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a 3-part seri

SUN SportsSun



SPIDER JONES

## GOOD MAN BOB

"Our forefathers did not break their backs, working like they did, for us to be doing what we're doing."

**4 SPIDER JONES** (ex-fighter, motivational speaker and radio host) — When Spider Jones enters a room, you know it. Because he immediately owns it. Inside Toronto's famous Sully's boxing gym on a busy Monday night, he is the self-styled "Prophet of Pugilism" who works the old fight hall, and young fighters, like it was his own joint.

says Spider, who's just written a book on his life called *Out of The Darkness*. "Toughness comes from a mindset of heart and spirit. Toughness is someone with resolve."

### Allegations officer ran downtown

#### Learning disability

That wealth of personality and cool charisma — which he capitalizes on with his CFRB radio show — is more than just talk. He's made the tough walk — starting from nothing.

One of nine kids, Spider was raised in a cold, rat-infested, two-bedroom house in Windsor in the '50s.

He stole to eat, and among his classmates — before he ditched school — was future wrestler Abdullah the Butcher and the leader of the Lobos bike gang.

By age eight, diagnosed with a learning disability, he dropped out and took to the streets. His peers were suddenly hookers and pimps and dealers. Instead of a pencil, he carried a straight razor. Instead of school books, it was soon a snub-nosed .32.

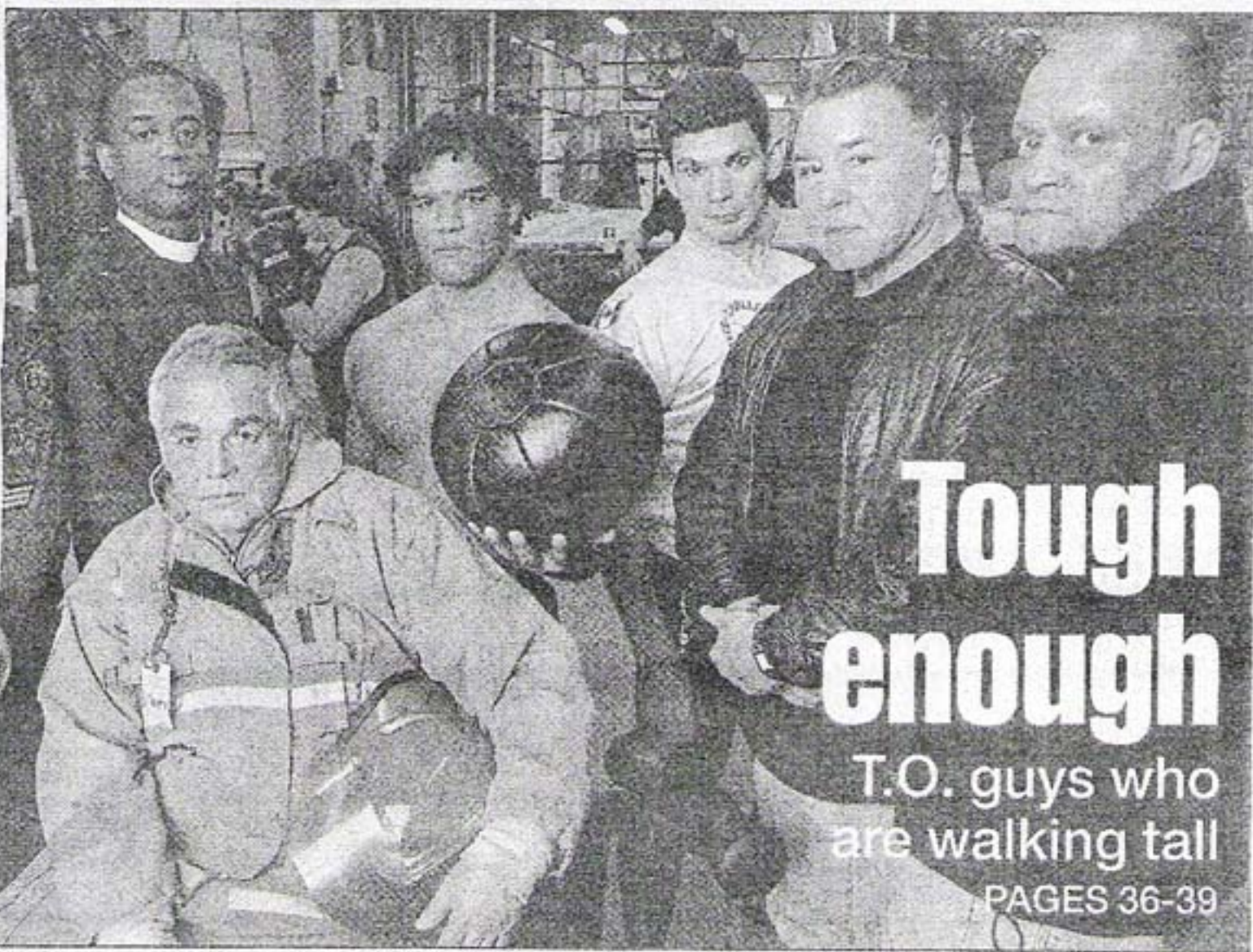
He worked his way into bare-knuckle boxing clubs — "smokers" — and became a pretty good numbers runner and small-time thief.

The murder of his cousin — a gang leader — and the '67 Detroit riots, pushed him off the street and toward Toronto. But still, he used skills never taught in school. He became a three-time Golden Gloves champ, and sparred with Ali before his fight with Chivalo.

In 1979, with a Grade 3 education, he began a radio arts program at Seneca — "To do that, at 34 years old, was the hardest thing I've ever done."

"Walking in that first day, and knowing nothing. The tough part was to stay." He graduated on the dean's honour list.

Chivalo says his friend survived "the eye of the storm" — to rise above it. "I'm not the most intellectual guy,"



# Tough enough

T.O. guys who are walking tall

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— they live it, day in and day out. From left: Iron worker Brian McCarther, police officer Tom Sharkey, Rev. Orim Meikle, fire-fighter Newton, eco-challenger Dave Zietsma, boxing legend George Chivalo and motivational speaker Spider Jones.

— Greg Henkel, SUN