Did everyone catch HBO's Bob Papa not even attempting to pronounce "Hlatshwayo" during the lead-up to the Andre Berto-Jan Zaveck fight on Saturday night? Papa quickly said something to the effect of "Hasho," mumbling his way through the second syllable like he was Chevy Chase doing a comedy bit, and moved on.

But I'm not going to criticize Papa for mailing one in. If anything, I envy him for being so blasé. One of these days, I'm going to send Editor Mike a completely half-assed column that took 45 minutes to write, and I'm not going to lose sleep over it.

But that day is not today. I put actual effort into answering a reader email and compiling the weekly Rants. I even used Google a couple of times to make sure my information was correct. So enjoy it while you can, because a man can only care about the quality of his work for so long before he takes the "Hasho" route:

Hi Eric,

I know the fight between the Mayweather father and son on 24/7 looked real, but I'm not buying it. It seems I'm in the great minority on that. But did you notice how often both guys turned toward the camera when they were hurling their insults? And more to the point, why should we

believe anything Floyd Jr. does or says? This is a guy who acts like a d-head to every opponent in the build-up to the fight, then suddenly is Mr. Magnanimous after the fight ends. He even claimed his partying lifestyle is purely for image enhancement, to sell fights. If you're going to make that kind of a claim, everything you do has to be questioned. So I'm questioning this spat with his dad. It looked like scripted "reality" TV to me, like The Hills or Laguna Beach.

One more thing about Mayweather: I can't believe how little flak he's taken for using the word "f-ggot." Any guesses as to why he's getting a free pass on that one?

By the way, great call on Helenius looking like Karl Hungus from The Big Lebowski. I'd been trying to place that Scandinavian-meathead look he has, and you nailed it.

Great stuff, keep on rantin',
J-Dog

J-Dog,

I hope someone else came up with the nickname "J-Dog" for you, because there are few things in this world lamer than calling yourself "Dog."

For the reasons you give, I can't 100 percent rule out the possibility that the Mayweathers were acting. But I'm at about 99.8 percent. Yes, they were turning their bodies toward the cameras at the outset of the argument, but as it went on, they seemed to stop being conscious of the camera crew. It's hard to explain exactly why I don't think the verbal war between Big Floyd and Little Floyd was staged, but I'll invoke Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's famous line about pornography and say, "I know it when I see it." It just FELT real to me.

As for "Money" slipping in that sexual-orientation slur, you're right that it's barely been mentioned in the press, especially compared to the way Kobe Bryant became the lead topic on PTI for a week when he did the same thing. I have two theories as to why Mayweather isn't taking extreme heat: (1) A lot of people didn't hear it. I know I missed it the first time and only caught it on my second viewing. You didn't SEE him say the word—you only heard him from off-camera, and barely. (2) Mayweather has lowered the bar for the level of class people expect from him to the point that something like this gets shrugged off. If Manny Pacquiao had said that word, there would be a firestorm. Same with Derek Jeter or Tom Brady or Kevin Durant or anyone else who is perceived as a nice guy. But Mayweather has a history of behavior like this (if not a history of using that particular word), and to a certain extent, people tend to tune it out.

Thankfully, nobody tunes out the Rants, so let's get to 'em:

• Well, Episode Two of 24/7 Mayweather-Ortiz wasn't as memorable as the first, but there were two moments worth commenting on. First, in the long and storied history of people misusing the word "literally," Ortiz butchered it perhaps more spectacularly than anyone ever has when he explained, "If you're talking to me, you're literally talking to a tree, bro." And second, how

eye-opening was it to learn that Mayweather bets on preseason NFL football? That, my friends, is what you call a gambling problem.

• On another Mayweather-Ortiz note, I'm curious to see, come fight night, who'll enter the ring first/last and be introduced first/last. Mayweather is the superstar, but Ortiz has the alphabet belt. If I had to guess, I'd say it's in the contract that Mayweather at least gets to enter the ring second.

• If I ever become a referee, it will be my goal to get work in Mississippi. I'm a big fan of their business-casual dress code.

• Apparently Andre Berto took to heart all that talk about him having no beard. I like the Bill Russell look on him. He's no better of a fighter than he was before, but at least he looks more bad-ass now.

• I guess there's no Slovenian version of the F-bomb, hence Jan Zaveck's use of the English version. What a bummer; I really want to learn at least one Slovenian curse word to have in my back pocket. I guess I'll have to look up "asinine" in a Slovenian-English dictionary.

• I have about eight or nine toes on the Gary Russell bandwagon now, and I must admit, I'm even entertained watching him duck punches. I normally don't pay too much attention to the CompuBox numbers, but landing 60 percent of your powerpunches is ridiculous, and holding your opponent to 16 percent landed on powerpunches is equally absurd. Could Russell be that next American-born superstar that so many skeptics believe doesn't exist? Possibly, although featherweight tends to lurk a little below the mainstream radar. One thing Russell needs if he's going to make it big is a real nickname. "Mr. Gary Russell Jr." ain't cutting it. Whoever came up with that creative brainstorm was definitely having a "Hasho" moment.

• As you've probably heard, HBO has ordered a pilot episode of Da Brick, a drama series loosely based on Mike Tyson's youth. Co-producer Doug Ellin described the series as "Entourage meets The Wire." So that either means I'll watch every episode and regret it, or want to watch every episode and never find time for it.

• How many people who don't follow boxing would have picked Marco Antonio Rubio to win his fight this past weekend after seeing this picture? http://fightnews.com/Boxing/rubio1.jpg

• Oscar De La Hoya was in the news just a little bit last week, wasn't he? A few thoughts on some of the things he said, did, and is rumored to have done: First, I really hate the phrasing of his claim, "I don't have the courage to take my own life." I get what he was trying to express, but "courage" was the wrong word. Second, I found his admission that the lingerie pictures were legit to be curiously timed. Doesn't he understand that juicy revelations are supposed to be saved for future autobiographies so you can at least profit off of them? And third, the New York Post reported that De La Hoya paid the woman who took those photos $20-million to keep quiet. What a shame. For that kind of money, he could have hired a real editorial staff for The Ring's website. (Zing!)

• As the world's leading critic of Omar Narvaez's protective matchmaking (I harp on it every year in my "State Of The Game" section in The Ring mag), I'm intrigued to see him stepping all the way up to face Nonito Donaire in October. This is the bantamweight equivalent of Sven Ottke coming to America to fight Roy Jones in 2002. It will not end well for Narvaez, but that's okay. Better to take a shot and fail than to be Sven Ottke.

• Look for a new episode of Ring Theory (http://ringtheory.podbean.com) this week, with previews and analysis of Vitali Klitschko-Tomasz Adamek, Yuriorkis Gamboa-Daniel Ponce De Leon, and of course, the whole Mayweather-Ortiz pay-per-view card. And Bill Dettloff and I both promise to keep the homophobic slurs to a minimum.

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