



# Muhammad Ali: The Birth of a Legend, Miami, 1961-1964

*Flip Schulke, Matt Schudel*

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In September 1960, Cassius Clay, a young boxer from Louisville, Kentucky, won a gold medal at the Olympic Games in Rome. Barely three months out of high school, Clay had embarked on a career that would lead him to the pinnacle of athletics as a boxer and a social icon. Within four years he would defeat Sonny Liston and thus become the world heavyweight champion, at which point he converted to Islam and took the name Muhammad Ali. By this time, he was already a legend, with a reputation for a strong sense of humor and a penchant for outlandish acts of self-promotion, which earned him the enmity of a few, but the love of most of the world.

Although Ali was certainly famous by the time of his bout with Liston, and his legend grew even more afterward, not much is known about his early years. After the Olympics, Ali moved to Miami in December 1960 to train with the celebrated Angelo Dundee. It was there that he honed his boxing as well as his self-promotional skills and grew into the boxer who would be able to take down the feared Liston.

In three extended sessions in the early 1960s, before he became known to the world as Muhammad Ali, the young Cassius Clay was captured by the cameras of Flip Schulke, himself a young man trying to make his name in the world. Photographing for *Life* and *Sports Illustrated* magazines, Schulke presented the young Clay in tender, almost intimate settings that would never be duplicated once the spotlights focused on the young boxer. It was a perfect match of camera and subject; Clay's warm, boyish exuberance beams directly through the lens to reveal a personality of extraordinary confidence and charisma. He would become one of the most widely photographed personages in the world, and these remarkable photographs show him at the very beginning of his journey.

Since that time, Ali's fame has only grown, to the point where he is generally considered the greatest athlete of the century, as well as a role model for young and old fans alike. These remarkable photographs show him at the beginning of his journey. *Muhammad Ali: the Birth of a Legend, Miami, 1961-1964* will be a necessary book for anyone interested in Ali's legend.

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