

TSS Exclusive! Larry Merchant Is In A Book Club!

Written by Michael Woods
Tuesday, 08 May 2012 09:47



Here is a tidbit I came away with after talking to Larry Merchant on Monday, and I think this qualifies as a real-deal scoop, and if anyone else prints this, I want full recognition for breaking this news: Larry Merchant is in a book club.

The octogenarian analyst for HBO told me he was sitting in the Santa Monica sun, trying to power his way through Philip Roth's 2010 novel *Nemesis*, because his book club met that evening. I was able to corner him for a few minutes to get his takeaway thoughts on Saturday's sub-superfight clash between Floyd Mayweather and Miguel Cotto.

"Most important, it was a helluva good fight," he said. "Nobody asked for their money back. It was good for the game.

"That's the primary thought. Other thoughts.. Mayweather, whether it was deliberate or because of how Cotto came to fight, had to fight. And the bloody nose was symbolic of the kind of fight he's rarely been in. That added to the excitement of watching the fight. The blood was not of someone damaged or hurt but the blood of drama."

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Merchant thinks Cotto came away a winner, even though an "L" was added to his ledger. "Cotto fought the way the best professionals have always fought, with every last ounce of effort, energy, ability and strength. He came away from the fight probably as a winner in terms of his outstanding career, in terms of answering questions some of his previous fights have posed. He probably extended his career into some potentially major fights."

Merchant told me that he was surprised that Floyd approached him after the Friday weigh-in, and apologized for his on air, post-fight rant following his win over Victor Ortiz last year. "To end the suspense," Merchant said to the viewers, as Floyd stood next to him, face six inches away from the analyst's, "I want to let you all know that Floyd graciously came to me yesterday and apologized for the incident last September and I accepted it and thank you for doing that," Merchant said, as he looked at Floyd.

"Thank you, thank you Larry," Floyd said, as the crowd booed, why I am not sure.

I mentioned that I sometimes have a tendency, regarding Floyd and apart from boxing and Floyd, to over-scrutinize situations and behavior; sometimes, I noted, it is best to simply accept, because we are not mind readers, and sometimes it is best to accept face value and move on. Maybe this is the best course regarding the Floyd apology, rather than deliberating on whether he truly meant it or not. It's not the same, but it's like when someone I'd label a rapacious toxic-capitalist sponge, like one of the Koch brothers, donates money to buy build a child cancer wing at a hospital. Is he doing it to get a ticket to heaven? Or is it from the heart? That's debatable; but the good that cancer wing will do isn't.

"If you're curious about everything, a writer wants to parse, that's the way we're made," he said. "At the same time, we agreed to bury the hatchet, and it should be taken at that fashion. He didn't stalk off when I asked him a question about jail." Merchant noted that Floyd didn't try and work it so Merchant or any questioner wouldn't ask about jail, something that had floated around the grapevine, that Floyd was making demands on HBO on what could or could not be asked of him, post-fight, and he accepted my props when I told him that his questions to Floyd were appropriately hard-hitting and direct, not an easy hurdle to leap considering what went down in September. Merchant thanked me for the tip 'o the cap.

He did share that he could have and maybe in retrospect would have pushed Floyd on the subject of the Superfight, especially in terms of his continuing fixation on "take the test" when by all appearances, Pacquiao has agreed to the testing protocol Floyd has demanded, as well as

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Floyd's desired split of revenue.

Merchant said he could have told Floyd that he was "under the impression Manny had already agreed to (Floyd-sanctioned testing protocol) and you had said there would be 50-50 split." (Refresher: Dan Rafael reported back in early December 2009 that Mayweather had agreed to a 50-50 revenue split, this after Pacquiao had been angling for a 60-40 split in his favor, coming after his beatdown of Miguel Cotto, and after Floyd had taken off all of 2008 and most of 2009. The fight looked like almost a done deal, but within a month, it was off the rails, not because of revenue issues, but because Mayweather wanted more stringent testing than Pacquiao would allow. By February 2010, Mayweather was moving away from agreeing to a 50-50 split, saying that if his May 1, 2010 bout against Shane Mosley did better on PPV than Pacquiao's March 13, 2010 scrap against Joshua Clottey, he'd need \$5 or \$10 million more than Manny if they faced off.)

In the parsing department, Merchant and me talked a bit about The Fight. He said that what we hear from Floyd moving forward will likely be influenced by how well the PPV did against Cotto, and he basically dismissed any talk of Floyd retiring, after Floyd said, "If this is my last fight" following the Cotto win, and said there was a lack of solid foes for him to meet. "We've been to that movie before," he said. "Floyd has every right to feel satisfied at giving fans a fight they enjoyed, and making north of \$40 million at the same time. Where to go from here? I think there will be a lot of pressure on him to eventually make the fight. But the problem is the longer the wait is, something could happen so it does not happen."

Merchant noted that all of us spin our wheels somewhat when we spend energy on covering how and why The Fight isn't being made. "I guess we're a little tired of thinking about it," he said. "There's nothing we can say or can communicate to them how big an event it would be. They know."

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jzzy says:

Money May sends mixed signals. He was gonna box till he was 38, now he may retire. He was gonna fight Manny, now he isn't. I think we all agree that at 35, he can't afford a long layoff. Nothing will be decided till after Pac/Bradley. Also, if Floyd thought this fight was tough, after 35 they're all gonna be tough. If Pac defeats Bradley, who else is there, Ortiz rematch if he wins?? The fans have no interest in Berto, Ortiz, Peterson etc.. and the fans know Money May is the one holding up the fight with Manny, does he want that as his legacy.

People will forever bring that up.

ultimoshogun says:

@jzzy, I gotta disagree with you on your statement that Floyd's the one holding this fight back. Since day one its been Team Pacman thats been doing all the tap dancing when it came to negotiations. Here's an accurate list I found posted on another site of all the flip flopping Floyd's had to deal with.

Mannys excuses as follow:1-I am afraid of needles.2-tests makes me weak.3-I refuse the test due to religious matters.4-I refuse the test cause I am clean athlete never tested positive for PED.5-I dont need floyd for my legacy.6-30 days cut.7- 21 days cut. 8- 14 days cut. 9- 7 days cut. 10- 10m for each extra pound above weight limit. 11-I dont need to follow Mayweathers demands. 12- I will choose gloves size. 13- I will choose ring size. 14-Agreed to the blood test but not by USADA. 15- Refused the fight due to Floyd asking for higher purse.16- He will negotiate with Floyd after Marquez fight. 17- He wants to fight Marquez for the 4th time. 18- Agreed to Floyds blood test demand (knowing floyd going to Jail). 19- Wants to stay active and fight on May (thinking Floyd going to serve his term from Jan5th). 20- Cant fight May 5th due to cut. 21- need more time to promote the fight. 22- Need bigger venue for this fight. 23-can fight late May or June (knowing floyd going to Jail June 1st). 24- Will accept lower purse. 25- wants 50% of the purse. 26- Floyd is out of the picture. 27- They dont know who to contact on Floyds behalf. 28- Floyd is not serious. 29- Floyd should contact Top Rank if he is serious (they refused to negotiate).30-Floyd wants to fight Morales. 31- Floyd wants to fight Robert the Ghost. 32- Floyd wants to fight Mexican fighter. 33- Floyd calling Manny to promote his next fight. 34- Floyd has no one to guarantee his purse.- Adrien - Boxing News 24

Radam G says:

@Jizzy, I gotta agree with on your statement that Floyd's the one holding this fight back. Those in the loop, know the poop. Money May is an arch-master at blaming an old-arse white Jew from stopping a bout between a black man and -- in Money May's own words -- a high-(YELLOW) brown one.

OMFG! Da BobFather needs to chillax. He hates to see an African American and Asian get PAID! YUP! NYET! Call a spade a spade. Instead of dancing with Da Manny, Money May rather drinks some Jonestown koolaid. Next thing that you know, Da BobFather will be blamed for deadly koolaid mixing. Danggit! Somebody always find a way to blame a Jew. Hehehe! Holla!

deepwater says:

hate to say it but mayweather holds the marbles now that he just earned 50 million on his own. mayweather is entitled to 60-40. pac should take the 40 million and go for the win. cotto laid out the blueprint if he can do it.

deepwater says:

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good for LM for being part of the bookclub. I wonder what his thoughts are on the austrian business cycle theory versus the keynesian economic theory this country has been under for the past 3 years. hyperinflation cometh as the money printing continues.

ali says:

Ultimoshogun incredible post...

deepwater says:

hey editor mike why do you inject your socialistic political thoughts in these articles?"It's not the same, but it's like when someone I'd label a rapacious toxic-capitalist sponge, like one of the Koch brothers," you do know that obama recieves the most donations from the 1% illegal toxic banksters. you know the federal reserve banksters that took away the value of your house and assets.. the same ones that are driving inflation through the roof. go to the store lately? how come obama hasnt arrested the banksters or the corrupt politicians that allowed it? its one big club(romney/obama same.no difference. same wars ,same los of liberty) and you are not in the club.

the Roast says:

That was very well said by Larry about the fight, up near the top before the Floyd apology part. After that I got bored and quit reading. Cotto fought a great fight. He brought out the best Floyd Mayweather we have seen in quite a long time. It wasn't enough to win but it will get Miguel some more big fights. I want Cotto vs Alvarez next. Young kid vs grizzled veteran. Mexican vs Puerto Rican. It's a natural. We know Canelo can dish it out but we don't know if he can take it. I pick Cotto by KO. What about Cotto-Martinez? Cotto would bring it, Sergio would box and move with his hands down, who knows? Cotto could knock him out too.

deepwater says:

hey editor mike since you hate capitalism so much i wonder how you built your website? did you come up with the idea by yourself? did you invest any of your time and savings into this business venture with no guarentee of success? is your hard work paying off for you? or do you blame other boxing websites, the big ones(like espn) that your not doing to good, maybe you think its unfair that espn has such a big stake in boxing, maybe you could do a better job if espn was forced to give you a share of their business. maybe you want the government to intervene on your behalf. google capitalism vs socialism and see the error of your ways. if you want to live socialistic check out cuba,france,spain