

S5 E27: Boxing To The Beat

(AJ II & Angela Jennings/Reggie Smith)

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0:00 AJ: Boxing, music, and community wrapped into one, this week on *Max Out Time*, come on over to BOOMBOX Boxing club.

0:10 Intro Song: 'For The City'

0:46 AJ: Reggie, Angela, how y'all doing today?

0:48 Angela: We're good, we're really good.

0:51 Reggie: Yes, thanks for having us.

0:53 AJ: It's great to see y'all man. Like this is a special episode because you are doing something that nobody else is doing. Something that is just so next level. BOOMBOX boxing club. First and foremost, why boxing?

1:09 Angela: I've got to give credit to Reggie, um definitely one of the best workouts for everything. Full body, for cardio, for endurance, for core, for for lower body, for strength. Reggie introduced me to boxing, so we have to to credit him for that. It's the sport he was using for his fitness when we first met.

1:31 AJ: Reggie, Reg the king, why boxing?

1:35 Reggie: As I grew up, I was a fan of boxing, what happened actually started out in a martial art called Ka Ma Gra. So, I finished grad school and I was looking for something new to do and I got into that and that kind of led me into Muay Thai and boxing. It kind of just started with having an appreciation for the sport and being a fan of the sport. Watching Mike Tyson –

2:01 AJ: So ya'll bite ears, y'all bite ears over there.

2:04 Angela [laughs]

2:05 Reggie: Not quite, not quite!

AJ: As soon as you say Tyson I'm going to the pigeons and the ears.

2:10 Angela: He did a lot before he started biting ears.

2:15 Reggie: It's it's really an age thing, that's what you forget when you see Tyson.

2:17 AJ: I'm new school y'all –

2:22 Reggie: So it's funny you say that like guys your age remember that. I remember that 90 second fights and the first round knockouts and all that stuff. So I got a different view and appreciation for Tyson.

2:36 AJ: So it's called BOOMBOX boxing club, and the first thing I think of when I think of a boombox is Radio Raheem, rest in power, and that's 80s.

2:50 Reggie: Nice, nice!

2:54 Angela: You got a little old school in you.

2:55 AJ: I do, we're going to get to even more old school because I know what type of music you listen to. So anyway, the music part, the boxing with music, is there a correlation there?

3:07 Reggie: There is now you know.

3:08 AJ: Good answer.

3:10 Reggie: So people work out to music all the time and so the concept was always going to be some type of music playing while we box. I think over time in the last year or so, we really refined this concept of boxing to the beat, and that was a last addition. It was always going to be boxing and music but in the last 12 months, we really started playing around with this idea.

3:38 AJ: It's actually like dance because you're boxing to the eight-count right? And one and two and three and four and those are the different punching combinations correct?

3:48 Angela: Correct, and we call out the combinations and it's good to use the rhythm of the music to be able to understand how your body is supposed to flow. They're repeating those patterns until they become something that they're used to, being able to do a little more fluidly. It makes it a little less awkward, a little less uncomfortable and you're not overthinking

about it so much. Next thing you know, it's like, 'I'm doing it, I'm throwing these punches', you're really using the rhythm and using your body to the beat.

4:16 AJ: I would imagine that people who walk in there who aren't boxers are little bit intimidated right? But once you get in there, you're probably get in there, you feel that this is actually kind of fun, I'm actually feeling that rhythm, okay, I got some energy, the coaches they're rocking with me. It's a beat and you are rocking to the beat.

4:37 Angela: That is the intent we were going for, that's it, that is it.

4:38 Reggie: I'm going to tell you really quick, what is really amazing, we talk about punching but like, I've seen beginners slip and roll punches and you just don't see that from people, it's literally the music is like *bang bang bang*. You got to see it, when you got 30 people rocking out in unison, dude it's like –

5:00 Angela: Yeah, it's lit.

5:00 AJ: Poetry in motion?

5:01 Reggie: It's tribal, like it's it's it's a thing that you've just got to experience.

5:11 AJ: Y'all have this quote, blasted it all over, we're talking about the brand, it's blasted everywhere, "Our mission is to empower and inspire while making the health benefits of boxing inspired training accessible to all fitness levels and backgrounds." Who came up with the quote, what does that mean?

5:28 Reggie: I think we were just we were kicking it around. We--we knew we wanted to empower people, and one of the things with boxing, as you get better and you do it more, you gain confidence. Even if there is no health benefit at all, confidence with people – when they walk out of that classroom, you see it. We wanted to share that with people, we kicked it around and landed there.

5:58 Angela: It's true, when we were talking about it and we went through that mission statement a couple of different times and we landed there because we really want people to walk out of BOOMBOX every single time, feeling crazy accomplished, feeling inspired, ready

to come back and do it again and taking on the day and feeling like they're gaining something, and they're ready to come back and do it again. When you see those people, they they elevate, they're excited, you see them in the room and it's like wow, where did that come from, a month ago you weren't hitting like that. You see the determination in their face, the feeling that they get when they feel that they're got it, it's crazy it's a crazy feeling and people love that.

6:36 AJ: Is that part of your goal? To see people who have taken your class, they walk in and then they walk out with confidence?

6:48 Angela: We definitely try and quote that, when they walk through that door it's like 'listen, you're going to rock it out period, you know, it's you and the bag, you're not competing with anyone else, it's you against you, and you've got this.' There's nothing really apprehensive to be about, the room is dark, the space is; it's you and the bag. That's how we came up with how we wanted the feeling to be, how we wanted the look to be. This dark room, it's you and this bag, these lights, the goal is for really for you to really focus on yourself and what you're doing. We came around and we speak to you in that way. Again, you are going to come into something new and something you haven't done before. We want you to have a level of comfort from the start, still the end goal at the end of the day is walking out of there feeling like you gained something, both mentally and spiritually, and physically. We hit all those points.

7:38 Reggie: One of the things that I didn't appreciate initially, there is like this look after class, we give everybody a high five on the way out. They've got this look like, yo, I'm beat but they are like I feel like I can do anything, you know what I'm saying? But we get that every time we teach that class, when the folks walk out, we take that with us. It fuels us, that's what it's about.

8:05 AJ: I can imagine that being so empowering, because because even as an athlete, you think of great sports films, you think about Rocky, going up the steps and the doing that little

dance. That's what you feel like after you just beat somebody's tail, or after you conquer an assignment or whatever you're doing in life, that confidence of getting up over that hill.

8:32 Reggie: Here's another analogy right, you know how, and you'll appreciate this as a guy, you go to the barber shop and your hair is not cut yet, you sit down on the chair, you barber works magic on you, when he's done, you feel like yes! It's literally like a transformation that occurs, and I feel like we're doing that with people and with boxing. When you get out of the barber chair, you feel a little taller, a little stronger. You know. Am I lying? Listen! Listen!

9:00 AJ: One of my favorite movies is ATL and we going to get into all the context, but you become a 'new new' man. That's in the barber shop and that's also in the BOOMBOX boxing club, that's the same way, that's the same feeling. So us we are sitting here, young Black folks, y'all two both got a black owned boxing gym, what does it mean for the black community to walk in there and have a fitness class with two of you actually teaching the class and running the show?

9:37 Angela: It's a surreal experience, I mean for us to see and I was just talking to Reggie as we were coming here, our space is so diverse. We had no idea what to expect when we opened up those doors. No idea of who was going to walk into the building, and to see not only black people but other people of color just in there, ready to work consistently, we have a number of consistent repeat fighters is what we call our guests. If it takes away those things, we don't work out, we don't like working out, we're lazy.

10:06 AJ: These are all the things that are being said.

10:09 Angela. Exactly. They're there, they're in it, not just us we have a wonderful team of coaches, they're amazing. They're rooting for us, they come in there and they're happy to be there, the vibe is crazy, it makes us – you know we we come in there, we stand, we sit and they're rooting for us. We're sitting there, we're rooting for them too, and them not wanting to disappoint us is a crazy feeling to have. We work out, we work out!

10:44 AJ: I know y'all do.

10:47 Reggie: One of the things I didn't appreciate or didn't realize, and I hear it a lot, so many people take pride in what Angela and I have done, I didn't realize we were such an inspiration like that. I didn't foresee that, I hear and I'm like oh wow.

11:07 AJ: It's touching, I can see the emotion in both of y'all voices, and the stories that y'all are telling, that it really means something.

11:16 Angela: It does, it really does. It's a primary driver, it's hard, you know it's hard every single day, it's every single day but they're in it and people are rooting near and far not only the people are coming into the studio, near and far, it's an amazing feeling.

11:37 AJ: I just go back to things that are just in my family alone, you talking about hypertension, you're talking about diabetes, you're talking about things where as black people and black communities, if you don't work out, protect and do the things that you need to do, those things are killing our folks. How does boxing help that?

11:54 Reggie: I think so with our format, we make working out fun, we're in there, we're moving around, the class is 50 minutes long. We can take your mind off of the fact that you're working. It's fun, you have other people, you have friends in there. It's better than walking or running on the treadmill mindlessly. The music, the experience, you're getting that work and you don't even realize, you're enjoying yourself.

12:25 AJ: I can only imagine. I definitely have to step inside the ring once in a while.

12:29 Reggie: Listen listen, she will break you down.

12:30 AJ: I like a challenge!

12:32 Reggie: I call her the cardio queen of Southeast.

12:38 Angela: I have fun in there, Memphis strong, all day.

12:48 AJ: You know I actually grew up in DC, in the neighbourhood that BOOMBOX Boxing Club is located. The Navy Yard. Been there my whole life, early 90s, like we talked about earlier and seen all of the changes that occurred for various reasons. I know Reggie you did,

but did y'all really know how big this is to put a black owned business in a gentrified neighborhood?

13:16 Reggie: That's funny, we remember when we signed our lease and walked out of that building, I said, they don't give first time black operators with no experience leases like this –

13:26 Angela: We literally had that conversation.

13:29 Reggie: We joked around, two black kids signing this lease with this big company.

13:37 AJ: It's amazing, it's groundbreaking.

13:38 Reggie: It is, like we a lot of places, small businesses start in smaller locations, we we kind of went all in big time, right from the get go, no it's definitely amazing.

13:58 Angela: And not being from here, like you said, I'm originally from Memphis and in DC now for about 12 years. I didn't know what it used to look like but now that we've been over there and we've been in that space and people from the neighborhood or they've lived here for years or from around there, like I'm learning that this is not what it used to look like, all of this is very new. Even having been in DC for a while, nobody was taking me over there, I wasn't exploring as I was exploring the city, only in recent years that I start understanding what's happening and that's the stadium and stuff is over there now. I'm learning what this space used to look like and the transformation that has happened, just to hear about it, it's crazy, I was like wow, I had no idea.

14:42 AJ: It's a 180, it's definitely a 180. What I want to say to ya'll is, we appreciate y'all. Reggie and Angela, we appreciate y'all. For something to move into my neighborhood which has done a 180 in the last 15 years. To go from these luxury apartments a lot of white owned businesses to cater to the people who are coming into the neighbourhood. For them to put in 2019/2020 a black owned business that's for us and by us, that meant something, that really did mean something. I talk to a few people, it means a lot, so thank you to both of y'all.

15:24 Angela: Thank you.

15:26 Reggie: Thank you man, I was talking to a guy yesterday and he said, he had seen this place and walked past and when he heard it was black owned, he said I'm coming in!

15:35 AJ: That's the motto though, it's black owned ok so I'm coming in, *crosstalk* I'm going to put my foot in there, at least tell somebody. Even if you don't put the money in, at least tell somebody. I ain't got no boxing gloves, or whatever, but I know you like to do fitness so you might as well go over there. Yeah it's two of them.

15:51 Reggie: Folks definitely have been big up, it's amazing, the support and the free publicity we get from folks who are like yo I'm here, come through, Reggie and Angela etc. It's um it's it's appreciated for sure.

16:14 AJ: What's the biggest challenge for y'all? Y'all are a black owned business, 7 months in?

16:22 Angela and Reggie: six months. Six as of this week.

16:25 Angela: Six as of this week, the 29th.

16:26 AJ: We're talking about a half birthday! As a black owned business, six months in, is it hard? Is it a struggle?

16:35 Angela: Chiiiiid let me tell you, for me, I'll give you the two points and we talk about this all the time. Reggie and I are still working our full time jobs but this is not a side hustle for us, this is a step into our next wave of our future. That's hard in itself, but the other part is, we haven't done this before, we don't come from a family of entrepreneurs or people who are kind of giving us some type of blueprint and a path, every mistake we're making it on our own and we're making it in real time so the challenge as a black owned business and we say this all the time, we don't really get second chances, right. I mean we go to a black owned business and we're like this is what I get for messing with Black people, I will not do it again. Target may piss some people off but in a couple of weeks you're going back to Target. But with that, you'll be like I'm not going back there again, they'll not get my dollars. You don't get the opportunity to make those mistakes and to correct it and do it over again. I think

that's one of the things that keeps us up at night and everybody has this fear of failure and this thing. Reggie was talking about it yesterday and we talk about it all the time. A lot of us fail in silence every day, a couple of friends you talk to your parents maybe, a couple of people but at this point we're out there and never wanting to that mishap or do it that one thing that causes BOOMBOX to go tomorrow because we are in it. Failing in public is way different to failing in private, that's huge and that's hard, and trying to figure it out while we are doing it at the exact same time.

18:22 Reggie: Never mind that we don't have traditional fitness experience. We have never worked in a gym. We don't even know what we don't know. You don't even know what you don't know. We finding out what we don't know when we're making these mistakes.

18:43 Angela: This is passion and love right here.

18:45 AJ: Those are the two things though, that's all you need. All you need is love and passion for your craft, and for your business and teamwork which y'all clearly have. Y'all clearly got it y'all clearly got some type of teamwork because in a partnership, a lot of them work in different ways *crosstalk* but y'all might have started in the romantic, let's keep it on the table! The Essence article that I read on Facebook about the two of you said that you two meet on Tinder. Mrs. super like.

19:30 Reggie: Yes, yes yes [laughs]

19:33 Angela: Let's talk about the like, we did meet on Tinder but I did not superlike him. I don't even think super like was an option. We were first generation Tinder. We were early in the Tinder games and I don't think the super like feature was there. We did meet on Tinder, Reggie was on Tinder weekly, he was going out for cupcakes, he had an exact tinder date, he was doing cupcakes and hot chocolate regularly. He was the first person I met in person off of Tinder. We went out on a date, 40/40 club, New York city, because I was travelling. That's exactly where I was.

20:16 Reggie: We got sliders. Sliders.

20:18 AJ: Slid right on in there.

20:19 Reggie: Naw listen. Then she um so the sliders come out, I paid the bill and whatever, she claims, I flexed on her with my platinum AmEx, I was like, look this what I pay with.

20:34 Angela: Who uses a platinum AmEx to pay for sliders, nobody does that.

20:35 Reggie: Listen, I am trying to get those points.

20:36 Angela: I was just kind of like, what is this? That that it turned into a really good solid friendship, we were really close and really solid friends, super competitive, that's how we got here. But no we never dated.

20:54 Reggie: We used to work out, she lives in DC, I lived in New York and anytime I come home for the holidays, we worked out together. That's kind of how we got the idea, just working out together and shit talking like we just like this.

21:11 Angela: This is how we hung out, we hung out and swiped on Tinder, I was like, I got to find you somebody. That's all we used to do. We used to have each other's phone and like I like her for you. Pretty much all the time. That's how we used to hang out.

21:30 Reggie: I used to go through her swipes and say I like this guy.

21:34 Angela: He always picks ugly dudes, every single time, I said you're picking ugly people on purpose. Like you want me to stay out here single.

21:39 AJ: Y'all got chemistry, y'all got a real chemistry, I know it's a friendship but you can see it. I can tell that your business will only thrive with your chemistry and your teamwork.

21:52 Reggie: We got we got a great skill set that just kind of meshes together.

21:55 Angela: Yeah, it balances.

21:56 AJ: Boxing, music and community, that's what it is.

21:01 Angela: That's exactly what it is.

22:04 AJ: That's what it is, so music, before we go, you Hove.

22:09 Angela: I love Hove.

22:10 AJ: You Hove, you Drake?

22:11 Reggie: I love Drake.

22:13 AJ: You Drake, I can see that, Drake is kind of sneaky, I can see that you're in there.
You Hove and Motown?

22:22 Angela: I can't help it, I'm a girl from Memphis, like that is what I grew up on.

22:25 AJ: My mother went to Diana Ross' last concert at the National Harbor. For you Reggie and for you Angela, I'm sorry Angela but ladies first, what's the best song to work out in? Whether you are coaching or working out?

22:44 Angela: That's tough. Maybe I will use this so one of the things we have at BOOMBOX is what's your theme song. That's what we like to ask people, what's your theme song? And my theme song it has been for the last couple of years, I don't know where it came from but it's everyday I'm hustlin' by Rick Ross.

23:08 AJ: EVERYDAY I'M HUSTLIN HUSTLIN HUSTLIN HUSTLIN

23:09 Reggie: And everyday she's hustling.

23:10 Angela: Listen, I mean, we wake up talking to each other, we sleep talking – a question, something we forgot. It's always there.

23:20 AJ: It's a 25/8 grind.

23:20 Angela: I work out to it, I I I wake up to it, I sit there and work to it and I, you know, me and Ricky Rose, we be hustling.

23:33 AJ: And Mr Ricky Rozay of Wall Street.

23:37 Reggie: With the Rick Ross beard so my theme song is Lose Yourself by Eminem, 8 mile soundtrack. Just talking about taking that chance and doing it and being in the moment and letting it go.

23:53 AJ: Love to end on that, just letting go. These are my special guest the founders of BOOMBOX boxing club right here DC trying to bring it back for us. Angela Jennings and and Reggie Smith, thank you all so much for coming on today. Do you want to leave us with anything?

24:10 Angela: No, thank you for having us, again, we are 1221 Van Street Southeast, over in the navy yard.

24:21 AJ: That's the good part of Southeast for people who--this isn't eastover.

24:26 Reggie: Listen if you're in the neighborhood, just stop in and say hello. The lobby area is just a vibe, you know we got music playing and it's always inviting, just come in and say hello. Maybe we can get you signed up for a class, if not just say hello.

24:41 AJ: We're going to make it happen, thank you all so much.

24:43 Angela: Thank you.

24:44 Reggie: Thank you man.

24:45 AJ: Lastly, I would like to say my thoughts and prayers go out to Ms. Vanessa Bryant and the Kobe Bryant family after his tragic, tragic passing. Kobe Bryant is someone I have looked up to since I was a young child. Growing up, I played basketball, and it was my first love and it was my first love because of Kobe Byrant. And now his legacy will live forever, rest in paradise, rest in power, to Kobe Bryant and all those who were on board with him, including his lovely daughter GiGi who he was coaching and mentoring and seemed to have been an amazing father to her. The greatest Laker who have ever lived, Kobe Bryant, we remember him.

25:35 AJ: Please continue subscribing at *Max Out Time With AJ II* on iTunes. Add @boombox_boxing on social media. Like me on Facebook, follow on IG and Twitter, and rate and review this podcast on all podcast streaming services today, AJ out!

25:54 Outro Song: 'For The City'

26:22 -End-

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