

# Dramatic monologue: a legend's thoughts prior to a fight

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Sitting in my locker room just waiting for the final cue from the promoters to give me the signal, I wait, mentally review the fight plan that we practiced for 90 days and nights, and pray that this fight will not last very long. You know, I don't want to be too much bruised after the fight, because there is still a short concert after this, regardless if I will be the winner or not. This has become one of my traditional post fight activity, even before I knocked out Hatton cold halfway into the fight; a punch that surprised everybody in the arena, the press, the promoters, my skeptics, my fans, my trainer/coach, and even myself. People accuse me of not preparing very well for this fight, which is already my eighth weight division. Yes, I have already broken the record set by famous and great fighters of the past generations, like Leonard, Hearns, Duran, and some others who I can't remember the names anymore.

In front of reporters, my trainer and my entire team says that I am very much prepared for this fight, that I have achieved the speed that has confused all of my previous opponents, and the power in my punches that knocked out some of them. But really, this is only half-true. I have no problems with my power. It is the speed and the endurance that I was not able to achieve. Blame it on politics, literally.

My recent electoral win as a congressman in the southern Philippines divided my time and my attention during the entire training period. I often had to rush to congress in the middle of this training just to comply with the responsibilities of being a congressman. This angered my coach, no doubt, but I explained that I had to do my job as a politician, which is really what I

consider to be my new passion. Of course this statement never reached the fans and the reporters. I have arrived here in America just last week.

It is almost a year since I last saw this place. Finally, I was able to sleep in one of my houses, the one in Beverly Hills, that I bought two years ago. It still looks the same; exactly the same height of tress from last year, the same arrangement of flowers that my wife imported from Italy, even exactly the same height of the flowers. Amazing gardener. It is very hard to imagine what kind of life I come from.

During my early teenage years, I ran away from our house just to be able to work in Manila, which is the capital and the richest city in my country. I experienced many odd jobs there, from street-peddling pan de sal, which is like a smaller version of a bagel, as a helper at the port area, where I lifted crates the whole day and where I got my muscular body, and sometimes as a construction worker. During my hours when I was not at work, I visit a local boxing gym, where they taught me the basics of punching, defense, footwork, and even the experience of being knocked out by a larger sparring partner. Soon I found out that I enjoyed boxing. I could not spend a day without visiting the gym even during evenings.

My punching power started to increase, and soon my trainers noticed that I could punch as hard as those who are three or four weight divisions heavier than me. Looking back at those years in my early boxing career, I know that this is where I developed the discipline and the drive to beat those who are better than me in the sport of boxing. During the past ten years, I defeated boxers who are considered as legends of the sport, and I give half of the

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credit to my trainer/coach, Roach, who I fondly call Coroach, in private of course. He accepted me as his pupil during the time when I have yet to achieve what my mind already knows, you know, that I will become a multi-weight division champion. He told me once that he saw in me the natural skills that he once aspired to achieve when he was still young enough to box professionally. I am happy that I was able to achieve what he envisioned me to be, ten years ago, and win titles according to his strategy and game plan.

The fight coordinator signals to me. It means that my fight will be next. Soon my entire team and a representative of my Mexican opponent will wrap my hands in plasters, then finally the boxing gloves will be fitted. Coming into this fight, I am not nervous of my opponent, only of my lack of preparation. Thoughts come to my mind, such as, "What if I instead heeded my coach's suggestion to train in America and temporarily forget my responsibilities as an elected official?", and "How long will it be before I get tired because of my lack of training?" Retirement is an option. I have always thought of it ever since I won in the elections, and since the fight that the entire boxing fans are clamoring for, against a boxer who seemed to have found a new career in YouTube instead of the ring, have little chances of ever happening. After all, I have already surpassed my life goals and in fact had been told by big time promoters that they find it difficult to find marketable opponents for my next fights. You know, boxing is business too, and they will only stage a fight if it will make them earn millions from gate receipts, cable TV royalties, and other merchandize. "Hey champ, Manny, you're on," an American twice my weight and height finally signals five minutes more to go and we are to go to the walkway that leads to the ring. Through the half open door, I see

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the singers of each of the National Anthems to be sung, making their way to the dressing room probably for last minute rehearsal. This will be my attempt to capture an eighth weight division title.

I know that the stakes are high, but as a boxer, I have to do my job. I only hope that the words in one of my advertisements are true, the one that says, "Manny Knows". [The theme that this story gives is about the importance of perseverance in order to reach your goals in life. The tone is excitement and nervousness, basically because of his lack of training. Pacquiao is in his boxing shorts, sitting on a stool and waiting for his signal to fight, lighting is very illuminated, as what is commonly observable in boxers' locker rooms]