

Ricardo Mayorga Courts Trouble While Trinidad Waits

Written by Steve Kim

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As you watched the Showtime doubleheader this past weekend from the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, the ubiquitous Don King was in his customary seat ringside in full view of the audience. But what was even more eye-opening was the presence of one Ricardo Mayorga sitting right next to him, who on October 2nd takes on the comebacking Felix Trinidad at the Madison Square Garden in New York. The Trinidad-Mayorga fight is one of the most anticipated events of the year.

Since we head into September it was no surprise that Mayorga would now make his way into the States to begin his final preparations to face 'Tito.' But it was just a few days before that Mayorga was arrested in his hometown of Managua, Nicaragua on suspicion of rape and then freed on Friday.

Less than 24 hours later he was sitting next to King, watching Cory Spinks out-box Miguel Angel Gonzalez, then Lamon Brewster escape with his WBO title against Kali Meehan.

"I was set up and that's all I'm going to say," is how Mayorga answered these allegations. There had also been quotes attributed to the hard-swinging and fast-living brawler that he thought his showdown with Trinidad would be postponed. "I never said that," he countered. "I am going to sleep in the ring and wait for Trinidad. I will knock him out."

Well, it seems that this recent brush with the law hasn't taken away his trademark swagger or bravado. But perhaps he should indeed shack up in the ring or take up residence in one of the lockerooms of the Garden and wait for October 2nd to arrive. Based on the reports that have been flowing out of Nicaragua the past few months, it seems he should avoid that place at all costs.

It seemed lately you couldn't go more than a week or two without hearing about the exploits of Mayorga, who was either driving his car off the road or fighting the law. Anyone else remember the time—and it wasn't that long ago—that Mayorga's biggest vice was just smoking? It seems so long ago, doesn't it?

Now, Mayorga, like every other man accused of a crime, deserves due process. Perhaps, like he stated, he was set up. Or maybe, whether he's in Managua or Topeka, Kansas, trouble always seems to find this maverick.

But there's an old saying that says, 'You can never go home again.' And perhaps like a Michael Nunn of years past, some fighters, like Mayorga, shouldn't even try. You remember 'Second To' Nunn—in the late '80's, as he reached his prime, he was thought of as one of the heir apparents to the 'Four Horseman' of Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Roberto Duran and Thomas Hearns.

Unfortunately that baton would never be passed. Instead, Nunn, who reached a quick apex,

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just as quickly declined into an afterthought in the game of boxing. And many around him blamed the influences and the vices of his hometown, Davenport, Iowa. I'm sure it's a fine, little city, with no more civil unrest or crime than any other metropolis in America, but for Michael Nunn it was a trap, filled with leeches, hangers-on and drugs.

Now, Nunn will be spending the next several decades in prison on drug charges.

Then you have the case of one Paul Spadafora, who's the pugilistic pride and joy of Pittsburgh, but can't keep his name out of the headlines when he's in 'the Steel City.' Last year Spadafora was accused of shooting his girlfriend in the chest, and just this past weekend he was cited for public drunkenness, disorderly conduct and recklessly endangering another person in a vehicle.

On the bright side, nobody got shot.

There are countless other prizefighters who, after attaining some success, go back to where they once fought to get out of, only to find trouble. To be fair, maybe these guys could find trouble at the Vatican or Disneyland, but it's clear that the chances increase when they are in familiar surroundings.

Mayorga, though, didn't seem too affected by this recent episode.

"I was only detained for three hours and lost only one day of training," he would say. He was brimming with confidence that he would be exonerated off all charges. But just to be on the safe side, perhaps he should employ the services of one Pamela Mackey, who's bound to get a positive referral from one Kobe Bean Bryant.

As for the always upbeat King, the show must—and will—go on.

"The judge in Nicaragua let him leave that country to fight in America and that's what we plan to do," he announced.

Hey, only in America. And as for 'that place,' perhaps Mayorga would be wise to stay out of it for awhile.