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Description

In 1966 Muhammad Ali, boxing's heavyweight champion, refused to serve in the Vietnam War. As a conscientious objector, he fought to stay out of the war and out of jail.

Keywords

Muhammad Ali, Cassius Clay, Vietnam, War, Conscientious Objector, Nation Of Islam, Sports, Athlete, 1960's, Great Society, Supreme Court

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**APA**


**CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE**


**Transcript**

Muhammad Ali on Vietnam

NARRATOR: In 1966, Muhammad Ali, the heavyweight champion of the world, was banned from boxing in the United States after he refused as a conscientious objector to serve in the army.

MUHAMMAD ALI (to crowd): Boxing is nothing like going to war with machine guns, bazookas, hand grenades, bomber airplanes. My intention is to box, to win a clean fight. But in war, the intention is to kill, kill, kill, and continue killing innocent people.

NARRATOR: As a follower of Elijah Muhammad, and a minister of the Nation of Islam, he said that the war was against the teachings of his religion.

Professor MANNING MARABLE (Columbia University): What the 60’s were about were a time of creative imagination. The ability to find truth, your own truth and pursue it. And that’s what Ali seemed to embody.

NARRATOR: Near the end of 1967, Ali was convicted of draft evasion by a Kentucky court and stripped of his world title by the Profession Boxing Commission.

HOWARD COSELL, reporting (to Ali): Sadly, news from Louisville must have been pretty upsetting, was it?

MUHAMMAD ALI (to Cosell): I’d like to say to the fans of mine that this very well could be my last fight.

NARRATOR: He would not fight again professionally for three years. Ali supported himself by giving speeches at college anti-war rallies.

MUHAMMAD ALI (to crowd): It has been said that I have two alternatives: Either go to jail or go to the army. But I would like to say that there is another alternative. And that alternative, that alternative is justice. And if justice prevails, I will neither go to the army, nor will I go to jail.

NARRATOR: Finally, in 1970, Ali was able to get a boxing license in Georgia, the only state without a boxing commission. The following year, the Supreme Court overturned his conviction for refusing the draft.

MARABLE: Muhammad Ali became even more popular, especially with millions of white Americans who had little in common with or sympathy with the Nation of Islam, but found Muhammad Ali
engaging, funny, captivating, charismatic, a leader and spokesperson for their own opposition to Vietnam and their own desire to find meaning in really pursuing your own beliefs regardless of the consequences.