

Believe Him Or Not

Written by Joel Stern, SPECIAL TO TSS
Monday, 16 July 2012 11:01



Where did that come from? Who could have predicted that? Danny Garcia and his father/trainer Angel Garcia could. In a fight HBO introduced as a night that was not supposed to be, Daniel Garcia shocked almost everyone in the boxing community except himself and his team, who never wavered in their belief they were fulfilling Danny's destiny. The boxing public believed they were going to see one thing. Danny Garcia believed in himself.

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While a lot of things spring forth from the manic energy that is Angel Garcia, his love for his son may be the purest. Emanuel Steward referring to Angel Garcia during the pre-fight remarks stated, "Such love I never saw from a father." In a Sky Sports Behind the Ropes documentary leading up to the fight, Angel Garcia professes that from Danny's birth he knew Danny was special, "I don't know why people don't see it. People are just blind to it. I guess it is just me that sees it for now, but Danny is meant to be here. He is gifted. He is just going to have to prove it."

Maybe Angel Garcia's hurricane love allows Danny to sit so calmly confident in the eye of storms, whether the storms be his father, the streets of his working class Philly neighborhood, the gym or in the ring with the best fighters in the world. Danny Garcia surrounds himself with what he knows. His father is his trainer. His brother works his corner. His mom and sister hang out in his house. Bags in his gym are held together with duct tape. He makes hip-hop videos with his friends. He wants to renovate the park he grew up in. Maybe his confidence springs from this knowledge of place. Maybe this confidence arises from his 130 amateur fights. Whatever the origin, this calm confidence centers his identity as a fighter, as a counterpuncher.

Any doubts Danny Garcia had about himself as a world class fighter were put to rest during the 11th round of his fight with Eric Morales. To many of us this fight was about a good young fighter beating a badly faded version of a once great fighter. "I beat a legend for the title," is how Danny describes that fight. He did so at the moment of the fight when things looked their worst. He steeled himself. He let his hands go. He countered.

As Danny Garcia entered the ring to fight Amir Khan, Jim Lampley stated that in Garcia, "there is no one fantastic quality that sticks out about him." But, if you hit Danny Garcia with a left, he is going to hit you with his right. If you try to hit him with your right, he is going to hit you with his left. By the time the night was over, Danny Garcia showed this deceptively difficult ability is what makes him fantastic.

Khan attacked from the opening bell. Garcia immediately responded to those attacks with enough speed and quickness to let Khan know this was a fight. Khan used one-two's and one-two-three's. Garcia fired back with hook-cross and cross-hook combinations. The counter hook wasn't landing, but Garcia found particular success with his right, looping it around Khan's left.

In round 2 Khan came forward with even more multi-punch combinations, especially the 1-2-3. Again Garcia kept responding.

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In round 3 during a period where Garcia was spending more time defending than responding, Khan must have forgotten the nature of the man he was dealing with. Khan walked in slowly with his right hand dangling well below his chin and compounded his mistake by throwing a sloppy right uppercut. Khan's foolishness was met with Garcia's perfect counter left hook. A lifetime of work realized in a moment. No accident, no blindly thrown punch, but a punch that was meant to be.

So did the kid who does nothing spectacular luck out again. Do we diminish Garcia's accomplishment because Khan is diminished yet again in our eyes? The next time Danny Garcia steps into a ring with one of the best fighters in the world Danny Garcia and his father will certainly believe that he is supposed to be there. Will we believe?