



## *Rodel E. Rodis on Barack Obama ....* *Telltale Signs / The Two Impostors*

*SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 6 (PinoyGlobal)* - When he heard the news on election night on CNN that Barack Obama had just won the presidency, my 17-year old son, Eric, wanted to scream. "I want to call all my friends and celebrate this moment," he said. He was ecstatic. He was joyous. He felt hopeful.

Eric had been gloomy and despondent over the past two months, deeply concerned about whether he and his generation had any hope for their future, weary of news of an economy that was going through a deep recession, with the ranks of the unemployed growing by legions. He openly wondered what the point would be of going through college if there were no jobs available for college graduates.

Like his older brothers and many others of his generation, Eric pinned his hopes for the future on Barack Obama, proudly wearing his "*Filipinos for Obama*" T-shirt to school and engaging his classmates and friends in political discussions.

On election night, we huddled together and heard the speech of President-elect Barack Obama. "For even as we celebrate tonight," Barack said, "we know the challenges that tomorrow will bring are the greatest of our lifetime -- two wars, a planet in peril, the worst financial crisis in a century." Eric was concerned about those same points.

"There are mothers and fathers who will lie awake after the children fall asleep and wonder how they'll make the mortgage or pay their doctors' bills or save enough for their child's college education," Barack said.

Those were Eric's concerns too. Here was a leader my son could believe in, a leader who spoke to him and for him.

Barack is not only the first African American to be elected president; he is also the first post-baby boomer to hold the post. His late mother was only 5 years older than Hillary Clinton and was even younger than John McCain.

So he can relate to my son and his generation more than any other candidate had ever done or could ever do.

"This is our time," Barack said, "to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth, that, out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope. And where we are met with cynicism and doubts and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, we can."

"Yes, we can. Yes, we can," my son repeated with full resolve.

I was more concerned about this presidential election than I was about my own race for re-election to the San Francisco Community College Board. I told my family and my friends that I would rather that Barack won and I lost than if I had won and Barack had lost.

I rejected my friends' advice that I refrain from being too actively supportive of Barack Obama as they feared that I may lose the support and the votes of McCain supporters. I didn't care. The country's future is more important than mine, I told them.

Well, I got my wish. Barack won and I lost.

After serving 18 years on the College Board, including winning four consecutive 4-year terms, I finally lost one this week.

I wrote recently about how this was a rough year for Filipino American candidates for public office in the US. So many community icons lost their bids for election or re-election and I openly feared that this trend would continue. And my fears proved to be right. There were 10 Filipino American candidates who ran for public office in the San Francisco Bay Area and I believe all of us lost.

For many of the candidates, it was sore lack of funding. The Filipino community does not yet understand the political culture of American politics where money is its "mother's milk". Filipinos would rather spend money gambling in casinos than in supporting political candidates.

In my case, the explanation for my loss can be found in the question I posed in a recent column "Daly's City?". The answer turned out to be a resounding "Yes". Supervisor Chris Daly targeted me for defeat and he prevailed. The three district supervisorial candidates he backed (Eric Mar, David Chiu and John Avalos), who were labeled as his "puppets" in a TV campaign commercial, were all elected. The candidates he backed for the College

Board also won.

But I honestly don't feel too bad about my loss because Barack Obama won. For my sons, his victory was far more important than mine.

About 12 years ago, when I was chairing a College Board hearing on a proposed parcel tax, a

member of the public spoke about how he would personally campaign against me all over the city if I voted for the measure.

I told him that I have three sons who will forever be in his debt if he came through and delivered on his threat because it would mean that I would be able to spend more time with my family instead of having to attend so many Boards meetings late into the night and read tons of papers to prepare for each meeting.

That man failed to come through with his threat then but Chris Daly and his henchboy, Roy Recio, succeeded now. But thanks to them, I will have more time to spend with my family.

A century ago, the poet Rudyard Kipling counseled folks to learn to "meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same." Sage advice to remember. #

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