and gun and shoot you.

DD: Well, you tell me you still get into street fights.

VD: I have had a few in the last few years, but I'm getting too old I'm afraid of hurting or killing somebody. I've always been afraid of hitting somebody so hard that

they won't wake up. I've had to throw people in garbage cans and dumpsters because I was afraid they wouldn't wake up. Most of them were bar fights. I was a doorman who worked at the Belmont Hunting and Fishing Club. It was private club in a rough part of the neighborhood on the North side of Pittsburgh. This was before I went to prison, I was probably in my late teens. You had to be twenty-one to drink, but they let me in anyway because it was owned by the Italians. You see how some of the movies are on TV, you know? That's kind of the way I grew up. As a little punk hanging out with bigger and older kids. I just got tougher as I got bigger, stronger, and older. When I got to jail, I knew everybody.

DD: (laughs.)

VD: I remember race was a big issue. Most white guys were scared, but I wasn't afraid of the blacks. A lot of them were my friends. This one big black guy was named Sugar Bear. He had a great big afro. He used to rob everyone he could because everyone had a box in their cell under their bunk with a lock on it. Well, Mario Stella—who was another Italian kid who wasn't afraid to fight, but would usually get his ass kicked, had his cell robbed by Sugar Bear. I found out who it was so I went to Sugar Bear's cell and I stole all his shit and gave all the guys their stuff back that hadn't been sold yet. So one night we were walking the cell block, getting ready to get locked up. All the blacks would stay on one side and all the whites would be on the other. Like I said, I used to mix, so me and this other black kid, named Sisco, were walking with our drink glasses. I was walking around on the black side and Sugar Bear jumped up and sucker punched me! I smashed my glass into his face and took him by his afro and ran his face in the glass on the floor. Some of the other black guys were jumping on me to pull me off him because I was going to kill him. Then the other black guys, who were my friends, told them to let me finish it

since Sugar Bear started it. I let him go after his face looked like a piece of hamburger. They sent me to another prison after that.

DD: You've calmed down a lot since prison, now since you're older.

VD: I've calmed down a lot. I don't do anything unless anyone tries to put their hands on me, you, or Dominick. You remember all the fights I used to get into when you were little and people used to pick on you? In Tampa, Dominick would get his bike stolen and I'd have to get it back and then he was on the playground... he wasn't a fighter like me and you. It's like flipping a switch on, you know? You don't wanna do anything to anyone. You want to be a nice guy and be friendly, but people won't let you. People mistake kindness for weakness.

DD: Didn't you say mom was a fighter too?

VD: She wasn't a fighter, but she could fight. She used to get me into a fight almost every time we'd go out.

DD: (laughs.)

VD: She'd be looking sexy and somebody would say something smart to her. She'd grab them by the face and say "You're an ugly mother fucker," and then I'd have to knock them out. I can't just stand there and let that happen. That would make me look weak. Sometimes there would even be a couple of guys, I've had to fight more than one guy at the same time.

DD: What are your hopes for me in regards to boxing?

VD: I'm proud of you and everything you do. I'm proud you have more control of your hostility than I used to. I used to try and correct people who were ignorant, when I should have just ignored most of them and walked away. There wouldn't

have been a fight. But most guys back in those days push you to a point where if you walk away, you were a sissy. I hung out with all the Italian gangsters so I couldn't be known as a sissy. I wasn't afraid anyway.

DD: Today, I feel like it's hard to provoke people for a physical confrontation. Times have changed where people don't try to provoke you for a fight anymore.

VD: Not people still do! That's why in the last few years I've gotten into a couple fights. People say smart shit to me, especially when I like to date black girls. How many white guys go into a black bar with a black girlfriend? Not many. But everybody respects me because after you get into a few fights and they see that you not gonna take any shit, they want to be your friend. But you have to get past that first point.

DD: Do you think mom would approve of me pursuing boxing if she were alive?

VD: Oh, she would love it because she had a personality just like you. This one guy tried to push Dominick's head under the water at the pool, he was a big guy too, and Mommy ran and jumped on him. Then she got in a fight with some other girl on the steps and they came tumbling down the steps. She was too easy to set off though, where you have more control and you handle things in a more lady-like way. Mommy was more like me.

DD: What are your hopes for me in regards to boxing?

VD: I just want you to have a good, healthy life. That's all. I don't want you to have to live like I've had to live. I would love to see you become the champion of the world, but even if you don't, to me, you're still the champion of the world.

DD: Awwe! You're killing me. (laughs.) I love you, Dad.

VD: I love you too, honey. I'd like to see you do good for your own benefit and enjoyment in the way that it should be done. In a classy way. But if it doesn't happen, it doesn't matter.

DD: Grandma's against it, big time.

VD: She's afraid you're gonna get hurt. She says you're just like me. Ask grandma about all the fights I used to get into. (laughs.) I've been shot, stabbed...

DD: Well, I hope you are around to see me grow and do good things. Stay healthy and take care of yourself!

VD: It didn't kill me then, so it is not gonna kill me now.

DD: Well, aside from the wounds, you got some internal health crises you gotta take care of as soon as possible.

VD: Yeah, that's for living life too fast. A life that I'm glad you don't live.



Desiree D'Alessandro and Victor D'Alessandro, 1993

Desiree D'Alessandro is a Tampa-based artist whose creative focus and research involves the integration of her artistic performance practice with ambitious pursuits in athleticism—specifically amateur boxing. She regards boxing as a potent topic in terms of contemporary sports and gender studies, as women's boxing is debuting in the 2012 London Olympics. Coupling gender and athlete demographics, while dissolving traditional fields and boundaries, Desiree implements a rigorous artist-turned-athlete training regimen with the aims of competing in upcoming Florida tournaments. The sport of boxing also resonates with Desiree because it has had a profound impact on her relationship with her father, Victor D'Alessandro, who was a fighter.

D'ALESSANDRO FIGHT JAMZ is a mixtape that features a retrospective compilation of the father-daughter duo's favorite fight and/or training songs between 1982 and 2010, spanning 14 different tracks from 14 different artists. This cassette booklet also includes a recent transcribed conversation exploring Victor's fight history and Desiree's current boxing pursuits.

MIX TRACKS

- SIDE A (1982-2004)**
1. Eye of the Tiger - Survivor (3:53) • 2. Keep It Up - Snap (4:03) • 3. Go For It! - Joey B. Ellis (4:14) • 4. Good Vibrations - Marky Mark (4:28) • 5. Mama Said Knock You Out - LL Cool J (4:58) • 6. Till I Collapse - Eminem (5:27) • 7. Can't Be Touched - Roy Jones (3:40)

- SIDE B (2004-2010)**
8. Round One / Boxing - Kray Twinn ft D&G (3:21) • 9. It's a Fight - Three 6 Mafia (3:11) • 10. Born To Win - Papoose (4:01) • 11. Knock 'em Down - L.I.D.A. (4:09) • 12. To Be King - Outlaw (3:21) • 13. Champion - Flipsyde ft Akon (4:05) • 14. Ready For The Fight - The Young Punx ft Count Bass D (3:37)