

## Abraham Closes Show And Miranda's Mouth

Written by Ron Borges  
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Edison Miranda needs to talk less often and duck more often.

For the second straight time in a big fight Miranda ran his mouth all week long but ended up speechless and on the floor long before the scheduled end of his work shift, this time at the hands of IBF middleweight champion Arthur Abraham.

King Arthur, as he's called back home in Germany, reigned supreme Saturday night at the Hard Rock Casino in Hollywood, Fla. because he rained counter rights and lefts into the face of Miranda like a hail storm in the fourth round, driving him to the floor three times before referee Telis Assimenios stopped the carnage at 1:13 of the round.

Miranda had been the aggressor all week and he remained that way early in the fight with the methodical Abraham remaining patient as always, his hands held high and his eyes constantly searching for the instant when he could counter Miranda's often wide hooks.

When that chance first availed itself late in round 3, Abraham wobbled Miranda with a right hand that buckled the challenger's knees in the same way middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik had when the two faced each other in a title eliminator a year ago. Eventually Pavlik would stop Miranda in seven rounds. Abraham got the job done even faster, needing barely two more minutes after landing that first big right hand to do it after he'd hurt him the first time.

That set up a showdown with Pavlik to unify the titles, a fight Abraham has been calling for. He did so again Saturday night not long after knocking Miranda flat with a straight counter right midway through round 4 and a grazing left on the top of the head that grazed him as he began to topple.

Miranda was up quickly but now totally on the defensive. As Miranda retreated, Abraham pursued him and the challenger's shoddy defense became his downfall once again. As he backed pedaled his hands were spread so wide it made them all but defensively useless and the champion quickly took advantage of it, driving him down on his back a second time with a sweeping left hook to the jaw.

His eyes now glazed and carrying the wary look of a man being assaulted in a lonely alley, Miranda struggled up but soon was back down for a third time from another left hook. As Miranda tried to escape Abraham's normally more potent right hand he opened himself up to a finishing left that had Abraham grinning and Miranda groveling on the canvas.

This came after a long week of the boastful Miranda claiming he would break Abraham's jaw in the same way he had when they first met two years ago in Germany. That night Miranda snapped Abraham's jaw in two places, cracking it so severely it took 22 screws to put it back together. Abraham fought eight rounds with blood filling his mouth in a fight he won by a controversial though unanimous decision.

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Miranda had five points deducted that night for low blows and head butts but even if he hadn't he still would have lost a majority decision. Despite that, Miranda and his handlers insisted he'd been robbed in Germany and claimed it would be different this time now that he was no longer struggling to make 160 pounds but was free to fight at the over-the-weight limit of an agreed to 166. No matter, as things turned out, because Abraham proved to be the stronger and the more resourceful man once again.

"I tired him out, then I knocked him down," Abraham said in the same efficient way he fights. "I'm a true champion and a champion has confidence in himself."

Rightfully so, as things turned out. Miranda talks like a confident man but he has now been beaten three times, dropped on as many occasions and is clearly a bully who can't take it when faced with the attack of top shelf opponents like Abraham, who has now beaten him twice, and Pavlik, who Abraham desperately hopes to face before the year ends.

"I wish to fight with Oscar De La Hoya (doesn't everyone these days?) and Kelly Pavlik," Abraham said and he certainly made a strong case for himself. Miranda, meanwhile, seemed in a muted state of shock after his head finally cleared.

"I really don't know what happened," he said. "I just felt he was too strong tonight. I was 100 per cent prepared but I felt weak."

That didn't start until Abraham first nailed him with the right hand late in Round 3 but his dissolution came quickly after that, allowing Abraham to remain undefeated (27-0, 22 KO) and as yet unchallenged. Yet as much as he and the world wants a showdown between Abraham and Pavlik to settle who is the best middleweight in the world, former junior middleweight champion Raul Marquez put an obstacle in Abraham's way by outfighting previously undefeated Giovanni Lorenzo on the undercard in a remarkable performance of perseverance, pain tolerance and patient passion.

Marquez was not expected to be able to stand up against the power punching Lorenzo, who was 26-0 with 18 knockouts when the night began, but he survived three cuts above and around his right eye, a face smeared with his own plasma and an ever decreasing number of powerful right hands from the slowly ebbing Lorenzo to win a unanimous decision.

The 36-year-old Marquez (41-3-1) started slowly but began to break down Lorenzo's resolve simply by his willingness to not only take the abuse his 27-year-old opponent was heaping upon him early in the fight but also with his trademark relentless aggressiveness.

By midway through the fight, Lorenzo seemed unable to accept that unlike his less resilient opponents Marquez was not going anywhere without a lot of convincing. It never came.

"I was older and wiser (than Lorenzo)," Marquez said after winning a unanimous decision that hinged on a one-point deduction from Lorenzo for a low blow. The decision seemed far tighter in the opinion of the three judges, who all scored it 114-113, than the crowd felt but in the end it didn't matter because Marquez now is the mandatory challenger for Arthur and is spoiling for

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that fight.

“He’s a young guy who was hungry, awkward, dirty sometimes,” Marquez said. “I thought we’d get to him. I had to dig deep, really deep, in there. I’m a warrior. Blood doesn’t faze me. Blood makes me hungrier.

“I think I took over in the middle rounds. Now I got a shot at some kind of world title. I think I deserve it.”

Certainly he earned it on the same night Arthur Abraham handed Edison Miranda what he deserved – a beating.