As he strolls along in the general direction of the sunset of his career, some of us are going to miss having Bernard Hopkins around to keep us grinning and scratching our heads.

It's not that Hopkins is a funny guy. It's just that he has so much to say and there isn't a lot of time left to say it. He knows they pretty much quit listening to you once you leave the game. And after 20-plus years in the prize ring, he knows they've been listening to him for a long time.

"I'm not in my prime," Hopkins said. "But I'm just leaving my prime."

Still, it looks like Hopkins hasn't missed a step. When it comes to talk, he can still take it and run. Of course, it's not like he carefully picks his words. Instead, he follows the rule of numbers. The more you say, the more likely some of it is going to make sense.

What Hopkins does is slam you with equal amounts of philosophy and verbal mayhem. You keep asking yourself, "what did he just say?" Then you remember who you're listening to and you just smile and nod and go along for the ride. You know you might get lost, but you'll always reach home in the end.

That's the best thing to do when Hopkins starts to talk. Grab on and just enjoy the trip. Don't analyze it, reason with it, argue with it or expound on it. Just listen.

"I don't have days off," Hopkins (48-4-1, 32 KOs) said at a press conference promoting his light-heavyweight fight with Joe Calzaghe of Wales (44-0, 32 KOs) on Saturday night in Las Vegas (HBO). "I don't do anything to my temple, my body. That's why I'm here. It comes from discipline that I got from a dark place 20 years ago."

That's what's special about Hopkins. Somewhere amid the carnage of words and reason, he suddenly busts free and it all becomes clear. At least some of it.

"This is going to be my third assassination of a southpaw in the last year and a half," Hopkins said "I never beat up on a Brit before."

Good stuff.

But then there's this: "You have to change his (game) plan and not let him recover from changing, to becoming another player."

Right.

At 43, Hopkins is quickly approaching George Foreman numbers. We keep thinking that any minute, he's going to quit the fight game for good and start peddling toasters or blenders on TV.

But it hasn't happened. Just when you think he's done, he suddenly shows up and you're glad he's still around.

When he heard on TV that Calzaghe wanted to fight him, Hopkins said "I put my teeth in, I rocked back in my rocking chair, took a pop of Geritol, and I called (promoter) Richard Schaeffer and told him to make it happen."

He reminds everyone that Calzaghe isn't exactly fresh off his teen years.

"Joe is not a spring chicken," Hopkins said of the 36-year-old fighter. "I'm already a senior citizen. He's knocking on the door."

Questioned earlier in his training about what would happen if he lost, Hopkins reminded us why we should listen.

"You're asking me the hypothetical about something I don't even visit," he said "I don't want to visit that world of losing. I don't want to visit that world of doubt. I don't think about the ifs."

Not bad.

As for when his career is finally over, Hopkins summed it up.

"I'll be able to show the world how I'll be missed when I leave the sport," he said. "You're going to see this athlete and man. It's going to be an eye opener."

Sounds good.