

So You Wanna Fight?

Rapper PK Silver
gets in on some
Tough Guy/
Tough Gal action

If *Fight Club* is your favourite movie, there's one show you definitely don't want to miss this week. It's the Canadian Tough Guy/Tough Gal Championship: Occupational Wars 6. Bit of a mouthful? Well, spit out your teeth and say, "Bring it on!" On Saturday night a roster of wannabe prize fighters step into the ring to thump or be thumped. It's a guaranteed spectacle.

But opening up the evening's proceedings is local rapper, promoter, fantasy novel writer and fashion promoter (is there anything this guy doesn't do?) PK Silver. Silver talks about the show in a downtown coffee shop from behind reflective glasses, looking every bit like a true rock star. So is he a tough guy himself?

"Absolutely," he says without hesitation. He doesn't fight much himself, he says, but is looking forward to being part of the event. Silver's background is mainly in heavy metal music, but he's fairly recently switched to hip hop. "I think rapping has a certain rhythm pattern that blends really well with metal," he says. (Rage Against the Machine, maybe?) Silver says his live show is complemented by dancers (models most of them, I'm told) with laughably little clothing covering their bits—who, as he says, take some of the attention off him. Not that he's shy or anything; he's perfectly happy to get up there in front of 3,000 people and do his thing. But basically, he likes to provide some good entertainment.

Ken "Hurricane" Himes, mastermind behind the Tough Guy competition, saw Silver perform at the Superbowl party at Sopranos and signed him up for the gig on the spot. "The kid's got something," he says.

Himes has been doing this particular event since 1990, when an afternoon drinking Lucky beer on a vaguely ring-like patio resulted in the idea. Jason Heit, recently retired pro-boxer and Mixed Martial Arts champion, remembers fondly that first amateur night in Victoria, which launched his career and culminated in him working as a celebrity bodyguard for the likes of Drew Barrymore and Nicholas Cage. "I was 17 when I went out there. Three guys, three knockouts—it was a good night," he laughs. Himes agrees that the event has the potential to create superstars (he talks of guys showing up thinking they're the next Muhammed Ali), but mostly they come out, fight and then go back to their jobs. Hence, the "occupational" aspect of the title. "Basically, these guys have no ring savvy," Himes says. He cites the Saanich Police's drag-racing program as a parallel: "It gets the kids off the street."

And that's sort of what this is—it provides a forum for people with a bit too much testosterone to release some of their aggression and live more healthily. According to Hurricane (why have a nickname like that and not use it?), the basic message is that weapons are for wimps . . . although, ironically, there will be a military presence at the event, with the Ashton Armoury showcasing some of their vehicles and weaponry.

Spectacle? You bet. "It's a rowdy slugfest," laughs Himes. "It's wild boxing: there's gonna be wild flinging. It's very entertaining, and hey, you get to see local guys out there." If you really want to check this out, but you're torn because of the hockey game, Himes adds finally that there will be TVs out there, so you won't miss a thing.

Once a year, just like in *Fight Club*, they come from their jobs—roofers and cooks and waiters and firemen—to become prizefighters. "The first rule of . . ." Ah, you get the picture.

—Matt J. Simmons



PK Silver

(with the Canadian Tough Guy/
Tough Gal Championships)

7 pm Saturday, May 5

Bear Mountain Arena, Colwood

Tickets \$20-\$50 at Sports Traders,

508 Discovery • 383-6443