Written by George Kimball
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ATLANTIC CITY -- The lines of demarcation have become so blurred over the years that the brand-name identification has become almost meaningless. A week ago in Quebec City, HBO televised a super-middleweight title bout in which an unbeaten 168-pound champion scored a knockout that shook the very foundation of Showtime's much-ballyhooed 'Super SIx' tournament, but the Lucian Bute-Librado Andrade rematch was presented as a "Boxing After Dark" telecast, as will next weekend's Chicago rematch between Juan Diaz and Paulie Malignaggi. This weekend's card, headlined by Paul Williams vs. Sergio Martinez, on the other hand, will be presented under the aegis of HBO Championship Boxing.

We found ourselves suppressing a chuckle the other day when an in-house memo by a TSS colleague described Williams-Martinez as "the poor man's Pacquiao-Cotto." If so, these must be very poor men indeed we're talking about. How else to explain that an otherwise attractive Saturday night matchup will take place not in the 12,000-seat main arena at Boardwalk Hall, but in the cozier confines of the Adrian Phillips Ballroom, whose boxing capacity is listed at 2,900.

If you can put aside for a moment the fact that it is taking place 3,000 miles away from what would be its more natural constituency and it would seem from this vantage point that a card like Williams-Martinez in tandem with Chris Arreola-Brian Minto is exactly what Lou DiBella had in mind when, back in his HBO incarnation, he came up with the Boxing After Dark concept nearly 14 years ago.

The idea then was to produce competitive bouts involving fighters who were, in DiBella's vision, "not necessarily A-List fighters," which would certainly describe the dramatis personae of this show. Martinez (44-1-2) currently owns a belt and Williams (37-1) has gone through a few of them. Their accomplishments are well known to hard-core boxing fans, but the pair of them could -- and did, the other day -- walk down the streets of New York without attracting so much as a glimmer of recognition from the public at large. In fact, from among the four of them, Arreola is the most likely candidate to elicit a double-take from a passerby, mainly by virtue of a cameo 10-round appearance against Vitali Klitschko in a title bout whose whose arrangement proved to be, shall we say, somewhat premature.

The point is that, as the late Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart once said of pornography, "i know it when I see it."

I know a Boxing After Dark card when I see one, and whatever they might want to call it, that is what this one is -- or should have been.

And, not to let the other network off the hook here, it should also be noted that Showtime has strayed pretty far afield from its original concept with what it sometimes airs under the imprimatur of "ShoBox: The Next Generation" -- a point that may have been driven home a couple of months ago when the definition of "the next generation" was expanded to include 38 year-old Tarvis Simms.

Granted, to preserve this show at all HBO had to make do with what it had left when the originally scheduled headliner, middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik, did a dixie back in October.

"As a fight fan, I was bummed when I heard Pavlik-Williams was off," said Arreola, during a stop at a Manhattan steak house Wednesday. "But then when I found out Martinez would be the new opponent I got excited all over again." And that was even before Cristobal himself was added to the bill against Minto.

Arreola is 27-1 after the Klitschko loss, and MInto is exactly the sort of opponent against whom he should have been proving himself at this stage of his career. You'd say that Minto, a 34 year-old Pennsylvania journeyman, has made a career of beating up over-the-hill heavyweights with fading name recognition, but even in that pursuit he has occasionally overstepped his bounds -- as was the case on the night he lost to an out-of-shape 46 year-old Tony Tubbs five years ago in West Virginia.

Whatever rewards might accrue to Arreola from beating Minto, one prize we know isn't coming is another WBC title shot. The F-bomb barrage with which Chris cut loose on the air served to get him suspended -- not, as one might have supposed, by HBO, but by Jose Sulaiman. (Arreola's promoter Dan Goossen pointed out that were Los Bandidos to evenhandedly apply this criteria, DiBella might end up on the WBC's permanently suspended list. On cue, DiBella then followed Goossen to the microphone and began his address with "I'd like to thank you all for for fucking coming.")

To hear the principals, including Williams himself, tell it, "the most avoided man in boxing" has stepped into a more dangerous bout with Martinez than he might have faced with Pavlik, but that further assumes another leap of faith -- an investment in the notion that Pavlik was ever going to show up for this one in the first place.

Although Goossen likes to boast that the 6'1" Williams "is capable of beating anybody from 147 to 168 pounds," the fact is that on at least one occasion he did not. In California in February of 2008 Williams was routed by Carlos Quintana, like Martinez a southpaw, and as DiBella has pointed out at every turn since the replacement match was made, "Martinez is bigger, stronger, and faster than Carlos Quintana."

HBO's Kery Davis concurred with this assessment: "The only fighter to give Paul Williams trouble was Carlos Quintana -- and Sergio Martinez is like Quintana on Red Bull."

"Good. They say they're using Quintana as a blueprint for how to fight Paul Williams," pointed out Williams' venerable trainer George Peterson. "I hope they follow through with that plan, because if you'll recall, it didn't work so well the second time they fought."

Whatever Quintana's perceived advantages in the Pechanga upset might have been, they were not in evidence at the Mohegan Sun four months later, when Williams stopped him at 2:15 of the first round.

Quintana (26-2) is also scheduled for action on the Atlantic City card, where he will be opposed

by Jesse Feliciano, who despite a 15-7 record gave Kermit Cintron a world of trouble when they fought in Los Angeles a year ago. A surprising deep undercard will also see heavyweights Chazz Witherspoon (26-1) and Tony Thompson (32-2) square off. Thompson was knocked out by Wladimir Klitschko last year; Witherspoon's loss had come a month earlier when he was DQ'd against Arreola in Memphis.