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New York Post (published as NEW YORK POST) - March 13, 1992 - page 7
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SON RISES ABOVE SAMMY'S BULL



AS a teen-ager, in the confused infancy of his manhood, Teddy Atlas was busted on a gun charge.

"I think I was trying to get my father's attention," he says. "Trying to play a role."

Trying to play the tough guy. Instead, he hurt the man he wanted to please, an elderly Staten Island doctor who made house calls. The father had to put up the family home for bail. The son had to stare down a detective asking for the names of his friends.



Mike Albans

A LIE: *Sammy Gravano said he was fearless, but that's a lie.*

On the day of sentencing, a weepy-eyed old man named Cus D'Amato addressed the court. "He's loyal. He could be a good kid," swore D'Amato, trainer of champion prizefighters. "You're gonna lose that by putting him in jail."

Probation, said the judge. You're coming with me, said D'Amato. And so began the education of Teddy Atlas, a tutorial in boxing and its corollary, fear.

Eventually, Atlas became a fine boxing trainer and found his way to a Brooklyn gym, Gleason's. It was there that he first met fear's disciple — Salvatore "Sammy Bull" Gravano. A winter day about 2½ years ago, Gravano

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walked through the doors.

"I'm not scared of nothin'," he announced.

Gravano had a peculiar charm. But Atlas understood, as well as anyone, that everybody's frightened, especially fighters. "The guy's playing a role," he figured. "Maybe he's seen too many Al Capone movies."

Sammy Bull invited Atlas to dinner with a half-dozen of his closest friends. And Atlas, who does not take resumes, accepted.

"I want to get into boxing," said Sammy Bull. "I could trust you. You got character. Set up a promotion company, me and my

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Gravano: 'John barked & I bit'

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