

[Transcript] Leading / 30: Anthony Joshua: Responding to failure, Saudi Arabia, and Tyson Fury

So, the big fight between Anthony Joshua and Dillion White may be off, but the big podcast chat is very much on. However, before we get into today's episode of Leading with Anthony Joshua, just a note to say we recorded this episode before the news broke that Dillion White, who was scheduled to be his opponent this Saturday at the O2 Arena, has had an adverse finding in the drug test. At the moment, not clear whether the fight will go ahead against another opponent, but luckily our discussion with Anthony didn't feature much about Dillion or indeed Saturday's fight. We focus much more on politics, on Black Lives Matter, on responding to failure, on being sent to boarding school in Nigeria, on socialism, why he believes in giving money away, Saudi Arabia, and how his life will not be complete until he fights Tyson Fury with me and Rory Stewart, ringside. Thanks for listening, I hope you enjoy listening to us as much as we enjoy talking to AJ.

Hello and welcome to the Rest as Politics Leading with me, Rory Stewart.

And me, Anastasia Campbell.

And today, we are very, very much on your turf, Anastasia, in that we are interviewing a leading sports star. So, this is the two-time unified World Heavyweight Champion and the Olympic gold medal-winning boxer, Anthony Joshua.

And before people ask, don't worry, we have not forgotten that we announced last week that we were going to be playing the second part of our interview with your friend, Yuval No Harare. We're going to be putting that out now next Monday, 14th of August, because Anthony Joshua has got a very, very big fight coming up this Saturday, August the 12th.

And as he explains, the one big interview he wanted to do before this fight, Rory, was with the and me. So, before he goes toe-to-toe with Dylan White at the O2 arena, we have got Anthony Joshua to talk to.

Very good. And of course, if you can't wait for the second installment of Yuval

No Harare, it's already available to Trip Plus listeners. Just go to www.TheRestAsPolitics.com to sign up or you can start a free trial on Apple Podcasts.

But for now, Anthony Joshua Alastair, why do you think he's such a great candidate for leading interview? Because he's a leader in that, as you said, he's been a World Champion Heavyweight Fighter. To do that, and we'll talk to him a little bit about the importance of teamship in sport, he is a leader. He's also something of a cultural figure. We'll talk about that as well.

And I just think that there's a lot of snobbishness about boxing. I just think that there are some amazing stories of people who've really turned their lives around with the help of boxing.

And there's also, as you'll discover, there are quite a lot more boxers who have gone into politics than footballers, cricketers, other sports that I can think of. And he has expressed an interest in political themes and political issues. So we'll talk a little bit about that as well.

For listeners who, like me, know nothing about boxing, since he had been on an unstoppable rise, he was the great future of boxing. He went into a match against Ruiz, who was an overweight Mexican

who wasn't meant to pose much of a challenge to him on his route to ever greater glory.

And to the complete astonishment of the world, having knocked down Ruiz, Ruiz then gets up, knocks him down twice, and everything then went derailed. And I think it's really almost more interesting talking to someone who's been through that experience of failure than perhaps talking to your friend, Meriwether, who saw any success. Mayweather. Mayweather.

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Great. Well, without further ado, here is our interview with Anthony Joshua.

So, Anthony Joshua, you have got a very, very big fight coming up, and yet you've decided to spend some of your time pre-fight talking to the rest of politics leading.

With two sort of political figures, somewhat of the past. So why do you want to talk to us?

You guys are interesting. I feel how you become big is like staying outside of your lane. If I just speak to people in boxing, then I can only go as far as boxing. But when I'm speaking to people in politics, people in entertainment, into acting, it's like opening up new doors and new listeners.

And AJ, so the podcast that we're talking on, the rest of politics is leading.

I want to ask you about leadership. Who's the leader in a boxer's life? Is it you?

Is it a coach or a trainer? Is it promoter? Is the team around you part of your leadership team? How do you think in that sort of leadership context? Who's leading whom in a boxing team?

So, in my opinion, I believe that the athlete is the leader and the coach is the one who gives him guidance. It's like the father figure teaching his son how to ride a bike. I can guide the child, but he has to turn the pedals himself. And he can ride as fast as he wants, as confident as he wants. He can go with a little jump and jump off the curb if he wants. But as a father, I'm just going to make sure that I'm there to watch and guide him. And that's why I'm using the bike as a tool to navigate through my career. So yeah, I'm the one that's leading. That's the one that's leading this destination. I know where I want to go. How do you build your team? That's very, very challenging

because when you turn professional, so I come and see you and we negotiate a contract, you can sell out 10 seats. So I'm going to pay you X amount of pounds every time you fight. And you feel lovely, sign away three years over the course of 10 fights, you feel perfect. Now, the issue is that you turn away and you realize I haven't got a physio, I haven't got a nutritionist, I haven't got a psychologist. I've never learned about accountancy because now you're an independent business, like you're not on a payroll. So now you're handling your own, your own affairs. I haven't got a legal team. So I don't even understand the importance of contracts and, you know, where I should have a contract in my company name or my personal name and what that means in the perspective of the HMRC. And this is where, for me, that was one of the biggest fights in boxing was I started so late and where I could generate an income from boxing happened within two and a half to three years, learning how to structure your foundations, right? The foundations are some of the most important things in my opinion. So I needed to really structure these foundations. That was the most challenging part of boxing for me early on. Did you make mistakes? Do you know what? Luckily enough, luckily enough, I didn't. I believe I haven't. I'm with the same team. We've expanded, of course, but with the same core team that I started with. Some people still hear some people not, but I've still got a lot of core members around and we all learn, we all learn on the job and we're helping other athletes along the way as well.

Jay, tell me a little bit about growing up and you grew up partly in Africa. What was that experience like? Talked me through that nine months. How did that help shape you as a person, as a fighter? So I wish I stayed there for a bit longer, looking back, because I think that it opened my eyes like past my community. The area I grew up in, I now saw a whole other side of life, right? That was probably the first holiday or place I'd ever been at that age. I was about 13, 12, 13, but I was actually told I was going on holiday whereas I was going to start school.

I was actually now going to live and it was a boarding school. Yeah, it was tough at the time,

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but it's a distant memory now as well. That's what I love about life is a lot of things just fall back into the distant memory at the time was the worst thing. Now I look back and it's like, here's what it is. We should tell those who are listening that you're wearing a pretty tight body cleaning vest. Just turn your right shoulder to show the tattoo and then tell us about the tattoo on the right shoulder. Well, it started off at 15. I wanted a tattoo and I was thinking, I don't want my mom to see. So I'm not going to get it on my neck where all the rubies get it. I'm not going to get it on my forearm or anything like that. So minus the rest of the tattoo, I just had wisdom at the top there. When I look back, it shows my mind was in the right place. I was searching for knowledge and wisdom because I could have got top raver or top geezer on the top of my shirt because at the time I was raven, but wisdom was the thing I went to at 15. Then the map of Africa is something that has meaning, it's heritage, it's part of my culture, part of my DNA. What it is is inside my house, when I would walk through my door, it was like I was walking back into Nigeria every time. Well, because of your parents? Because of my parents, right? The food we was eating. When I'd listen to them on the phone, they'll speak in a native language. There's certain cultural ways that I was raised, which are different to a lot of my friends and stuff like that. So yeah, I needed something that had meaning to me. And I got this done shortly after I was 16. I was just wondering, were you ever regretted not boxing for Nigeria? I'm really happy I stuck with Great Britain looking back because it's been a massive part of where I am today. That's what I said, everything has a meaning, everything. The positive has something that comes out of it. The negative is, yep, I could have had 200 million people screaming for me in Nigeria, like look at Afro beats now, how big it is. I could have been amongst that like America and African connection and been big all over the world. But I'm happy being one of the few kings in Great Britain, you know, and of course that you got that gold medal. You've always been a kind of putting stuff back into your local community, particularly in Watford, but just just give us a bit of a sense of the role that boxing played in keeping your life on the straight narrow because I get the sense that your life, you know, came pretty close to going right off the straight narrow. Yeah, so before boxing, I lived in hostels, I would smoke, not that it's a bad thing, but I believe at a young age when you're developing smoking weed and it's not good for you if I'm on this with you. You have to be sharp and I think smoking weed relaxes you and makes you paranoid and stuff. And the world is so competitive, you need to be sharp, your brain needs to be like on point. So yeah, smoking weed, obviously you're raving and drinking and I was getting in trouble as well. Like I said, I'd have a fight in the street after a rave where I was drunk. I'd try and make money. If I could get alcohol for cheap on a black market, I can then sell it to local corner shops for more. I was like a wheeler dealer, however I could get money. And this was at the age of like 16 and 18. I got banned from where I grew up. So I moved to London and elevation requires isolation. So I was then able to like when I moved to London, even though it was only 20 minutes down the road, because it was like Watford and North London, the edge of London, I was isolated in a way. So I was on my own. So I tried gymming. I started going to the gym because I was thinking when I go back to Watford, when this ban gets lifted, I want to be big and strong and go and dominate. And then I started like realizing there's a benefit in looking after your health. And it wasn't about money. There was no monetary value in looking after my health, but I felt rich in spirit.

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When I started training, I felt really rich in spirit. And I stumbled across boxing because my cousin was boxing. And when I was gymming, it was like, yeah, you know, you got these muscles, yeah, but can you fight like I'm gonna come fight, but I've been fighting like when it's outside the clubs, I'm gonna fight. Trust me, you can't fight. So I'll take you to the boxing gym. And the thing is with boxing, I think it's for more troubled, deprived kids are getting bullied, a rich kid that may be getting bullied, people are going through things. And I think it just took to me because I was probably searching for that home where let's say when I used to fight, I used to get arrested and getting trouble. Now I'm fighting and people are like, whoa, don't mate, you look amazing. I'm gonna be this is this is a bit of me like, and that's the kind of like what I started thinking. I was like, people are praising me for the same thing I was doing, but in the wrong environment. And I just stuck with it. And I remember I used to leave the gym, I used to throw up. And that's it felt like, like the devil was coming out of me, like my spirit was getting cleansed. And I never use boxing as a way where I felt it's going to define me because I'm a champion. I always said I'm a champion by just turning up to the gym and sorting my life out. And then at the age of 18, 19, I decided to stop smoking, start raving and drinking around 21 after the Olympics when I turned pro, maybe 23. I stopped wheeling and dealing because I always understood that you have to have a secondary income, right? I couldn't pull my eggs in one basket. So I imagine I'm still professional, still fighting in front of the world, but I'm still in my community wheeling and dealing and stuff like that. But yeah, and that's why I'm lucky I had an out of that negative, where I was like a wheeler dealer, having a secondary income, I also understood

the importance of handling your business. And that's where when I was thrown into this world of boxing,

where it wasn't only about performance, it was about handling your business, those experiences from my past helped me in good stead in now the business environment that was boxing.

If you go through your professional career, so you have this amazing run where you were like, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win, win. You've then had a few defeats and the three defeats in the last six fights. What have you taken from those defeats? And how do you use what you've learned from that to go into your next fight and then hopefully the one beyond that and then maybe a fight against Tyson Fury, which is the whatever he wants to see. Yeah. So I understand that it's my reality now. So I have to accept that there were guys out there at one stage in my career that were better than me on that night and they're able to beat me on that night. And I was so learned that I don't let that define me. So I'm still able to like come back and fight like I'm on August 12th and prove myself again. Now I'm now trying to like shape my reality now, way to like mental stamina, mental strength, what is mental strength? Who am I? Am I those defeats?

And I say, no, I'm not those are experiences. And you can't have nighttime at the same time as having daytime. Like you can't have positive at the same time as having negatives, even one of the other. But it's all about what you can take from the negative that happens in my life. And what I took from that is ended up in Texas in Dallas with a new coach. I feel very settled. But in order to get to that place where I'm settled, I went through a lot of storm and troubles. But I kept on questioning myself. I didn't rest. As I said, I didn't sit back and go into a shell. I said, I'm very competitive and I compare nature, right? I'm not competing with anyone else. It was just

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myself. I'm trying to figure out like myself, how do I get better? What's wrong with me? As you said, I was winning, winning, winning, winning, winning, and I faced a loss. Why is that? So those questions I asked myself was the competitive nature that I had against myself. And it brought me to a place of climbing back up that mountain where I am now. And that's sorry, and that's not winning in the ring. These are small victories that I've had at home. And what is it that went wrong? Do you think with that first loss, when you think back on it, what happened? I mean, it was a sort of stunning thing to watch. It must have been horrible for you. Now, looking back at it over time, what is it you think went wrong on that night? It's hard to say. And as an athlete, what went wrong? Because it seems like you make excuses. So I'm just going to say, I got beat by the better man that night. That's what it was. He was just better than me that night. He done well, credit to him. And even in my worst times, I always say that I still made history where the guy who beat me became the first Mexican champion of the world.

So that's still a historic moment in my career, which is it'll be something that will always be around for many years. And my name, even in negative, will always be spoken about in Mexico, for example. So the Joshua name, even in the negative times will still live on.

I wrote a book a few years ago called Winners, AJ, and every athlete that I spoke to in that book, including Floyd Mayweather, I asked them a question. Which of these two statements defines you most?

Okay. I love winning or I hate losing. So which is you? I love winning. That's interesting. You're in a minority. Yeah. Most of them say I hate losing. Yeah, yeah, I can imagine. Do you know what Mayweather said? I hate losing. No. He said, I never, ever, ever think about losing. Why would I do that? See, and such a simple statement is such a bold, powerful statement as well. When you truly understand the power of his might, that shape in Israeli, how he's gone 50 and 0, beating X amount of world champions, everyone wants to be Floyd Mayweather in the boxing community. And he said, like, I never think about losing. So we're here now talking about, Roy asked me about the loss to Ruiz. And that's why I said, I can't let it define me because it's interesting as an athlete. Once you lose, can I come back to you and say to you today that I never think about losing? That's where my mental strength needs to come in, because you have to consistently think like a winner, even in your worst times. So do you think Mayweather genuinely was telling me the truth when he said, I never, ever think about losing? In my opinion, 100%. Can you go into a fight without any doubt? Do you have to be clear of doubt or do you need doubt to drive you? Everyone's individual, but I believe doubt means that you're underprepared mentally. I need to be clear because I, it's interesting that we talk about I control my thoughts. Who am I and what are my thoughts? How are they two separate things? But there's something

going on that's separate to me that I can use to control my reality. And yeah, I want to control that. You went on to train with Klitschko and then you had this amazing fight against him. And I wonder whether you talk a little bit about that relationship and a little bit about Ukrainian boxing and British boxing. I mean, one of the things that strikes me as an outsider is how in the 70s, 80s, you thought a lot about US boxing. It was all about US boxing. And now these countries like Britain and Ukraine are producing these superstars. Tell us a little bit about Klitschko, Ukraine, that relationship. I've got so much respect for Vladimir Klitschko.

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He's an educated man. He's got PhD. Yeah, like that's enough for me. So is his brother there? I think they're the only two professional boxers with PhDs. Yeah. And they get looked at as dumb and boring. It's crazy. So I really respect them because like why value is someone that has other things going on in their life? It's not just what meets. It's just not on the face. They have other things going on in their life and they're amazing. They're very successful in what they've done in the boxing industry. I know how tough it is in this industry. So to navigate their way through this industry, I give them untold amounts of credit and respect. So he invited me to training camp in Austria. So as a young up and coming heavyweight, like I've got heavyweights now in my gym that are training with me, helping me prepare. He invited me. And I remember buying like a Canon camera. Asked my friend, David, what camera should I buy? Because I want to film. I want to kind of document, yeah, like how a professional, how an elite champion sets up a training camp. I'm someone that I'm not afraid to look stupid in order to get smart in terms of I'll ask questions. So I'll ask him a million questions. I'll film certain things. I'm like, hey, man, stop filming. We like, you know, stop filming. It's private, right? But I've got like this one minute clip of Klitschko sparring. I've got little bits of the speedball. Then I came back and then about four years later, me and him now facing off together to compete in the ring. So from that experience, right in the camp with Klitschko, I was so inexperienced. His training camp was very tough. Dylan White was there in the training camp. Kevin Johnson, who I also boxed was in the training camp. Malik Scott, who's now a Deontay Wilders trainer, was in the training.

So I was like, this hostile environment where the up and coming boxes are coming together. So it's a character building environment as well. And like you're sparring in front of these guys. And sparring is the closest thing to a fight. You just put a headguard on, you put a bigger protector on and you fight basically, you fight. And people want to see if you're tough enough. So I've got all my competitors watching. That was really good. That was really good. And I proved myself. And aside from me and Klitschko competing with each other, I appreciate the fact that he brought me into his training camp and he opened his doors to me. And in terms of like Great Britain and Ukraine and America now still dominating, I believe it comes from the amateur system. Like a lot of these guys, they say amateur for a long period of time. So you get so much experience. Experience is the best teacher where I'm still going for a process of changing trainers, figuring out what's good for me, trying to understand my style. Whereas if you can learn all this in your amateur days, what's good for you, what style you have, because in the amateurs, you're fighting taller guys, shorter guys, you're fighting guys from Africa, from Russia, from North America, different styles, different cultures. So you're going through all of these experiences which are going to shape you when you turn professional, you're going to have gathered up so much information about who you are as a fighter. So Ukrainian boxers don't really turn professional straight away. They kind of represent their country. Like their government really look after them when they're doing well for the country. And that's where I think they manage to produce very, very talented fighters in the long run, where we kind of rush our fighters. Like I turn professional after three years, because I'm like, I'm not getting anything from politics. So I need

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to go out there and earn my coin myself. So I'm like, forget all this boxing for Great Britain. I need to kind of box for myself. Where's the professional contractor? So that's the difference between where we are. And now and again, one talent manages to fight his way through all these experienced guys. Like you got me three years as an amateur, and then you have someone like Usik probably 14 years as an amateur. So that experience that he has is paying off for him. He's done really well. Now, since we got the message that you were sort of, you know, desperate to appear on the rest is politics leading and you know, I love a fine. And even though I'm on holiday, AJ, I've spent the last two or three days just watching videos of your fights and your interviews and all sorts of other stuff. And there was one interview I came across where you asked if you had an interest in ever going into politics. Yes. And I'm going to tell you what you said. You said, and this is a phrase Rory uses all the time, you said 100%. So what did that mean? What does going into politics mean in your eyes? That's like, what does going into politics mean in my eyes? That's a great question. Tell me what politics means that that word. I think politics is the bringing together in our system of millions of people to try to have the country making the right decisions for the future. That's how I see politics. I don't know if Rory would agree with that. It's a beautiful description. Beautiful. It's arguing to make decisions. Yeah. Yeah. Arguing to make good decisions. Yeah. And, AJ, do you feel that as you've got wealth here, do you think you've got more right wing? Do you think you feel more like a kind of businessman, like I don't want to pay too many taxes? The only wing I know is a chicken wing. I don't know. Left wing, right wing, up wing, down wing. Well, I know it's to wing and left hooks. But let me be honest, no one wants to pay money to the government. Everyone wants to give money to their family and friends, right? Everyone wants to spend money on a new pair of trainers. So. Yeah. But I believe in paying tax. I think we should all pay tax. Yeah. Of course. I pay my taxes. Yeah. I don't like it, but it drives me on to make more money. I'm like, oh, that's amazing. I've got some money then next week. It's like, oh, I actually don't have as much as I thought. But this is like, I want my son to actually be learning accounting, even on a basic level. He should learn accounting because it's very important. I've never met a poor accountant. So yeah, I think it'll be good for him to learn the basics of the way the UK economy works. And, AJ, you've done really well financially. So when you finally come to leave boxing, which we hope isn't anytime soon, but when you finally leave, you'll be a very wealthy man. What will money mean to you? What would you do with it? Are you going to, I mean, what's the point of having all this money? You've already got more money than you can spend in your lifetime. What's the point of it all? I say like, you're like a community bank in a way. But I live off the, let's say, 5% wrong. That if I had 100 million pounds, I'm worth 5 million a year for the rest of my life. So I have to be smart. I have to be shrewd. But at the same time, I'm not stingy. It's just in my nature. Some people are stingy. Some people wonder why I wouldn't do it if I was him. Why is he doing that? But they're not me. And I would ask them the same question. If he was in my position, why don't you? So for me personally, money is a tool to help yourself and to help others as well. So you're basically a socialist, AJ. That's what you're telling me.

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Well, what's a socialist? You believe in equality of opportunity and you believe as a wealthy man, you should help others to climb the ladder.

Yeah, because you do off of interest. It's free money. Don't cost me anything.

That 5 million a year for the rest of my life is not going anywhere because I've invested the bulk of it. So why shouldn't I help people along the way? I've managed to break away from the rat race and changed the cycle that I was stuck in. And I think it's important to also not walk alone, but to walk side by side by with people. I love to help people.

As I said, if I can make free money, I would always give portions of it away, 100%.

Okay, AJ, Rory, let's take a quick break back in a moment.

One of the things that, again, Alison knows much more about boxing than I do, so I apologize for this. But as somebody who knows very little, it strikes me that there were like these big, legendary figures in the 70s and 80s. Even my mum who doesn't follow sport knows about Muhammad Ali,

she knows about Mike Tyson. She kind of gets the impression that in the 60s, 70s, 80s boxing was like the biggest thing in the world. And now someone like my mum is less aware of it. Has something changed in the culture? Is there a sense in which it isn't quite the same, even that however well you or Tyson Fury do, you're never quite Muhammad Ali, something's changed in the culture. So in terms of the culture, there's a great book called The Ark of Boxing. So when I speak on this subject, I'm only speaking of what I've read, this is my philosophy. So what I learned is years ago, let's say before TV, what would be pushed was what the governments could tax the most.

And when they realized in like bear knuckle fighting and prize fighting would generate massive gates, they would like, they'll give acceptance to have fights of 90,000 people, for example, right. So big news in communities, word was spread that, you know, Joe Lewis is fighting Rocky Marciano, bringing massive gates, he'll be spoken about on one or two radio stations all month, and it was a talk of the town. So let's say now you've got 10,000 people that are signing up to be boxers every month. And then when TV came about, for example, I would rather sit down and watch

Sunset Beach, rather than watch two guys punching their heads in. So what changed then is that in those times where Joe Lewis was the king, that was really the only thing people were interested in or would watch where they were more famous than the president. They were the real heroes of the country. But now you're giving these kids and people like myself so much opportunity to watch so many different things. Half of the great things I say to the world, if they just listened, it'll be a better place, but I can understand that they've got so many other things to watch.

Whereas if it was years ago, you know, what I would say would get picked up by millions of people, but now it's hard, it's really difficult to kind of stand out amongst so many unbelievable individuals. Yeah, but also, I mean, back then, I mean, I can remember growing up, a Muhammad Ali fight was like, it was on the BBC. It was absolutely massive. How many channels did we have back then?

Exactly, we had three or four. Yes, it was like more mainstream. So, and you know, and it was, it was like very little football on telly. I think now, I think there is this model now,

I think Sky Sports did kind of do a pretty good job on boxing, you're now with the zone, which are taking it to a different level. I think the reason your mum doesn't know about it so much Rory is because it has moved very much to the pay-per-view model.

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Okay, that's another issue, not an issue because it's benefited some boxers, but obviously, yeah, lost viewers in other ways. So, yeah, the pay-per-view model is an issue where people, I'm not paying to watch that. A lot of people do pay that, don't they? Because you were going down and obviously, in my view, very, very right on political route there, Rory took you straight back to boxing. I want to just raise one more political issue with you, because you did, and this is something that showed how hard it is sometimes or how easy it is if you're talking about politics to get into a bit of bother. And that was when during the Black Lives Matter, following George Floyd's death, and you spoke at a march in Watford and you read our speech and you had this phrase, don't shop in their shops and it got spun out as a, you know, you took a lot of heat for it. And I just wondered if that made you, I remember Eddie Hearn, your parot at the time, saying that you were kind of hurt by the reaction to it. So, I just wanted to get, first of all, why you felt you ought to get involved in that issue and the way you did, and how you felt then about the way that that reaction was worked up against you. Why I felt I had to? I felt there was no point in me going into central London, because there's issues in the community, right? And where I grew up, a lot of people, they know me from a kid anyway, so let's tackle what issues we have at home. And yeah, I've faced racism, stereotype, all that type of stuff. So it's been, it was tough. So I felt like it's important to tackle issues at home, where I've experienced certain things, right? And I know these type of people and we can all work together in making the change. So I went to the Town Centre with a lot of our, you know, 600 to 1000 people from the local town, which was a really nice turnout. And yeah, stupidly, I didn't proofread a note that was written by one of our, like, remember growing up, there was like 50 of us. In terms of 50 of us, two parents to each 50 people, all their parents were there as well. So it was like local in it. And it was like, I gotta say something. I was like, actually, give me, give me Reese's speech. And now, and the stupidest sounds, that was it. But looking back, if I understand, I understand where he's coming from, I understand where he's coming from. But I read it. So I take the heat for it. But if I was to write my own speech, I believe in more togetherness. I believe we're all one under God, you know, under God's eyes, we're all one. And it's a shame, really, a real shame, what happened to George Floyd. It's a real shame, when people are judged on the color of their skin, because the color of the black man and black woman is melanin. It's a chemical reaction in the skin, which is to do with sun. And, you know, it's not based on anything else. But it's just determined as a negative sometimes to people. So it's a shame, where there's that lack of education that people are people. And that's why I just say cultural, cultural teachings are important. So yeah, that's why I would have addressed is like, look, we're all one at the end of the day. We all bleed the same. And that's why I'm in my community helping everyone and anyone. I don't, yeah, I don't really like choose and pick sides. So next, next speech you may make sure you read your own speech. Yeah, exactly. But this is what I'm saying. If I'm going to put myself in the forefront and be an ambassador and be an athlete, you also have to accept when I do make mistakes. Because I'm not perfect. And I'll say I'm allowed to make mistakes. I'm allowed to learn, and I'm allowed to come back. And I, and I put that out there. And if no one likes that, then don't be a fan of me, because that's just who I am.

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I thought listening to you that you spoke very, very powerfully about that.

Are there a couple of other issues that you've really feel passionately about, which are not boxing related, but where if you were able to change the world, these are a couple of things you'd really want, want to change.

Yeah, I just like, I just know it's like to really struggle. I know it's like to really, really struggle. So it's just a, it's just to continue to help people in my small way.

That's all like a change. And that's when you talk about what would I be as a politician?

I think I'll be someone that works in the borough. I wouldn't try and do world politics. I'll try and as I always say is start at home. Hence where the Black Lives Matter march rather than go into central London. I'd actually just stayed in my local area and we tackle problems at home.

And yeah, I think if I can inspire one of the kids from there, I could lift them up higher than I've ever been, because I'm only on a platform that I stand on. And if I can lift someone up, they could actually go on to do better things than I have. So yeah, I am, I would definitely do things more local. But whether you like it or not, you inevitably, because of your profile, and because you're in a sport that's got such a rich political history, I mean, you talk about Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Ali became a really significant political figure.

So if you take something like this, if you if you probably can have a fight in Saudi in Riyadh, yeah, with the Auntie Wilder, and just as Jordan Henderson, the Liverpool player, ex-Liverpool players getting a load of flack at the moment for going to play in Saudi Arabia, you'll get some flack from human rights organisations saying you shouldn't be, they would say supporting the regime by taking a fight there. Do you see why people are going to thrust politics upon you, whether you like it or not?

Yeah, definitely. Because that's their reality. Like if I'm involved in human rights and so on and so forth, that's my day-to-day reality. So anything I see that goes against what my reality is, I have to address it. So I understand, but I'm a boxer. So if I have a great opportunity to do good business anywhere in the world, if someone likes or doesn't like it, it's got nothing to do with what their opinions are. It's just about what's good for my career.

But what about, let's say we talked about your friendship with Klitschko, and his brother, as you know, is the Mayor of Kiev in Ukraine. Like if you were offered twice as much money to go to fight in Moscow at the moment, would you go?

Yeah, yeah, I would.

You would?

Yeah, and then I could donate some of the funds to Ukraine.

Yeah, I feel like it's balanced. Out of a negative, that's what I said to you, out of a negative, I could always create a positive. And at the time, it maybe looked at as a wrong thing. People may not agree with it. But if I was to do that, me personally, I would say, okay, if I was to fight in Russia, my goal is to help fund some kids that are suffering in Ukraine from the hospitals being blown up. So it's a balance. It's a balance.

And I think the world is based on hypocrisy as well, where one would say they would and another would say they would. And in 10 years, no one remembers half of it anyway.

AJ, this again is maybe an unfair question. But after that Ruiz fight, it felt to me as though in the next few fights, you got a little bit hesitant that something went, you weren't going in as fast and furious as you have been before. Is that right? Did something change or did I

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misunderstand that? So what I believed is one has to be more versatile than have one strategy. If you're going to war constantly, sooner or later, people will figure you out. And for example, Ruiz was able to figure that style out. And I took an immediate rematch. If I went in there and done the exact same thing, I went back onto the battlefield, and I prepared the same way than the exact same thing. I would have had the exact same result. But what people felt to understand is I boxed him four months later to a unanimous points decision to become two-time headweight champion of the world. And that was all that was important to me. And you asked me earlier, what's more important to you? Do you hate losing or do you love winning? And when you love winning, you'll just do whatever it is to win. Because all you care about is just getting the win. And for me, just getting that win was the most important. Which ever way I had to do it, for me, just getting that win was the most important thing. Without that win, I don't know if I would be here speaking to you guys right now, because my career would have taken a completely different trajectory. So I understood the importance of just getting that win. And how much did the defeat contribute to the win? Everything. As Rory said, it changed my whole approach to the second fight, which got me the victory against the same opponent. So I just tackled it a completely different way. And that's what life, for me, is about, is learning. So as we said, Black Lives Matter. What did I learn from that? And how can I do it better the next time? I lost to Ruiz. What did I learn from that? How can I do it better the next time? And I'm going to keep on evolving, keep on changing, keep on trying to improve myself as a person inside the ring, outside the ring in my day-to-day life. And that's why I love life. And that's why I still do sports, because you asked about finances. It's the challenge of boxing that I love every day. I can work on something that I can get better at, that I believe I'm getting better at. So that's why I just love living. I love that chase for improvement, but that chase for better times, better punch out puts, and to challenge myself. Now, just to explain to us, those of our listeners who don't really know about boxing, most of them, including Rory's mum, know who you are. They know who Tyson Fury is. And you are like the big two in this firmament for British people, for British people, but also as world boxing figures. What are the obstacles to you two getting together and having a fight? Time. Time is of the essence. Time. That's it. It's got to be the right time. The stars have to align. He's on a completely different trajectory than what I'm on. So what's his trajectory? Right now, it seems that he is planning on fighting an MMA fighter. And then after that, he might take the rest of this year out. And after this year's out, he might fight for the undisputed. We're not too sure what happens there. Or there might be another opportunity where he can generate funds elsewhere. But I don't know what his trajectory is for the future. But right now, he's spent this year planning to compete with an MMA fighter when he's a WBC champion of the world. But is it also about money? Oh, no, there's no issue with money there. No. Is it about money? Yes. But is the money an issue? No, not at all. I know my worth. He knows his worth. And there's more than enough on the table where both of us can receive a lot of money. Yeah, there's more than enough. There's more than enough on the table. So it should happen. I mean, I think people just find it difficult to understand why it won't happen. It's strange. It's strange. And like, there's no excuses. Because if you really want something to happen, I fought people. I could say, oh, you know, we're on different networks.

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He's on BT. I'm on design. I fought people on BT. I fought people on Skype. There's no excuses. That's what I said. It's just timing. It's just timing. So is it going to happen?

You have to ask him. Do you know what? Do you know what? I'm at a stage now when I'm just tired of waiting around. Because there's been a time in my life where 100% it's going to happen. I promise you I'm on it. I'm going to make this work. And it's like deflated. Remember, me and him were supposed to fight before the USIC fight, I think he had announced it and said, we signed a contract.

I had sparring partners in. I was sparring, getting ready to fight him. And then Deontay Wilder filed for an arbitration. And he had to pull out of the fight and he had to go and fight Deontay Wilder. And I've been there a lot of times, a few times before. And I think my resume shows that as well. I've fought 12 world title fights. I've competed with, I think, four to five champions of this era. Heavyweight champions of this era. Yeah, losing is not nice. But if you fight the best consistently, you might come up short. But I feel it does a lot for my character anyway. It makes me feel strong within myself that when it's all said and done, I want to be able to sit down and break down in tears when it's all said and done. No, and I gave it everything. But do you not feel your life as a boxer and your career would be incomplete unless you can have that fight? Yeah, definitely. And do you think he doesn't feel that?

No, I think he does. I think he does. But it's just, from an entertainment, from a performance point of view, we're not spring chickens anymore. We're older, war torn fighters, you know, we've been through a lot. And it would have been really good to have this fight in our prime. And especially that we're both from Great Britain as well, you know. Yeah, absolutely. And like, imagine, like, we could do something so positive. I know it's like boxing is about egos and who's a better man. But if we put that aside and say, look, we're two of the best fighters in the world, finally, where Great Britain is on the map, how can we inspire the country? How can we do something positive? We could really make something like amazing happen out of this, like historical. I don't know what it is, but I hope we do come together and do something positive rather than just get on stage and disrespect each other and put each other down. I ain't got time for all that. I just want to fight him and beat him. Rory, give me a book to read.

When am I 18, AJ?

We're going to give you two books to read. We're going to give you his book, which is called But What Can I Do? And what's it about? Give me a little. It's about trying to get more young people engaged in politics, basically. But AJ, you need to read The Winner's Book and particularly the interview with Mayweather. You will love it. The Winner's Book, yeah?

Yeah. He's got a really good mindset. He's amazing. Amazing. He's amazing. It's all here.

I know it's all there. I see what I didn't like about him was the utter obsession with money.

But can I interrupt there when you say the utter obsession with money?

I understand it because he's come from a poverty-stricken background, a very tough background, but I believe that if you do generate a lot of money, I just wish that he helped more people.

There's nothing wrong with making money. No. Okay. Let me put it a different way.

It was the flaunting of it. The flaunting of it, right? Even if you flaunt it,

if you're seen to help people, when you're not seen to help people, it's like,

this is all for me. You guys stay out there. You can never get like me. I want to sit down

and be like, this is all for me and I want you guys to come and experience this as well with me

because there's more than enough for all of us. When someone knocks on your door and they're

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hungry

and you close the door, sooner or later, they'll come and burn your house down.

So you've got to look out for people where you can. It's important.

I think his mindset was, because I'm on the political front, I'm interested in obsessive mindsets and he has got an utterly obsessive mindset. It's so important.

This is the thing, right? I'm saying this saying, what I would do if I'm Floyd Mayweather, and as I said, it works for him and we have to give the man credit for who he's become.

Maybe someone down the line in his family or maybe there is someone in his family doing all these great things that we don't know about. Maybe he is doing it, but me, if I was on the forefront, the front line, that's why I try to open an organization,

Clean Hearts Community and stuff. I like to put things back because I could show you watches worth millions of pounds and cars worth millions of pounds, but...

As he did.

Yeah, but I feel like, naturally, it's not something that everyone can get their hands on, but what I can do is show you how to help people. When you're in a position, it doesn't take much to help someone. Giving someone 20 pounds can change their day. People live paycheck to paycheck.

20 pounds makes a massive difference to someone's life. 200 pounds, and that's why I try and show you little acts of good deeds because I could show you the cars, I could show you the watches, but at the end of the day, what's that going to do for you? People say, oh, you should do it in private, so why should I drive my cars in front of you and show you all my cars, but I should do all the acts of goodness in private? I would rather hide my cars and stop flaunting my wealth and show you the acts of good deeds that I do.

Yeah, yeah. See, I think you're more political than you're later on.

What have these guys got in common? Vitaly Klitschko, Manny Pacquiao, Nikolay Valuov, Iddi Armin, who went on to be one of the most murderous dictators in history, in Uganda, Eric Morales, and Alexis Aguello. I think the thing that they had in common, obviously boxing. Obviously boxing, great boxes. They all went on to be elected politicians.

Yes, yes, yes, yes. I didn't know Alexis Aguello went on to be one of them.

Yeah, he went on to be one of them.

I didn't even know Eric Morales did as well.

Eric Morales is still a congressman in Mexico.

I find it interesting after sports, why these guys go on, and I envision myself just kicking back on my feet up on a beach somewhere. Maybe they did.

Yeah, I can't imagine myself waking up at 6am, rushing to work with a briefcase, getting a coffee, and going for another fight, not physically.

Morales gives you salary away every month.

Me and Morales will get along. He understands money isn't everything, but he knows it helps.

That's why he probably doesn't.

Yeah, yeah. Anyway, there you go.

So we've got the winner's book, but what can I do?

And then, okay, my recommendation for you is try the places in between.

That's an account of me walking across Afghanistan with my dog,

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just after the Taliban fell through the middle of winter.

I walked for 6,000 miles across Asia.

So what did they think when they saw you?

Well, you got to read the book to find out. Read the book and find out.

You've also got to see the pictures and see how he dressed up as well.

Okay, no problem.

Listen, AJ, it's been absolutely brilliant talking to you. I've loved every minute of it.

Thank you, guys. I appreciate your time.

I want to see you in the room with Tyson Fury.

Yes, I completely agree with you.

And I'd love to be in the arena at the time.

You will be.

All right, mate.

And we'll speak before then as well when it happens.

Definitely, definitely.

Thank you very much. Bye-bye.

Great to see you. Take care.

All the best.

So, Rory, I'm guessing that's your first ever encounter with a World Heavyweight Boxing Champion.

What did you make of Anthony Joshua?

I liked him very much.

I think he seems like a very decent human being.

I think it's an amazing story.

And I cannot believe the psychological pressure those guys are under, because there's sense that they now only fight on average once a year, and that they have to put these months of training into a single match.

And the way in which I was also,

I mean, really just very interesting how he came back from this extraordinary moment.

Yeah, I like the fact that he's obviously got a very, very positive mindset.

I know his press guy reasonably well.

And he was saying that he's just somebody who's got a very sunny disposition.

And this thing about anything bad that happens,

trying to get the good in it,

trying to take something positive out of it.

I know that's what sports people often say.

I think you made a very interesting point about the difference between, say, boxers, and footballers, tennis players, golfers, who are literally cricketers, who are literally playing all the time.

So if they get a defeat, they can pick themselves up and they go again sometimes the next day.

You know, he's had to sort of go away three defeats in his last six fights

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and really go deep into himself and come back.
And, you know, we'll see how he goes.
I also like the fact that, unlike a lot of political figures that we talk to, he pretty much answered every question, even the ones that were coming from a bit left field, just straight out. He sort of took a little moment to think about it, then he gave an answer. Politicians could learn from that.
Yeah, because I think we underestimate what you can learn from top sports people. I remember interviewing Lance Armstrong and him saying to me that in his eyes, the greatest sportsman in the world was Michael Schumacher. And I said, what? He's a motor racer for God's sake. He said, I said, why do you say that? He says because he's the best team builder in sport. I thought it was really interesting and it's basically that. So that whole thing about how do you build a team? The point he made, for example, about keeping the people that he's always had close to him, he's changed his trainers quite a lot, but he's got this other group of people around him that have always been the same. And I think the whole thing about how you deal with yourself, the public profile, and bear in mind, he's basically, he's still only 33 and he's moving towards the later stages of his career. So he's had to deal with all that kind of media stuff, pressure. So I think there's a lot you can learn from sports people. I really do. Well, I mean, some of them are extraordinary. You're talking about motor racing. I was just watching that movie Rush about James Hunter, Nikki Lauda. And the sense of what Nikki Lauda came back from and that crash and the way that he basically was dead. Yeah. Now, I think I didn't actually raise some of the, I was going to, I watched, like you, I watched the documentary, the one about his fight with Klitschko. I watched it this morning. And I don't know if you clocked it the same as I did. He had a fight on the 25th of June, 2016. And I'm thinking, how could you possibly have a fight two days after the bloody referendum? And of course, all the whole period of that part of the film, there's not any reference to anything else that's going on. Because that's the other thing about these guys. They've got to be utterly single-minded. But I've always answered about why you wanted to talk to us. And he's thinking about, he's interested in you having all those books behind you.

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I think there was a sort of openness and a wanting to learn and a wanting to develop. And I think that's the other thing that these guys, they never ever stop adapting.

And you look, there's obviously a bit of blame game going on with the thing about him and Tyson Fury.

I'm sure Tyson Fury would say it's all about Eddie Hearn wanting more money or whatever it might be.

But I just love the fact that he said, basically said his life won't be complete unless he has that fight.

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah.

Well, he's probably got to beat a couple of people now before Tyson Fury is going to give him that chance, isn't he?

Oh, Rory, I love the way you become a boxing pundit in overnight.

I'm sitting up, actually, I'm doing another podcast.

I haven't told you called The Rest is Boxing, where I'm going to be holding forth a lot.

I'm even going to be able to go by the end of it.

I'll even get Mayweather's name right.

I'll be that good.

It'll be fine.

It'll be fine.

I'll get a lot of listeners.

All right, Rory, thank you very much.

And you've all known Harari, part two of our interview with him will be in your feed on Monday, 14th of August.

Very good.

All the best.

Thank you very much.