



BERNARD "THE ALIEN" HOPKINS AND BEIBUT SHUMENOV MEDIA CONFERENCE CALL TRANSCRIPT

Kelly Swanson

This week has been jam-packed with information about the April 19 'History at the Capitol'. Yesterday, we did a conference call with the undercard fighters, and now, we have our main event fighters available today to talk to the press. I'm very excited about it.

Bernard Hopkins, the IBF Light Heavyweight World Champion, certainly a future first ballot Hall of Famer is on the phone; along with Beibut Shumenov, who is the WBA and IBA Light Heavyweight World Champion. I think it's going to be an amazing unification bout; let's go ahead and talk a little bit more about the fight and its particulars as well as introduce the fighters. I'd like to introduce Bruce Binkow, the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Marketing Officer of Golden Boy Promotions.

Bruce Binkow

We're very, very excited about this one, and I personally can't wait as I know a lot of you can't. It's a great tripleheader. It's called 'History at the Capitol.' The main event is outstanding, Hopkins versus Shumenov. The co-main, Shawn Porter and Paulie Malignaggi is a fight that a lot of people want to see, and the telecast will open with Peter Quillin versus Lukas Konecny. It's going to be a great night. It's Saturday, April 19 at the DC Armory in Washington, D.C. It's promoted by Golden Boy Promotions and brought to you by Corona, AT&T and Casamigos Tequila. The telecast will be on SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING beginning at 9 p.m. Eastern and Pacific Time. There are tickets still available starting at just \$25. The tickets can be had at Ticketmaster.com and all Ticketmaster locations. The DC Armory Box Office is open on fight night only starting at 3 p.m.

So, without further ado, let's get right to the main event. I'd like to start by introducing to you all, Beibut Shumenov. Shumenov is 14-1 with 9 KOs. He's a native of Shymkent, Kazakhstan, but fights now out of Las Vegas, Nev. He was a 2004 Olympian for his home country. What's amazing about Beibut aside from his talent is that he made his way up the ranks of the light heavyweight division with amazing speed. He won his first title in 2009 in just his eighth professional fight, and then, he added soon thereafter his WBA title in 2010. Since 2010, he's successfully defended his title five times. So, this April 19th, he's going to get a shot at the big one, which is the legend, Bernard Hopkins, and Shumenov is hoping to etch his name in history with a victory on the 19th. So, with that, Beibut, if you'd like to make an opening comment before we open it up for questions, ladies and gentlemen, Beibut Shumenov.

Beibut Shumenov

Hello, everyone. I'm very excited that I'm fighting with Bernard Hopkins, one of the greatest fighters and a future Hall of Famer. So, everything has been great. I'm in the final stage of my preparation camp. So, everything is great. I am looking forward to showing all my capabilities on April 19 in Washington, D.C.

B. Binkow

Now, I'd like to introduce a man that needs no introduction. As a matter of fact, you almost run out of things to say about Bernard. If you're on this conference call, you know everything there is to know about Bernard Hopkins, so I'm not going to recite all of the amazing stats and the history and the triumphs that this man has experienced and given us through his performances in the ring, but I will just say something that we talked about when we were on our press conferences and that is I truly believe that what Bernard is doing, the level in which he's competing as a professional athlete, in one of the toughest sports that there is at this point in his life is nothing short of remarkable. If it was any other sport, I think that he would be getting a lot more mainstream media attention, and it's my mission to make sure that people experience the joy of watching Bernard do his thing before he finally hangs it up, whenever that's going to be.

He's been called 'The Executioner,' more recently 'The Alien.' I'd like to introduce to you Bernard 'The Alien' Hopkins.

Bernard Hopkins

Thank you, Bruce, and thanks to all the sponsors and everybody that's had a hand in promoting this tripleheader coming up in Washington, D.C. Any of those three fights can easily be main events on any night, so that's the bang for your buck if you can tell me that something else can match that in three championship fights. So, I'm looking forward to being the main event on that and also making a statement like I've done many times before.

I'm used to this type of dance, and I'm just hoping that people will tune in whether they are there personally or at home and checking it out so they can witness the three major championship fights on the same card, which is not done often in boxing.

Q

Beibut, can you talk about what the reason was for your two lengthy layoffs and was that by your design or was it just problems getting fights or you weren't signed with a promoter or what was going on there?

B. Shumenov

At that time, I was promoting myself and we tried to make a fight against Cleverly; it didn't happen, and then, we tried to make a unification title fight against Chad Dawson. Again, we didn't get any success. So, I couldn't get any of those big names, and I couldn't get to all those big networks. That's why I got stuck and couldn't do anything.

Q

So, was it a matter of when you came to make your deal with Golden Boy Promotions that they outlined a plan where they said hey, we'll get you in the ring, we'll give you a fight, it turned out to be the Kovacs fight and then after that, we'll get you that big fight with Bernard Hopkins?

B. Shumenov

They didn't mention Bernard, but I told them to my manager, Mr. Al Haymon and then to Richard Schaefer that I want to fight who's the best. I want to keep fighting until I fight for all of the championship belts. So, I want to fight all those champions.

Q

Does it offend you that no one says what about Shumenov against Stevenson because they're sort of overlooking you I guess a little bit against Bernard Hopkins? What are your thoughts about that?

B. Shumenov

Like I said, my main goal is to unify all the titles and I'm not thinking ahead. I'm only concentrated and focused on my upcoming fight against Bernard Hopkins, and it kind of motivates me more. They're only talking about Bernard facing Adonis Stevenson. It motivates me more. I don't care. It makes me train even harder. It makes me be a better fighter.

Q

What are your thoughts about fighting a guy with so few fights compared to the legendary resume that you've compiled over your 20-plus year career?

B. Hopkins

If you look at Shumenov, you look at Shumenov's record, you can be blinded and misled by that, he has to give you some type of blueprint to say if you're not thinking multiple ways. You're thinking one way, then you think what you see. But I'm smart enough to understand that when a guy has a pedigree of an amateur record, as far as I'm concerned, they need to send people to fight amateurs with 100-something fights that come out of there basically closed, they just don't have they license yet, and that's a big debate in amateur boxing right now.

I'm very wise in this game, and I understand when you have a pedigree and it goes deep in the Olympics for his country, Kazakhstan, it's something that he understands the big stage. He's been around the championship level without even having a title at the top.

So, I'm not underestimating him. I'm in a position right now where I haven't been in many, many years, and that is people overlooking my opponent. People have overlooked Bernard Hopkins even with titles. I mean I have records to prove, but at the same time, I know what that can do to a guy. It can motivate a guy and also can put pressure on a guy, and that's the blessing and that's the education that I come from both sides. I'm still around to understand how he feels and how he has to be motivated, what motivates him, and that's dealing with the IQ and that's dealing with the experience and that's the luxury that I have in the game today amongst anybody I fight whether it's Shumenov, whether it's Stevenson, or whoever you name. It doesn't matter because I've been here longer than any boxer that's boxing right now in a respectful level and position, and I think that's an honor.

Q

What is your opinion about that aspect of sort of knowing that you have an even bigger fight perhaps in the future if everything goes good for you in April and also your thoughts about Stevenson making that jump because he's wanted you certainly much more than he's wanted Kovalev.

B. Hopkins

Well, first of all, it's good for both of us. It's good for both guys, myself and Shumenov because we going in April 19 in D.C. on SHOWTIME, and all what you just said is going to be mentioned by the commentators, and leading up to the fight it's going to be mentioned. So, it's out there. I mean, like you said, it was out there when Stevenson came onboard to unify the title on this end, and of course, he'd be fighting his next fight on that network. So, all these things are basically a win/win for the fans of boxing because at the end of the day, no matter which side of the street you're on, west side, north side, east side, southwest, doesn't make a difference. People want to see one guy who even has a title as the man that beat the man. When you're a fighter, you want all the major belts that someone else is carrying.

Now, tell you how much I'm a dinosaur in the game, I've been here before, as anybody having short memories that's listening, 2001, post-9/11, New York City. So, I have a track record of having an itch to prove if I have to have all three or four belts, forget what anybody says who's the best in this division or who's the best, the man beat the man, that is true I agree, but at the end of the day, Stevenson made it clear he wants to fight other champions, myself and anybody else, and as far as I'm concerned, the belts that people care about are the main three belts that people really know about and care about. Any fourth or fifth belt is just extra gravy if you want to put some more on your bread. The bottom line is we in the ring April 19. We're going to do what we got to do, the winner will be the winner and we move forward, and I'm looking to be the winner and I'm looking to make history. What better place to make history than D.C. at the capital?

Q

Beibut, nothing can be said exactly about Bernard's accomplishments. He's 49-years-old, but when you look at him, why do you think he's been able to have success as long as he's had?

B. Shumenov

It's truly amazing. It's unbelievable. It's incredible. I don't see where in the past or in the future anybody could do what Bernard does.

Q

Do you have any fears that if this fight goes to the cards that because of his reputation, the decision will go in his favor and not yours?

B. Shumenov

Right. But since my December fight, which was before the fight, a lot of people starting asking about potential fights between us, and then, right after the fight Bernard got in the ring and I got the feeling that the fight would happen in the near future, and right after the fight, I started watching his fights and studying him. I'm preparing to win each round clearly to leave no doubt for judges, anybody.

Q

Bernard, you mentioned 2001 against Felix Trinidad. It's been a very long time since you had a unifying title fight. Why has it been so long?

B. Hopkins

Well, you have to ask boxing. I mean, you're asking me a question; if I had a crystal ball, every division would be unified to one champion. I mean that's through the politics, but you're asking a question that I think that me and you both are asking. You're allowed to ask anything you want, but that's self-explanatory, but I'm glad I'm the one that continues to make history, that continues to give something to scratch your head about, and that's my main objective.

I have my own agenda, and trust me, in that agenda is to one day be part of a long conversation about where do they put Bernard Hopkins because we can't just put him with all of the other historic legend boxers. So, I want to make y'all have a really hard time whether you're here or not, whoever's in the future, figuring out where to put this and I have to do the work now to be able to do that later. That's the thing. You work now, you enjoy later. That's how it's supposed to be.

Q

Bernard, for the third straight fight, you're listed again as the betting favorite. Does that change your views going in?

B. Hopkins

That's shocking, but I always say I know you might look at this as not being a boxing question, but I was born in 1965 in this great country, and anybody that knows history of 1965, I was the underdog when I was born in this country compared to my ancestors. So, when you say underdog, I got the mentality that I'm always going to be the underdog. I don't look for any favors or any help. I go and do what I got to do, and that's one of the reasons I'm here so long.

I'd have been long gone if it was that. If I wanted to just get a house and have some money in the bank, I'd been gone 15 years ago. Do the math. It's 2014. Do you know how many great fights I had in the last 15-plus years? So, I mean, I'm glad you said it, but it doesn't move me one way or the other. I was hoping that Shumenov would be the underdog because I know how he feels when people don't give a person a chance. I mean, trust me, I've been through that, I understand that, but I accepted that, and I'd rather have it that way.

So, I flip it in my mind that he's the favorite. I'm a 10-1 favorite on April 19 in D.C. He's a 10-1 favorite over me in D.C. April 19. That's how I train, that's how I think. I don't look for any favors from nobody because I never got any. Look at my career.

Q

I recently talked to your trainer, Naazim Richardson, and he said ultimately what it comes down to is Bernard is going to get tired of winning all these titles. Do you kind of see it that way, that the only way you will ultimately leave this game is throughout your own volition, giving up those titles, not having them taken from you?

B. Hopkins

Absolutely. Me and Naazim, he's an old man. He's been around me for 20-something years. He's been a second trainer at one time with Bouie Fisher, the first trainer. So, he understands and he understands how I think and he understands what kind of mission that I feel that I'm on. We communicate. So, I couldn't have been as accurate as you said. But my whole thing is, as Beibut said, he wanted to unify the titles. I'm answering that call because I want to do the same damn thing, and now, we have the pieces in line that has the same mentality. It gives you something to write about. It gives the fans and anybody that's listening that comes along after you, it gives them a chance now to say we unified the title in that division, maybe become a good disease, a good virus that might spread through other weight divisions and that would be good, I think, for boxing. I mean that's my opinion, I could be wrong.

Q

Are there any fights you've seen, for example, his last fight with Murat or probably one of the biggest fights of his recent career with Kelly Pavlik, for example, where you were able to learn from those fights?

B. Shumenov

My apologies, but I cannot discuss the knowledge that I have about Bernard's work. Out of all the studies, I cannot discuss the knowledge as I've been perfecting myself against Bernard Hopkins, and I'm at the final stage with my preparation, so people will get to see my capabilities.

Q

Bernard, what do you see from Shumenov when you study him?

B. Hopkins

These are the things that I don't have any problem telling you, how I feel whatever because whatever I tell you, if you want to hear it doesn't necessarily mean it has to be my strategy. See, *The Art of War* is one of my favorite books. You asked me a question, see the difference between Bernard Hopkins and Beibut, and that's his own style and it doesn't make him bad or good, it's just the way he thinks.

You ask me a question, well what do you see in Beibut, that you can do to expose? Well, I can tell you anything. Doesn't necessarily mean it's true. I just might want him to hear, and these are things from *The Art of War*. He understands what *The Art of War* means. You understand? Because at the end of the day, no matter what I tell you, it's what happens in that ring, but I've been in this game almost three decades, and there's no style through the amateurs, short amateur career I had, I didn't have 100 fights, I didn't have 50 fights, but the short amateur career that I had, that and the one in state penitentiary is that it's no style, I repeat, there's no style on this planet earth dealing with boxing that I haven't seen or been in the ring with.

It's nothing I haven't seen that I've been in this game for 26, 27 years that's going to surprise me April 19, and that's not underestimating anybody. That's not overlooking. That's just keeping it real by the time I've been in this game and by the time I've been a student and still considered a student, a little edge of a teacher in this game that I'm in.

Q

Beibut said that he wouldn't react negatively if things get dirty in the ring and that he would let the referee deal with that. What do you think about that?

B. Hopkins

I don't know where this dirty stuff comes from. I mean, I don't understand. Only thing I know in two weeks or less, man, we're going to be doing what we got to do. It's not my job to think about what a man can do to me, I can do to him. I never had a big brother. I am the big brother of six siblings. So, I never had a big brother to look over me in case something happened. Now, I let my challenge speak for itself. I let my history speak for itself. I let the last five or six fights or five or six 17 years speak for themselves. We're going to fight, and if somebody does something they're not supposed to do, you got checks and balances that will check that.

It's not my job. I can't be a fighter and the referee. I wouldn't even bring that up to you. That's irrelevant. It's ridiculous, and if he said it or you said it, whoever said it, it's just not the point. The point is that you've got a guy in there, it's the reason he's in there, and the bottom line is I'm going to come across and bring my talent to a level where people are going to be talking about something else, and they're going to be excited and they're going to look forward for what comes next, and that's how I feel, and that's how I'm training and that's how I live.

Q

You spoke of being born 1965. You were three years old 46-years-ago today when Martin Luther King was assassinated, and I guess I would like to ask you if you would express your thoughts on the significance of this day and his legacy from your point of view.

B. Hopkins

It really in a major way speaks for itself, because I was born at a change in America, but I also was born to establish my history through the checks and balances. A lot's been done, lots still needs to be done, that would be perfect, but at the end of the day, I'll just say this, when I step in any challenge and I step in any era or any other ways I think about history and when I was born and people that came before me, it puts me in a situation to do what I do.

I really believe that and that means the law of God, and I really believe that and that's from my soul, and I'm here not only because of my talent, I'm no fool. I'm here because I have not only angels watching over me, but a bigger being that got me through things that I know weren't my doing. It couldn't have been my doing not even having the best lawyer. It couldn't have been my doing. This was something beyond that, and that's what comes in the spirit when I go to fight. If he don't have that same spirit he's in trouble. He's in trouble.

Q

Does it energize you the prospect of being a unified champion again?

B. Hopkins

Yes. It gets me a lot more energized than my last two fights, but those last two fights played a role to get energized; to me, this isn't the climax, this is the pre-climax, and as far as I'm concerned, it's where I need to be and where I had to go through to get here in the last year or two, to be patient, to fight my mandatory, to show people and get out of there, get out of the way. I wanted it to be Kovalev but they chose to fight Cleverly, smart move, good management.

Now, we're here, and I'm looking to show the world that I might be the second or the first boxer in any division that became undisputed in two weight classes in modern time, and I stand to be corrected, but I figured I'd put it out there. Somebody can research; I know y'all will get back to me, but I love history and I love trying to break records that have been set for multiple years because I believe I have a history of doing that, and this is energizing too. This is also adding to what you said being energized, yes. [NOTE: Evander Holyfield was undisputed at cruiserweight and heavyweight.]

Q

Do you sit back and sort of notice that boxers are sort of being on top now a little bit more, having more decision and more say on the business side and whether that makes you proud of the things that you've done in the past and those struggles that you've gone through and the battles that you've fought to try to assert your rights as a boxer?

B. Hopkins

Well, I'm always proud when you have your fellow man that's tired of being labeled one way and wants to get the red light district type of mentality label off their back, I'm always excited when you see change and bigger fights, better fights and also knowing your business. I think knowing your business gives you an advantage, not at a disadvantage.

The only reason why I'm here is Ali had his purpose. Jim Brown had his purpose. Jethro Page had his purpose. So many people had their purpose and their time and I'm like those people in this time. Love me or hate me, I went against the grain when it needed to be and I compromise in a respectful way when need to be, and I think that's what leadership is about.

But April 19 starts another chapter, and this other chapter is very important because I'm 49-years-old, and I'm showing that I'm 49-years-old and competing and winning because what I've done in the past and I'm reaping the benefits of how you take care of yourself, and that's the brand, that's the Bernard Hopkins. So, Beibut, 29, 30 whatever he is, he's 10 years younger, 15, whatever he is, I've got 10 or 15 years over him or more, I'm not fighting a guy my age, I'm fighting young guys. I'm fighting guys that can fight guys that are undefeated, longer stints of amateur career, not new to the game, not going to be camera shocked, not going to be D.C. shocked. I just come in to push through, man, to make him work and I'm here to do this.

I'm here to show that this is why I'm different and to show how you're different is to show in a sport that's so physical and so mental; what better place to prove yourself than boxing. I know no other sport and I'm biased that I've been a part of where you can show what you're made of in 36, 37 minutes or less.

Q

You look up to Hopkins. How long have you been following his career?

B. Shumenov

Look-I'm not just a boxer, but I'm also boxing fan. So, I've always watched all the big names when they fight Bernard.

Q

Could the fans expect you to try for the knockout on April 19?

B. Hopkins

Well, I sure enough think I try hard enough. I didn't get it with Karo Murat, and Shumenov is no Karo Murat, no disrespect to Karo Murat, he can fight, different style, different demeanor, but at the end of the day, I see opportunities. I see a lot of opportunities with Shumenov, believe it or not, that I didn't see with Karo Murat, and the styles always make fights. I know that's an ancient quote, but it's legit and it's real, and I see his style perfect. I couldn't ask for a better style in a match up and I don't know what he thinks. It doesn't matter, but he might think the same thing.

As he said, he's been studying me since his fight in San Antonio in Texas, and he's a boxing fan. You can't look at the record and be sidetracked and think this man doesn't have any experience. I will not play that game, but in the same token, I'm looking for a battle. I'm looking for a battle, and when it's all said and done, I want to be raising my hand in victory.

Q

Are you going to look into training fighters because they could use your knowledge and I think you would help?

B. Hopkins

I have so much to bring to the table to again, respecting trainers from all walks of life, to limit myself to be in a corner, to limit myself away from the big picture in boxing would be a disservice to my fellow boxers, who are in Pampers right now, and it's going to be boxers one day. They're walking around at six months old or a year old and they walk around in diapers and they are going to be fighters one day like myself and others.

So, why not have a venue for them where they can not only be educated first about a sport to get into and then multiple people that are going to be teachers/trainers and anything else, but I think do good for boxing. I think I played a role that I've been playing with Golden Boy Promotions for seven years. I think I've played a role when fighters come up and ask me about certain things, about taking care of the body, living a clean life amongst all the lights and the flash and the glitter and the success, how do you stay focused, disciplined. I think it would be a disservice to keep that away and just tell a person how to throw a jab and a left hook.

Q

Bernard, what should he study for?

B. Hopkins

I mean, I lost count. There's a lot of them. You can go on YouTube. I mean it's an information highway. You can find out anything about anybody, what you want to put out there, but in the same token, I mean it's kind of hard to be kind of like an invisible man in a boxing business. Can you imagine that?

People going to know the style you've been successful with and the style that you are and just now knowing how to crack that safe. Now, it's multiple styles I have, and I've said it, I don't know, it wasn't with you, but it was with two other callers before you,

I've been in the game since 1988, I mean that's almost three decades. Obviously, I've seen every style that you possibly can see with the short amateur career. I've seen the different styles how they hold their hands, how Beibut holds his hands, how he fights with a jab out, all this stuff. This isn't giving away no secrets.

That's the boldness of me, not the showoff because I'm confident about what I say based on putting the work behind, and understanding that I have to live up to those things, but I don't mind being on the edge. Look at my life. Look at my career. So, whatever style, it needs to be presented. We do what we do.

So, at the end of the day, somebody's hand is going to get raised and somebody is going to have to evaluate they're career.

Q

How is different now going through the rigors of training than it was let's say during the middleweight tournament days?

B. Hopkins

When you're young, you overdo things a lot and you get away with it. When you have wisdom and you have understanding, you learn how to not overdo things where you rest and save your money like investing and you go ahead and you spend it tomorrow. A lot of things you do when you're younger, you get away with it, a lot of things, you can't do or you shouldn't do wisely because it's always the next day, there's always next week, and it's the preparation part.

The mindset controls the body because the body has always been right, but I've prepared a temple to be able to have the mind control the body. When your mind is right, everything is going to fall into place, but if your mind is right and your body is whack, it's off balance. Life is a balance, and come April 19 on SHOWTIME, you're going to see the balance between a guy with experience, a guy with a good pedigree, but a guy that's in there with someone that has an IQ and a boxing ability and a body that brings it, not the look and the physical part, that's nothing but the physical, but the youth of half his age in the ring with a guy that's 30, 31-years-old. It's going to be amazing to y'all, and that's what I need to display and that's what I will display. I'd rather show you than I can tell you. It's better to prove it to you than talk to you all day long, but this is part of the business too. You have to talk.

Q

Do you still have long-term goals or do you just take it fight by fight now?

B. Hopkins

No. I can't take it fight by fight because that's boring. That's like going to work and not knowing if you're going to get fired each day. My thing is I always have long-term goals just to stay alive, but they are realistic goals, and I believe the realistic goals compared to the goals you just had, is nothing but a dream. It's nothing but something just to fool yourself, and then reality comes in when those times go by and you looking at that date that you have to have things done that aren't done, you get to now looking at reality and then you just die. So, my thing is yes, as long as I live and breathe this air called life in my lungs. So, yes, that's how I operate. That's how I function.

B. Binkow

That was a great call. Yes, I don't have anything to add other than to reiterate what Bernard said at the beginning, which is that these are three potential main events in one night, another spectacular tripleheader brought to you by SHOWTIME and Golden Boy. Any chance that we have to showcase the great Bernard Hopkins is always a treat and very special. So, I urge everybody to tune in or buy a ticket, and whatever you do, just be with us on April 19 at 9:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific.

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Hopkins vs. Shumenov, a 12-round fight for the IBF, WBA and IBA Light Heavyweight World Championship, will take place Saturday, April 19 at the DC Armory in Washington, D.C. The event is promoted by Golden Boy Promotions and sponsored by Corona, AT&T and Casamigos Tequila. In the 12-round co-features, Shawn Porter defends his IBF Welterweight World Title against Paulie Malignaggi and Peter Quillin puts his WBO Middleweight World Title on the line against Lukas Konecny. The live SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING® telecast will begin at 9 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast) immediately following ALL ACCESS: Mayweather vs. Maidana. The telecast will be available in Spanish via secondary audio programming (SAP). Preliminary bouts will air on SHOWTIME EXTREME® at 7 p.m. ET/PT (delayed on the West Coast).

Tickets priced at \$25, \$50, \$75, \$200 and \$300, plus applicable taxes, fees and services charges, are on sale now and available online at <http://www.ticketmaster.com>, all Ticketmaster locations or by calling (800) 745-3000. **The DC Armory Box Office will be open on fight night only from 3 p.m.-10 p.m. ET.**

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