Most of the scorn for Saturday's lackluster heavyweight danceoff has been directed at Wladimir Klitschko, who stood a whole head taller, and significantly outweighed his foe, Sultan Ibragimov at Madison Square Garden.

After all, it was apparent after about 30 seconds that Ibragimov was put off by the skyscraper standing in front of him, and he realized he didn't have the tools to detonate the Ukrainian. So, he spent most of the night staring at the IBF champion, looking for an opening that would never appear. Occasionally, he'd take a run at Wlad, who'd simply back up two steps, and be out of harm's way.

Fans were especially irked at the man holding the clear edge in size and skills, and clamored for Wlad to throw the right, instead of spending an interminable period sizing his man up, making certain Ibragimov wouldn't pull a Corrie Sanders, and catch him with a sneaky left. Most people understood Ibragimov was so much shorter than his foe that he really didn't have a snowball's chance in hell at felling the charitable champ, and thus, affixed much if not most of the blame for the snoozy showing to Klitschko. But Larry Merchant sees it differently. Merchant checked in with TSS and gave us his thoughts on the main event. Suffice to say, Merchant will not be added to the Team Ibragimov holiday card mailing list.

"Sultan reminds me of those that used to say that all southpaws should be throttled at birth," Merchant said. "In the old days, they wouldn't have let him in to Madison Square Garden, let alone the ring.

"A southpaw whose whole being is having the other guy do the work so you can then hit him, trap him into a mistake…" Merchant said biliously. "He's smart, he's clever, but it's an abomination that someone like him could hold a title."

Ouch. C'mon Larry, quit holding back. Tell us how you really feel. Stop filtering!

"They should send him back to Russia," he continued. "And have Putin put him in a dungeon.

"Sultan made a peace treaty in the middle rounds, 'I won't bother you, so I won't get knocked out. A well schooled prizefighter can always survive if that's his intent. After a few rounds that was Sultan's goal, it looked like."

Hey Larry, care to share some of that scorn? Wlad didn't exactly drape himself in glory Saturday, did he? Doesn't he deserve some time in the dungeon too, for being so hesitant to throw, for being excessively cautious, and causing so many fight fans to fall asleep face first into the onion dip on Saturday?

"I can't agree with that, with the idea that (I should criticize) the guy moving forward, who threw more," he said. "And he threw fairly few punches per round, but his opponent was determined to

survive. Tyson had that with Bonecrusher Smith and other guys. Lewis had some of those fights, and Holmes did too. I saw guys do that to Frazier. I'm not comparing Wladimir to those guys, but I'm not going to blame the fighter trying to fight, 'cause the other guy doesn't want to fight.

Merchant pointed out that Wlad had been trying to stop his most recent foes, before Sultan. "Chris Byrd was trying to win, and he got stopped," he said.

Valuev vs. Klitschko is really the only fight moving forward that Merchant thinks could draw much money and interest in the division. The battle of the two well coordinated power forwards perks up Larry. "That would intrigue people," he said. "That's the big fight." No pun intended.

All the unification/consolidation talk isn't just puffery, meant to obscure the fact that there is a lack of tasty matchups out there. Merchant knows that there are some mandatories for Wlad to deal with (Alex Povetkin/IBF; Tony Thompson/WBO) and like all us, cannot predict how that will play out.

But bottom line, Merchant isn't in line with the masses on this one. Mostly, he assigns blame to Ibragimov for pulling Klitschko down into the depths with him in New York on Saturday.

Hey Sultan, if you get an invite from a Mr. Putin, inviting you to a "shindig" at the embassy, or a fete at which you are to be the honoree, you may want to pretend that invite flew off the porch, OK?