

# FIGHT TELECAST A SELLOUT HERE

1,552 Fill Capitol Theater  
—Others Report Big Sales

By JOSEPH M. SHEEHAN

For its brief run, the Maine encore to Miami Beach's 1964 first showing of *The Beauty* (Cassius Clay) and *The Beast* (Sonny Liston) was even a bigger box office hit on Broadway.

The Capitol Theater, at 51st Street and Broadway, the prime New York outlet of 30 theaters in the Metropolitan area hooked up on SportsVision's closed-circuit telecast of the heavyweight championship fight, was sold out.

Not only did the Capitol dispose of all its own 1,552 seats at \$10 apiece but its box office also sold to latecomers at \$6.75 each another 400 or 500 tickets each 400 or 500 tickets good for admission to Loew's Sheridan Square, at Seventh Avenue and 12th Street. This made it a double bonanza, both for SportsVision and cab drivers hovering in the neighborhood of the Capitol.

### Ticket Sales Brisk

Early checks with other nearby closed-circuit outlets indicated that business was brisk almost everywhere. This presaged well for SportsVision's pre-announced hopes of selling more than 600,000 of the 1,000,000-odd theater seats available at its 257 outlets over the nation.

The crowd at the Capitol was surprised, shocked, stunned and what-have-you at the sudden finish of the bout, which was over before many of the on-lookers had settled down in their seats.

But oddly enough, there was little resentment at getting so small a run for such big money at a theatre that earlier in the day, for \$2, had presented "Peyton Place" and "Return to Peyton Place" as a double feature.

There were skeptics who cried aloud, "It was a dump"; "Clay never even hit him" and "What kind of a punch was that?"

But most of those who stayed to see the video-tape slow motion replay of the knockout sequence became believers.

The playback showed quite plainly, to any one open-minded enough to want to see it, that Clay scored sharply and cleanly with a whistling right cross to the left side of Liston's jaw.

It had seemed, the first time around, that the knockout punch had been a left hook, but the replay made it clear that this blow had missed, or at best connected glancingly, after Liston already was on the way down from the preceding right.

### TV Viewers Confused

The confusion of the long count and the resumption of hostilities after Liston, tumbling flat to the canvas again after hauling himself groggily up to a three-point stand on one hand and two knees, never was satisfactorily explained to the television audience.

But the more knowing among them surmised that Clay's failure to retreat to a neutral corner after the knockdown, as required by the rules, undoubtedly had something to do with it.

The crowd at the Capitol—just a long crosstown block away from darkened Madison Square Garden—was reminiscent of a Garden fight crowd on a big fight night, such as the February night when Floyd Patterson and George Chuvalo brought the historic abattoir back to rousing life by packing it for a fight for the first time in years.

On hand were the same sleek, tanned, well-fed, cigar-smoking types one identifies as Garden—or Yankee Stadium—ringsiders at \$100 attractions.

And the chivalrous, as usual, escorted the normal complement

of long-stemmed flowers, bedecked in sumptuous furs and glittering jewels.

There may have been regulars, who by plane (their own, chartered or commercial), train, car, bus, yacht or whatever, made their way Down East to the Maine event—but it seemed that most of them stayed within the familiar bounds of the great White Way.

Recognizable faces, out in the open or incognito, and recognizable names—Woody Allen, the comedian; Louis Nizer, the trial attorney, and Dan Topping Jr. of the Yankees, among them—were on hand in abundance.

In Britain, Chattanooga, and Lewiston, Me., seeing wasn't believing.

"It looks as though he knocked Liston down with a wrist movement," Tommy Farr of Wales said in London of Cassius Clay's one-round knockout victory last night.

Farr, a former heavyweight who once lasted 15 rounds with Joe Louis, saw the fight at the British Broadcasting Corporation's studio, where it was relayed via Early Bird satellite.

Farr said that the fight was "a real shocker."

Henry Cooper, the British heavyweight titleholder, also saw the match. He said:

"They talk over there about horizontal British heavyweights—but we can do a little better than that."

In Tennessee the legal counsel for the World Boxing Association (which doesn't recognize Clay) described Clay's knockout as "a farce and a fraud."

Bob Summitt, the counsel, also said that the fight was "another good example of taking money from the public without giving them a real fight."

He said that if Clay fought Patterson, the W.B.A. would withdraw recognition of Patterson, too.

And in Lewiston, which happened to be where the whole event unfolded, the chairman of the Maine Boxing Commission said "the fight was a terrible disappointment."

George Russo then commented, after reflecting on a self-asked question, "Have these two fighters back here again?"

"It wasn't any kind of fight," he concluded.

Governor John H. Reed, like Russo, did not see the knockout punch. The Governor said he had no plans to seek an investigation of the bout's strange ending.

Reed said a member of his party saw the knockout punch through a pair of binoculars and thought it was a hard one.

George Chuvalo, who was also there, termed it "the biggest fix I ever saw."