While he was fending off legal woes stemming from bar fights and domestic beefs, while he was a fighter without a homebase to attract a rabid throng of paying customers, while he proclaimed himself the world's best pound for pound fighter, and many of us yawned, Floyd Mayweather was on his way to being what he is now: a legitimate pay per view attraction.

PBF explained his popularity in a recent conference call.

"It's the right chemistry and the right team," he said. "My team has really went out there and went to work for me, not just inside the ring but outside the ring, conducting business. I'm going to keep dedicating myself. I'm going to keep just working hard and eventually everybody will open their eyes and see that I really want it and I need to be at the top...one day I said, I'm going to be a pay-per-view attraction and here I am today. I truly believe that we're going to do over a million homes. It took a lot of work. Kelly Swanson my publicist is breaking her neck to try to get my face anywhere that she could possibly get it and Leonard and Al (Haymon), there's a good chemistry and, of course, Richard Schaeffer and Oscar de la Hoya and Golden Boy Promotions. They do a great of a job and, I've got my own company now, so all those things together, mixed in one is what pushed Mayweather to the top and, of course, the main thing is that my skills
and my hard work."

A lot of that is true.

The marketing of Mayweather has been damned masterful. The "Dancing" stint was prime product placement. All those folks deserve a tip of the cap, as does Floyd, for having an amazing capacity to work his tail off.

Now, I don't have the means to commission a poll, but I am curious about this popularity factor.

I wonder, how many people are going to buy the fight Saturday spurred mainly or partially by the desire to see Floyd lose?

How many of those buyers are going to buy the show, because they love to hate Floyd?

I first recall becoming aware of the "love to hate" phenomenon back around 1980. There was a late night TV soap called "Dallas" that starred Larry Hagman as amoral Texas oilman JR Ewing, who by hook or more often by crook would bend, break, and steamroll the rules to get what he wanted.

He had an undeniable charisma, though, and if you couldn't take your eyes off him. He was a tiny bit lovable, but mostly repulsive, and he commanded attention.

PBF has a bit of that, I think. (With a much greater helping of charisma and far less

repulsiveness.)

PBF has plenty of admirers--and let's put it on the table, the love him or loathe him breakdown does along racial lines, to a large extent--and also a healthy contingent of people who don't care for his pronouncements at being the best boxer that ever was, and his cash flashing habit.

The "love him" camp has been growing, sort of like Huckabee's poll numbers. Yes, PBF has grown in the last two, three, four years. He doesn't appear in the police blotter for out-of-the-ring fracases. Humility creeps into his speech more than it did.

Here's how he closed his final conference call.

"I just wanted to say that I appreciate all the media because, I mean you guys are the ones that helped Floyd Mayweather get to the level that he's at over the years, writing all the articles and I appreciate, I mean everybody," he said. "I really, and I truly mean that and thanks for supporting me. My family appreciates you guys. Be there December 8; if you can't, buy pay-per-view because you, this go-around I have to give you guys a toe-to-toe battle and I'm not going to let you guys down. I'm going to go out there and perform well and all my U.K. fans, all my U.K. writers, I appreciate all the articles and continue to write about Ricky Hatton and continue to write about Floyd Mayweather and I'll see you guys next week."

The cynic might argue that he's gotten wise to how the PR game is played. Possible. But this man has such a healthy ego, and a propensity to say what's on his mind, I don't see him spouting this "thanks to the press" line unless he feels it.

STOP!

I wrote all that on Wednesday afternoon, before I received an email link, from Iceman John Scully, to a Youtube video making the rounds. The video features Floyd, in a profanity laden, N-word littered boastfest. He's yapping to a DJ, DJ J-Nice, and he drops m-bombs, racial slurs, calls Hatton a f****t, and generally acts like a world-class thug. He proclaims his superiority over any an all in the boxing ring, tells listeners how filthy rich he is, and basically rants like a caricature of a rapper.

I won't post the link, because the publisher likes to keep it clean here, but you'll be able to find it easily.

It's a gross showing, to my taste.

I have to acknowledge that there is a culture gap at work here, a culture canyon actually that Evel Knevel couldn't traverse in a sky cycle.

I'm Caucasian, and don't know how hard it is to be systematically oppressed for hundreds of years, to come from a beaten down neighborhood that reeks of hoplessness, and have doors pre-slammed in my face simply because my skin is dark. I would never presume to say that I have any clue what that is like. I do think I understand a tiny bit that people who have risen from

that atmosphere might be inclined to shout it loud and proud and defiantly, that they've persevered, and bucked the odds. But without being black, I'll never know the sting of the race gap in our country. So maybe we're destined to never meet in the middle, and find common ground on this sort of behavior.

The hip hop culture, the hyper-sexualized, hyper-violent arm of it, has popularized this sort of tasteless rant, in which those that have "made it" advertise their net worth and standing in the world, but this Youtube outing is over the top even in that milieu.

It made me rethink my line of thinking, what I wrote before I saw that Youtube.

It's now screamingly obvious that Floyd is playing both sides now, acting in one manner for one segment of the nation, and in another manner for another segment.

Is that wrong? Maybe, maybe not.

We all have different facets to our personality.

Certainly politicians tailor their presentation and message to their audience and PBF is always vying for votes, in the form of PPV buys.

So I don't think it's that surprising that these different guises are in use.

But what does disappoint me is how Mayweather is so fixated on the almighty dollar. To him, it's almighty, and to me, that's sacrilege. I'm not a Bible thumper, I'm actually of the Bill Maher school on the subject of religion. But it's almost obscene to hear Mayweather obsess about money, wave around wads of it, and send the message to the kids that it's money that matters, that if you make loads of cash you are a success.

Hey, dismiss me as a hater cause I'm not rolling in it.

I really hope that PBF sees that he's wasting time that could be sent sending out a positive message to kids, instead of tooting his own horn to such a sad, sickening degree.

His father has said repeatedly that money has gotten into Floyd's head, and changed him. I don't know if it's money, or what, but that video...

Man, that is some sad, sick stuff. And for anyone that doesn't see it as such, maybe you should examine your views and taste, and consider that you've become numb to stuff that should turn you off.

I believe the only way PBF can see some light, and get out of this obsession with money, and this overwhelming need to proclaim his worthiness, is to taste a loss in the ring.

Will Hatton be the one to do it, I don't know, but a loss, in the long run, could be the best thing that ever happened to Pretty Boy Floyd Mayweather.