



# **D. Man: My Life and Boxing: Based on a Memoir by Richard Paul Westcott**

*Dr. John White*

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Dickie Westcott grew up on the mean streets of Baltimore during the 1950s. Postwar cities saw an explosion in juvenile crime rates as literally millions of unsupervised teenagers, from single parent or broken homes, roamed the streets. A good number of these young people joined gangs, like the Drapes in Baltimore. Dickie was a sixteen-year-old member of the Drapes and a promising young boxer when, on New Year's morning of 1956, he killed a fellow teen in a drunken fight. For his crime, he served five years in Patuxent Institute, a new, experimental maximum prison for "defective delinquents" (D. Men). The first half of *D. Man: My Life and Boxing* tells Dickie's early life story and the final chapters are about his life as a live-in janitor at Johnny Tocco's Ringside Gym in Las Vegas. At Tocco's gym, Dickie got to know some of the greats in boxing and came to train young fighters. *D. Man* profiles celebrated athletes such as Mike Tyson, Roger Mayweather, Danny Batchelder, Felix Trinidad, Jr., Kevin "Kid" Kelley, and Layla McCarter, to name a few. They are seen from an insider's perspective as Dickie chronicles the rise of a great young heavyweight, Friday Ahunanya. Yet in the end, *D. Man* is not so much about boxing. It's about a man society labeled as "defective," who rose above his crimes, his afflictions, and his circumstances to find peace in the center of a violent game.

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