

From the screenplay, **THAT CHAMPIONSHIP PLACE** by Michael J. Laurence.
THE SCENE: SMOKIN' JOE FRAZIER and his twelve year-old son, MARVIS, are driving home in Joe's convertible. Night.

JOE

I understand you hangin' out over Joey
Pep's. Now Daddy loves you but you don't
do what he tells you, Daddy gonna tatoo
your beehind. Cures deafness every time.
You understand me?

YOUNG MARVIS

Yes, sir.

JOE

Ain't never gonna be room but for one warrior
in our house. That clear? 'Sides, gotta be born
with the hunger. Was hunger that put Muhammad
down after he shoot his mouth off on me.

(Exulting)

Now back in Beaufort, little kids say, "Can I walk
wid you, Billy?" They call me Billy Boy then, you
know?

So always bein' hungry, I say, "What you got in
the bag?" And if there was a cookie or they left
a sandwich, I say you can walk with me for the
sandwich. And nobody messed with me by then
because that was after I threw this high school
teacher into the lake and threw his older brother
in after him. (Laughs)

See, fightin'...your Dad hadda grow muscle
humpin' steel beams and pressin' cows up over
his head! And bangin' on bricks to tough up these
hands. Yeah! Just like the movies only I done it first.

Now, Ali never did that. His hands is like bookkeepers.

Next thing I know, Daddy wins the Olympic Gold in
Japan. When I come home they book me to fight
Woody Gross. He takes a shot and does a nosedive
on his way to the floor. Boom! First round. Then Mike
Bruce falls in three. Ray Staples in two. Then Abe
Davis gets off his stool, sticks his chin out and goes
flying!

Marvis laughs.

Yeah! Pow! The next year...you with me?

YOUNG MARVIS

Yes.

JOE

Next year Dad knocks seven guys on their asses before he beat Oscar Bonavena in ten. Didn't go down but he lost. Eddie Machen, tough fighter, he got hit on the nose, did a waltz, you know how they do in ballet, and hit the deck. Boom!

Marvis laughs.

Next year they hadda wake up five guys with ammonium. Then Buster Mathis, he was like banging on the side of a building. But the building finally tips over like this see, then a little more and pow, he bounces off the canvas.

Marvis roars. Joe joins in.

Manny Ramos went tweet tweet. Then Oscar Bonavena goes fifteen but he doesn't pull it out.

Then there's this Dave Zylgics in Texas...Timber! Boom! First round. Jerry Quarry, bang in seven, Jimmy Ellis and Bob Foster, crash! You gotta have the hunger, son... (laughs) HUNGER, BABY!!! (laughs)

Now Daddy got to get ready to beat up George Foreman so I don't want you disobeying. You stay out of the gym. Go learn accounting like we been talking. Go find out how many zeroes in a million bucks!

* * * * *

From **THAT CHAMPIONSHIP PLACE** by Michael J. Laurence. SCENE: Marvis is now in his twenties. It's Joe 's first visit to his son's apartment.

JOE

You've been getting noticed. Certain people

have been talking to me. They want to cash in the Frazier name while it's still a name.

MARVIS

You want a coke or something?

JOE

You're doin'; good. But you can do better. Some of the guys you're fighting they drive 'em straight over from the morgue.

(Hand up)

Now I'm not starting anything. But certain people think they can jump you from the minors to the majors. They're offering a once in a lifetime shot. They want us to go to camp in Vegas.

MARVIS

Oh, man. I don't know.

JOE

What's the matter with Vegas?

MARVIS

Nothing. It's not Vegas.

JOE

Then what?

MARVIS

I can't go to Vegas right now.

JOE

Why not?

MARVIS

I'm getting married.

Stunned silence.

JOE

You what?

MARVIS

That's right.

JOE

I need to sit down on something. Gimme something to sit down on.

(Pointing)

You sit over there so I can see you.

MARVIS complies.

Now first I want to stop shaking. Then I want to ask you a question. OK, here it comes. Have you lost your mind? What's wrong with you? You must be crazy. All this free milk out here for a strong young man like you and you want to milk one cow? I don't understand you. You're handsome, you got everything going for you...

MARVIS

That's what I want to do. And I don't want you calling her a cow.

JOE

But what about all them other women out there?

MARVIS

Not for me.

JOE

Shhh! Now you don't want to say that out loud. Don't sound right for a fighter. No athlete that's handsome and good looking like you can escape all them fine women. They're lining up in the locker rooms now posing as reporters!

MARVIS

We're settin' the date.

JOE

Your mind needs to be looked at by a professional! Maybe you love this lady but it don't always go the distance.

(Beat as he digests this)

Now you need to know some history. Fraziers

as far back before they were keepin' records
Fraziers is crazy about women! Your Dad may
be dead and gone, in the graveyard, but one
day that blood line's gonna kick in! And I want
you to come...

(Getting down on one knee)

...and I want you to do just like I'm doing and
my right hand to God, and when you feel it
coming on, I want you to come to the grave
and I want you to look right at the tombstone
and say, 'Dad, you was right!'

It's gonna happen.

To JOE's utter shock, the kitchen door opens and DARALYN steps out.

DARALYN

(Demurely)

Mr. Frazier, Hi, I'm Marvis's cow. Moo.

JOE, stunned, but playing it for comic effect, rolls over on his back with a thud.

JOE

I'm down for the count.

ADULT MARVIS (VO)

After he recovered, Pop had one more thing
to say.

JOE

(Flat on his back, to the ceiling)

Might as well tell you the rest of it. I went
ahead and made a deal. You fightin'
Larry Holmes the 28th.

DARALYN sits. MARVIS is aghast.

© Micael J. Laurence & Marvis Frazier