



Raw Combat: The Underground World of Mixed Martial Arts

Jim Genia

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They fight in decrepit boxing gyms in the Bronx and Brooklyn, or on mats in hidden martial arts schools in Midtown Manhattan and Queens, each of them warriors in the truest sense of the word. In New York, where ultimate fighting (a.k.a. "mixed martial arts" or "human cockfighting", depending on who you ask) is banned, there exists a culture of a combat, a secret society populated by saintly thugs, mean-spirited pugilists, college students, tough guy wannabes and borderline psychotics, and in surreptitious events like the Underground Combat League they assemble for battle. Then they wage war.

Superstars like Forrest Griffin and Georges St. Pierre fight in sold-out arenas in Las Vegas, Los Angeles and London, fight before thousands in the full, warm embrace of state sanctioning and earn enough to buy new houses and cars and gigantic flat-screen televisions. But the real heroes are those in the trenches, in places where mixed martial arts is vulgar like a curse word. Those men are fighting in gyms or in basements, in the worst neighborhoods imaginable, before at most a hundred spectators, doing the illegal for no money, for no reasons other than a moment of glory and the sheer love of the sport. RAW COMBAT is their story.

RAW COMBAT takes you deep within the underground world of mixed martial arts, providing access to a realm few ever see and insight into the modern gladiators that exist there. There's James, the aspiring fighter from Long Island on a collision course with Mike, an instructor under Tiger Schulmann. There's Kaream, the pro fighter fallen from grace. There's Kimbo Slice, the most successful underground fighter ever, and of course there's Peter Storm, the man behind New York City's illicit fight circuit. RAW COMBAT introduces you to them all, and gives you an unprecedented up-close and personal look at their lives and struggles - and the secret world they exist in.

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