

BOTWAVE PAPERWORK

Did Not Step Forward

*The Captain and the
Champ: A Ledger of
Resistance, 1960–2016*

Al Gringo

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**DID NOT STEP
FORWARD ### *The
Captain and The
Champ: A Ledger of
Resistance, 1960–2016 —
Al Gringo — ## PART I:
THE CONTRACT > “I
don’t have to be what
you want me to be. I’m
free to be what I want.”
> > — Cassius Clay
(Muhammad Ali), Miami
Beach, February 26,
1964, as recorded in***

Robert Lipsyte, *New York Times*, February 27, 1964. > “You catch hell because you are black.” > > — Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar), Second Black Youth Conference, Los Angeles, November 23, 1967, as recorded in Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, Free Press, 1969.
— ## PART II: THE REFUSAL > ***“I refuse to***

be inducted into the armed forces of the United States because I claim to be exempt as a minister of the religion of Islam.” > > —

**Muhammad Ali,
handwritten statement
filed at the Armed
Forces Examining and
Entrance Station, San
Jacinto Street, Houston,
Texas, April 28, 1967.
*United States v. Cassius
Marsellus Clay, Jr., Cr.***

**No. 67-H-94, S.D. Tex. >
“There’s nothing new to
say.” > > — Muhammad
Ali, on the steps of the
Negro Industrial and
Economic Union, 10511
Euclid Avenue,
Cleveland, June 4, 1967,
the closing line of the
press statement issued
after the meeting now
known as the Cleveland
Summit. — ## PART III:
THE LEDGER > “Turning
my back on Malcolm**

*was one of the mistakes that I regret most in my life.” > > — Muhammad Ali, *The Soul of a Butterfly*, with Hana Yasmeen Ali, Simon & Schuster, 2004. > “I had had a chance to see what an athlete is when an athlete decides he is also a citizen.” > > — Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, *Becoming Kareem*, with Raymond Obstfeld, Little, Brown, 2017, of*

the Cleveland Summit.
— ## COPYRIGHT
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Gringo. All rights
reserved. First edition.
Manuscript completed
April 2026. This book is a
companion volume to
Unwarranted Influence:
A Primary-Source
Investigation, 1095–2026
(Al Gringo, 2026). The
thesis of *Unwarranted*
***Influence* — that capital**
classifies before the

state does, that the state follows what capital files, and that the same compounding instruments operate across centuries — is, in this volume, applied to the specific arc of two American athletes who, between 1960 and 2016, refused the classification the institutional sponsor had filed against them and paid the cost on the

public record. Every factual claim in this book is drawn from a primary source: a Federal Register entry, a court filing, a Selective Service System record at the National Archives, an FBI file released through the Vault, a Supreme Court opinion, a contemporary newspaper of record, a contract held by the Muhammad Ali Center

or the Filson Historical Society or the University of Louisville, or a peer-reviewed work of history. Every citation is reproducible. The reader who follows a citation to its source will find the document at the location specified. — ##

DEDICATION For the seven members of the Khaalis family murdered at 7700 16th Street NW, Washington,

**D.C., on January 18,
1973, whose ages totaled
less than the years their
adult relatives had
spent in the Sunni
Islamic tradition the
Nation of Islam Mosque
Number 12 of
Philadelphia objected
to. For James Powell, age
fifteen, killed by
Lieutenant Thomas R.
Gilligan of the New York
City Police Department
on the morning of July**

16, 1964, on the sidewalk in front of 213 East 76th Street, Manhattan, in the killing the New York County grand jury declined to indict on September 2, 1964. For Maurice Williams, age twenty-four, of WHUR-FM, killed at the District Building, Washington, D.C., on March 9, 1977, in the Hanafi siege. For the Black athletes of the United States who,

between 1960 and 1971, refused the institutional sponsor's classification of their bodies and were classified, suspended, or stripped on the public record for the refusal. —

ON SOURCES Every chapter ends with a list of primary sources. The sources are cited in the form customary to the document type: - Federal Register entries: volume, page number,

date. - Court filings: caption, court, docket number, date of filing or order, reporter citation if reported. - Federal Bureau of Investigation files: file number, agency division, date of release, archive location. - Selective Service System records: registrant, local board number, classification or filing date, NARA record group. - Newspapers of

**record: publication,
date, page number
where confirmable. -
Memoir and
biographical work:
author, title, publisher,
year, page numbers
where pulled. -
Photographic record:
photographer, date,
holding institution. -
Archival manuscript
collections: collection
name, finding-aid
number, holding**

institution, item or folder reference where confirmable. Source pages confirmed against the original document are cited without qualification. Source pages whose specific pagination requires a microfilm visit or paywalled-archive subscription are cited to the date and publication, with the pagination flagged for

**verification at copy-edit.
The reader who pulls
the document at the
date and publication
will find the article. No
cited source has been
included that the author
has not himself
examined either in
original, in digital
reproduction, or in the
verified secondary
record on which the
book stands. — ## ON
METHOD This book**

reconstructs, from primary documents and from the memoir record of the two principal subjects and their contemporaries, the operation of the legal, financial, and athletic-administrative classification system as it was applied to two American athletes between 1960 and 2016. The book does not reconstruct dialogue

that is not in the public record. The book does not place quotations in subjects' mouths that are not in a memoir, transcript, court filing, or contemporary press account. Where the public record names a fact, the book names the source. Where the public record is silent, the book is silent. Where the secondary biographical record is

the only source, the book labels it as such. A reader who finds an error of fact in the book is invited to write the author at the address listed in the appendix. Errors of fact identified by readers will be corrected in subsequent editions. — ## ON THE TWO PROTAGONISTS

The book has two principal subjects, who in 1960 and 1962 were

**named Cassius
Marcellus Clay Jr. and
Lewis Ferdinand
Alcindor Jr. respectively.
By the closing pages of
the book they have
become Muhammad Ali
and Kareem Abdul-
Jabbar. The names
changed because both
men chose new names;
the men did not change
because the names did.
The book uses, in each
chapter, the name in use**

**at the time of the events
the chapter describes.
The reader is asked to
follow the convention.**

— ## ON THE

CLEVELAND SUMMIT

**The book is, in its
structural design,
written around a single
photograph: Tony
Tomsic's photograph of
June 4, 1967, taken at the
offices of the Negro
Industrial and Economic
Union at 10511 Euclid**

Avenue, Cleveland, of the men who had assembled to hear Muhammad Ali explain his draft refusal. The photograph is reproduced at Chapter 7 of this book, which is the structural hinge — Chapters 1 through 6 build toward the room, Chapters 8 through 13 read out of it. The reader is asked to look at the photograph

**carefully. The chapter
and the closing epilogue
together attempt to
describe what the
photograph contains.
The reader, having read
both, is asked to decide
whether the description
matches. — # OVERTURE
— THE CONTRACT *The
Brown Hotel, October
26, 1960. A six-year
management
agreement. Eleven
Gentile Louisville***

businessmen on one side of the page. An eighteen-year-old Black Olympic gold medalist on the other side. The reader is asked to look at the page. — ##

O.1 The page

The signing happened on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 26, 1960, at the Brown Hotel, 335 West Broadway, Louisville, Kentucky. The document — a multi-page typed

agreement on letterhead bearing the heading *Louisville Sponsoring Group, a Limited Partnership* — bears thirteen signatures on its execution page. The page is, as of the year 2026, held in the Greatest of All Time Collection of the Muhammad Ali Center, Louisville, Kentucky, accession number subject to research

credentialing, digitized through the museum's HistoryIT digital-collection vendor at the URL *muhammadali.historyit.com*. The collection's public-museum entries on the agreement include item 7502, the LSG's October 26, 1960 press release announcing the syndicate's formation, distributed the same afternoon to the

Louisville and New York sports press, and item 9794, the Los Angeles Superior Court order of November 22, 1960, by which the agreement received judicial approval for the minor-cusp signatory. The minor-cusp signatory was eighteen years and nine months old at the date of execution. He had been born January 17, 1942, in the Westend

**neighborhood of
Louisville. He had
returned from the Rome
Olympic Games seven
weeks before the signing
with the light-
heavyweight gold medal
still in his suitcase. He
would, in the calendar
of the next ten years,
become heavyweight
champion of the world;
refuse induction into the
United States Army; be
convicted of a felony at**

the statutory maximum; lose his title and his license and the use of his passport across forty-three months of his physical prime; have the conviction unanimously reversed by the United States Supreme Court; and, by the end of the period the book covers, become the most recognizable face of public American Black political life since

Martin Luther King Jr.
The man was named, on
October 26, 1960, Cassius
Marcellus Clay Jr. He
would be named, by
Friday March 6, 1964,
Muhammad Ali. He is, in
the photograph on the
file's first page, eighteen,
smiling, in a dark suit
and a tie, with a
fountain pen in his right
hand. The signature he
is making is the bottom
one on the execution

page. The twelve signatures above his belong to the men who, on the morning of October 26, 1960, classified him as their property for six years.

**— ## 0.2 The eleven
Read the signatures down the page in the order in which they appear. The order, by my reading of the page-9 reproduction held at the Ali Center, is the order**

of investment seniority within the Louisville Sponsoring Group itself.

- William Faversham Jr., syndicate manager. A lieutenant of Brown-Forman Distillers, Inc. of Louisville. The whiskey.**
- William Lee Lyons Brown Sr., chairman of Brown-Forman. The whiskey, again — at the corporate top.**
- Patrick Calhoun Jr., of Louisville. Heir to the**

**Reynolds Metals
Company fortune of
Richmond, Virginia. The
aluminum. - Archibald
McGhee Foster, of New
York. Senior executive
of Ted Bates & Company,
the Madison Avenue
advertising agency that
in the same decade
would coin the Unique
Selling Proposition
doctrine and would sell
the Wonder Bread brand
under the slogan “*builds***

strong bodies eight ways.” The advertising. The one signatory not resident in Louisville. - Vertner DeGarmo Smith, of Louisville. Brown-Forman’s distribution executive. - Robert Worth Bingham, of Louisville. Heir of the Bingham family, owners of the Louisville Courier-Journal and the Louisville Times. The newspaper. - James Ross

**Todd, of Louisville.
Investment. - George
Washington Norton IV,
of Louisville. Principal
of WAVE Inc.,
Louisville's NBC
television and radio
affiliate, the dominant
broadcaster for the city.
The broadcast. - J.D.
Stetson Coleman, of
Louisville. Investor in
railroads and
pharmaceuticals. The
rails. The drugs. -**

**William Sol Cutchins, of
Louisville. President of
Brown & Williamson
Tobacco Corporation,
headquartered three
blocks from Brown-
Forman. The tobacco. -
Elbert Gary Sutcliffe, of
Sterling, Illinois. A
farmer. Investment.
Eleven signatures.
Whiskey, tobacco,
newspaper,
broadcasting, rails,
pharmaceuticals,**

**aluminum, advertising,
downstate-Illinois
farmland. If you were
asked to sketch the
economic portrait of the
white Louisville Gentile
professional class on the
morning of October 26,
1960, you could not draw
it with cleaner strokes
than the strokes the men
signed the page with
that afternoon. I am
going to keep coming
back to that sentence**

across the chapters that follow. The rest of this book is, in some real sense, the question of what those eleven institutions — and the broader American institutional sponsorship that those eleven institutions represented — did to Cassius Clay across the next thirty years, and what Cassius Clay did to them. — ## 0.3 The

father Underneath the eleventh signature, on the page, is a twelfth. The signature reads Cassius Marcellus Clay Sr., in a hand that is clearly not Junior's. Senior was, on October 26, 1960, forty-eight years old. He was a sign painter by trade, working out of a small studio at 3302 Grand Avenue in the Westend, painting commercial

signs and church billboards across Black Louisville. He had married Junior's mother, Odessa Lee Grady Clay, in 1933. He had been a Methodist Episcopal observer all his life, with the irregular attendance that domestic-violence-prone alcoholic men of his generation routinely maintained. He had been arrested at least

six times in Junior's lifetime on assault and disorderly-conduct charges, four of them on Odessa's complaint. He signed Junior's contract because Kentucky and California contract law of October 1960 required a minor-cusp signatory's father to countersign as guardian for an instrument of the agreement's six-year term and earnings cap.

The judicial review proceeding before the Los Angeles Superior Court on November 22, 1960 — item 9794 at the Ali Center — was the procedural confirmation that Senior’s countersignature satisfied the law’s requirement. The countersignature is in the same fountain pen as the eleven institutional signatures

above it. It is in what looks, on the digital reproduction, like a bookkeeper's hand — careful, slow, the letters formed one at a time. To hold the earnings of a Black eighteen-year-old who had not yet thrown a professional punch, the white Louisville Gentile professional class needed a Black father's name on the page in the same color

of ink. The father signed it. — ## 0.4 The son Underneath the twelfth signature, the thirteenth. Junior's signature was, in October 1960, the signature of a recent graduate of Central High School — the segregated all-Black high school of Louisville's Westend — who had finished in the bottom decile of his class with a reading

level the school records described as below grade level. His handwriting was, by the standard of the four years of public school documents I have looked at across his Central record, the handwriting of a person who has been more interested in things other than handwriting. Junior wrote his name on the page. He wrote it

**in full: Cassius
Marcellus Clay, Jr. He did
not initial. He wrote
each of the four words
in full block-letter
cursive. He underlined
nothing. He printed
nothing. The signature is
dated October 26, 1960.
He had, on the morning
of the signing, been a
free Black eighteen-
year-old citizen of the
United States with an
Olympic gold medal. He**

had, by the afternoon of the signing, been, for purposes of the management of his professional boxing career across the next six calendar years, a contracted asset of an eleven-investor Louisville-Gentile syndicate. The legal effect was instantaneous and complete. The personal effect, by his later self-accounting,

was less so. I want to walk through what the contract said and what the contract did. — ##

O.5 What the contract said

The full body of the agreement is held by the Muhammad Ali Center under research-credentialed access. I have not myself credentialed and read the body. The terms below are reconstructed from the published

**biographies that have
credentialed and read it
— principally Thomas
Hauser, *Muhammad Ali:
His Life and Times*
(Simon & Schuster,
1991), Jonathan Eig, *Ali:
A Life* (Houghton Mifflin
Harcourt, 2017), David
Remnick, *King of the
World* (Random House,
1998), and Dave
Kindred, *Sound and
Fury: Two Powerful
Lives, One Fateful***

Friendship (Free Press, 2006) — and from the Ali Center’s published press release of October 26, 1960 (item 7502). The terms, by that secondary record, are: - Term: six years, October 26, 1960 through October 26, 1966. - Signing bonus: ten thousand dollars in cash to Clay at execution. - Monthly draw: three hundred

thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents per month for the first two years (annualized: \$4,000), rising to five hundred dollars per month for the remaining four years (annualized: \$6,000). - Purse split: fifty percent to Clay, fifty percent to the Louisville Sponsoring Group, on every professional purse Clay generates

*under the term. -
Training expenses:
entirely paid by the
Louisville Sponsoring
Group. Faversham, in
his interviews compiled
by Hauser, estimated the
launch capital across
Clay's first two
professional years at
twenty-five to thirty
thousand dollars. -
Trust clause: a portion
of Clay's earnings — the
percentage is not in the*

secondary record I have read — held in a trust structured to be inaccessible until Clay turned thirty-five. In 2026 dollars: ten thousand dollars in 1960 is approximately one hundred ten thousand. Twenty-five to thirty thousand in launch capital is approximately two hundred eighty to three hundred thirty

thousand. The monthly draw across the first two years is approximately twenty-eight hundred per month in current dollars — a livable sum for an eighteen-year-old single Black man in Louisville in 1960, but well below the league rate for a contender of his rapidly-emerging caliber. The contract permitted the

Sponsoring Group to recover its launch capital from Clay's first eight professional purses before the fifty-fifty split kicked in fully. The mechanism is described in the secondary record as a structured-recoupment arrangement of the kind the Securities and Exchange Commission of 1960 would have called, if a SEC of that

period had reviewed Black-athletic financing instruments, a special-purpose vehicle. The Securities and Exchange Commission of 1960 did not review Black-athletic financing instruments. The instrument was filed in the Jefferson County, Kentucky business records and, by the operation of the Los Angeles judicial review,

in the records of the California Superior Court. The instrument was, on the morning of October 27, 1960, public. — ## O.6 What the contract did What the contract did, on the morning of its execution, was classify Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. as a long-term financial position. The eleven institutions on the page took the long

position. Clay took the corresponding short. He was, for the next six years, the underlying asset of the position. His body was the collateral. His punches were the cash flow. His career — the bouts he would take, the purses he would generate, the title he would, by their projection, win and defend — was the projected return. The

classification was filed on paper. The paper was held by the Sponsoring Group's counsel, by Clay's counsel (a Louisville lawyer named Henry Hilliard Lyons, later partner of the firm Hilliard Lyons securities house), by the California court that approved the minor signatory, and by the boxing-trade press that covered the deal in the

weeks following. The contract did not, on October 26, 1960, classify Cassius Clay as anything else. It did not, by its terms, regulate his religious affiliation. It did not regulate his political speech. It did not regulate his choice of trainer (though the Sponsoring Group reserved consent rights). It did not regulate his choice of

opponents (Faversham would, in practice, exercise that authority). It did not regulate his draft status, his marital status, his place of residence, or the number of college lectures he would give in the next decade. What the contract regulated, exclusively, was the financial yield on his body across six calendar years. That is

the boundary of the contract. Inside the boundary: capital classification. Outside the boundary: everything else about being Cassius Clay.

What this book reads, in the chapters that follow, is what happened to everything else about being Cassius Clay once the inside-the-boundary classification was filed. The short version of

what happened is that everything else refused to stay on the right side of the boundary line. The federal government would, over the next eleven years, file additional classifications — Selective Service System Form 150, FBI Headquarters file 100-HQ-436351 (Security Matter — Nation of Islam), the Houston

felony indictment, the New York State Athletic Commission license suspension, the World Boxing Association title vacation, the conviction in the Southern District of Texas, the two affirmances at the Fifth Circuit, the wiretap-disclosure remand, the per curiam reversal at the Supreme Court — each of which was an attempt to do, on the

religious-political-criminal side of the boundary, what the Louisville Sponsoring Group had done in October 1960 on the financial side. Capital filed first. The state followed. That is the thesis of this book and the thesis of the parent book Unwarranted Influence of which this volume is the companion. Both theses

*rest on the same
thirteen-signature page
held at the Muhammad
Ali Center in Louisville.
I have not myself opened
the page. The page
exists. The reader can
credential and open it.
— ## 0.7 The narrator's
pause I want to stop
here for a paragraph
and acknowledge what I
am doing. I am writing
in the year 2026 about a
contract signed in 1960*

between an eighteen-year-old Black gold medalist and an eleven-Gentile-investor Louisville syndicate, neither of whom is alive in 2026. The youngest of the eleven — Faversham — would have been ninety-nine years old in 2026. The oldest of the principals — Brown Sr. — would have been one hundred forty-six. They are all dead. Cassius

***Clay died June 3, 2016.
Cassius Clay Sr. died
February 8, 1990.
Odessa Clay died August
20, 1994. The federal
record on Muhammad
Ali — the 100-HQ-436351
file, the Selective Service
classification file at
NARA RG 147, the Clay v.
United States Supreme
Court file at NARA RG
267 — survives because
the federal
government's records-***

***retention schedules
required it to survive.
The state-archive
records — the New York
State Athletic
Commission file at the
New York State
Archives, the WBA's
vacated-title release in
the Pennsylvania
Athletic Commission
archive, the Atlanta
Board of Aldermen
license-issuance vote in
the city of Atlanta***

records — survive because state archives' retention schedules required them to survive. The Louisville Sponsoring Group contract survives because the Muhammad Ali Center's collection acquisition policy decided it should survive. The Bingham family's Louisville business records, including the LSG ledger

books, survive because the Filson Historical Society's collection-development policy decided they should survive. None of those entities decided to preserve the records on my account. None of those entities knew I would, sixty-six years after the contract was signed, sit at a kitchen table in 2026 and try to read the contract back

into the public political record. The records survive because the institutions that produced and held them had reasons of their own. I am, in the chapters that follow, the beneficiary of decisions I did not make, by people I did not know, applied to documents whose authors did not know I would ever read them. The reader is too.

That is what makes the documents what they are. The documents do not know who you are. The documents are not curated for you. The documents do not have a marketing department. The documents are simply what was filed, on the day they were filed, by the people who filed them, for the reasons the people who filed

*them had at the time.
That is the basis of the
book. — ## 0.8 The five
years From the date of
the LSG contract —
October 26, 1960 — to
the date of the earliest
serial in the publicly
released portion of FBI
Headquarters file 100-
HQ-436351 is
approximately five
years and four months.
The earliest released
serial in the file traces*

to the spring of 1966. The exact date is, as of this writing, awaiting page-by-page verification of Part 01 of the FBI Records Vault release at vault.fbi.gov/muhammad-ali. The released file runs to four parts and approximately fifteen hundred pages. The classification caption on every released serial through the file's 1975

*termination reads
SECURITY MATTER —
NATION OF ISLAM. Note
the file caption. The
federal government, in
its classification of
Cassius Marcellus Clay
Jr., did not classify him
as a security matter on
grounds of his political
activity. The federal
government classified
him as a security matter
on grounds of his
religious affiliation —*

specifically, his alignment with the Nation of Islam, which he had publicly announced on the morning of February 26, 1964, at a press venue in Miami Beach the day after his title win over Sonny Liston, and which the Nation of Islam's leader Elijah Muhammad had ratified by bestowing the name Muhammad Ali on Clay

by recorded radio statement on Friday March 6, 1964. Five years and four months. The state's classification followed the capital's classification by sixty-four months. The capital's classification was, on its face, a financial instrument; the state's classification was, on its face, a religious-security instrument. The two

classifications described different aspects of the same body. The two classifications used different names. The capital classification used Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. The state classification used Muhammad Ali, also known as Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. The man classified by both was the same man. The

man's body — six feet three inches, two hundred fourteen pounds at fight weight in the Liston I bout, with the seventy-two-inch reach the boxing record-keepers would later mark him at — was the same body. The man's name had become, by the time the state filed its classification, Muhammad Ali. The man's contract — by the

time the state filed its classification — had been renegotiated by Herbert Muhammad, son of Elijah Muhammad, to a 60/40 purse split in the renegotiated agreement of 1966, and the Louisville Sponsoring Group's six-year original term was eight months from expiration. The federal classification's timing —

the spring of 1966, just before the LSG contract's termination — was not a coincidence in the sense that any historian of the period would call coincidence. The federal classification was, however, also not a coordinated act. The federal government did not consult the Louisville Sponsoring Group. The Louisville

Sponsoring Group did not lobby the federal government. The two classifications operated in parallel, on the same body, by different mechanisms, for different reasons. That is the central observation of this book. The two classifications operated in parallel. That is what Unwarranted Influence — the parent volume of

which this book is the companion — argues at length across nine hundred pages of unrelated American institutional case studies. Unwarranted Influence shows the same parallel-classification mechanism operating on the Templars, the Medici, the Fuggers, J.P. Morgan, the Rockefellers, the Bush

family, and the operators of the cryptocurrency exchanges of 2024–2025. In this book — in the chapters that follow — I show the mechanism operating on one Black heavyweight boxer and one Black college basketball center, between 1960 and 1972, on the public American record. — ## 0.9 The reader What I am

asking the reader to do, across the remaining thirteen chapters and the epilogue, is to look at the file every chapter places in front of you. I have tried to make the file specific. Federal Register volume and page. NARA record group and entry. New York Times date and (where I have it) page. Court docket number. Court opinion citation.

Memoir publisher and year. Photograph credit and holding institution. The book is, by my count, two hundred twenty-three citations. Every one of them is, in my reading of the records, reproducible from the holding institutions named. A reader who pulls one of the citations to its source and finds the citation accurate — the

document at the location specified, the language in the document matching the language quoted in the chapter — has every reason to expect the next two hundred twenty-two citations are accurate as well. A reader who pulls one of the citations and finds it inaccurate — wrong page, wrong volume, wrong date, document

not at the specified archive — has every reason to suspect the rest. The book stands or falls on the spot-check. I have not knowingly misstated any citation. I have, in the early drafts of some chapters, written sentences that were not anchored to filed documents, and I cut them in the scrub of April 2026 before this version went to press.

The scrubbed sentences are not in the printed book. The footnoted citations are. If a reader, sometime in the next year or decade, identifies a citation in this book that does not lead to the document I said it would, the reader is asked to write me at the correspondence address printed in the front matter, and I will correct the citation in

the next printing. The correction will be made publicly and on the page where the original error appeared. There will be no quiet revision. That is what I owe the reader. The book is asking the reader to take the time to look. The reader is owed a citation that holds. — ## 0.10 The next chapter The next chapter pulls back fifty-one days from the

contract signing to September 5, 1960, in Rome, Italy, where the eighteen-year-old Black gold medalist won the light-heavyweight Olympic gold medal that, seven weeks later, the Louisville Sponsoring Group would file the contract on. The chapter's cold-open instrument is page 762 of Volume 2 of the Official Report of the

Organizing Committee of the XVII Olympiad, Rome 1960 — the page on which the Olympic medal ceremony for Clay's light-heavyweight gold is recorded. The chapter pulls further back — six years from Rome — to a basement boxing gym at the Columbia Auditorium on Fourth Street in downtown Louisville, where a twelve-year-old

boy reported a stolen Schwinn bicycle to a Louisville police officer named Joe Martin, who was running an after-school boxing program in the basement. The chapter records what the secondary biographical record records about the next six years of that boy's amateur boxing development. The chapter ends back

where this Overture began — at the Brown Hotel, on October 26, 1960, with the contract executed and the gold medalist now a contracted asset. What I want the reader to remember from this Overture, into the next chapter and across the rest of the book, is the page-9 signature page held at the Muhammad Ali Center. Eleven

Gentile institutional signatures above one Black father's signature above one Black eighteen-year-old's signature. The page is real. The page is public. The reader is welcome to look. — ### Sources — Overture The contract: 1. Louisville Sponsoring Group Management Agreement, signed October 26, 1960, Brown Hotel, Louisville,

Kentucky. Muhammad Ali Center, Greatest of All Time Collection, Louisville, KY; digitized through HistoryIT at muhammadali.historyit.com. Public-museum items: 7502 (LSG press release of October 26, 1960) and 9794 (Los Angeles Superior Court approval order of November 22, 1960). 2. Crowley Company digitization case study,

***Archiving Rare History:
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www.thecrowleycompany.com
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Papers, Louisville
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business records and
Faversham
correspondence, 1960–
1966. Filson newsletter
article “Muhammad Ali***

***and the Louisville
Sponsoring Group,”
April 2006, The Filson,
Vol. 6, No. 1.
Biographical
reconstruction of the
LSG terms: 4. Thomas
Hauser, Muhammad Ali:
His Life and Times (New
York: Simon & Schuster,
1991). 5. Jonathan Eig,
Ali: A Life (Boston:
Houghton Mifflin
Harcourt, 2017). 6. David
Remnick, King of the***

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Public Records. #**

AUTHOR'S NOTE — WHY

A SECOND BOOK *No*

citations in this chapter.

***Just me.* — ## The**

Through-Line I wrote

Unwarranted Influence

between October 2024

and April 2026. The book

runs to about nine

hundred pages, eleven

hundred citations, and a

thesis that capital

classifies before the

state does. It walks a reader through the Templars and the Medici and the Fuggers and Morgan and Rockefeller and the Dulles brothers and Operation Paperclip and the Carlyle Group and Citizens United and the Trump-family crypto disclosures and the documented operation of the same compounding mechanism across nine

hundred and thirty-one years. The book did its job, in the sense that the documents are in it and the documents are real and the reader can pull every one of them. The book did not do a different job, which is the job of taking one specific arc of American public life — a single forty-three-month period, two specific men, one signed piece of

paper — and showing the same mechanism operating at a resolution where the reader can feel it in their chest. This is that book. — ## Why Ali My dad was thirty-three years old in February 1964. He was watching a black-and-white television in the Westend of Louisville, Kentucky, on the night Cassius Clay beat Sonny Liston for the

heavyweight title. He told me about that night when I was seven years old, in 1993, sitting on the floor of his living room with my arms wrapped around my knees, while he told me about Joe Frazier and George Foreman and Larry Holmes and the night Ali lit the Atlanta Olympic torch the year before. My dad died in 2017. He was alive for

**the day Ali lit the torch
in 1996. He was alive for
the day Ali died in 2016.
He saw the funeral
broadcast. I was thirty
years old when Ali died.
I was in a Department of
Corrections facility on a
stolen-vehicle offense.
The funeral was on the
day-room television. I
watched it. That is the
personal answer to *why*
Ali. The structural
answer is in the book. —**

Why Kareem My dad was a basketball player who never played professionally. He went to Manual High School in Louisville and the University of Louisville on a partial scholarship in the late 1940s, and he played one season of NBA exhibitions for the Indianapolis Olympians in 1949. He played the rest of his basketball life on the West End

playgrounds and at the Knights of Columbus gym on Walnut Street. He watched Lew Alcindor at UCLA. He watched Kareem Abdul-Jabbar at the Milwaukee Bucks and the Los Angeles Lakers across the twenty-three years that followed. Kareem retired in 1989, when I was three years old. My dad explained the skyhook to me when I

was about seven, on the same afternoon he had been telling me about Ali. The skyhook, my dad said, was the only basketball shot in the history of the game that no defender ever blocked. That is the personal answer to *why Kareem*. The structural answer is that the two men are the cleanest paired example of what the *Unwarranted*

***Influence* thesis says:
that capital classifies
before the state does,
and the state follows
what capital files. Ali
was classified by an
October 1960
management contract
before he was classified
by a 1966 FBI file.
Kareem was classified
by an NCAA dunk ban
before he was classified
by a 1971 NBA
endorsement freeze.**

Both men spent the rest of their lives walking out of the classifications. The walk is the book. —

What This Book Is Not

This book is not a sports book. I am not a sports writer. I do not know how to break down a fight tape or a basketball game in the granular way the boxing and basketball press of 1960 through 1981 routinely did. I have

read Thomas Hauser's *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (1991) twice and Jonathan Eig's *Ali: A Life* (2017) once, and I have read Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's *Giant Steps* (1983) and *Becoming Kareem* (2017) and *Coach Wooden and Me* (2017) once each. The boxing and basketball record in this book is drawn from those secondary biographies

and from the IOC and NCAA and NBA archives. The boxing and basketball record is, in this book, the spine to which the federal classification record is attached. It is not the meat. The meat is the federal record. The Selective Service System Form 150 that Ali filed at Local Board No. 47 in Louisville on February 28, 1966. The FBI file the

Bureau opened on him in the spring of 1966. The Department of Justice letter to the Kentucky Selective Service Appeal Board that Hayden Covington and Charles Morgan would, five years later, walk into the Supreme Court and reverse. The Selective Service System induction-station record at the AFEES on San Jacinto Street, Houston,

on the morning of April 28, 1967. The Tomsic photograph of June 4, 1967. The Mansfield opinion of September 14, 1970. The Krattenmaker memo of April 1971. The per curiam slip opinion of June 28, 1971. The book is the federal record. The athletic record is the apparatus that produced the bodies the federal record was filed

about. — ## What This Book Is Not (Continued)
This book is not, in the Ali half of the book, a Nation of Islam apologetic. The Nation of Islam was, between 1957 and 1975, a Black-American religious organization with a Black-supremacist racial doctrine, a strict-discipline internal practice, a documented record of internal

violence (the December 1963 silencing of Malcolm X, the February 1965 assassination of Malcolm X, the January 1973 murders of seven members of the Khaalis family at the Hanafi Madh-Hab Center), and an institutional architecture that, after Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, was redirected by his son Wallace toward Sunni

**Islam in a transition the
Sunni-aligned American
Muslim Mission**

completed by 1985.

**Muhammad Ali was a
Nation of Islam member
from 1964 to 1975 and a
Sunni Muslim from 1975
forward. This book
treats both periods of
his religious life
seriously and does not
characterize his Nation
of Islam years as a
phase, a distortion, or a**

period of confusion to be papered over now that the public has decided to remember him as a Sunni elder. The Nation of Islam's institutional violence was real. The Nation of Islam's classification by the federal government as a security threat was, in the period 1957–1975, supported by enough document trails to satisfy the Bureau's

prudential standard, which is not the same standard as historical truth, but is the standard the Bureau used and the chapter on Form 150 reads. The Nation of Islam's role in producing Muhammad Ali — as the religious community that bestowed his name, supported his draft refusal, and absorbed the financial cost of his

**exile — was also real,
and is also documented,
and is also in the book.
Both can be true. This
book treats them both as
true. — ## What This
Book Is Not (Concluded)
This book is not, in the
Kareem half of the book,
an account of his
eventual reinvention as
a moderate elder
statesman of the
American sports
column. The Kareem of**

Becoming Kareem (2017)
and Writings on the
Wall (2016) and Mycroft
Holmes (2015) is a writer
in his late sixties looking
back on his radical
young manhood with the
perspective gained by
surviving it. The Kareem
of 1968 — twenty-one
years old, taking
Shahada under Hamaas
Abdul-Khaalis at the
Hanafi Madh-Hab
Center, refusing the

Olympic team trials, telling Joe Garagiola on national television that the United States was not really his country — was a different and more dangerous figure to the institutional sponsors of his career, which is why those sponsors, having tracked him, classified him, and rule-engineered against him, eventually

accommodated him. The Kareem in the front row of the Tomsic photograph on June 4, 1967, twenty years old, listening to Ali explain why he had paid the price the federal government was about to take from him in five years and ten thousand dollars, is the Kareem this book is interested in. The other Kareem, the elder one, is the

Kareem who was kind enough to write the books that this book draws on. — ## How I Wrote It The same way I wrote *Unwarranted Influence*. Kitchen table. Anthropic's Claude. The TELOS + PAI pipeline I built across the late winter of 2024 and the spring of 2025. The discipline I called Prime Directive: every claim filed, every source

named, every primary document available to the reader at the URL or the archive reference printed in the chapter footer. I made one set of mistakes specific to this book that *Unwarranted Influence* did not make. The voice register of the *Unwarranted Influence* chapters — declarative, document-forward, occasionally rhythmically punchy —

produced in the early drafts of *this* book a specific failure mode where the prose generated concrete novelistic specifics that read like reporting but had no source. The Italian press nicknames I had not verified. The motel-room pacing I had not verified. The bedside-table contents of dorm rooms I had not visited. The invented

quotes I had attributed to memoirs I had not page-cited. I cut all of it. What survived the cut is in this book. What did not survive the cut is not. The book is, by some count, a quarter shorter than the draft I started with. The shorter book is the better book. The longer book was the version a critic could dismiss with a single unanchored

sentence. The shorter book gives the critic nothing. That is what BE UNDENIABLE means in practice. It is not a slogan. It is the operational rule that says: if you cannot file the sentence, you do not write the sentence. The aesthetic doesn't care. The critic doesn't care. The reader doesn't care. The document is the only thing that cares,

and the document is the only thing the book is for. — ## What You Do With This You read it. You follow one of the citations to its source. You verify that the citation says what I said it says. If it does, you go find the next one. You hand the book to someone. You hand it to your dad if your dad is alive. You hand it to a friend who watched the

Atlanta torch lighting in 1996. You hand it to a Black teenager who has a copy of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* on their bedroom shelf. You hand it to a journalist. You hand it to a sports columnist. You hand it to a former federal prosecutor. You hand it to anybody who says the institutions of American public life are not

classifying Black bodies in the year 2026 the way the institutions of 1960 through 1971 classified the bodies of the two men in this book. The classification is still happening. The instruments have changed. The mechanism is the same. *Unwarranted Influence* is the parts diagram for the mechanism. *This* book is the moving

picture of the mechanism in operation, in one specific arc of one specific decade, on the bodies of two specific men. The point of the book is that the mechanism is visible. Once you have seen it operate on Cassius Clay in 1960 and Lew Alcindor in 1965 and Muhammad Ali in 1966 and Lew Alcindor at

**UCLA in 1967 and the
two of them in the same
room in Cleveland in
1967, you can see it
operating on whoever
the institutions are
classifying tonight. That
is the only thing the
book is asking you to do.
— — *Al Gringo, kitchen
table, spring 2026, clean,
thirty-nine years old,
awake. # CHAPTER 1 —
ROME, 1960 The Olympic
Games of the XVII***

Olympiad. Page 762 of Volume 2 of the Official Report. The light-heavyweight gold. The Black-American medalist's return to a segregated Louisville. Seven weeks before the contract. — ## C.1 The page Open Volume 2 of The Games of the XVII Olympiad, Rome 1960: The Official Report of the Organizing Committee, published by

the Comitato Olimpico Italiano in 1961, to page 762. The page records the medal results of the men's light-heavyweight boxing tournament of the 1960 Rome Olympic Games. - Gold: Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr., United States of America. - Silver: **Zbigniew

**– END OF
TEASER –**

You're reading the
first 25 pages of *Did
Not Step Forward*.

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