

The price boxers pay: Graphic photographs show how just one fight exerts a heavy toll on fighters' faces

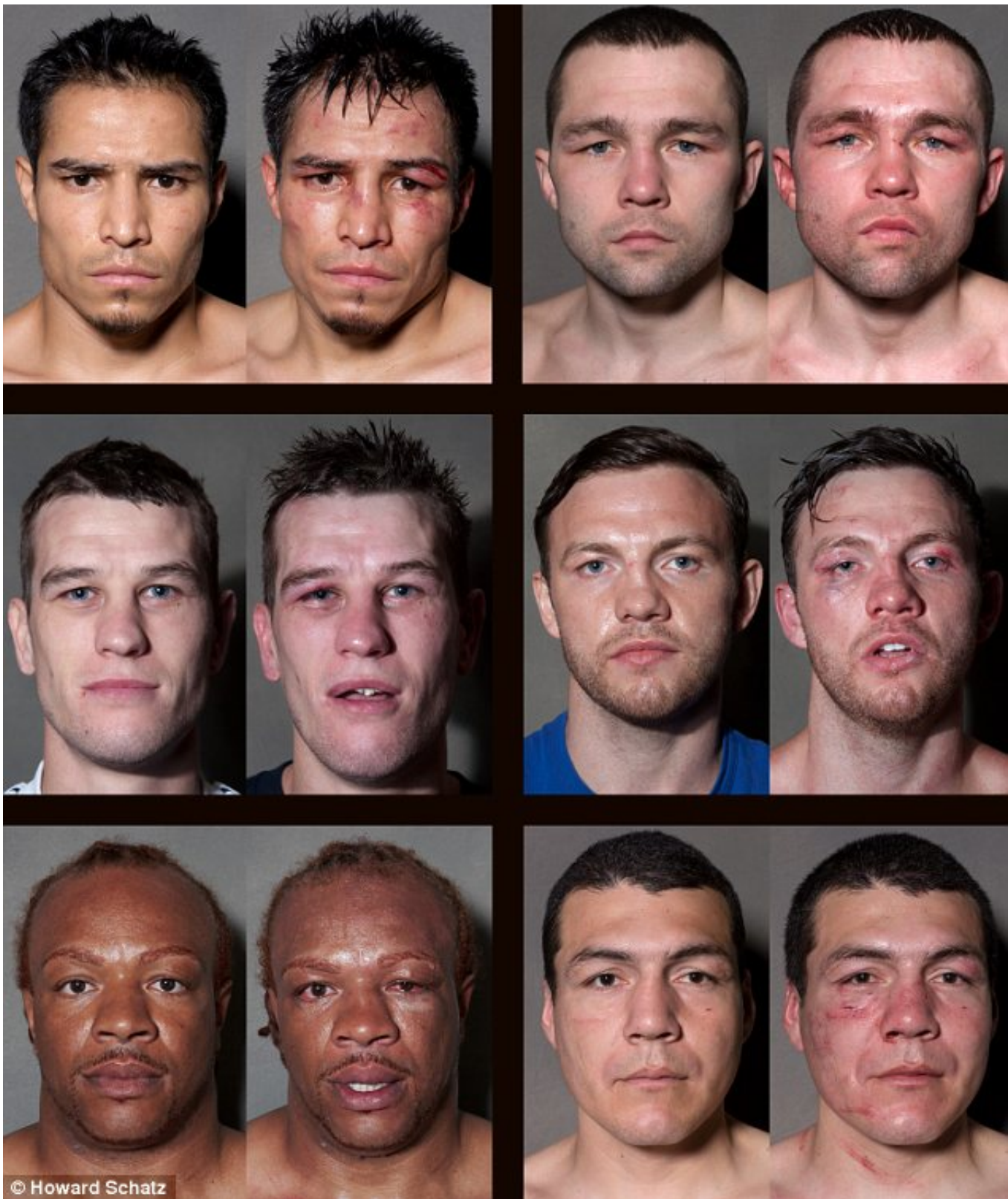
By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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Boxing is a sport more often associated with brute violence than with aesthetics.

But photographer [Howard Schatz](#) has turned thuggish fighters into the subjects of extraordinary portraits showing the beautiful side of pugilism.

The stunning pictures, collected in a new book, took six years to capture as Mr Schatz sought to investigate every aspect of the controversial sport.



Bloody battle: These extraordinary pictures by Howard Schatz show the toll exacted on boxers by their calling



Tough: Many of the boxers were reluctant to pose for the camera after suffering bruising defeats

At the Fights: Inside the World of Professional Boxing was published earlier this month by Sports Illustrated Books.

Mr Schatz trained as an ophthalmologist before taking up the camera, and through the course of his career has made ground-breaking explorations of such diverse subjects as actors, pregnancy and the underwater world.

When shooting photographs for a book on athletes of all disciplines, he became unexpectedly enchanted with

boxers in particular, despite their unsophisticated reputation, according to [Slate](#).



© Howard Schatz

Kinetic: Howard Schatz threw salt, water and powder at his subjects to capture these stunning photos



Champ: British boxer Amir Khan swinging a punch at a cascade of salt thrown at him

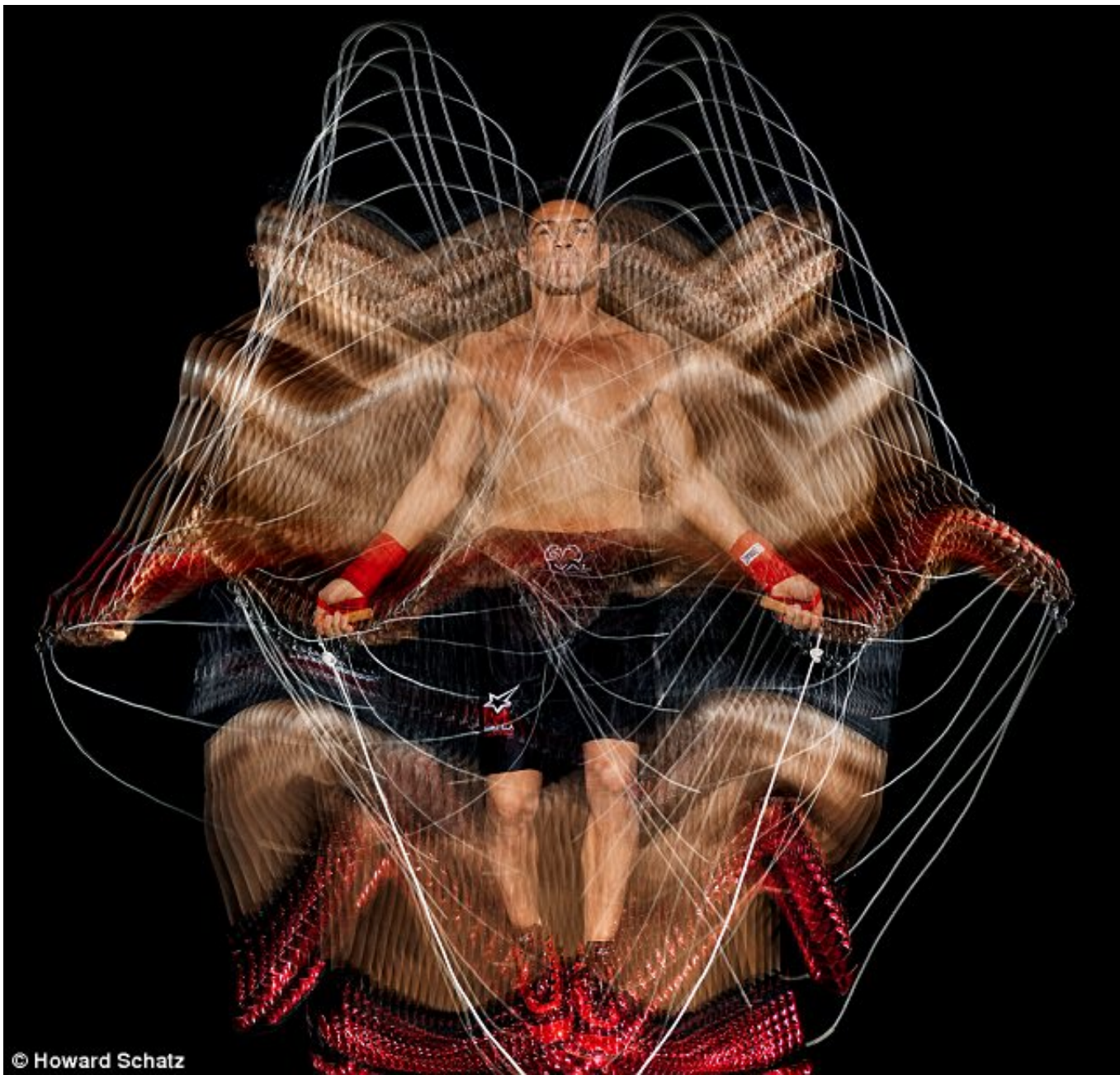


Fierce: Manny Pacquiao showing how he has risen to be one of the greatest boxers in the world

'I realised the individuals who are boxers, no one is like them,' he said. 'Their level of courage... that they would participate in an endeavor where their opponent wants to make them comatose - that sort of courage really is awesome to me.'

Many of the pictures concentrate on the extraordinary power of movement displayed by the super-fit athletes, tracing their paths as they throw punches and exercise in preparation for fights.

Mr Schatz used strobe lighting to capture the unique shots, as well as throwing water and salt on to the boxers to emphasise their kinetic energy.



© Howard Schatz

Energy: Mr Schatz set up a special camera to capture this picture of a boxer exercising before a bout



© Howard Schatz

Frenetic: The photographer found beauty in what is usually thought of as the most thuggish of sports



© Howard Schatz

Spectacular: The project started when Mr Schatz shot a series of athletes from different disciplines and was most impressed with the physique and attitude of the pugilists

But perhaps the most amazing pictures are gathered in a set entitled 'Before and After'.

The 12 pairs of images shows boxers straight before and immediately after a fight, and vividly document the brutal toll which just a single bout takes on the pugilist's body.

Mr Schatz told Slate that these photographs were particularly unwelcome to the fighters themselves, who were reluctant to pose for the camera after sustaining a loss.



© Howard Schatz

Legend: One of the images shows former fighter Mike Tyson as you've never seen him before



© Howard Schatz

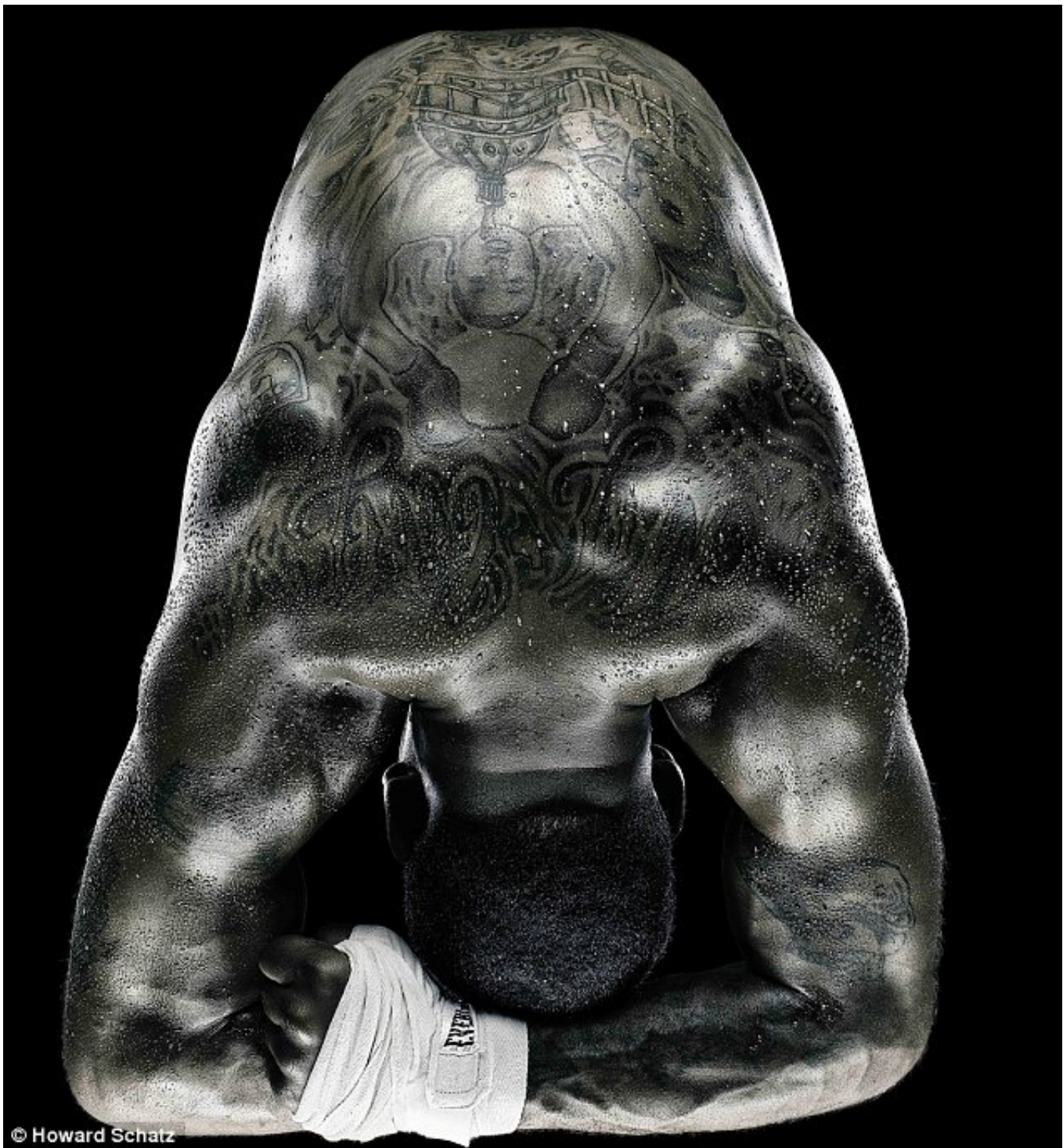
Unusual: The pictures shine a new light on a pursuit not usually beloved of aesthetes



Ghostly: Some of the images seem almost otherworldly in their extraordinary perspective

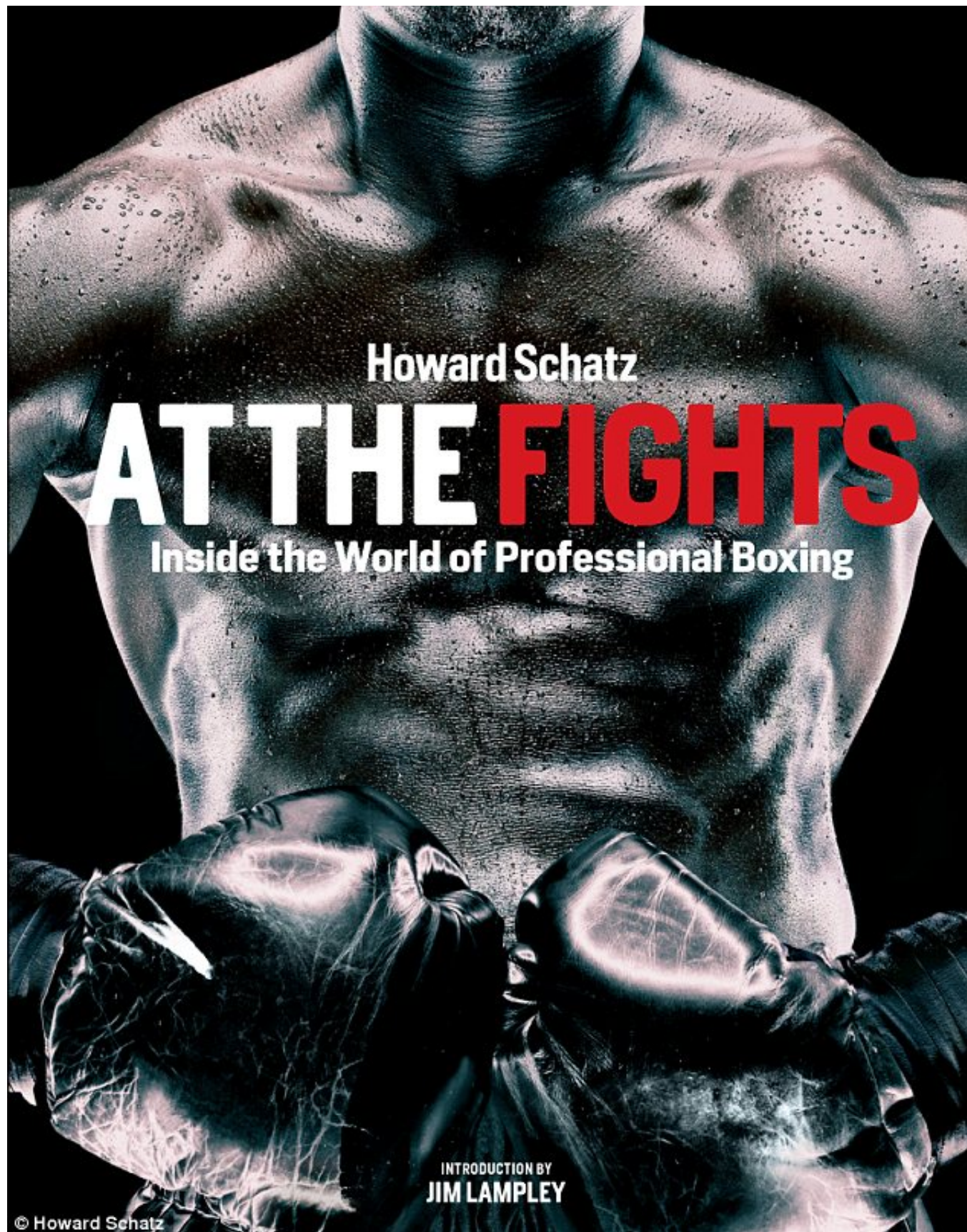
'After a boxer loses, he doesn't want to talk to anybody,' the photographer said. 'He's ashamed, embarrassed, and defeated - it's awful.'

'To get someone to stand there and have someone take a picture of them after they've been knocked out or lost on points - it's really tough.'



© Howard Schatz

Humanising: Mr Schatz transforms his subjects from fighters into complex packages



Book: **At the Fights: Inside the World of Professional Boxing** is out now,
published by Sports Illustrated Books

Read more:

- [Howard Schatz](#)
- [At the Fights: Inside the World of Professional Boxing](#)