

Hey, It Worked For Pacquiao

Written by Ron Borges
Thursday, 27 May 2010 15:00

With the recent announcement that, as expected, Paulie Malignaggi will not retire from boxing but will instead pursue his profession as a welterweight in Italy, a thought came to mind. How about politics?

Unlike most people in this politically correct world we live in, Malignaggi tells it like it is. If he were alive today, Howard Cosell would have a love affair with Malignaggi. So in the midst of this Tea Party “revolution” that is supposed to be going on in the United States, instead of going to Italy to fight, why not try making his stand as a political voice of common sense, which is something in short supply in American politics these days.

I bring this up because Malignaggi’s comments just prior to his disappointing 11th round TKO loss to Amir Khan were one of the more honest assessments of the nonsense that goes on with Homeland Security. These guys can barely keep an admitted terrorist on a national watch list off an international flight in which he paid cash or react swiftly when the father of one notifies the authorities that his son is someone they should keep an eye on yet they hold up Khan’s visa for weeks as if they never heard of the guy.

As you know, the super lightweight champion was forced to train for some time in Vancouver after flying there for the weekend from his L.A. training base with an apparently expired visa. This forced his trainer, Freddie Roach, to uproot himself from his highly successfully and busy Wild Card Gym in Hollywood to tend to Khan’s final preparations for the Malignaggi fight.

While Khan’s American promoter, Golden Boy, labored to get Khan a visa in time to meet Malignaggi at Madison Square Garden in a highly publicized event which was televised on HBO, Malignaggi commented on the situation not in the way most were – which was fretting over whether or not Khan would be allowed into the country in time for the fight or trying to blame Golden Boy for not acting sooner on Khan’s new visa.

Rather, Malignaggi pointed out the obvious – that this was an absurd example of all that’s wrong with our border security. As he had when he spoke out both before and after being screwed by the Texas Athletic Commission and its refereeing minion, Laurence Cole, Malignaggi hit directly at the problem.

“I tell you what, man, I live in the United States,” Malignaggi said before the Khan fight. “I’ve been here for many years and my family moved here from Italy. But it’s getting a bit irritating that all the guys that come (to the U.S. with bad intentions) seem like they get in this country but then honest people, they get held back at the border.

“My grandfather goes to Italy every summer and every summer he comes back here, home, and they stop him at customs. They bring him into a room. They interrogate the guy like he’s some kind of criminal. Then you got guys blowing s--t up and they get in the country scot-free.

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“Now you’ve got somebody like Amir Khan, who is coming here. You look him up on Google, he’s a world champion. He’s not looking to do any harm (except to Malignaggi). He’s looking to do his job and they stop him at the border! They stop him at customs. They try to prevent him from getting his visa. They’re giving him a problem. What’s the big, _____ing deal, man?

It’s getting so irritating because if something is going to happen, it’s like okay. We’ve got guys looking to blow up Times Square. You got guys blowing up buildings. How the hell are these guys getting in here but honest people can’t get in here or they have a problem getting in here?

It’s really getting ridiculous man. Talk about the National Trade Admission (NAFTA) or whatever they call it. But honestly, man, if you prevent people from making a living it’s...I’m trying to make a living and my whole family is involved. Grandfather comes back from Italy every summer and gets stopped the last two, three summers in a row. It’s a little bit irritating.

Actually, it’s a lot a bit irritating! It’s a ----ing joke when you’ve got guys already in this country blowing s--t up or looking to blow s--t up and you’ve got honest people trying to get in here and they can’t get here. How do the guys that blow s--t up get in here? That’s what I want to know.”

That’s what everyone in the country wants to know every time it happens. Or, thankfully, nearly happens. What we need, as a country, are more guys like Paulie Malignaggi. Guys who will ask questions unfiltered by politics or political correctness. Hard questions about simple matters that reveal more than they may seem to at first.

How does a terrorist who tried to bomb Times Square successfully get on an international flight and nearly escape the country while the super lightweight champion of the world, who just happens to be named Amir Khan, gets held up at the Canadian border for weeks?

How long does it take to make a phone call and learn A) he is who he says he is and B) he’s fighting in New York in a few weeks at Madison Square Garden?

What did Homeland Security and the customs officials think? Khan was using a world title fight as a diversion for his REAL intentions in America?

They couldn’t find out in a day that Khan has been training at the Wild Card Gym for fights in and out of America for some time now? If something was out of order it took weeks rather than hours to rectify it?

Leave it to Malignaggi to get to the heart of the matter. Since losing to Khan, Malignaggi has announced his decision to campaign as a welterweight in Italy, seeking to win first the Italian title and then the European title presently held by Matthew Hatton.

Certainly, with his boxing skills and experience, Malignaggi is likely to do well in Italy, a country where he holds dual citizenship along with his U.S. citizenship. It is a logical and likely lucrative choice for him, one made easier by the fact he spent the first six years of his life in Italy, has family there and speaks fluent Italian.

Yet, at 29, he admits his boxing career is closer to the end than the beginning, so why not consider a second career? These days a guy who cuts through the b.s. and tells people the truth might just have a chance getting elected something in this country.

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How about Minister of Truth or Consequences?