Written by Michael Woods
Tuesday, 22 December 2009 18:00

Hotdogs taste good, but nobody really wants to watch them being made, not if they want to scarf one at the ballpark without hurling. All the various bits and pieces, from various parts of deceased animals, ground up, seasoned with shovelfuls of MSG, extruded into a condom-type wrapper and then cooked.

Yummo, as Rachel Ray might say.

It is with that image I leave in your head that I segue into the Mayweather-Pacquiao drug testing skirmish.

Lord, what a tiresome, moronic topic. But, since it is news, since our devoted fandom seems to be curious about the matter, and devotes time and energy to it, I reached out to boxing's poet laureate, Larry Merchant, for his insight on the whole dreadful deal.

"It has the ring of being gamesmanship," said Merchant via telephone on Wednesday afternoon. "I would think that the last thing a fighter like Mayweather who stands to make 30, 40, 50 million wants is for a fight to be postponed or cancelled."

So, the question begs, why is Team Mayweather so intent on making an issue of pre and post-fight drug testing? Why are they and we wasting time, energy and effort heading into the most meaningful, transcendent, buzzworthy fight in a decade or two, on this whole non-issue?

Because correct me if I'm wrong, and you can't, because I'm not, there isn't a shred of evidence that Manny Pacquiao has ever used any banned performance enhancer, be it steroid, human growth hormone or what have you, in order to gain a competitive edge in a boxing match. He's been tested, and re-tested, and re-tested again by the Las Vegas commission, and nothing untoward has ever been detected.

So...what evidence do these folks who lob these cowardly accusations have? Please, furnish them, OR SHUT THE HELL UP. Man, if I'm Team Pacquiao, and my conscience is clean, I'm talking to an attorney about libel/slander law, just to clarify it in my head if nothing else. You cannot, or should I say, you should not be able to widely disseminate the allegation that a person cheats, and uses banned PEDs, based merely on your gut instinct. You should not be able to hijack the spotlight during negotiations for a fight that will stand to benefit you and the sport many times over. Because unprecedented focus--in recent times anyway--will be on the sweet science should the two top pound for pounders get it on March, or whenever, and you are tarnishing the sport when you when you fire in the crowded room, without smelling, apparently, a wisp of smoke.

Floyd Mayweather Sr. brought up the "Manny uses PED" issue, accusing Pacquiao of being dirty to the Grand Rapids Press' David Mayo on Sept. 15, when he said, "I don't think he can beat Lil' Floyd with steroids in him or not."

"He don't have that kind of talent. He don't have that kind of skill, whatever he has in him," he said two days later, during a press conference for the Mayweather-Marquez undercard. He said he thought Manny was dirty when Manny fought his guy, Ricky Hatton, on May 2. (Not coincidentally, setting up a plausible reason for his man's submission at the hands of the Filipino Fury.) Then, right after Manny smashed Miguel Cotto, Senior started smearing again. "I know Floyd is the best," says Mayweather Sr said on Nov. 14. "But when [your opponent] uses something illegal, even the best can get hurt."

Enough, Senior! Let's take this out of the gutter, away from the realm of TMZ, and keep it clean! If you know something, beyond what your intuition tells you, then produce it. Otherwise, zip it. I am surprised that some of the people that are standing by this are getting themselves dirty in this slanderous muck, this cynical whisper campaign that seems like something that amoral character assassination artist Karl Rove might dream up, aren't distancing themselves from it.

All involved can, and must do better, because new eyeballs are on us. People that stepped off the bus when Tyson quit against Kevin McBride are tuning in again, or will, if they aren't turned off by the drug-testing dreck.

I'm not sure why Team Manny hasn't swung back more aggressively, because there are plenty of cards for them to play. I won't mention them, because I don't want to contribute to the poisoned atmosphere, but it's like when you get clanged in the cup by your foe--you got to come back with a harder blow to the groin, ASAP. I realize that countering might only elongate this silly flap, but you recall what happened to Swiftboated John Kerry? He figured all the hints and allegations would blow over, but in the internet age, they hang around the net like dirty bits of toilet paper.

I'm bewildered--Team Manny seems to be bending over backward, offering to get themselves tested more than any other boxer EVER HAS, in order to prove they are clean. They are allowing themselves to get pushed around here, and maybe the time has come for them to take a stand and tell Floyd Sr. to produce something beyond innuendo, or hold his tongue.

Anyway, back to Merchant....Merchant counsels me and others getting irked to chill.

"To me, all the testing talk is gamesmanship. The back side may be an alibi if Floyd loses. The front side is maybe that he agitates the other guy, or makes a lot of noise, because he has a clever intuition on these kinds of issues. It's like when he brought up Diego Corrales' issues (he was headed to prison for physically abusing his then wife). Whatever he can find to try and upset his opponent. Is it a psychological ploy, or to build the fight, who knows? It's noise. It's part of the noise machine."

Insiders tell TSS that Floyd is quite confident that he'll beat Pacquaio, so we guess that he isn't looking for a way to weasel out, and that this is a psych operation meant to cast doubt on Manny's achievement, keep him distracted by having to answer this question.

It's masterful, I suppose, if you are a Machiavelli fan. I'm not.

"Maybe Floyd's father is really concerned," Merchant said. "But I think Floyd's confident that he can win. And if not, for 30, 40, 50 million, that's a pretty good payday to risk losing."