Written by Michael Woods
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There he was, checking out the scene at Barclays Center on Monday, Bernard Hopkins' birthday, listening to Bernard spar with Don King, the promoter of Hopkins' March 9 tussle in Brooklyn. Bryant Jennings took it in, and his mind drifted, to larger shows, against top tier guys (cough Klitschkos cough), where he'd be at the mike, talking about the big day.

I said hi to the Philly heavyweight, who appeared on radars in January 2012, when he beat Maurice Byarm on the first NBC Fight Night card. Since then, he kept racking up wins, to the point where he's ranked No. 3 by the IBF, and finds himself on the doorstep of a shot at a Klitschko. I asked him, as politely as I could, not wanting to get dropped and stopped for my impertinence, if people maybe sorta say to him, 'You look smaller in person' when they meet him for the first time. Yep, he said with a grin, good naturedly. "But it doesn't bother me. I know what's up under here," he said, tapping his chest.

When will we see the 6-2 28 year-old back in action? He scored a TKO5 win over Bowie Tupou on Dec. 8. Jennings said he was readying himself for a March date, but that got scrubbed. The right foe couldn't be found, he said. He wasn't interested in guys like Matt Godfrey or Jason Estrada, and Michael Grant, he said, turned down a fight. "He's a steppingstone, and I'm looking to bring boxing back."

He might scrap in May, he said. Promoter Russell Peltz on Thursday said HBO might find a slot for Jennings in the second quarter. He'd love the winner of the Mitchell-Banks bout, and "anybody in Europe. We'd take Robert Helenius in a heartbeat."

Hopkins, Jennings said, has been a role model for him. Yes, Jennings is impressed with how he maintains himself, but more so how he takes care of the business side.

Hey, that Philly scene is kinda hopping now, isn't it?

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