Written by Eric Raskin
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Everyone on the east coast has a story about where they were and what they felt when the earthquake hit last Tuesday. Everyone on the west coast just wants them to shut the hell up. Everyone on the east coast has a story about what Hurricane Irene did or didn't do to disrupt their lives. Everyone who lives in the southeastern corner of the U.S. just wants them to shut the hell up.

Was Irene an inconvenience? Sure. My family was in the middle of a vacation at the Jersey shore (the steroid-free, Snooki-free section, thank you very much) and we had to evacuate, and then on Saturday, due to tornado warnings, we had to carry the kids to the basement in the middle of the night. That's about it. All these natural disasters combined weren't even enough to make Andre Berto cancel a fight. So, to my fellow east coasters: Pick up your toppled lawn chairs and get over yourselves.

After all, there's boxing to talk about. We start this week's column with a one-email mailbag, and as you'll see, the email was sent prior to last weekend's fights, in response to my TSS piece on the pressure Teddy Atlas was facing in the Alexander Povetkin-Ruslan Chagaev fight:

Eric,

In your opinion, do you think Teddy Atlas is a Hall of Famer as a trainer? To me, I don't think so. He's great at self-promotion, positioning himself as the noble teacher and fountain of fistic ethics and high standards. But I see him as doing more to tear down fighters he's trained than build them up. I see his work with Povetkin as a disaster in the making: taking a young fighter who could have been a great masterpiece (a la Freddie and Manny), and tearing him down so much that he's lost any concept of what his ring identity is or should be, and thus Povetkin losing a career direction when that's the very thing Teddy was supposed to be providing.

I expect Povetkin to win, but look unclear of who he is as a fighter.

—Bakari P.S. Loved the Chekhov's gun analogy. I say the gun backfires.

Bakari,

Your prediction wasn't far off: Povetkin won, and finished strongly, but didn't look like an improved fighter under Teddy's tutelage—at least not yet. But there's still time. This was a good learning experience, and maybe he'll get in one or two more of them before challenging a Klitschko. Povetkin is a perfectly competent heavyweight, and in this era of incompetency, that might just make him the third best heavyweight in the world. Still, if he wants to beat a Klitschko, he ought to stall as long as possible, for two reasons: (1) Povetkin will gain experience and perhaps improve as a fighter; (2) the only way he beats a Klitschko is if they start to age and slow down.

But back to Teddy Atlas: Dare I say his unique brand of motivation (which led my four-year-old daughter, who watched the last three rounds with me, to ask, "Why is he always yelling?") helped Povetkin in this fight? It was looking bleak for the Russian in round six, when he couldn't get out of the way of Chagaev's left hand, but he showed resolve and found the energy he needed to win most of the late rounds. So, good on Teddy. His methods don't work for every fighter. But Povetkin seems to really believe in everything Atlas has to say, he seems to want to maximize his potential and learn and train hard, and this might just prove to be a productive partnership. By Povetkin winning this fight with Chagaev, he and Atlas took a huge stride toward making their decision to pass on a fight with Wlad Klitschko look prudent.

As for Atlas' Hall of Fame potential, his career isn't over, and if Povetkin becomes world heavyweight champion eventually, that helps his case. Still, the only major accomplishment on Teddy's training resume is Michael Moorer's win over Evander Holyfield. Other than Moorer, he hasn't taken anyone to the top. So, no, I don't think Atlas is a Hall of Fame trainer at this point.

However, I do 100 percent expect him to make the Hall of Fame because of the exposure he's gained as a broadcaster (he's been in our homes, on basic cable, every week for 13 years and counting) and as an ambassador for the sport. Whether you love or hate Atlas' commentating style, it's definitely padded his "fame" resume. The question is, under what category would he be inducted? Broadcasters are "Observers." Trainers are "Non-Participants." Technically, "Non-Participant" should cover both (and it used to before "Observer" was created several years back). I suppose this creates a slight complication for Atlas' Hall of Fame case. But one way or another, he will get in—regardless of where Povetkin's career goes from here.

And now, some more Povetkin-Chagaev thoughts and the rest of the Rants:

• Is there really a chance that Povetkin will fight Evander Holyfield next? Just when you thought the heavyweight division couldn't sink any lower …

• This coming weekend, 47-year-old Al Cole faces Danny Williams. Just when you thought the heavyweight division couldn't sink any lower …

• I don't mind that Epix tape-delayed the broadcast of Saturday's heavyweight fights by about 15 minutes (presumably because the fighters entered the ring in Erfurt, Germany ahead of

schedule and Epix couldn't start their telecast early), but I do mind the word "LIVE" on the corner of my screen when the fight isn't, you know, live.

• Things I like about Robert Helenius: He's an excellent finisher, he's a fluid puncher, he has a quality nickname ("The Nordic Nightmare"), and he looks like Karl Hungus. Things I don't like about Helenius: He's a slow starter, and I've seen better physiques on bowlers. I know that boxing isn't bodybuilding and there have been a lot of great heavyweights over the years who lacked muscle tone. But I still like my fighters to look like they've trained. In any case, Helenius is a heavyweight to keep an eye on, and there aren't many of those.

• While both heavyweight fights on the Epix show were a little better than I expected them to be, the best fight of the weekend was a strawweight bout on Fox Deportes late Saturday night between Moises Fuentes and Raul Garcia. A knockdown apiece, a mild upset, gutsy efforts from both guys—what more can you ask for? (Besides to find a few men twice their size who can duplicate that drama.)

• Actually, on second thought, the best fight of the weekend was the one between Floyd "Not No Junior" Mayweather and Floyd Mayweather Sr. on HBO's 24/7. It escalated quickly from "this feels like a performance for HBO's cameras" to "so thaaaaat's the way it is in their family." When Big Floyd started dropping MF-bombs, you knew it was no act. And then came the best line, Little Floyd telling him "You couldn't fight worth s---!" It was fascinating to watch Little Floyd's bodyguards trying not to get too involved. You could almost see them thinking, "Normally, I'd beat this old man to a pulp and leave him on the curb, then let Floyd deal with a lawsuit later … but I'm not sure what the protocol is when it's my boss' dad."

• By the way, the MF-bombs were intense but, to the viewing audience, harmless. I'm not sure the same can be said about the barely audible homophobic slur that "Money" slipped in there.

• I've heard some people claim that Victor Ortiz's backstory is a complete fabrication, but even if that's the case, it's great for generating interest. You can't watch Ortiz and his brother talk about their childhood and not be drawn in.

• In case you couldn't infer it: I thought that was the most promising opening episode of a 24/7 series in a long time. Maybe even going all the way back to the original De La Hoya-Mayweather edition.

• Congratulations to Brian Kenny on his new gig with MLB Network and on 13 tremendous years driving the ESPN Friday Night Fights bus. What I'm about to write is based purely on personal conjecture, not on any inside information whatsoever, but I wouldn't be surprised to see BK providing blow-by-blow on HBO's new prospect-based boxing series next year. It just seems an obvious match now that he's left ESPN.

• I'm already bored by the Bob Arum-Dana White feud. But I am curious to see how the upcoming MMA film "Warrior" does at the box office. If it's a bigger hit than "The Fighter," that will tell me that MMA has gained a meaningful mainstream foothold.

• Lost amid the discussion of how baseless Zab Judah's formal complaint over the refereeing in the Amir Khan fight was: Why in the hell would Judah want a rematch with Khan? Damn, Zab. Take a hint.

• As he revealed last week in hopes of easing some of his legal difficulties, Floyd Mayweather's partying lifestyle is only an act. In related news, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. has revealed that his pursuit of a professional boxing career is only an act.

• There will be no new episode of Ring Theory (http://ringtheory.podbean.com) this week, as we take one of our occasional three-week breaks. We'll return with a new episode either immediately after Labor Day, or the next time J-Woww's face moves, whichever happens first.

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Comment on this article

FighterforJC says:

Teddy Atlas is a f*g

brownsugar says:

I think Povetkin looked less mechanical while throwing a wide assortment of short hooks and crosses in close... a variation off the Tyson theme... but I thought he was going to have cardiac arrest in the corner... never saw a guy gaping and gasping like that on the stool.

the Roast says:

F**k Atlas. He is a grandstanding douchebag.

Radam G says:

C'mon, guys! Be NICE! At least TA doesn't SUCK! Holla!

brownsugar says:

Teddy had an agreement with Povetkin that he stay in the states to train because of his ESPN contract... Povetkin and company went home anyway and when they found out they didn't have a clue,.. Teddy bit back his pride and went over to help... honestly Povetkin won by only the slimmest of margins.. so I have to say that Atlas had to contribute to his victory.