

Espinoza Talks HBO-GB Divorce, Floyd on CBS; Ghost Says He's The Chosen One

Written by Michael Woods

Wednesday, 27 March 2013 14:35



I confess I enjoy talking to Showtime boxing boss Stephen Espinoza when I see him. He's a lawyer, yes. But I don't hold that against him. He's not from the Judd Burstein school of lawyers-in-boxing, in-your-face, confrontational.

While he sometimes can't or won't give me the total truth, because he doesn't want to jeopardize a negotiation or throw someone who arguably deserves it under a bus. He'll tell me, or maybe wrinkle his nose, if he thinks a fight stinks, occasionally, and that's refreshing. Also, he doesn't run for a corner and huddle with other execs, giving off the vibe that he'd rather be emptying a cat litter bin than be talking to the press.

I chatted with Espinoza on Tuesday afternoon in NYC, during a media gathering to spread the

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word on Robert Guerrero (*pictured above, with wife Casey in background, in Tom Casino-Showtime photo*), the Christian warrior who's promising to go all David on Goliath Mayweather May 4 in Las Vegas, on Showtime PPV. He didn't want to get into a pissing match with HBO, or with Bob Arum, while HBO was divorcing Golden Boy a few weeks ago, but some time has passed, and plus, I had him cornered in the Vanderbilt Suite at the MetLife Building at 200 Park Ave.

I asked him how he thinks the sport will be affected by the drawing of the line in the sand, with HBO and Top Rank over here, Golden Boy and Showtime over there.

"I'm not sure how it affects things," he said. He admitted that he found HBO's announcement "strange," using the same term that Richard Schaefer did. "If you say you're looking for the most competitive fights, but categorically won't do business with the largest supplier of fights...."

I replied that maybe it's just best that the terms of the divorce are on the table. Maybe it's best to be transparent, and because relationships are clarified, people can proceed with a new level of comprehension. He nodded that that take might have some merit.

So, was it tit for tat, did HBO make the move in response to the Mayweather ship jumping to Showtime?

"I'm not sure of the rationale," Espinoza said. "You get the sense it was maybe them closing the barn door." He quickly realized he didn't want to compare boxers to cattle, but the implication was clear. "Let's substitute a better metaphor."

As for Mr. Arum's charge that he hadn't heard from Espinoza since November, the Showtime exec said that last fall, they wanted to make a Mikey Garcia-Orlando Salido fight. "We haven't spoken since then, but it's been pretty clear what his intention was," he said. "If Arum calls me, I'd be happy to take the call. I've been on this job for 16 months, and Bob hasn't called me once."

Me, I'd like to see all these guys get along well enough to put together a few of those fights that

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it would be a shame to never see because they hate each other, and can't swallow the bile long enough to put the fans first. Would Espinoza try to act as a mediator, bring warring parties together so we could see a Donaire-Mares fight, for example? (And there actually aren't that many must see fights that aren't being made, today, because Top Rank and Golden Boy are Israel and Palestine). "Somewhat," he said. "We'd like to make Donaire-Mares. But when a large offer was made (to Donaire), and it was turned down, it became clear other things were in play. Three million dollars for the fight would have been a record. I think there is a perception that the networks can force the promoters to make fights, we can't. But, we have an open door, it's open to everybody."

He also tossed me an interesting tidbit when I asked if he'd maybe do more business with Euro promoters, to widen the talent base available what with Top Rank being exclusive to HBO, basically. Not really, Espinoza said. In so many words, he said that's because he is purposefully looking to rebrand, re-position Showtime, and he wants to steer clear of fights and relationships that remind people of the "old" Showtime.

I touched on my desire, as a fan of the sport, to get more and better fights on "free" TV, to grow the hardcore fanbase from its present 1.2 million Americans. He agreed that is important, and also said he's put into effect more local radio ads, and street team ads and marketing to a younger set, in nightclubs and such, to try and draw more fresh eyeballs to the sport. I get the sense we could see a couple more cards on CBS this year, and he said that Floyd fighting on CBS isn't a mere pipe dream. That would have to be "alternative business model," Espinoza noted, agreeing that ads alone don't equal the revenue generated from PPV.

After that talk, Guerrero appeared. He was presented by Golden Boy's Dave Itskowitch with a birthday cake--he turned 30 on Wednesday--and then had me convinced that he was more of a threat to Mayweather than he was before I saw him in person. "I look at this fight as a modern day David and Goliath," he said. He said Floyd used to act respectably, but since the fight against Oscar De La Hoya, he "spun out of control." The Gilroy, CA boxer said when someone like a Mayweather gets too big for their britches, "the Lord will humble you." He made it quite clear that he believed he'd been tasked by that Lord to hasten the process. "I know the Lord is using me to do that," he said.

Guerrero said during their first face to face promo event, Floyd whispered to him that they say prayers to the same God. He implied that God would pick no favorite, that it would be up to each man to get it done on May 4. "But God has favors over people," Guerrero said. "God uses people." Mayweather's problem is he worships money over everything else, Guerrero said he told the fighter, and Floyd "froze up."

Reader, could Guerrero's faith in fact elevate him to a level of proficiency on fight night that could propel him past Mayweather? Or do you believe he is using the best method he can decipher to psych himself up, the "chosen one" angle? Weigh in, in our Forum!

[Comment on this article](#)

tlig says:

To be honest I'll like to see Mayweather lose; not because I dislike him or even take his persona seriously but just to see how he'd react to losing for the first time as a pro. That said, of everything the Ghost is quoted as saying in this piece the only one that makes sense is what he claims Money whispered to him (that God roots for no one in boxing bouts or other sporting events).

I believe though the he truly feels God is using him and this would (or at least can) translate to him putting up a much-better-than-expected fight. But that can only get you so far Robert and against Money I'm guessing it isn't very far.

But it would be interesting to see Money lose though.....

deepwater says:

the cattle comparison is right on the spot. the suits look at the boxers as cattle. end of story. espinoza sure is behind the ball. Europe? check out the euro and Cyprus. no money in Europe except the Germans. top rank is ahead of the ball on this one. Asia is the place to be. once you writers get shipped to Macau or Singapore you will see where all our gold went and understand the nature of money. all empires collapse and the petro dollar is on the way out. little Zou will be leading the way. gotta give props to senator Rand Paul for doing the epic filibuster. Obama really shouldn't be killing Americans by drone with out trial . a plus is Senator Paul says to the 11 million illegal people, you want to work we got a place for you. cool deal. hard work pays off

deepwater says:

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yeah man God stays out of it but if Robert wants to promote God or Jesus good for him. either agree or disagree. boxers use lots of things for motivation, religion is cool if its what fires him up. imagine a gay boxer promoted his religion, would the writers on here mock his religion? or would they say he is entitled to his beliefs. double standards are evident

SouthPaul says:

Bob never made the call. Ok, got it, but how many times has Espinoza reached out to Bob? Quit the bullshittin', Stephen, You're the hall monitor... You're the man in the middle Reach out to Bob Arum and Co., prove to us..to them...and everyone in between there ain't no obvious lawyer friendship bias going on.

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=deepwater;27836]yeah man God stays out of it but if Robert wants to promote God or Jesus good for him. either agree or disagree. boxers use lots of things for motivation, religion is cool if its what fires him up. imagine a gay boxer promoted his religion, would the writers on here mock his religion? or would they say he is entitled to his beliefs. double standards are evident[/QUOTE]

deepwater just makes sense all the time..

fact and common sense..

reason and logic...

Just like your children, or a wife, God can help motivate a man.

Faith can give you that extra effort, that extra ability to endure and dig deeper.

God may not choose sides in the ring, but ****, that belief in God that robert has may get him to run 9 miles a day

instead of 7

and that extra stamina will come in handy

dino da vinci says:

Mr. Woods, did you just compare Golden Boy Promotions to Palestine?

@Deep. No money in Europe except the Germans? There is staggering wealth in Europe. When mentioning someone is from old money in the United States, people in Europe giggle, and they should considering they've had a thousand year head start. [I]That's[/I] old money. I believe it's just a difference in culture. Someone gets a bit of cash in the US and they can't wait

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to go on YouTube to showoff their good fortune. In Europe they quietly go about accumulating it.

Lastly, the US Dollar is not based on oil. Oil is transacted in US Dollars. Bit of a difference there.

deepwater says:

That old money is in certain families, it's not in public circulation. Paying attention to Cyprus, Italy, Greece, Spain? Capital controls, bank holidays, bank accounts seized, ect. The petrodollar means that countries must purchase us dollars first before they can purchase the oil. Funny thing is the bric countries are going around the dollar. Hussein tried to sell oil without without the dollar look what happened same thing with kadafi. March 26 2013 5:49 PM

Economies: China and Brazil Ink Bilateral Trade Deal

China and Brazil agreed to trade in each other's currencies just hours ahead of the BRICS summit in South Africa.

REUTERS

The deal, which extends over a three-year period and amounts to an exchange of about \$30 billion in trade per year, marks the latest effort among two of the world's largest emerging economies to shift the dynamics of international trade that have long favored the U.S. dollar.

I can go on and on but that would deprive you of using google and entering = us dollar as world reserve currency in jeopardy.

By shifting some trade away from the U.S. dollar, the world's primary reserve currency, the two countries aim to buffer their commercial ties against another financial crisis like the one that resulted from the collapse of the U.S. housing market bubble in 2008.

"Trade ties between China and Brazil are of great importance to the two countries' economies amid global woes and the member states' economic stability is vital for the BRICS mechanism," said Zhou Zhiwei, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Xinhua reported.

Trade between China and Brazil has exploded in recent years from \$6.68 billion in 2003 to over \$75 billion in 2012, and in 2009, China replaced the U.S. as Brazil's main trading partner.

The trade deal comes before a summit of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in Durban, where the group of five is expected to discuss the establishment of an international development bank.