

BORGES: That Robbery Was Misdemeanor, Not Felony

Written by Ron Borges

Monday, 20 December 2010 18:29



Bernard Hopkins knows more about robbery than most people do, having spent 7 ½ years in Graterford State Prison in Pennsylvania for committing the strong-armed version, so he understands what happened to him Saturday night in Quebec City was no robbery. It was more like being pick-pocketed at the packed Pepsi Coliseum.

If you come into a young man's hometown, get knocked down twice in the first three rounds (even if only the second was legitimate) and fall five points behind in a title fight it's not a robbery when they don't give you the decision. Of course, it's also not right that they didn't because Hopkins won without much question eight of the final nine rounds and deserved the 114-112 nod US judge Steve Morrow gave him.

The proof of that was twofold. First, not even Canadian-born judge Claude Paquette could in good conscience give Pascal the decision. Neither could Belgium's Daniel Van de Wiele. What they could do though was simply stay out of it even though their job is to be into it.

Those two chose to play Switzerland rather than perform their only function (that we know of) at ringside Saturday night and judge the fight, opting instead to both call it a draw. One had it 113-113 while the other saw it 114-114. Either way Pascal had reason to celebrate Christmas a week early because the result was a majority draw and hence he retained his now diminished title.

The second bit of evidence that this decision was like someone pulling a wallet out of an unsuspecting innocent's coat in a crowded arena was that over 16,000 Canadian's booed lustily when the outcome was announced even though it allowed the hometown hero to retain the WBC's version of the 175-pound title.

Hopkins, to be fair, lost nothing but the opportunity, as he put it last week, "to join the 7-foot lady" in the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest fighter in history to win a legitimate world championship. Of course, that assumes you consider the WBC legitimate, which is a

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subject for another day and certainly not for the holiday season.

What the non-loss provided Hopkins was what he likes best: a chance to portray himself as victimized by the world in general and boxing in particular. In this case he's right but enough already with that song.

"This was a sure enough robbery," Hopkins said. "This is what hurts the sport."

It doesn't help but what actually hurts the sport is that a 46-year old fighter can come into the hometown of a 28-year-old world champion, be hit in the back of the head once and have it called a knockdown and then get dropped by two legitimate left hands two rounds later and still end up not only beating said champion but making clear that he wanted to win more than the champion did.

In recent years the wily Hopkins has been forced by the unavoidable consequences of age to slow down his pace in fights. He always picked his shots carefully even as a young man and went about his work in the ring with the same stealth he once used to operate in the streets of Philadelphia.

But against Pascal, Hopkins knew he was in early trouble and so chose to simply outwork his younger opponent, tearing into his body with enough hooks to the liver and kidney to make Pascal a quite unwilling participant in the second half of the fight.

That allowed Hopkins to display what was for him a furious pace, outworking Pascal and out fighting him. In the end, Hopkins would throw nearly 100 more punches (92 to be exact) and land 66 more than the younger man. More significantly, over the final few rounds, the ones where championships are most often decided, he came forward and pressured Pascal while the latter seemed to be saying, "If you want it that bad...well, here."

"He looked tired from the sixth round," Hopkins (51-5-2) claimed. "He was gasping. He held every time I got close and I just kept coming forward, throwing punches. I dominated the fight. Look at his face. Look at mine."

Visual evidence is often, though not always, significant both in robberies and boxing matches and so it was Saturday night. By the end of the evening Hopkins looked pretty much the way he had at the start while Pascal's face was red and swollen on one side and he seemed decidedly underwhelmed by what had just transpired.

"I thought I won," Pascal (26-1-1) said sheepishly, knowing he was fortunate Joe Isuzu wasn't doing the interview.

"I thought I won..." ("He kicked my ass but, hey, I'm Canadian!)," Isuzu would have muttered.

"It's not that he's that good (Just good enough to beat my butt all around Quebec City for a half hour or so!)," he would have admitted.

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Whatever the truth of Pascal's thoughts about what had happened at the Pepsi Coliseum, Hopkins was not hurt either by Pascal or by the result. He left without another belt but he's already got enough belts to open an accessories shop in Philly if he wanted to and the fact is he was unlikely to ever defend it anyway because at 46 that's not what it's about any more.

For Bernard Hopkins it's about getting paid and getting off on slapping around young kids like Pascal, who don't know how much they don't know about boxing until someone like Hopkins comes in and gives them a very expensive tutorial on prize fighting.

Saturday night Hopkins got both and that's what is actually bad for boxing. Not Hopkins himself because he is one of the few recognizable names the public has left in the game and he is enjoyable for anyone who appreciates the dark art of pugilism because he is a master at its many sordid details.

Watching Hopkins work on an opponent is like watching a master wood carver transform a block of fir into a carved-out sculpture. It is art with a brutal twist.

But the artist was not robbed Saturday night in Canada. He just had his pocket picked. By boxing standard's that's barely a misdemeanor.

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DJ_12 says:

Pascal already got his A@@ kicked by Carl Froch earlier in his career so we knew that he was not the real deal. Bhop knew that also which is why he took the fight. Bhop won in the court of public opinion plus he got a fat paycheck. Still it would have been nice to go back home as the new Lt Heavyweight Champion.

Radam G says:

I agree with SuperBoxingScribe Ron B all the way. Ole B-Hoppy should have expected and probably did expect hometown cooking. But I will give the judges great kudos for not being traditional crooks. Normally in a bout like that, B-Hop would have gotten robbed by a split decision. I was pleasantly shock that the Canadian judge had mucho class and courage that he could not give the nod to his home-country fighter. I can give him a BIG salute for having cojones to do the halfway right thing. I give Pascal a C- for being hyped and a scary cat at the same time. Holla!

brownsugar says:

testing123

Radam G says:

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B-Sug is back in da Hizouze! Welcome to the soon-to-be 2010 TSS ROTY! Glad to see ya back. We appreciate ya! Holla!

brownsugar says:

I don't know about ROTY but it's great to be back Radam,... and this is more than a house... it's a veritable Castle.. won't say too much about the fight,.. you and Mortcola said it best... but it's funny that Pascal rose in popularity with his loss to Froch,.. and in an instant his stock plummets drastically in the eyes of his fans because of his socalled win over the ancient magical sorcerer of boxing Bhop (Pascal should just call him Pops). Now he has a daunting task in honoring his rematch to Dawson who has to have a frothing beard white foam around his mouth in anticipation of meeting him again... if he survives Dawson.... Bhop should be back on deck to administer another 36 minutes worth of credit hours of professional boxing 101...then we'll see if the Freshman from Canada has retained anything from his most recent lesson. @Roast,.. I was always here,.. you didn't see me making a fishnet out of bamboo thatch and Kudzu vines on the other side of the island lol. tight article mister RB.

the Roast says:

Whassup Brownsugar!! Glad you made it!

the Roast says:

I'm basking in Bears victory. Devin Hester into the record books. HOF.

brownsugar says:

agreed Fe'Roz this article is pure poetry,.. I was almost tempted to try and steal some of it's "essence" for open mike night at the weekly slam. But nobody can do Borges but the man himself.

in touch says:

Agree with the article. Hopkins should have expected that and, thus, started sharper. That being said, I give all respect to Hopkins for doing as much as he could to turn things around. I was disappointed with Pascal for fighting a scared fight. And not throwing a jab. How did he expect to beat Hopkins without throwing jabs? Terrible strategy. Bad trainers. Bhop threw nice, short shots and was effectively pursuing the younger fighter. Bad judging does not help to propel our sport. A few weeks ago, Victor Ortiz got robbed by the judges. This week, Bhop got ... dare I say robbed? Or... his pockets picked?

the Roast says:

You got that right Fe'Roz. He could have paid big bucks for a lesson like that!

brownsugar says:

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I'm going to have to rewatch the fight to see what it was that changed Pascal from a banger to a survivor. some of those body shots must have felt worse than they looked.