



A FAREWELL TO FLOYD MAYWEATHER

HALL OF FAME BOXER **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** SAYS GOOD-BYE TO "MONEY" MAYWEATHER

Dear Floyd, you did it. You made it to the 49-0 mark, a milestone you like to say was reached by only the great Rocky Marciano, but was actually achieved by others, including my idol Julio César Chávez, but who's counting? And now you're retiring. Again. (The first time was after our fight in 2007.) But this time you say it's for real. You're serious about hanging up the gloves. On to bigger and better things. So I am writing to you today to wish you a fond farewell. Truth be told, I'm not real unhappy to see you retire. Neither are a lot of boxing fans. Scratch that. *Most* fans. Why? Because the fight game will be a better one without you in it.

Let's face it: You were boring. Just take a look at your most recent performance, your last hurrah in the ring, a 12-round decision against Andre Berto. How to describe it? A bust? A disaster? A snooze fest? An affair so one-sided that on one judge's card Berto didn't win a single round? Everyone in boxing knew Berto didn't have a chance. I think more people watched *Family Guy* reruns that night than tuned into that pay-per-view. But I didn't mind shelling out the \$75 for the HD broadcast. In fact it's been a great investment. When my kids have trouble sleeping I don't have to read to them anymore. I just play them your Berto fight. They don't make it past round three.

Another reason boxing is better off without you: You were afraid. Afraid of taking chances. Afraid of risk. A perfect example is your greatest "triumph," the long-awaited record-breaking fight between you and Manny Pacquiao. Nearly 4.5 million buys! More than \$400 million in revenue! Headlines world-wide! How can that be bad for boxing? Because you lied. You promised action and entertainment and a battle for the ages, and you delivered none of the above. The problem is, that's precisely how you want it. You should have fought Pacquiao five years ago, not five months ago. That, however, would have been too dangerous. Too risky. You've made a career out of being cautious. You won't get in the ring unless you have an edge. Sure, you fought some big names. But they were past their prime. Hell, even when we fought in 2007—and I barely lost a split decision—I was at the tail end of my career. Then you

took on mega Mexican star Saúl "Canelo" Álvarez, but he was too young and had to drop too much weight.

Me? I got into this business to take chances. I took on all comers in their prime. The evidence? I lost. Six times. After 31 wins, my first loss was to Félix Trinidad, and I learned a valuable lesson that is true both in the ring and in life—don't run. I didn't stop taking on the best of the best. After beating Derrell Coley, I took on "Sugar" Shane Mosley at the height of his powers—undefeated and considered by many to be the pound-for-pound best in the world. Again, I lost. After four wins against more top-ranked fighters I took on Mosley again (we can debate who actually won the rematch, but the judges had me losing that one as well).

YOU'LL BE REMEMBERED AS THE GUY WHO MADE THE MOST MONEY. AS FOR YOUR FIGHTS? WE'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN THEM ALL.

Did I go easy after that? No. I moved up to middleweight to win a belt and faced one of the greatest middleweights of all time, Bernard Hopkins. After a body shot that I'm still feeling took me out of the fight, I took on two more guys at the height of the power who, many years later, would finally face each other at the ages of 38 and 36—Manny Pacquiao and you. When fighters do that—when they risk losing—that's when everyone wins. The mantra of my firm Golden Boy Promotions is simple: the best taking on the best. It's too bad you didn't do the same.

You took the easy way out. When you weren't dancing around fading stars (show idea for you: *Dancing Around the Fading Stars*), you were beating up on outclassed opponents. A lot of your opponents were above-average fighters, but they weren't your caliber. You're a very talented fighter. The best defensive fighter of our generation. But what good is talent if you don't test it? Muhammad Ali did it. Sugar Ray Leonard did it. You? Not a chance. You spent 2000 to 2010 facing forgettable opening acts like Victoriano Sosa, Phillip N'dou, DeMarcus Corley, Henry Brussels and Sharmba Mitchell.

There were guys out there—tough scary opponents like Antonio Margarito and Paul Williams—but you ran from them. Were you ever on the track team in high school? You would have been a star.

Boxing will also be a better place without the Mouth. Your mouth, to be precise, the one that created "Money" Mayweather. I know you needed that Money Mayweather persona. Before he came along—and Golden Boy Promotions—nobody watched your fights. You couldn't even sell out your hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Mouth made you money. More money than you could spend in a lifetime. (Wait, I've seen those episodes of *24/7*. You probably will spend it all.) But the Mouth doesn't have a place in boxing; save it for the WWE. Unless you're someone like Ali, whose fights were as scintillating as his banter, the all-talk-no-entertainment model cheapens our sport. Boxers should speak with their fists and with their hearts. They don't have to say anything to prove themselves. You're going to have a legacy. You'll be remembered as the guy who made the most money. As for your fights? We've already forgotten them all.

Now that you're stepping aside, attention can be turned to the sport's real stars. The brawlers, the brave, the boxers who want nothing more than to face the best and therefore be the best. There is Canelo, Kazakh KO sensation Gennady Golovkin, ferocious flyweight Román González, slugger Sergey Kovalev and a host of up-and-comers including Terence Crawford, Vasyl Lomachenko and Keith Thurman. Want to see what a monster fight looks like? Canelo takes on Miguel Cotto on November 21. It won't do 4.4 million in PPV buys, but everyone who watches it will be thrilled. And that's no empty promise.

You're moving onto a new phase of life now, a second act. I'm sure it will be nice not to have to train year-round. To get out of the gym, spend time with your family. But I'm wondering what you're going to do. You have a lot of time and, at the moment, a lot of money. Maybe you'll put your true skills to work and open a used-car dealership or run a circus. Or maybe you'll wind up back on *Dancing With the Stars*. It's a job that's safe, pays well and you get to run around on stage. Something that you've been doing for most of your career.