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Jacobs Beach: The Mob, the Garden & the Golden Age of Boxing

Kevin Mitchell

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The gripping tale of boxing's golden age when the mob held as much sway in the ring as the fighters, from award-winning writer, Kevin Mitchell.

New York in the Fifties was the most interesting, the most vibrant city in the world. As American culture burst into life -- it gave us television, beatniks, rock 'n roll, Marilyn and Elvis, Cold War paranoia, the Pill -- New York was its epicentre. New York gave the world a couple of other things too: one bloody and brutal but the king of sports, the other simply bloody and brutal. The Fifties were boxing's last real heyday. Never again would the sport be so glamorous or so popular. And that's where New York's other gift to the world -- the Mob -- came in.

Gangsters have been around boxing for ever, but 1950s New York was special. Most of the decade's major fights took place in the city, at boxing's spiritual home, Madison Square Garden. Most of the deals that made or ruined the lives of the era's many fine fighters were done on a famous strip of pavement across the road from the Garden: Jacobs Beach. And the man standing on that strip of pavement was a charming Italian murderer called Frankie Carbo.

Carbo had lurked in the long shadows of professional boxing since Prohibition, but this was his time. Through his willing associates, the International Boxing Club, he exercised total control over sport's most dubious neighbourhood. Under Carbo, the Mob reached its apogee in the fight game; and under Carbo it would breathe its last ugly gasp. The Mob would be replaced by men dedicated to its traditions, but none would be able to match its power. When the Mob had done it, boxing would never be the same again.

Kevin Mitchell's gripping new book is the unsanitised story of those times and that place, of Rat Pack cool and the fading of the Mob's peculiar glamour, brilliantly told through the eyes of the men who were there.

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