



Razor's Edge

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I Appeal:

"..... to all and sundry back home, particularly the politicians, not to rob us of this great athlete who has given the country back its honor with his integrity and skill."

NEW YORK, N.Y., Dec. 19 (PinoyGlobal) - Today **Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao** is an international celebrity. The world toasts to his name. This is not rare to icons that are lionized for their excellence in their field of endeavor. Filipinos in particular are extremely proud of him and many open their houses to the erstwhile rough street boy who was selling cigarettes to make a few centavos a day for his family to survive. This is a paradox because in youth he barely had two square meals a day, much less a proper education. He must have even lived in a very modest house, the emblematic bahay kubo type.

The indifference of a world that has no pity for the poor may still be vividly in his mind. It was only yesterday when he was literally ignored like a pariah in the community because he came from a very poor and broken family. Now the door of opportunities are wide open to this once ostracized toughie, including movie roles offered on a silver platter that many would give their right arm to have. He is even made to believe that he can sing, for the world tends to exaggerate your talents when it takes a fancy on you. The poetess Ella Wheeler Cox aptly observed, "Laugh and the world laughs with you; Weep and you weep alone."

Today the world laughs with Pacman, for how long only God knows. He should be told that the most fickle institution is the public - when it over praises you

consider it a caveat. In my rearview mirror I can safely see that Manny is no exception. He too will meet his Waterloo. Unless he retires early while he is ahead, he will be crying alone in the end.

The flatteries are more intense now because he is cajoled to run for public office again despite his ignominious defeat for congressman only 2 years ago right in his own backyard Gen. Santos City. Absurd as it may seem, he may win hands down this time. Regrettably, he said after annihilating Oscar DeLaHoya in the ring that after three more big fights he will run for office. That remark indicates that the flatteries he is bombarded with every day by sycophants and admirers have already had a telling effect on his ego.

If I meet Pacquiao in person, which is highly unlikely because he is far away and surrounded by barracudas that want his money and use his name for their personal selfish agendas, I will tell him that he is already on top of the world. There is no public office or title that can outweigh the crowns he now holds as the greatest in his genre now and in the future. On this he is not only parochially idolized by our people back home, but by the whole world. Ergo, his name is far greater today than it could ever be if he pursues his political fantasies.

No matter what he does if he is elected it can never surpass the height he reached as a boxing icon. Not

even the presidency, which is quite remote for him to achieve, could compare with the honor and glory of lording over his turf (the ring). Not to mention that to be an elected official he would have squandered the money he earned through the blood, sweat and brutal punches he suffered in the ring.

His obsession to be in public office could provoke the curiosity of the people, who may ask why. Is he just complying to the politicians who surround him with their sordid vested interests, or is he truly earnest to solve the nagging poverty bedeviling the common man. Or is it because he wants to help eradicate corruption in the government, in which case, his credibility will run afoul with his good name because of the company he keeps who are the personification of corruption. In plain language his credibility would be in peril, where today he enjoys the tremendous trust of Filipinos who love him devotedly.

Hence I appeal to his rooters not to spoil and ruin the pristine image the world sees in him, and hand our national treasure and his innocence to the corruption in the government. Exposing him to politics is bound to undermine his unsullied integrity, thereby demolishing like a

castle of cards everything that he has achieved by his boxing prowess and feats in the ring abroad that is hard to duplicate by other Filipino boxers of this and future generations.

Candidly speaking, what can he really do for his constituents assuming he is elected congressman, senator or even president as he intimated in the interview after the bout with De La Hoya? At best or at worst he will be going down not up. Those patronizing him are guilty of disservice to the country because they would be removing the only source of pride and dignity the Philippines has enjoyed since he catapulted to the limelight in the international boxing arena of Las Vegas.

Going down to brass tacks, can he intellectually defend any measure he would propose in Congress? Manny must face the reality of his own limitations and face the truth that he could not be a politician.

As for me, I want him to be the boxing icon - a precious gem in the sports arena. Thus I appeal to all and sundry back home, particularly the politicians, not to rob us of this great athlete who has given the country back its honor with his integrity and skill. #