

Joe Cortez Deserves Most Blame For That Crazy Ending...WOODS

Written by Michael Woods

Monday, 19 September 2011 09:56



The immediate reaction to the ending of Saturday's Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz was, in many quarters, damn, that was a cheap shot!

Then people got their DVR's cookin--and once again, apologies to my late pal George Kimball who loooooathed the idea of covering an event off TV, which had us at odds because I think I can usually communicate what happened at an event better, because I have access to instant replay--and pored over, frame by frame with Zapruderish attention to detail. And then sentiment shifted somewhat. (Maybe with an assist from Twitter. My theory is that writers' analysis can tend to shift more quickly than used to be the case, because colleagues and peers might open up their eyes to a point they missed, or realize their call was erroneous, not shared by the majority, and thus needing to be adjusted.)

Many folks still didn't care for Floyd's move. They determined after some study that the sneaky combo didn't seem illegal, as it looked like ref Joe "I'm Distracted But Well Meaning" Cortez had in fact called for action to resume, but more of them focused on Ortiz' part in the fray.

First, people came around to the realization that hello, Ortiz started the bad blood with a ludicrously obvious head butt. I'd written as I watched the first three rounds about two attempted butts which were not commented upon by the HBO team. They pondered and said to

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themselves, wait a second, what if I were in a fight, and someone fouled me in such a blatant fashion? The temptation, for most of us, would be to retaliate. Yes, ideally, you want the referee to mete out punishment, not take it into your own hands. But most of us can at least understand why a fighter might go all Dirty Harry on a foe. (There is a reason I use this dated film reference, wait for it.)

Then, they studied the attempt at reconciliation, saw Ortiz step back a quarter step, and saw Floyd crack him, and saw Ortiz look at Cortez for help, before he was hit by the second launch. The Zapruders shook their heads. What was Ortiz thinking? Why did he react in that fashion, why didn't he--hello??--fight back.

Some fans started to have flashbacks. They thought Ortiz' eyes looked OK, and wondered if he didn't stay down, to try and earn a DQ win. They saw him smiling after the bout, they saw him smiling and hugging Floyd like they were best pals RIGHT AFTER HE GOT SUCKER PUNCHED AND KNOCKED OUT and wondered if he was secretly relieved that it was over. Basically, they again found themselves asking themselves about Ortiz' heart. Fair or not, they saw some elements, they thought, that were on display back in 2009, when Ortiz indicated that he didn't want to absorb more punishment, and opted out against Marcos Maidana.

Such speculation is allowed. Is it polite? Does it involve a bit too much mind-reading for my taste? Maybe...I think we all, the writers, the fans who put in their two cents on message boards and social networking sites, need to be mindful of maintaining a degree of respect for any and all who enter the ring and give full effort. Even if they give full effort, and then the going gets tough, and their resolve diminishes. Not every fighter can have a Gatti heart, after all.

After people had some time to rewind, and watch, and watch again, more folks had more of an issue with Cortez. Ole "Firm But Fair," or, is it "Fair But Firm," I can never get that straight, seemed to be paying more attention to the timekeeper, or someone else ringside, than he did the fighters. He should have, in retrospect, kept them separated, with explicit and ultra-firm directions, while he hashed out that ringside issue. Instead, after Ortiz twice went to Floyd to say I'm sorry, once with a kiss on the cheek, the 66-year-old Cortez re-started the action. "Don't be doing that!" he commanded to Ortiz. Then, "Let's go." And then, as the fighters came together, to begin fighting again, Cortez drifted away. He appeared confused, not in the moment. He walked towards the commission officials ringside, and interacted with someone or someones there. "Time in?" he asked, as Ortiz offered Floyd his hands, and a mini hug. Victor began to step back, his hands at his side, and Cortez wasn't looking at the boxers as Floyd attacked.

As much as anyone there's your culprit in this portion of the sordid affair. I attach some blame to Ortiz, for getting crazy, and starting the atmosphere of fouling...and to Floyd, for going cheap when he could have simply used his skills as the best boxer in the world to get the job done...but Cortez, if he had handled the situation by the book, would have prevented all talk of a suckerpunch ending.

If we're parceling out blame, Cortez has to receive the lion's share, because he is there to keep order. When in the fog of war, when emotions boil over during a stressful time, the ref has to be

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the voice of reason, the person to keep order. Cortez didn't.

He was neither firm, nor fair, he was flawed.

[Comment on this article](#)

michaelabii says:

Quite true but I do believe Ortiz has to endure the stigma of not adhering to the rule "protect yourself at all times". Why should Mayweather be held accountable to the dubious standard of "sportmanship" in a world where two guys are trying to take each others heads off as was evidenced by Ortiz's flagrant head but in the same round ? I wonder if we would be having the same firestorm of opinions if Mayweather had been the recipient of the alleged "sucker punch". Truth be told Ray Leonard used to do it all the time - he would punch right when the ref said time in. We have to remember that at this level of the game you are totally responsible for protecting yourself. I have no problem whatsoever with what Mayweather did but I do have a problem with his tirade against Larry Merchant even though it made for good TV. That instance was worth the \$60 I paid. Again, Mayweather relishes being the bad guy so why expect any better from him. And, lets be honest - thats one of the reasons why we pay to see him. I say lets enjoy him while he is still around !

FightforJC says:

Of course it doesn't bother Floyd's fans what he did. Victory is what matters most.

Robert Curtis says:

Joe "I'm fair, but a feeb" Cortez did okay. It's not his job to protect Ortiz's chin. I don't know what Victor was thinking with all the headbutts, rabbit punches, and then all the make-up hugging and kissing. What makes it worse is I think Ortiz could have gotten up. He didn't fight like a champion. Even if Mayweather hadn't sucker-punched him, Ortiz was way outclassed the whole time. I was impressed at how effortlessly Floyd handled a southpaw and landed so many solid right hand leads. Floyd stood right in front of Ortiz the whole time and Ortiz couldn't hit him. Floyd slipped and rolled away from everything Ortiz had, which wasn't much. Floyd was moving forward a lot and pressing the action. The biggest crime was that flagrant head butt right into Floyd's teeth. It made me mad just watching it. Imagine how Floyd felt? Ortiz knew he was ineffectual and that's why he started getting dirty. He looked like a little boy who had lost his mother in the train station. I'll hate Floyd the next time he backs out of a Pacquiao fight, but not today.

Radam G says:

Wow! People refuse to call a spade a spade. Ortiz did nothing wrong. Cortez and Money May did. A pugilistic allegorization is just how people are rolling. I guess so many humans love

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mythology and bullsh*tology more than reality and actuality. Cortez and Money May violated the rules, simply and plainly. Maybe it was all about protecting and supporting the house boy -- I mean house fighter. Holla!

Radam G says:

Wow! Bobby C, you may need to brush up on your physics. That was an unintentional butt. And the rabbit punching was inadvertent because Money May was doing his infamous psych turning to present his back to his opponent. This is one of the old trick of the trade. You turn your back and the opponent doesn't punch, so you then sucker punch him.

Go back and view the butting episode and you will/or should notice that Money May had an armlock on Vicious Victor's punching arm. Simple physics are optical illusions to the unexpected and/or uneducated eye. Since humans, who are not in a certain discipline have a certain way of thinking, they will never see or notice the truth. An expert witness see what a fanfaronade would even imagine. I'm reminded of how Long Tall bum Paul Williams shotput Kemit Cintron outta da squared jungle. To this day, da know nothings insist tha KC jump outta da squared jungle. Holla!

FightforJC says:

@Radam: Prior to the butting/sucker punch, what'd you think of the fight? I think Mayweather was outboxing Ortiz as expected but he wasn't outclassing him or confounding him. Floyd's overrated defense was reduced to desperate clinching in my opinion. Floyd couldn't keep Ortiz off of him and was getting to him more than Floyd was comfortable with. He had Floyd on the ropes at least a couple of times and Mayweather's fairytale shoulder roll defense wasn't to be found, he could only grab Ortiz, who was visibly rocking Mayweather even with shots that were getting blocked. Ortiz also managed to land at least a couple of decent body shots. I think it would've been interesting had it continued. Floyd unleashed that flurry which actually surprised me and Ortiz wasn't deterred. I think Floyd would've had a hard time trying to really hurt Ortiz and thus have a hard time keeping him off, if Floyd couldn't knock him clean out when Ortiz was just standing there with his jaw hanging open.

Robert Curtis says:

The only way that headbutt could have been less intentional is if Victor had used a diving board to jump off of and up into Floyd's face. Victor lifts and propels the top of his head straight into Floyd's mouth. He led with his head and made serious contact. This isn't some JFK in Dallas Zapruder mystery. I've been watching the tape all morning. Victor's head clearly goes forward and upward into Floyd's face. As I said elsewhere on TSS, it reminded me of Fireman Jim Flynn throwing his head at Jack Johnson or the fictional Spider Rico skull-kissing Sly at the start of the Rocky Franchise. OK, Floyd was grabbing and holding. But Victor knew he was guilty, and that's why he kept on with the lame huggy-kissy apologies too long. The fight game is rough and even the best champions have played dirty and took an edge when they needed one. Ali thumbed thumbed Ernie Terrell and laced anyone prone to bleeding. Holyfield used his head like a third fist. Rocky Marciano used to hit on the break. Tyson tried to arm bar a dozen

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opponents.

Radam G says:

I think -- no! I know that Vicious Victor O had Money May missing and b*tch punching. Go and check out the stats. No one has ever made Money May punch so much. It is a myth that MM was in control. VVO was getting warned up and MM was unable to hurt him or keep him off dat money-luv'in' arse, for certain. Plus, MM got hurt to the body a few times. That is why he started shaking his head to bluff that he wasn't hurt. That is one of the tricks of the trade. Bottomline, MM was in deep kimche, and the corrupted powers that be latently saved his arse with an obvious controversial cheat. Holla!

FighterforJC says:

It's one thing to rough up your opponent and bully them to gain an advantage psychologically or in some cases even physically, but what Mayweather did was the equivalent of an execution, and I don't mean that in a positive way. It's one thing to be crafty and smart, but what Mayweather did was blatant and cheap. He could've seriously injured Ortiz. It was a free shot at a human head with Ortiz's neck and jaw muscles loose and relaxed. If Mayweather hit harder than my grandma Ortiz would've been in a coma.

They weren't in the heat of battle where Mayweather might've been fueled by adrenaline when his opponent inexplicably dropped his guard. You take advantage of mistakes your opponent makes in the ring when both of you are engaged. If the other guy is not quite ready to resume the match, a true sportsman gives him a chance to get set until they both know that they're ready, especially if you're confident that you can beat him fair and square. Mayweather's behavior says it all. This was the sure way he could win and he didn't want to let the opportunity pass.

Radam G says:

Hehehehehe! Bobby C, you are such a full-of-sh*t comic! WOW! I'm going to have to file a lawsuit against your a\$\$ for cracking me up like this. That jive is hurting my ribs. Causing one to laugh too hard should be unlawful, lol! The USA is lawsuit crazy, anyway. Holla!

Robert Curtis says:

Now I've watched the tape a dozen more times in real time and slow motion. I do see Floyd grabbing at Victor's arm on the inside. Floyd's right glove does seem to disappear for a split second before the butt. At no point do I see evidence of an unintentional clash of heads though. Victor's head shoots forward and up into Floyd's kisser. Floyd was leaning back and away from Ortiz too. Unintentional butts happen when both heads are in motion. Only one head was in motion and it was clearly Ortiz's.

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Now, since I got my bearings back from laughing like a victim who was shot with too much laughing gas, let me say that an unexpecting eye, uneducated eye, and unaccepting eye cannot see Jack or Jill or find a hill. So it is only natural that he/she cannot see that Money May's pugilism is no longer a thrill. And now he has to cheat to pay a bill. Holla!

Radam G says:

Wow! Bobby C, like I said! You need to brush up on your physics. And throw in some human anatomy also. C'mon! If I kick your kneecap in the right place, your foot will automatically pop up and kick me in the cojones. If a seasoned pugilist like Money May grab you in the right area, things will pop, crackle and snap, and of course, SHOOT like mutharocket! Just go to the gym and tell somebody to grab and hold your arm[s] a certain way, and I sh*t ya not! Your dome will popshot straight to da grill. C'mon! You just need a bit of physics and anatomy. Ain't asking you to become a rocket scientist. Just a sweet scientist. Holla!

Robert Curtis says:

Radam, I agree about the Williams-Cintron fight. That Kermit didn't frog jump out of the ring. The only argument for unintentional I might consider is that Ortiz used the top of his head. He wasn't looking at Floyd when he did it. Still, the upward thrust is pretty damning evidence.

Radam G says:

Optical illusions are all up in da game causing mass confusions. Holla!

Robert Curtis says:

Anyone else buy Radam's Jack-in-the-box headbutt theory, that Floyd pressed a button on Victor's arm that made his head pop straight up? Wow, that Floyd is awfully sneaky.

FightforJC says:

[QUOTE=Robert Curtis;9515]Anyone else buy Radam's Jack-in-the-box headbutt theory, that Floyd pressed a button on Victor's arm that made his head pop straight up? Wow, that Floyd is awfully sneaky.[/QUOTE]

I'm actually not in agreement with that. Ortiz's headbutt was obvious to me, but it wasn't a big deal.

Radam G says:

Fight fans and fanfaronades are so very fickle. They make me get on my tickle. And I'd not trust 'em with a wooden nickle. Cortez is on da take. Dat sucka is a snake. He is the overseer of the house fighters, and will do any cheat to get them the win in dat city of sin.

Now in New York, New York. Straight up in The Big Apple, a great referee who was correctly

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doing his job, and the fans, fanboys and cyberspace _____ got all up in his grill for enforcing the rules. That's RIGHT! Yall musta' fo'got. When Arthur Mercante [name misspelled] Junior Time let a fighter rightfully continue, da knowings, faders, fakers and on-the-popular-side bandwagon jumpers were on the wrong side of that issue. And NOW, again, they are shucking and jiving. But this time when the referee is 100 percent WRONG! AMJ was 100 percent right with Yuri Foreman. Joe [HARD LYING] "I'm firm, but I'm fair" Cortez is 100 percent WRONG.

C'mon, guys! You can't have it both ways. Grow a pair! Da sucka ref Cortez is firmly crooked, and not an iota of fair. If he were not a media mafia ref on the take, he'd be in the electric chair. Holla!

brownsugar says:

for over a century boxers have extended their hands when offering apology while warily watching the other oponent to make sure they're not caught with the dreaded "Sucker Punch"... The sucker punch is older than "Fools Mate" and has been played since he beginning of the sport..."Whats that on your shoe?..Where???.....Gotcha!". ..

And boxing is no different than chess... you take the win when it presents itself.

Even when Mosley got popped in Floyds last fight he was standing several steps away from Mayweather taking the formal precaution to protect from the dreaded "SuckerPunch"... when Mosley extended the split second tap ritual to almost 5 seconds he deservedly got popped to remind "Shane..that being in The ring isn't the same as being on the basket ball court".

Ortiz had attempted to grind the top of his head into Mayweathers face twice earlier... The third time it was born out of the pure exasperation and frustration of being publically dismantled by Mayweather with ease...

Ortiz cocked body back and lunged forward like the popular Marvel Comic Character "The Rhino" except he wasn't wearing the bulky iron helmet.

I honestly thought Mayweather was well over the painful head-butt that split open the inside of his bottom lip,.. Floyd never cries during a fight...or puts on a long dramatic show for the crowd if he gets fouled..... I have never seen him retaliate to even the most egregious low blow (Judah), or rabbit punch (hatton), or head but,(well he's pretty good about keeping his head out of the way except when it's aimed directly at his face).

I think it was the excessive luv fest Ortiz was trying hold after the foul. Acting as if he didn't know what he was doing... then hugging kissing, and tapping gloves once too often.

There is no unwritten expectation for an intermission just because some guy wants to unburden his guilt or offer condolences... This is war for chrissakes.

Hagler told Leonard he was going to "Rip his eye out"... because he knew about Leonards detached retina.... Could you imagine Hagler and Hearns touching gloves anywhere within thier

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3 round of mayhem. Boxing is war... take no prisoners.

Floyd was in Beast Mode at the weighin and had siezed Ortiz by the throat before Schaffer interviened. Floyd is the Ultimate Pro,.. a Merc, an Assassin when he choses to be... ("I'm bringing back the Floyd of 98" Mayweather said before the bout)

When Ortiz kissed him you could see Floyds eys fill with bloodlust,.. like "I'm gonna kill this guy" it was subtle but it was there.

WHAT ORTIZ DID WAS COMPLETELY UNPROFESSIONAL AND DISREPECTFUL.. YOU KISS AND HUG A PROFESSIONAL PRIZE FIGHTER... ONE WHO'S ALREADY WHIPPING YOUR ASS.. THE BEST BOXER ALIVE TODAY.. AND JUST STAND THERE WANTING TO CONTINUE TO TOUCH AND HUG AFTER THE FIGHT HAS BEEN PUT BACK IN PLAY...????? FLOYD HAD NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO SHOW ORTIZ THAT HE'S A FIGHTER AND NOT A LOVER. (as one of the tss writers said earlier)

Cortez had already waived them in..CLEAR AS DAYLIGHT... but Ortiz had become obsessive...yet he wasn't on Cortez's time, he was on Floyds time,... because the fight was already back in play. Floyd had no obligation to acknowlege the apology the first time,... but less the 4th time. Floyd knew this... Ortiz chose not to respect the "Protect Yo Self Rulez + paid the ultimate price..

Even if the fight would have continued... Floyd was only getting stronger and shaking more rust free in the process... we all know that he doesn't have a stamina issue... If the figh wasn't stopped in the 4th, Ortiz would have sustained a vicious beating like Hatton did,.. never to be the same again. ..neither physically or psychologically.

Mayweather understood the rules...and Ortiz simply did not know and resumed that Mayweather was something other than the stone cold professional prizefighter that he is.

FighterforJC says:

Uneducated thugs and rapists band together. 'Nuff said.

Robert Curtis says:

Well, I'm less emotional about the subject now. I do think Floyd could have kept his cool and provided us with a better fight, especially considering he got paid \$25 million. What Floyd did was legal, but not moral. My theory is that Floyd just got mad. He's a vain character, proud of his grill, and didn't like the taste of his own teeth. He wanted quick payback and probably knew that his sucker-punches would anger the fans too. He loves being a villain. I think it's all calculated. Even the Larry Merchant rant was part of his script. Anything to stir up controversy and fan the fires of his own ego. Floyd won't die broke or brain-damaged, but his legacy will always be questionable.

Radam G says:

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B-Sug! OMG! Hopefully you are not becoming B-Thug. Hehehehehe! Cortez jived up, no matter how spend it. He separated himself from the boxers -- A BIG NO NO -- and was talking to the timekeeper. C'mon I know what time it is. Money May is a protected money-producing house fighter, who can get away with murder. I predicted that he would do something dirty, not tricky. I was spot on. And like always, GOT PAID, Babbeeeee!

B-Sug, in every backroom of boksing BIG-MONEY wide, everybody and his cousin are calling Money May "a dirty SOB, and sayin' "nuffin' was legal about what he did." He got away with one, because of the BIG MONEY HOOK UP with the mafia Humbuggery Bullsh*t Operation -- HBO. But all power to him. It is about gettin' paid in prizefighting, not proudfighting. He took da streets to da squared jungle and the Kansas boy Vicious Victor Ortiz was not ready for him, as the suburban boy Sugar Shane Mosley was not ready, but more than Ortiz was. Da province boy Da Manny will be ready and quite steady. And Money May knows it. Holla!

Radam G says:

Well, no JIVE, Bobby C! Money May and Larry Merchant were taking a script from the late, great mouth Howard Cosell and GOAT Ali. Uncle Roger May is right about "most people don't know sh*t 'bout boksin!" So no one in da know expect for them to know about the business side of the play-acting optical illusions. LM, as he said, would not have been able to kick Money May's arse 50 years ago. But he woulda, coulda, shoulda been able to fool those suckas born every minute. Holla!

Radam G says:

Since one suppose to "protect yourself at all times," every bouts where a person wasn't doing it should be reversed. Terry Norris got DQ'ed, because a muthasucka didn't protect himself at all times. King Arthur Abraham got DQ'ed against Andre Dirrell, because AD didn't protect himself at all times. Superman Roy Jones Jr got DQ'ed because a chump didn't protect himself at all times. Humberto Soto got DQ'ed, because a bum didn't protect himself at all times. So everybodee and dey momma oughta quit listening to "protect-yourself-at-all-times jive-turkey _____! Holla!