In anticipation of their April 23, 2005 welterweight title fight on ESPN Pay-Per-View, Antonio Margarito and Kermit Citron met with members of the press. The transcript is below.

Carl Moretti: We are getting closer and closer to the April 23rd ESPN pay-per-view show. There is no question that top to bottom this is a show everyone is looking forward to, and you look at the fight at the top between Margarito and Cintron and it has everything you want. The Mexican-Puerto Rican rivalry continues: two big punchers; two guys with huge hearts and great chins. You add the outdoor arena at Caesars Palace and it should be a great evening of boxing.

Will you test Cintron early?

Margarito: If you have seen my fights, you know I don't back down from anyone and I will leave all my heart and everything that I have on the table. I am ready to give a great fight and the people at Caesars Palace will be the winners.

Cintron: It's going to be a great fight. Margarito is a great champion. He has good heart and he comes to fight. Come the 23rd of April, we are going to see a great fight.

What is next for you if you win, Kermit?

Cintron: I will still have to get through Margarito before I think of anything else. After that, Carl Moretti and Main Events will decide whatever is next. I'll just continue to win fights and everyone will get a chance to fight Kermit Cintron.

Are you eager to test (Cintron's) endurance in this fight?

Margarito: Anything can happen in the ring. I would like to finish early so we could all go home, but if we can't, I will make some adjustments and show some things you haven't seen before. You may see some things that you haven't seen from me before.

What did you think about Margarito in his last fight?

Cintron: I walked away from that thinking that he's a great fighter and a great champion. Lujan came at him the first couple of rounds and Margarito adjusted. Margarito then began to take him apart. I walked away thinking that he was a great champion. I just have to train hard and be prepared. He's number one in the welterweight division. It's not my opinion that counts, but I think of him having great heart. Every fight is different. He could bring a different style to my fight. He ended up taking Lujan out and you never know.

Kermit, how is your hand?

Cintron: My hand is great. I've been punching with it and sparring with it. It's just great being

able to punch with my right hand the way I want to.

Your hand was infected and turned black?

Cintron: Exactly, yes. Any fighter would like to take a tune-up fight after a long layoff. We couldn't do it and we just want to fight he best. And that's what I want to do – fight the best out there. In my opinion, Margarito is the best out there.

Floyd Mayweather predicted you would get knocked out.

Cintron: Who is Floyd, man? Who is Floyd? I have a great chin and my chin has been tested when I fought Teddy Reed. If people still have questions about it, they can buy ringside tickets to the fight on April 23 and check it out for themselves. Regarding Mayweather – he's going to be surprised himself. Gatti is a tough fighter and if Chop Chop Corley can hurt him – you'd be surprised. And Mayweather will be surprised.

Kermit, are you ready to step up to fight the big boys?

Cintron: I've been ready to step it up for a while. I stepped it up against Teddy Reed and I'll step it up against Margarito. And after I win against Margarito I will step it up even further: Shane Mosley or Zab Judah. I will be ready to fight whoever thinks they are the best. Just bring them on. I am a competitive guy. I've been on the floor for who knows how long now. I know what it takes to win.

What about a Mexican-American rivalry?

Margarito: I know about the great rivalry that exists between Mexico and Puerto Rico. The only Puerto Rican I have fought is Santos and you know how that went. All I know is that I have been training for this fight and I'm ready for this fight and I'm ready to give it my all.

It seems like everyone is trying to get away from (Cintron)?

Margarito: I have been looking forward to this fight. I know he's undefeated and I know he's hungry. I know he wants to beat me but I want to win also. I've been working very hard and I know how important it is for me to win this fight. I know there are a lot of good opportunities for the winner of this fight. So obviously I am preparing very well. I truly enjoy the challenge of fighting someone that no one else wants to fight.

Kermit, what about the layoff?

Cintron: The layoff has made me hungrier, made me train harder, and made me want to get back in the ring that much sooner. I want to fight so it has been a good thing for me.

Will the jab be a factor?

Cintron: I have been using my jab a lot. I have been training very hard and when it comes

down to the fight on April 23rd, you will see that I'm using my jab more and boxing more. I will finally get to use both of my hands. Especially my right hand more than I have been able to.

How has Margarito been able to improve as much as he has?

Margarito: I think that styles make fights and the styles of my last few opponents I have not been able to adapt to very well, so I haven't looked as well as I should have. There is no question that my style and Kermit's style will match very well. I think it will be a better fight because of his style and the way I fight. I truly believe that in the gym is where you prepare and adapt and I believe that I will be very prepared for this fight.

What have you been working on, Kermit?

Cintron: I have been doing lots of bag work and hitting the mitts. I've been hitting a lot with both hands and hitting a lot with my right hand. My hand is in great shape. Come April 23rd I will be able to let go of my right hand the way I want to throw it.

Is this the fight of your life?

Cintron: Definitely. It is for the world championship. A lot of people want to be in the position that I am at right now. This fight against Margarito will show where I stand and what I will do in the future. This fight is definitely very important to me.

Antonio, how would you define this fight for yourself?

Margarito: All fights are important, no doubt about it. This was is a little more important because of what it will mean for the winner. I think a lot of doors will open for the winner and it is a good fight for me at this time. Kermit is a great boxer and he is undefeated. For me to beat him would be a good thing and then I could take advantage of the opportunities that will happen.

What did you learn from fighting in the club shows in LA?

Margarito: When you are in Mexico you want to come fight in the United States and make a name for yourself and I think that's how I began. I knew I had to win all of the fights that I had and they were all important moments of my life. As a boxer, it would lead me to the championship, which is what I wanted. I knew the fights were important because then the fans would follow my career. People that liked the way I fought.

What were the biggest things he learned in those fights?

Margarito: You are always learning, even if you are sparring or hitting the bag. You are always learning. Early on I didn't have the experience to show the people what I could really do. After time, the experience took over and that's why you see a different fighter today.

Have you sparred against bigger fighters?

Margarito: I have had good sparring. We've had guys that are bigger and stronger than my size and I have been able to take their punch.

Cintron: Two of my sparring partners are junior middleweight and one is a welterweight. So yes, I have been sparring with bigger guys.

Are you ready to go 12 hard rounds?

Margarito: Like any fighter, you train and prepare for twelve rounds. But you would like the fight to end early. With him, a lot of people are talking about how strong he is and what a big puncher he is. But I have been fighting strong punchers my whole career and I have proved myself against them. I proved that I can take a punch and that I will be ready for him.

Kermit, are you ready for the quality of Margarito?

Cintron: I am up to the challenge. I believe that I have the heart and I just want to fight the better guys out there. Just because I don't have the experience doesn't mean that I am not going to win fights. I am learning every time. When you are watching fights, you can see that. I am getting better every time and I deserve to be where I am at. I worked hard for it.

Are you prepared to have Margarito still standing after taking your best shots?

Cintron: The more he stands there, the more damage he is going to get. You have to train hard and I have been preparing myself for this fight. When it comes to April 23rd, let the best man win.

Antonio, are you ready for Cintron's power?

Margarito: Yes, of course. I know that he is a strong puncher. I know what I am up against and I've been up against undefeated guys before and I came out OK.