

Written by Eric Raskin

Wednesday, 18 January 2012 10:02

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*It seems like many if not most folks are feeling like this man is the key to making Mayweather-Pacquiao happen. Or not happen. (Hogan)*

I hope none of you boxing fans out there have been taking these Rants for (g)ranted. What once was a weekly tradition has become, due to other pressing obligations, a sporadic home for the ramblings of a fight writer in his 15th year on the beatdown beat. But with the way 2012 has started for the boxing world, it's just as well that I haven't written in a couple of weeks. There have been no major fights and not much to talk about other than the latest news and rumors on how boxing's biggest stars are posturing rather than assuming an actual fighting posture. For every boxing writer other than Mario Serrano, the guy who drafts Robert Guerrero's press releases, there hasn't been much to comment on this January.

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But now that a couple of weeks' worth of ideas have accumulated, here goes with another Raskin's Rants column—starting with the subject we can't stop talking about even though, really, there's nothing to talk about:

-- Hey, Floyd Mayweather, you say you want to fight Manny Pacquiao on May 5? Step away from the Twitter and pick up the phone. You can call Bob Arum directly, and go ahead and record the call and release it later as proof if he tries to lie about what was said on the call. And same goes for you, Pac-Man. Call Richard Schaefer, call Al Haymon, call Leonard Ellerbe, call whoever you have to and say, "I want this fight, let's get into a room together." And you guys want to make a marketing splash? Hash it out in person, everybody in a room at once, let the lawyers draw up the contracts, and then sign them live on ESPN at the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich. Bottom line: If either Mayweather or Pacquiao steps out from behind the publicists and promoters and requests an in-person meeting, and the other one balks, then we know who the ducker is. And if nobody balks, then maybe we'll get a fight. (A fight that, by the way, doesn't require 3½ months to promote. Not when every sports fan on the planet has been actively promoting it for the last 30 months. If, hypothetically, you signed the fight tomorrow and it was scheduled for two weeks from now, you'd have a fine shot at 3,000,00 PPV buys. Mayweather vs. Pacquiao doesn't need a press tour to build awareness.)

-- Congratulations to my friend Nigel Collins on his new part-time gig tweeting and Facebooking for *Friday Night Fights*. It's not the platform he deserves (I think we all know what that is), but it's a platform to keep his voice in the boxing media, and that's a step in the right direction.

-- I would wish Muhammad Ali a happy 70th birthday, but somehow I doubt he cares if I wish him a happy birthday.

-- Like much of the boxing media, I received an advance copy of the first two episodes of HBO's new documentary series *On Freddie Roach*, which its producers have been careful not to call a "reality show," since it has little in common with most reality TV. If this was a reality-TV show, it would have to rank as the most subtle show in the history of the genre. There's no hitting you over the head with sensational personalities and orchestrated stunts, there's nobody trying to brand a new catch phrase or win a million dollars. It's just cameras following around an ordinary guy who happens to have extraordinary success at a high-profile job and is battling a disease. And it's in the quietest moments that the show excels most. My favorite scene from the first two episodes features the title character all alone (well, except for the camera crew) in the dressing room before the Amir Khan-Zab Judah fight, lining up pieces of tape, preparing the room, performing pre-fight rituals and manual labor, just a common man and not the celebrity that he is but never behaves like. Like that gripping 45-minute-or-so stretch in

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*Castaway*

, there's not a single line of dialogue. And there doesn't need to be.

*On Freddie Roach*

is not what I'd call "must-see TV." It's neither as brilliant as

*Mad Men*

or

*Breaking Bad*

nor as water-cooler-tastic as the early days of

*Jersey Shore*

or

*Survivor*

. But it's "should-see TV." It won't blow your mind, but it's a half-hour well spent.

-- So HBO has revealed that their new quarterly boxing news show will be called *Jim Lampley's Scorecard* . I

wonder how Harold Lederman feels about that.

-- Seriously, I am looking forward to the debut of Lamps' new show. With the right format and the right guests/panelists (especially certain east-coast writers who already contribute to HBO.com and are in their 15th year of covering this sport, but I won't name names), this could be a huge boost to boxing from an awareness standpoint.

-- I also look forward to *Gus Johnson's Score Tally* when it debuts a few months later on Showtime.

-- I was upset when Robert Guerrero had to pull out of his bout with Marcos Maidana with an injury. I was bummed when Andre Ward vs. Carl Froch got bumped back by a cut in sparring. But I'm not losing any sleep over an injury preventing Eddie Chambers-Sergei Liakhovich. As long as the guys in the opening TV fight this Saturday on the NBC Sports Network, Jesus Soto-Karass and Gabriel Rosado, stay healthy, I could care less what heavyweight fight I'm fast-forwarding through on Sunday morning.

-- It wouldn't be a Rants column if I didn't end with a plug for my podcast, so check out the 2012 debut episode that went up last week ( <http://ringtheory.podbean.com> ), featuring my second annual reading of a humiliation script that Bill Dettloff wrote for me thanks to his victory in our Quick Picks competition. And look for another episode next week, with a special guest joining

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us. And no, the guest won't be Bob Arum. Every time we ask Bob to come on, he shoots back a series of excuses for why it just isn't going to happen.

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