It was sad watching Hasim Rahman in the ring against Alexander Povetkin in a bogus WBA "championship" fight on Saturday afternoon.

Rahman caught lightning in a bottle on April 22, 2001, when he knocked out Lennox Lewis in South Africa to become heavyweight champion of the world. He could have parlayed that victory into a $20,000,000 payday to fight Mike Tyson or a $15,000,000 rematch against Lewis. Each offer guaranteed that, win or lose, there would be more multi-million-dollar television paydays for future fights.

Instead, seduced by the siren call of Don King and a duffel bag filled with $400,000 in cash, Hasim signed with DK, lost a subsequent court battle, and received a reported $4,000,000 for the privilege of being knocked out by Lennox in the fourth round of their November 17, 2001, rematch.

The money that Rahman got for fighting Lewis is long gone. Hasim has now fought sixty times as a pro. Throw out his one shining moment in South Africa and he has never beaten an elite

fighter. On Saturday, weighing in at 256 pounds, he was knocked out by Povetkin in the second round.

After the knockout, Freddie Roach (who was commentating on the fight for Epix) opined, “He’s not respecting the sport. He’s not respecting himself. He came into the fight just for the paycheck.”

That certainly appeared to be true.

Six years ago, Tim Smith wrote, “There is something fundamentally wrong with Rahman. Perhaps that's why the guy has had nine trainers in his career. He comes up small in big spots. You don't want him on the mound trying to save a one-run lead or at the plate trailing by three in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and the bases loaded.”

That said; there’s something inherently likeable about Hasim. So it’s particularly sad that there’s now cotton in his voice when he talks.

As for Povetkin; he’s hardly a world-beater. In his only other fight this year, he eked out a controversial majority decision over WBO cruiserweight beltholder Marco Huck. It wouldn’t be a surprise if Alexander continues to avoid the Klitschkos and moves in to pick at the carcass of the heavyweight division only after Vitali and Wladimir are gone.

Meanwhile, the co-featured fight on Epix saw Kubrat Pulev score an eleventh-round knockout over Alexander Ustinov.

Pulev gives new meaning to the term “fighting squared up.” Ustinov (a 305-pound James Gandolfini look-alike) makes Robert Helenius look mobile.

Pulev, by virtue of his victory over Ustinov, is now the IBF’s No. 1-ranked challenger for Wladimir Klitschko’s title. This is not encouraging, given the fact that Rahman was the WBA’s

mandatory challenger for Povetkin's crown.

By the way; in a recent Boxing Industry Poll of elite matchmakers, Rahman was ranked fourteenth among *American* heavyweights, finishing significantly behind the likes of Amir Mansour and Franklin Lawrence.

That says all that needs to be said about the WBA's ratings.

* * *

Things You'll Never Read on a Boxing Website

With fights like Povetkin-Rahman, boxing doesn't need Mayweather-Pacquiao this year.

Chuck Giampa is hosting Saturday Night Live tonight.

Al Haymon Speaks

* * *

It's part of watching *Game Day* on ESPN. Fans craving attention push and shove to get into the picture and mug for the camera while standing behind the commentators.

It's also an unfortunate part of watching the aftermath of a fight on HBO and Showtime. Max Kellerman or Jim Gray is trying to interview a fighter. And someone who doesn't belong in the picture – most often the promoter – keeps shoving his face on camera. At times, it's comical.

The camera moves to another angle in the hope of cutting the promoter out of the frame. And the promoter moves with it. The camera moves again. The promoter moves again.

There's a simple solution. Don't conduct the interview in the center of the ring. Move the fighter and interviewer against the ropes and come in tight with the camera. It's not rocket science.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Sorry, but I felt no sadness. Bogus title = bogus behavior for bucks -- no matter how small -- for a never-was big baller, shot caller. Rahman was not even a faller. Dude took a dive standing up.

Whatever happened to "The Harder They Fall(?) Holla!

deepwater says:

The only ones to be sad is the ones who watched this crap. people should be angry. angry that the rock is a bum that had no intention of even fighting. it was for a payday. purse should be held, rock should be suspended. people should be angry at anyone who makes an excuse for this garbage. people should be angry with woods saying the rock was dehydrated. come on man. are you saying that so washed up rock will give you an interview or something. shame on everyone involved. fans should be angry when garbage is served to us. this was garbage and i am not having it. rise up boxing fans and call b.s. on any clown that sticks up for this mess.

SouthPaul says:

Interesting notes and nuggets from Al Haymon. A man you hear a lot about but not much directly from. Love his style.

Buzz Murdock says:

That said; there's something inherently likeable about Hasim. So it's particularly sad that there's now cotton in his voice when he talks.
Well put Mr. Hauser, Requiem for a Heavyweight is a never ending story on "the lost highway".

deepwater says:

a fat lazy bum who didnt even try and fight and just showed up for a payday is not likeable. boxing fans should talk with disqust about no good bums that just show for a payday. if you like his voice so much go date him. but any boxing fan worth his salt will call bs on this nonsense.

sometimes people say boxing is fixed and corrupt and its fans that make excuses for this crime that are ruining the sport.shame on you

Buzz Murdock says:

I understand your point, about boxers who show up out of shape, and the disappointing performances that are mismatches from the gate. As a boxing fan, I thought rachman's shaky performance was worse than expected, and I expected the worse. The reference to "cotton in his voice" was Mr. Hauser's not mine, but I found it an accurate description. Requiem for a Heavyweight is the ultimate boxing trajedy, which is as applicable to life as Death of Salesman..What you saw on one level as a Black-eye for boxing, I saw as an over the hill athlete desperately reaching for something that wasn't there...I guess it's all a matter of perspective.

dino da vinci says:

[QUOTE=deepwater;20613]a fat lazy bum who didnt even try and fight and just showed up for a payday is not likeable. boxing fans should talk with disqust about no good bums that just show for a payday. if you like his voice so much go date him. but any boxing fan worth his salt will call bs on this nonsense. sometimes people say boxing is fixed and corrupt and its fans that make excuses for this crime that are ruining the sport.shame on you[/QUOTE]

I'm not particularly a big excuse guy. But let's state some facts and see where they take us. I'll preface these next few sentences with, yeah, I'm a fan of the big fella, and not having seen the fight, don't have a comment in that direction. But I'll tell you what I do know. Hasim was readying himself for this fight for quite a while. I saw him spar with one fighter I was told was undefeated, and by the looks of it, may very well have been. Other fighters varied from shop worn to guys I believe Hasim should have waited a few more weeks before climbing in the ring with them. But that's the way he prefers it. Rahman DID roadwork, Rahman was sparring more rounds than he should have been early on (at least in my opinion) readying himself for the fight. Of course he went to pick up a check, but he didn't do it in disrespect of the sport. THAT I've seen plenty of times over the years. Hasim and Eddie believed it was a fight they could win. One observer who is forever working on his craft is referee Robert Byrd. Robert worked at least half a dozen of Rock's sparring sessions along with several other men who are hoping to make it their calling.

In a nutshell, as much as I admire the guy for trying, it appeared to me that like many, he might lean towards denial. Problem with knocking out a guy like Lennox, it tends to color the actualities of the trade. It's not like he recaptured that moment again and again. But there is certainly no doubt he believed he would at least once more. You'll always be free to believe what you want, but there is zero dog in Hasim Rahman. Zero. It's not that he failed to bring his tool kit, it's just that when he opened it and reached in for a monkey wrench to club his opponent with, all he found in the tray was a snub-nosed Phillips head screwdriver.

Deep, back in the early '80's, I had lunch with a guy who went to lunch with a friend of his who was already scheduled to have lunch with Arnold Schwarzenegger. The guy relayed to me

Arnold's plans for Arnold after bodybuilding. The acting. The politics. And Arnold delivered. Rahman told me a long time ago his plans to win some piece of the title and retire. Not milk it, no defenses of it. He was adamant. I'm winning, and I'm retiring. Now, I have a lot on my plate, but I try and get in here and read what I can as fast as I possibly can. If my memory is accurate, you too fight pro. (Hope I'm not confusing you with someone else), or at least are in the process of having an amateur career. You're to be commended on having the moxie to do it. But let's hope that the people closest to you never have to plead with you to stop, only to have it fall on deaf ears. Lastly, I hope there is a tiny little spot in your heart that can understand how hard it might be for the Hasims and Evanders of the world. And well, it is what it is.

SouthPaul says:

I'm glad Da Dino finds time to make it in. Good detail, good story telling. Nice...

dino da vinci says:

[QUOTE=SouthPaul;20642]I'm glad Da Dino finds time to make it in. Good detail, good story telling. Nice...[/QUOTE]

Well thank you, SP