

From The New York Times Cover to the Big Screen: Todd J. Stein's Battle Against the National Guardianship Crisis

The Final Fight: A Personal Story Becomes a National Call to Action

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For writer and producer Todd J. Stein, *The Final Fight* is more than a film — it is a reflection of his own family's struggle and a call for long-overdue reform. The drama follows an aging Golden Glove boxing champion trapped in a web of betrayal and guardianship abuse. The story hits home, his own father, a Golden Glove boxer and a trailblazer in the fitness world, endured the devastating realities of guardianship, a system that too often strips seniors of their rights and dignity.



Todd Stein with his father Marvin

Having witnessed firsthand how easily the courts can remove autonomy from vulnerable adults, Stein has become a passionate advocate for seniors and their families. He has appeared on Spectrum NY1's *In Focus* to speak about his father's case and the broader crisis facing elder adults, emphasizing that his work in film is another step in raising awareness. "This isn't just a story for me," Stein has said. "It's a fight for families everywhere who have been silenced or pushed aside by a system designed to protect but too often used to exploit."

Unfortunately, Stein's experience is not unique. In 2023, reporter Jessie Van Berkel of the *Minnesota Star Tribune* exposed the ordeal of Beverly and John Rowland, after John was placed into an involuntary guardianship. "They took away her rights," Beverly said, a stark reminder of how easily lives can be dismantled under this system. As Van Berkel reported, guardians are not required to demonstrate qualifications beyond passing a background check. They can be appointed by the court, and do not need to be related to the victim. Predators, drawn by money

and power, find guardianship as easy as “stealing candy from a baby.”

The problem extends beyond individual cases. Guardianships can generate enormous profits for attorneys, real estate professionals, and nursing homes tied to the process. Family assets are drained as lawyers are paid directly from a ward’s estate to defend guardians against relatives who challenge them. Homes are sold below market value, often to connected buyers who profit by flipping them. Meanwhile, professional associations that benefit from the system exert political influence to weaken or block reform. In Minnesota, for example, new legislation left intact extends immunity for guardians, shielding them from liability except in cases of “gross negligence,” an almost impossible threshold to meet.

Oversight is minimal. Van Berkel’s reporting revealed that the Minnesota complaint office had just one or two staff members to review thousands of cases, with most complaints ignored and the office itself now on the brink of closure for lack of funding. Most states, shockingly, don’t even know how many of their citizens are currently under guardianship.



Marvin Stein, Fought to Regain his Civil Rights

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Todd J. Stein

It is against this backdrop that *The Final Fight* takes on even greater urgency. The film dramatizes the story of one man’s resilience against abuse, but it also shines a light on a national crisis hidden in plain sight. Stein believes the project can amplify what advocates across the country have been working toward for years: meaningful reform. He points to leaders like Rick Black of the Center for Estate Administration Reform, Marian Kornicki of the Victims and Families Devastated by Guardianship Coalition, and

investigative journalist Diane Dimond, whose book *We’re Here to Help: When Guardianship Goes Wrong* has brought crucial attention to the issue.

By bringing the narrative to the screen, Stein hopes to give voice to families who have been silenced and to honor his father’s legacy as a fighter, not just in the ring, but in the battle for dignity and justice. *The Final Fight* is more than a film; it is a rallying cry for awareness, accountability, and change. Currently seeking investors for the project, Stein is looking to make

the festival rounds and attach talent to the project. "I have the casting wish list and am now starting to reach out to the talent representatives." Having spent three decades in the entertainment industry, my hope is that my contacts will be helpful with getting the script into the right hands."

Team Stein

The Final Fight

+1 917-842-0625

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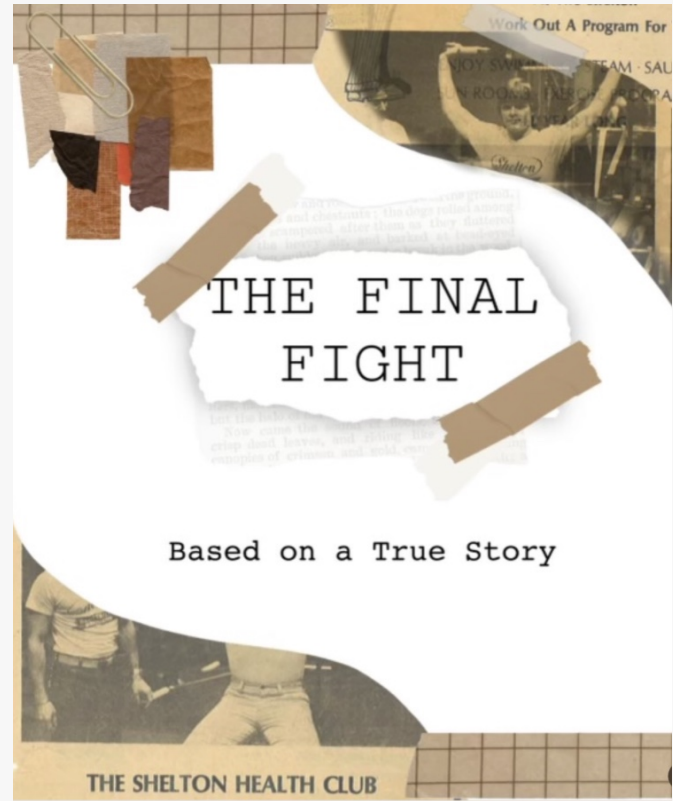
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The Final Fight Feature Film



Todd and Marvin Stein at the iconic Shelton Health Club



Marvin Stein in 1940 at age 10

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