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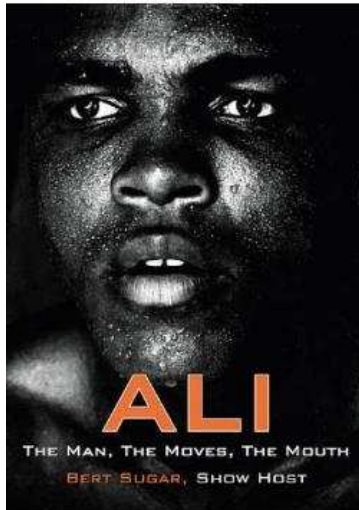
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A Largely Forgettable 'Ali' Review

by Anders Nelson

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Muhammad Ali would seem to be an endless fount of creative material, given the enormous athletic, racial, and political dimensions to his career, but it cannot be said that everything that comes out of it is worthwhile. The documentary *Ali: The Man, The Moves, The Mouth* unfortunately, is not, or is at the very least undistinguished in the company of many notable works (particularly *When We Were Kings*, which won an Oscar upon its release in 1996). Brief and unilluminating, *Ali* contributes little to our understanding of either Ali or his legacy.

At barely an hour in length *Ali: The Man* allows itself to do little more than skirt the surface of the man's boxing career (compare this to the ungainly and epic Will Smith biopic), finding only superficial links between the familiar bullet points. We see Ali as political firebrand, as man of worship, as boastful celebrity, and as supremely talented boxer, but never engages any one perspective long enough to make it feel fresh, or even exciting. It's frequently reminiscent of A & E's *Biography*, but with none of

that show's finely tuned format or production value.

If anything sets *Ali* apart, it's the narration of veteran boxing writer Bert Sugar. The man talks as if he's trying to be heard over Terry Bradshaw, and uses the intonation of a live sportscaster in instances both appropriate and otherwise. Though frequently overbearing, he provides the program's only moments of either humor or energy. For instance, when displaying the famous photograph of Ali knocking out all four Beatles simultaneously, Sugar describes the incident literally as if it were a real fight, in a tone completely indistinguishable from the one he uses to describe his fight with George Foreman. Surely it was intended as a joke, but it's a bizarre choice that makes an otherwise forgettable program occasionally perplexing and strange.

SPECIAL FEATURES

There are none.

"Ali: The Man, The Moves, The Mouth" is on sale July 24, 2012 and is not rated. Documentary. Starring Bert Sugar, Muhammad Ali.

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