

Foreman tells tale from 'Rumble in the Jungle'

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Muhammad Ali was at his bombastic best, just days before he was supposed to have his head handed to him in the Rumble in the Jungle. Listen to what he said 33 years later, and the words still sparkle to those who remember a magical time, if not such a magical place.

"I rassled with a gator! Tussled with a whale!" Ali said. "I murdered a rock! Injured a brick! I'm so mean, I make medicine sick!"

Apparently medicine made George Foreman sick, too.

At least that's the tale Foreman tells in his new book, which he is now busily promoting as only he can do. This is, after all, someone who resurrected a career with a smile and fat jokes and sold more than 100 million grills with his name on them.

And what better way to

sell a book than bring one of the most famous names and one of the most famous fights into it. Makes the whole religion angle a bit easier to promote.

The problem is, it's not a new story. Foreman said similar things about a strange bottle of water just after the fight and repeated them a few years later.

And while Foreman says he's bringing it up again as a cautionary tale of hate and forgiveness, it smacks of sour grapes, directed against a man who helped him become heavyweight champion and is no longer around to defend himself.

"Forgiveness is there, but the story must be told," Foreman said recently between book signings. "There's more to it than meets the eye. I was mad later on. I could have been dead over there."

In the book "God in My



Muhammad Ali, right, rocks George Foreman with a punch.

Corner," Foreman tells of his manager handing him a bottle of water just before the fight that had a medicinal taste to it. He became tired, he said, part of the reason Ali

stopped him in the eighth round in a huge upset.

I don't doubt Foreman believes something was wrong with his water, but you have to wonder why he's re-

hashing the story after so many years. If Foreman truly believes in forgiveness — and no one questions his evangelical credentials after 30 years in the pulpit — it seems odd that he wants to dredge it up again.

But he is, and he repeated the story of the water Dick Sadler gave him just before the fateful fight in the early morning hours in Zaire.

"We got the ceremonial water like we had in all our fights but it tasted like medicine to me," Foreman said. "He looked me in the eye and said, 'Same water as always.' I took another sip and it still tasted bad. He just looked at me and said, 'Same water as always.'"

Boxer and manager split after the fight and Sadler died a few years ago, so his side of the story will never be told. Foreman doesn't say why his own manager would want to slip him a mickey.

Others said Foreman blamed Sadler for not getting him out of Zaire when he was cut in training, though President Mobutu was the one who made sure of that.

There was too much money invested in the fight, and the people wanted to see Ali win.

"You've got to remember, in those days, he suspected everything," said Bill Caplan, who was Foreman's publicist at the time and remains a close friend. "He thought the bitter tasting water was something someone had slipped in there. Years later he abandoned that, and I'm a little bit surprised he brought it back."

If anything, Foreman has taken pains to praise Ali and says the loss ended up being the best thing that ever happened to him.

He found God after a near death experience in a 1977 fight with Jimmy Young and left boxing to become a minister, only to return to become the oldest heavyweight champion ever and America's favorite pitcher.

"I lost and I'm happy about it," Foreman said. "Ali didn't need any medicine in the water to whip me. If I would have fought him 20 times with organic water he would have beaten me. He had the style to beat me."

Foreman was in trouble long before he entered the ring in Zaire. Ali had so much popularity among the locals that there was fear for Foreman's safety, and Foreman hadn't gone beyond the second round in his last eight fights.

Ali's business manager at the time, Gene Kilroy, said he and Ali watched tapes of Foreman before leaving for Africa and Ali saw him hanging on the top rope after knocking down Joe Frazier for the sixth time in the second round.

The rope-a-dope had yet to be invented, but something clicked in Ali's mind.

"Ali said, 'I got him, he's got no stamina,'" said Kilroy, now an executive with the Luxor Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. "He said, 'Wait until he hears round four, round five, round six. George, you're out of gas and (See Foreman, Page 9)

Your Horoscope Says... May 31-June 6

ARIES

An afterglow will surround you this week if you summon it up from your subconscious, and you may not feel like getting immediately into work mode on several days this week. It's okay to go with your feelings; the world will wait for a little while. Treasure happy moments.

Soul Affirmation: My smile gives light to everyone I meet this week.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 21, 38

TAURUS

Your mind will be extra busy this week with thoughts of new projects and the things you want to get done. Best course of action is to clear up pending and overdue items. You'll have a clean slate in no time and will feel genuinely content and ready for the new stuff.

Soul Affirmation: Light from my soul shines in many directions.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 13, 51

GEMINI

You should know by now that trying to be in two places at once is very taxing to your nerves! Slow down a bit and trust that you'll get what needs to be done accomplished. Give yourself a head start on all road trips so that you have time to enjoy the view. Love promises much this week. Accept the promise.

Soul Affirmation: My mood is created by the company I keep.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 19, 36

CANCER

A friend from the past could suddenly appear in your life. This could be a highly beneficial reunion for both of you. Let bygones be bygones, and renew this friendship. Love isn't used up just because it's shared.

Soul Affirmation: My blessings come through others this week.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 24, 53

LEO

Drive the speed limit this week or you could wind up with a ticket. Why rush? Serenity is available if you only stop and listen for it inside of you. Discharge your usual obligations with dignity, and silently count your blessings.

Soul Affirmation: Friendships are the shock absorbers on the bumpy road of life.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 52, 53

VIRGO

Trust! — that's what you need to do. Sure, people lie sometimes, but when you know their hearts, you know what to expect; therefore, you're not deceived. Be prepared for lots of compliments this week. Most of them will be sincere, so plan to accept them gracefully. You may be planning a summer trip. Make it a nice getaway.

Soul Affirmation: I take a chance on new beginnings.

Lucky Numbers: 22, 28, 29

LIBRA

Live free and large, and cherish good friends. Financial matters are highlighted during working hours. Everything to do with your money, or money under your care, goes smoothly. A party invitation arrives, so say YES!

Soul Affirmation: I open myself up to the good news that wants to come to me.

Lucky Numbers: 33, 46, 55

SCORPIO

Creative mental energy makes this a banner week for you. An ambition that you thought you had left behind years ago suddenly resurfaces, and you'll see similarities between what you are doing now and what you dreamed of back then. Enjoy!

Soul Affirmation: Laughter is strong medicine against any disease.

Lucky Numbers: 34, 46, 55

SAGITTARIUS

No need for rowdiness, wild ones. You can make your point without jumping up and down and waving your hands and arms in the air! Speak your wisdom softly, gently this week, so that others can hear it and benefit, smooth one.

Soul Affirmation: I give thanks for the wisdom that guides me.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 27, 39

CAPRICORN

Things speed up again this week and you are in a highly creative mood. An outspoken female in your circle may illuminate a thorny question for you. You'll be surprised and pleased by what you hear. Take her aside and thank her.

Soul Affirmation: I keep myself free of all resentment.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 40, 51

AQUARIUS

Hello, home life. After a busy next few weeks all you want to do is savor the feelings of domesticity at home. Or perhaps go shopping to spruce up your living space. Whatever you decide, do it with a close friend. You'll both enjoy the week more if you are together.

Soul Affirmation: The grandeur of my presence reflects the sunshine of my soul.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 14, 17

PISCES

One of your most unique gifts is the power to change your mind. You know how to change the way you think, and it gives you great versatility. This week, you may be called upon to change the way you think about someone you love. Be kind!

Soul Affirmation: I am on the watch for those who need me.

Lucky Numbers: 32, 36, 45

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— MONDAY —

Smothered Chicken with rice & 1 side

— TUESDAY —

Red Beans and rice w / hot links

— WEDNESDAY —

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— THURSDAY —

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— FRIDAY —

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