

BORGES: Blind Faith At 48 Can Be Bad For Your Health

Written by Ron Borges
Friday, 21 January 2011 21:33

Unwittingly, Evander Holyfield revealed this week what his hopeless quest to become heavyweight champion for the sixth time is all about, as if we didn't know already.

Asked on a New York television show if he ever thinks about the night Mike Tyson bit the top of his ear off and spit it out rather than take a second straight beating from Holyfield, he replied honestly, "I think about the \$35 million I made. It ain't all bad if you think about it."

If the 48-year old five-time champion were making \$35 million Saturday night to fight Sherman "Tank" Williams at the Greenbrier Hotel in the boxing hotbed of White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, you could understand why he's doing this. Hell, if he was making \$3.5 million you could understand it in the present economic climate, even if it cost him a bit of ear or even a tip of nose.

To be frank, a guaranteed \$350,000 might even be a valid explanation for what he's up to considering his well documented financial problems. But Holyfield has no guarantee of any of that. All he has is hope, a blinding faith in himself and, apparently, a feeling that he has a God-given right to be heavyweight champion of the world.

That blind faith in himself and his God's intentions for him is what made Holyfield heavyweight champion in the first place. It's what allowed him to beat down much bigger men, including the once vastly talented giant Riddick Bowe. It allowed him to twice blow up the myth of Mike, even when he was seen by many as a ridiculous 18-1 underdog the first time they met.

But blind faith at 28, when he first became champion, or 38, when he was still winning title fights, is different than blind faith at 48. Blind faith at 48 that you will once more unify the heavyweight title is how a man ends up blind at midnight, his eyes closed tighter than an old lady's window shades on a dangerous street corner.

That is especially true if you never had the one-punch issue-settling power of someone like George Foreman, who remains the oldest man to win a legitimate heavyweight title because he was blessed with the ability to give anyone a concussion with one sweep of his right hand.

Holyfield never had that gift, although he had many others. He won by outworking his opponent. He won by having a bigger heart than just about any fighter who ever lived. He won with a willingness to take a shot for the chance to give two back that was second to none. He won because he always believed he would.

At this stage, the latter is all he has left. The likelihood he will defeat journeyman Williams is high, which is why Williams got the fight. He's 38 and a never was, a stepping stone at the lowest rung of boxing's long ladder to success.

He is 34-11-2 with 19 KOs and Holyfield was right when he said this week when asked what he

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had to watch out for from Williams that, "He has to watch out for me."

Certainly that's true. Holyfield (43-10-2, 28 KO) is still quite capable of beating all but the most elite fighters and in the heavyweight division that's what most of the fighters are – all but the elite. In fact, he's already scheduled a second victim for March, 45-year-old Dane Brian Nielsen in Copenhagen. Nielsen (64-2, 43 KO) is coming out of a nine-year retirement to face him. Economic times aren't any better for the kroner than for the dollar.

What Holyfield assumes is if he can beat enough of these type of guys he'll get a shot somehow at one of the Klitschkos or England's David Haye because it will make good business sense for them. One shouldn't put that past Haye, who seems intent on finding as many soft places to land as he can before he ultimately has to face one of the Klitschkos, but it seems less likely either of the Klitschko brothers will turn in that direction.

For the Klitschkos to bother with him, Holyfield would have to take the greater risk of facing some young gun with speed, power and name recognition first. Confident though he may be, Evander Holyfield understands this is a quest that must continue through boxing's back door if it's going to lead him to that last great title shot so that route is out.

Since 1999, Holyfield is 1-5-2 in world championship fights for real belts against live opponents. He now holds the WBF "title," which is like being champion of the NBA's developmental league and calling yourself NBA champion. It's technically true but not accurate.

Many people have publicly urged Holyfield to stop, claiming they are concerned for his health. He has always countered that no one is more concerned about his health than he is and that's probably true. But he's always been willing to risk that health for the prize – which once was glory and a place in history but now is clearly driven by a lower purpose.

Evander Holyfield needs the money but he also needs the attention and he needs The Moment. Years ago, when he walked onto the floor at Madison Square Garden on his way to a lop-sided beating from Larry Donald someone asked me why he was doing this.

I had to ask twice what his question was because the roar of the crowd shouting Holyfield's name drowned the questioner out as he walked toward the ring. When it was finally clear what he was asking, I pointed to my ears and said, "Where else do you think he can hear that?"

More even than money that is why Evander Holyfield will fight Saturday night at a fitting location. Once the Greenbrier was an elite hotel, a place where the rich went to relax. It's been broken down for a while and is trying to make a comeback to a time that no longer exists.

So is Evander Holyfield.

I wish them both the best but fear the worst. Not Saturday night but one night in just such a place a once proud champion will fight in the shadows until that's all he can see.

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Isaiah says:

War Evander! You all may choose to beat on that old drum about retirement, but frankly, I'm sick of doing it. I may as well cheer my favorite fighter that's fought in my lifetime on for as long as he so chooses. This isn't the same old charade about pleading that he should stop. NO! Enough is enough of that whiny crap. If the man wants to box until his sixties, who am I to tell him he can't as long as he's still healthy enough? If he passes his physicals, still trains like a Spartan, people still love the Holyfield name and still pay to see him, then fight on warrior! Just maybe, David Haye will give him a shot and Evander can beat the taste out of his mouth. It'd be awesome for Evander to walk away with a major strap like he should have been able to do against Valuev. Once upon a time, Christians were fed to the young lions for their radical new faith from Yeshua himself. Silly Romans. ::GOD always keeps his plans in motion. NO ONE can stop the truth!:: Apparently, Evander is looking to continue that ancient tradition in a metaphorical sense by going after someone like David Haye hopefully soon. Only thing is, this time, the warrior is going to rip apart that young lion Samson style. WAR EVANDER!

the Roast says:

@Isaiah, You know what? Once in a while you make perfect sense. I agree with you 100%. This man is my favorite fighter of all time also and if he wants to fight on for his own reasons than I wish him the best of luck and I hope he doesn't get hurt. I was just looking at the Dokes fight. Hard to fathom that was '89! Haye would be the perfect last shot.

brownsugar says:

I have no problem with Holy's faith, it's his age that bothers me,.. at 48years old his body can't manufacture enough testosterone to produce the muscle that used to armor his body. Physically and mentally he's a shell a shell of his former self. Even his Pastor , Creflo Dollar has begged him to quit. Every hyeanna and bottom feeder feeder has set their sites on him. Like a wounded lion. There is no gloy or sanity in Holyfield continuing his career as a fighter.

Radam G says:

Holy is a very spritual gent. And may just be pulling a Clark Kent. Mild-mannered Holy aims to rewrite history. He is one boxing mystery. This cat is part "Ole Mongoose" Archie Moore and part Superman. And winning that title again, he believes that he can. This era of heavies are a bunch of chumps. On these suckas, Holy will put a bunch of lumps.

@B-sug, Holy's health is good. His 48-year-old body is manufacturing testosterone like an 18-year-old -- a [H] word that rhymes with corny -- hotshot. Don't forget that boxing is better known as "The Sweet Science." Holy knows the whole nine and how to kick a behind. There are a lot of freaky secrets that those who are not in the know know. There are tons of highly qualified doctors who have Holy's six. He's is not making the mistakes that GOAT Ali, Sugar Ray Robinson and even contender Jimmy Young, to name a few, made. These cats had quacks

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in their entourages that medically poisoned these fighters' bodies and minds. For example, I assume that you heard about the doctor/quack who was giving GOAT Ali thyroid pills and codiene ones. Quacks gave SRR raw hamburger meat laced with marajuana and coke sprinkled on it. I won't even name the jive that quacks gave Jimmy Young. In entertainment and athletics, there are plenty of quacks -- legal peddlers of severe harm, injuries and death. BELIEVE DAT! I'm still not over how they took the great Michael Jackson, Anna Nicole Smith and Kanye West's mom. [Sorry about that emotional diversion.]

B-sug, I know that you are the googling master. Google up the Filipino/Asian foods known as "Tamilok" and "Betamax." I think that you probably ate some "Betamax" during your military tour of the Philippines. You probably didn't know that you ate that Betamax. [It gave you a surprised surge of unbelievable energy and stamina.] All that you knew was that your testosterone was mountaineous. Hahahahahaha! Those Pinay joy girls will put it on ya. It was all your pleasure, but their business -- or is that bitnezz. You Yanks never knew what was happening, Imfao! [Danggit! Sorry for another diversion.] Anyway, Holy loves hanging out Asia way and getting on his partee and [food] tour. Every doc, who's worth his labcoat, will tell you that there are foods -- herbs, plants, incests and spices -- in Asia that will keep you pumped up and hard. The only doubt that I have about Holy is that the heavyweight tramps -- I mean champs -- will use the age-excuse not to throw down with him. Trust ME! If these greatest B+ -- bum -- fighters of all time could beat Holy, they would have already kicked his butt after his match with Valuev. What was the name of the last joker that Doc VK fought. That's is what I thought! You don't it by heart and neither did I or my momma, lmao! Holla!

Editor Mike says:

But the faith bolsters his belief that he can do at 48 what he did at 28. When we're talking faith in God, that's cool. But faith causing you to perform actions that could kill, or maim you, not so cool, IMO.

Radam G says:

No! No! No! Holy is far from believing nonsense from fans and fanfaronades. He has been in the game for more than forty years, and clearly know that he cannot do the same things the same way that he did it 20 years ago. Boxing is like soldiering. If you think or try to do the same thing at 48 years old that you did at 28 years old, you wasted 20 years of life and learning. [Youth is gun ho in a blaze of glory. Experience is patient with setting traps and optical illusions.] As in the words of the great, late, U.S. Army General MacArthur said, "Old soldiers never die, they just fade [more like fake] away." In other words, you lead your opponent into fighting all the time, while you are perpretrating fading, but really faking away and coming back at your selected time. "I shall return!" Holy is not going to get hurt anymore than the slick, old dawgs of yesteryears -- Jack Johnson, Archie Moore, Willie Pep, Ron Lyle, Saoul Mamby, Larry Holmes, Rev. George Foreman, Roberto Duran and still-whuppin'-arse B-Hop. All these nowadays heavyweight chumps need to do is jump to beat up the old man -- Knock his brains OUT! But they can't! Bottomline is that Holy will probably never get that shot at the elite corrupted, alphabet-sanctionion organization title belts. Holla!

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brownsugar says:

RG... I hear you... Ima big researcher of healing nutrients and preventative health thru healthy eating too... Yes,.... Holy still has his own mind,... but he's already noticeably damaged... and most of the effects from his boxing career won't even be visible untill 5-10 years from now,.. then it'll be too late to do anything about it. I hope he does well, but I'll have to read about the outcome...hopefully right here on the TSS.

the Roast says:

I gotta get me some of that Tamilok.

amayseng says:

i would rather die doing something i love than live till 100 doing something i dont..

this is america, let the man fight till he is 60 if he is physically and mentally capable.
i watched evander beat valuev.....and he was robbed..
if a boxer is taking unnecessary punishment i agree hang them up, but evander has not so why not get the heck off of his shhhhit

brownsugar says:

amayseng,.... what do you mean? you can barely understand Holy now when he talks...crack heads like what they do too... don't make it right.. Fans can choose to be concerned or not.. But I'll never be silent about one of the greatest boxers of my generation. Win or Lose... Holy really needs to hang em up.

Radam G says:

For the record, Holy's speech has always been that way. Let me educate you about what it is. Many black American boxers -- from the South -- who I have known, are picked on about sounding so-called "punchy" from the jump. Unknown to many Americans, who are not originating from the deep south U.S.A., these boxers speak "Gullah." [I know that you are going to google that, B-Sug.] Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas says that he was picked on by other [American standard English-speaking] blacks when he went away his locale because they said that he sounded like "an ignorant boxer." The main reason that Muhammad Ali picked on Joe Frazier is because Frazier's accent and diction were full of "Gullah" sounds and colloquialism and that "da sucka already sounds punch drunk -- like an old dumb box-ahh [sic]." The GOAT Ali got on Joe Louis, Sonny Liston, Ernie Terrell and Ernie Shaver for the same reasons. All of these cats speaks/or spoke from their throats, thus making guttural sounds, instead of easier to understand sounds if they would speak correctly from the diaphragm, thus spittin' articulated "American Standard English.

The American boxing scene is a crazy, rotten, hypocritical, jealous, trifling, harsh business. If someone has a speech impediment, he is immediate labeled punch drunk or dumb. Ninety-nine

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percent of boxer who "overstay," don't die of, or suffer from Parkinson's Disease or Alziemers more than any other person who has never boxed. The only boxer with Parkinson's Disorder that most fans and fanfaronades can named is GOAT Muhammad Ali. But I can name a movie star with PD, Michael J. Fox; a famous boxing scribe who had it, Howard Cosell; and a politician who has it, Janet Reno. There are tons of American footballers and basketballers who are "punchy" in their elderly state of existence. The television magazine "60-Minutes" did a piece on that last year. Maybe somebody can dig it up. Life is full of dangers, just as it is full of strangers. And one only has one life. And you must live it your way. Human concern is great. But since nobody can die your death, they should not dicate dangers of your life. More power to anyone who takes a risk. I remember GOAT Ali telling me in 1976 that George Chavalo, George "Scrap Iron" Johnson and that young kid George Foreman would not be able to talk or be understood in five or ten years. WOW! He also told me -- not to long ago -- that life will sometimes fool ya. Holla!

brownsugar says:

RG,.... a mild disagreement hardly constitutes a rumble... besides disputes and disagreements are a good thing ...After tonight you can't possibly think Holy needs to continue fighting. By all accounts the man looked like a zombie.

Editor Mike says:

Time to get out. But he won't.