



## *Razor's Edge*

By  
**Joe Mari Mercader**  
*Executive Editor*  
FILIPINO TIMES  
*New York-New Jersey*

*Joe Mari Mercader ...*

### *Pacman Smashes Legendary “Punisher”*

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**NEW YORK, N.Y., Dec. 09 (PinoyGlobal)** - It is sad that I cannot be proud of our Philippine public officials and political leaders. But I am proud and ecstatic over a poor boy from Gen. Santos City who started selling cigarettes in the streets and became internationally famous by his boxing exploits. **Manny “Pacman” Pacquiao** earned the enviable reputation of being the greatest boxer last Saturday “pound for pound” in all the divisions whose 5 championship belts he won, and currently holds, mostly via knockouts. Pacman has defeated every conceivable Latino champion and contender that caught his devastating punches in the ring. The latest was the self-appointed would-be “punisher” of Pacquiao, Golden Boy **Oscar De La Hoya** in Las Vegas, last Saturday.

DeLaHoya was supposedly going to redeem the Latino champions who were humiliated in a string of victories by the Filipino boxing icon Pacman. What happened was the reverse – it was a total upset beyond Oscar’s wildest nightmare. The presumptuous Oscar was the one brutally punished and humiliated in a decisive defeat he never suffered from the great fighters he put to sleep in the ring on his way to a blizzard of victories starting as the young Olympic boxing champion in the '90s.

I join our people all over the world who are euphoric over Manny’s victory against DeLaHoya who was considered the superior boxer over the underdog

Pacquiao. But the wheel of fortune spun the other way around making Manny the dominant slugger early on up to the 8th round when Golden Boy Oscar called it quits to suffer defeat by TKO.

Manny earns tens of millions of dollars with his fists and shares it with the poor. In contrast our government officials abscond public funds with brazen temerity and flaunt their ill-gotten wealth without qualms even as they are arrogant and poor sports in defeat.

They should learn the lesson of sportsmanship and fairness from the two combatants – Oscar De La Hoya and Manny “Pacman” Pacquiao. After their historic encounter in the ring last night the giant boxing icons exchanged compliments that awed television viewers. The modest Pacquiao told De La Hoya, “You are still my idol.” Oscar graciously whipped back the sincere accolade “No. Now you are my idol.” Unlike former speaker **Joe De Venecia**, De La Hoya rattled off compliments about victor Manny. Oscar did not sour grape and admitted to the announcer interviewing him after the fight, that the Filipino boxer is the greatest boxer he encountered in the ring, which is more than I can say about JDV who is non-stop maligning **GMA** since they went their separate ways.

Our political leaders drag each other to court contesting the victory of an adversary when they are not killing each other during and after the elections.

Pacquiao's triumph last night was, in my perception, a bit tarnished by the presence of public officials who were in the ring on hand for Manny's victory, when they should have been in their respective offices tending to the needs of their constituents.

*Vice Pres. Noli de Castro* headed the group. With him were *Governor Chavit Singson*, cabinet members and several congressmen who joined the caravan to Las Vegas, whom Manny naively thanked on television for their support.

It is quite obvious that Noli De Castro wanted to bask on the tremendous publicity of the event. He mistakenly believes if he is seen with Pacquiao in the ring his presidential ambition will be greatly enhanced come 2010 barring the Charter change (Cha cha) or postponement of the elections to 2011. And of course, if Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will be decent enough to step down after her term and support him under the condition that she and her family are not prosecuted for corruption.

De Castro should retrospect that even Pacman lost when he ran for Congress because the electorate loves their public officials to be where they want them to be. In Manny's case they want him as a boxer not a lawmaker. Therefore, Noli's idea of using the larger than life Pacman could boomerang on him and it might just cause his defeat.

For De Castro to be in Las Vegas when every minute of his time is needed in our economically beleaguered country is a shame. Even, assuming he used his personal funds for the trip, which I doubt, still the journey was not vital to public service he is committed to give Juan de la Cruz. The same thing is true with the other boxing aficionado public officials who clotted the ring after the fight. Who paid for their expensive trip, is a question to be resolved.

Be that as it may, still they had no business deserting their offices for the glamour of being with Manny Pacquiao. No amount of excuses could wear off the stigma of their unpatriotic trip when their official time was needed by our hungry and economically strapped people back home.

But that is neither here nor there. I will discuss these things in my future columns. For now our priority is the excitement of Manny's latest conquest - legendary boxing idol Oscar de la Hoya, an American born Puerto Rican.

Before I continue I want it clearly understood that I never questioned the bravery and courage of the Latino people. Mexicans have proven their valor in many

a battlefield to debunk skeptics doubting their machismo. Even their legendary boxers who were defeated by our Filipino boxing icon, Manny Pacquiao, stood their ground without dissipating their courage though bloodied, until the end. It just happens that Pacquiao is phenomenal as a fighter in the arena.

What I am driving at is that at the rate our Filipino boxer is knocking them out in the ring it would not be surprising if there will not be a single boxer left in Mexico to carry the torch for their people in the boxing arena abroad.

Pacquiao proved that he could vanquish any Latino boxer in his league. Although he is born in America, Oscar de la Hoya, the latest victim to smash into the solid fists of Pacman, is a Puerto Rican by blood. His parents came from Puerto Rico, and he was the Latino's last hope to redeem the prestige they once enjoyed in the boxing world. The names of Julio Chavez, Marco Antonio Barrera, Enrique "El Terrible" Morales, Juan Manuel Marquez, David Diaz, Oscar de la Hoya and many more commanded respect before our own boxing icon bested every one of them with decisive victories earning him the moniker "Mexicutioner," and rightly so given his successful fights against all these boxing "legends," except for Julio Chavez who never fought Pacman.

This is unfortunate because the Mexican boxers were incomparable before Pacman stepped into the picture. That is life, now you're up, tomorrow you are crushed under the same debris of misfortunes that visited the lives of other celebrities who ended up humiliated and in obscurity. This is precisely my secret apprehension about the future of Pacquiao whom we Filipinos love so very much for giving our country and us the honor and prestige, which Philippine public officials miserably failed to do for us abroad. Instead, they disgraced our people by their corruption that is well publicized around the world.

Manny Pacquiao should retire as soon as possible now that he is still ahead, lest he meets the same ugly fate that befell Oscar De La Hoya and the other dethroned boxing demigods. As for his political aspirations, I suggest he burns his money and enjoy the pleasure of doing it himself rather than those opportunists who are basking on his greatness and wealth pushing their political ambitions at his expense.

Better yet, maximize his magnanimity to the poor by giving them more than the usual dole outs he showers the masses with as he has been doing these years. In this manner he will be a larger than life icon.

Mabuhay ka Manny Pacquiao! And thank you for vindicating the Philippines in the eyes of the world. #