

COUGHLIN: UFC 100 Preview

“The Half-Guarded Truth”
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“UFC 100: Lesnar v Mir 2”

It is February 2, 2008, it is Las Vegas, and Frank Mir is alone. Off to his side stands a man with a mustache. This man is yelling at Frank, asking if he's prepared for what is about to come. Are you going to fight? Are you ready? Frank has done this before. In his first UFC fight, he made a world champion grappler say I Quit in 65 seconds. Frank is a former world heavyweight champion, of course he's ready. He once fought a man six inches taller and dozens of pounds heavier. Frank broke that man's arm - not his elbow, like a normal submission man would, but the forearm itself - into two pieces in 50 seconds. He's ready; Frank Mir is a giant killer.

Brock Lesnar isn't a giant, he's a monster - a Biblical Leviathan. He isn't a human being; he's a blonde-haired Nordic god come to life. He has hands the size of frying pans - hands so big he has his own custom made gloves. He lives in the woods of Minnesota, killing anything that wanders near his home. He looks like he should wear a velvet cape, carry a sword of stone, wear a necklace made of skulls, have blood smeared on his face (Where is he going to get blood inside this tiny cage?) and ride a horse with two heads. Dammit, it looks like HE should have two heads! Brock Lesnar is someone people are afraid to look at. This is fucking insane.

Frank Mir is looking at a man everyone kept describing as big. That's OK. Big means slow. Big means he's not agile. Big means lumbering. Big has a weakness. Jiu-Jitsu was designed to beat Big. Frank knows Jiu-Jitsu and he believes in Jiu-Jitsu. But at this moment, when he's seeing a man that is truly impossibly Big, he has a sudden moment of doubt. Jiu-Jitsu teaches that you can choke someone until they quit, but Brock has no neck. How do you choke someone that has no neck? What kind of person doesn't have a neck?

Is Brock smiling? Why is he smiling?

The cage locks. The mustached man says to fight. Frank's pupils dilate as the adrenaline floods his system. His brain wants to survive and needs every ounce of strength it has right now. They locked the door so that flight wouldn't be an option. Frank has to fight.

It's OK. Be calm, Frank tells himself. Stand with the brute. You can strike. You have the experience. Take your time.

What just happened? Big is supposed to be slow. How am I on my back? Big is not supposed to be agile. How the hell did he take me down? Big is supposed to be lumbering. Why didn't I see him move? I turn my hips and I escape. That's what I do now. I buck, I turn, I get my hips between him and me, I create distance, I establish position, I hold on within the safety of my guard. I move. Why can't I move? MOVE! MOVE! MOVE! Oh shit, he's going to hit me now.

Brock punches Frank the way an oil rig punches the earth, but blood flows instead of oil. Frank cannot move. He's naked and tied to a chair, his hands bound behind his back with an itchy rope. He's sweaty and dirty and thirsty and hungry and exhausted. A single, flickering light bulb sways above his head. He's helpless. A man in the shadows walks around him, yelling and screaming that Frank will break.

It isn't the actual pain that is bad, it's the waiting. It's not knowing what the next blow will feel like, if it will be worse. It isn't the crack of the whip, but watching his captor roll it back up. He's being hit on every part of his face, somehow all at once. His nose valiantly tries to stay in one piece. His teeth would be dust were it not for the mouthguard he clenches between them. His eyes are instinctively wincing shut every time the next punch comes. His eyes are always closed now. Nothing matters, Brock is going to hit anything he can: ear, nose, eyes, mouth, even the back of the head. Hitting the back of the head. That's not supposed to happen.

Frank Mir's wife and daughter are in attendance. My wife and daughter are watching all this. My little girl. Someone take my family out of the arena, please.

Frank is being stood up. Is it over? Can I go home? I tried my best. He isn't right. His arms feel like cinder blocks. Fuck the arms, his hands feel like cinder blocks! Cinder blocks that can grip with fingers made of iron. And he keeps hitting me with them. He won't stop. How can he be so fast? The official is taking away a point from Brock Lesnar. This is a joke. Why bother? He has a dagger on his chest and a giant skull stitched into his back. He probably uses his teeth to rip the meat directly off the bones of a fresh kill and you're going to take away a point? Is this supposed to be a deterrent? Is this supposed to help me? A point deduction? That's like pinching Goliath in the side instead of giving David a slingshot. Screw a slingshot, I need an ax!

How long have I been in here? It feels like days, it feels like - 30 seconds? It's been 30 seconds. Einstein was right, time

is relative. Someone loosen these ropes, please! Oh God, I can see him recoiling the whip now. It's starting again. Not again...

Instead of ripping Frank to the ground, Brock Lesnar punches him in the face. That was impossible. The hand was too far away. Human arms aren't that long. He could not have reached Frank's face, but somehow he did. And when he did, Frank fell down. Frank fell down because his brain momentarily shut off. It tried to survive, again. It keeps trying to survive a situation it shouldn't be in. It told the body that whatever was happening was bad and it needed to stop now. Listen to me, Frank. Stop. This.

More pounding. It's like a child hitting the ground out of frustration. Frustration for what? Why is Brock so angry? He's not trying to punch Frank. He's not trying to win a fight. He's trying to punch the ground and Frank's head is in the way. Brock spins around with agility that defies the physics of a man his size. It's graceful. Big isn't supposed to be graceful. He keeps hitting. Frank moves. Brock hits. Frank twitches and Brock hits him for twitching. Brock wants Frank to stop moving, to stay still, and until Frank does that, Brock is going to keep punching. There hasn't been enough blood yet. Oil rigs don't tire. They don't sleep. They keep pounding until they're told to stop. They would go on forever if you let them. They are made for this.

Long arms, thinks Frank. Too long. That arm shouldn't have been able to punch me. Not from that distance. But it bends. Even long arms have to bend. That means there's a pivot point. I don't care how big he is, joints can snap. Try an armbar. Break that arm. Snap it. Do it.

Dammit.

Tens of thousands of people watch as Brock rips his arm from Mir's grip. It was a violent movement. Violent even by the standards of the past 54 seconds. They cheer. They dream about fights like this, where violence is every dish of a seven course meal; where there is no feeling out process; where they can witness a live execution. The Romans watched spectacles like this. Thousands of years later, nothing has changed. Please, Brock, kill him. We can't kill anymore, but you can. All you want is to hear our applause and that is all we have to give. Kill and we will roar for you!

His arm safe, Lesnar immediately resumes punching. Mir can't move. Punching. He can't collect his thoughts. His skull thuds against the mat. All of his training is failing. The referee is in no hurry to stop things. This isn't right. You wouldn't treat a dog this way. Brock Lesnar is gone now. He is now It. It's bigger than before. It's standing now, holding Frank's feet like a grown man holding baby shoes. What is It doing? Why is It stopping? Why is It just looking at me? From down here, with It standing over top, It looks even bigger. What's going to happen next?

Look at those legs. Legs bend. Legs have knees. Knees can break. They can be hurt. If he can't walk, he can't fight. Do it.

Frank Mir hooks one foot behind the knee of Lesnar and then rolls towards the leg. Lesnar tries to pull away but Frank holds on. Frank wraps himself around the leg now. Lesnar falls to the mat. Frank begins to extend his hips forward. Lesnar may be the biggest man Frank has ever seen, but Frank is still 250 lbs, and 250 lbs thrusting into a knee hurts. Brock is dragging Frank like a father drags a child who selfishly clings to his dad in the morning. Hold on, Frank. Hold on to that leg. Hold on the way flood victims hold on to rescue workers. Do not leg go. Hold on. This will work. It has to work. You've done this a thousand times. Hold on. For 90 seconds, this miserable son-of-a-bitch has hit you with every ounce of his strength, now it's his turn to hurt. Just hold on a little longer. He'll quit. Big has a weakness. Jiu-Jitsu was designed to beat Big. Hold on. Make him quit. Hold on. Make the beast gnash its teeth. Make the beast cry.

It's over.

Get up, Frank. Walk around like nothing happened. Get up, now! Tell the world you stood in the middle of a hurricane the way children stand in sprinklers. People counted you out and you proved them wrong. You proved everyone wrong. You didn't just survive, you didn't just slay the beast, you made It quit! If this were thousands of years ago, they would write about you in The Bible. You're a Sunday school lesson now, Frank. Tell everyone it was easy. Lie to them, Frank. Tell them you won because that's what you do. You took out Traven in 65 seconds. You took out Sylvia in 50 seconds. I guess it's OK that it took 90 to stop Lesnar. After all, he was kinda big.

On Saturday, Frank Mir fights Brock Lesnar again. This time, the UFC Heavyweight Championship is at stake. This time, instead of 90 seconds, the fight might last 25 minutes. No monster dies the first time you kill it; the really scary ones come back time and time again. It will be July 11, 2009, it will be Las Vegas, and Frank Mir will still be inside the cage, alone.

Mike Coughlin is the host of Five Star Radio, your weekly radio MMA fix. This week, Mike has an in depth preview of the

entire UFC 100 card, with picks and insight found only here at f4wonline.com. He also wants to name his kid Turk.