



Dan Stuart's Fistic Carnival

Leo N. Miletich

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Dan Stuart's Fistic Carnival is your ringside seat to the wildest, craziest, most unbelievable sequence of events in the history of boxing—a colossal clash of giant egos, pulpit-pounding preachers, grandstanding politicians, and indomitable lawmen that reverberated from the marble halls of Congress to the muddy banks of the Rio Grande. And it's all absolutely true!

Never have so many done so much to stop so few. The year was 1895, and Dallas gambler Dan Stuart had a modest idea: promote a boxing carnival featuring a match for the heavyweight championship of the world between Gentleman Jim Corbett and Fighting Bob Fitzsimmons. What could be simpler?

But before the final bell sounded, there were chases, arrests, threats, fiery sermons, political posturing, and poltroonery. Four governors, two presidents, and the U.S. Congress were outraged; three militias had been called up; and the Texas Rangers carried orders to shoot to kill. State and federal laws were passed expressly to prevent the match, poems and satires were composed, and mobs of thousands flocked to a quiet frontier border town to catch the action.

Before that final bell, John L. Sullivan fought a goat and fell off a train, cowboys and Indians played football, Bat Masterson and Judge Roy Bean got involved, Mexican rurales closed the border, two hundred gamblers hurtled across the Texas wilderness on a rail odyssey, and a lion got smacked in the kisser with a punching bag. And Dan Stuart's dream of the Fight of the Century threatened to become the Fiasco of the Century.

This richly detailed true epic of a fight and the hard-punching (and sometimes loony) political and religious turmoil surrounding it will entertain not only sports fans but all who appreciate a well-told tale that demonstrates once and for all that truth can be stranger than fiction—a *lot* stranger.

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