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## **SHADOW BOXING**

**By PETER LALOR**

*Rubin Hurricane Carter has been the subject of a Bob Dylan song and a movie. His guilt or innocence is still hotly debated, as are a lot of the former boxer's claims about his history. PETER LALOR reports*

The small, dapper man smoking a cigarette on the balcony of a Sydney hotel doesn't look like one of the most feared boxers of his time; doesn't look much like a man twice convicted of triple murder. And, for that matter, he doesn't resemble the cult-hero Bob Dylan described as "Buddha in a 10-foot (3m) cell".

Rubin Hurricane Carter came to town this week to hawk a video and join Nelson Mandela on stage in his role as a civil-rights activist. He is short, slim and has considerably more hair on his head than the bald and bulky middle-weight of the 1960s.

If you haven't seen the movie, or heard the song, Carter is the former boxer convicted of a triple bar-room murder in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1967. He became a cause celebre in the early 1970s when Bob Dylan wrote Hurricane and his case was adopted by everybody from Muhammad Ali to Burt Reynolds. Hurricane came to symbolise the injustice white people had wrought upon black Americans and it was easy for everyone to join in -- they just had to hum along with the song.

Carter was freed in 1976, only to be retried and convicted by another jury. Then, in 1985, the boxer was finally released from prison when an appeal led by a group of Canadians and a boy from the Bronx succeeded.

The spotlight was turned back on the boxer when Norman Jewison released a movie, starring Denzel Washington and based on Carter's book, in 1999. The film sparked another controversy as the family of the shooting victims and a number of journalists decried the Hollywood