



Razor's Edge

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A Clash Of Personalities Almost Jeopardized Independence Parade

NEW YORK, NY June 14 (PinoyGlobal) - By the way, last June 8, Filipino Times had an exclusive get together with presidential candidate, Sen. Manny Villar Jr. This was held at the mansion of Cora Rivera at Fort Liberte, Jersey City. The occasion was made possible by Publisher Manny Agbanlog who went to the Philippines to invite Villar for this occasion, which was done in collaboration with Global Pinoy Online of Nonoy Mendoza.

Food was galore and extremely delicious prepared by the beautiful wife of Manny, Susan Abanlog. Large lobsters were overflowing and the Lechon was superb not to mention the Filipino cuisine of Susan.

The affair was a resounding success beyond the expectation of the Senator. A great number of noted Filipino community leaders came to meet Manny Villar. Even the mayor of Jersey City and an American congressman were on hand to meet him. For the record, Villar is consistently leading the presidential aspirants in all the surveys in the Philippines.

As moderator of the occasion I made it a point that only those designated to address the crowd spoke. Dr. Erie Agustin gave a very invigorating introduction of Villar that highly impressed the lawmaker as well as everybody around. Agustin knew the entire life of the senator, from his birth to his business successes and luminous political life. Architect who is also a commissioner, Zonny Lerum, gave a very warm welcome speech. Yours truly gave a three-minute pep talk outlining what we should ask him after 2010 when he wields the scepter of the presidency.

Sen. Villar's riveting talk inspired the listeners who were completely convinced of his innate love for our

people and concern for their welfare. His business acumen is a factor for his possible victory because it resonates with our chronic economic problems crying for immediate solution. Manny Abanlog gave a cogent closing-remark, hammering on the salient points the good senator struck in the course of his speech.

We did not invite the media because Filipino Times is more than adequate to disseminate what would transpire in the affair given the tremendous popularity of the paper. That is why we even banned the television people who were crawling like hungry vultures outside the premises. I marshaled the occasion and modesty aside it turned out exceedingly eventful.

Going to the issue of the day, unknown to the celebrating Filipinos at the Independence Day last June 7, in Manhattan, a high-tension drama was in progress that almost caused an incident. This was sparked by the haughtiness of Rebong. A pea brain lackey (a consulate underling) obviously, with the explicit instructions of Consul General Cecile Rebong, had the unmitigated gall of telling Senator Manny Villar Jr., who is a presidential candidate, to walk behind Rebong, Vice Pres. Noli de Castro and Ambassador Hilario Davide Jr. during the parade. This uncalled-for provocation caused the near tempest on the teapot!

Anybody in his position would explode and Villar was not in any mood to take the unbridled affront with the resignation of Job. He resented the order and threatened to walkout.

My informer said Villar even pulled ranks saying he would walkout because he outranked everybody, why should he follow Rebong and Davide never mind De

Castro who is vice president? Cecile Rebong herself is walking on an egg shell, anytime she will be winging back home soon with no clear designation yet.

On hearing Villar's threat she panicked. She has been calling the hotel phone of the senator endlessly trying to apologize but the damage has been done.

Why in the first place invite a dignitary only to belittle him by making him follow behind her – an inferior official? Either Rebong is incompetent or just too drunk with self-importance that she thinks even the probable next president is not deserving of the honor of walking with her?

Typical of lame duck Rebong (of bashing opposition leaders), instead of refraining from being too partisan when she has no business doing so as a consular official, she must have given instructions to her people whom to respect and whom not to among the visiting dignitaries. If that numbskull consulate subaltern did not withdraw the veritable insult a very embarrassing incident could have ensued.

In any case, her arrogance is a vestige of her days of wine and roses when she would be intoxicated by the adulation of photo-op sycophants who want to impress compatriots here that they are “VIPs” (VERY IMPORTANT PIGs) with her. How pathetic can they be legends in their own fossilized minds. Sporting that tag of “VIP” like branded monkeys just to appear in public, as Empress Rebong's retinue, is the height of presumptuousness!

Has it not occurred to her that Mayor Bloomberg himself is unimpressed of our yearly Independence Day parade? My informer says he did not attend our parade. Being a pragmatic politician, Mike Bloomberg will not waste his time walking in a parade with the same flock of mosquitoes marching with her year in year out? Our festivities are not even sound and fury: they are just egos in a slow motion working their way in the square jungle of Manhattan to “commemorate” our Independence from Spain.

Bloomberg is a no-nonsense politician: unhesitatingly, he would walk fifty miles in any of the Hispanic parades, be it Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican, Ecuadorian, etc. Their parades overflow with beautiful and well dressed people, than to be seen walking with Rebong and Davide behind whom are a handful aging mosquitoes whose faces the public is tired of seeing in every Independence Day Celebration. For that matter he will join any parade of Oriental people but not ours with the kind of miniscule crowd we have that depicts our unity in diversity or plainly, our disunity as an ethnic group here.

By the same token Sen. Villar, who is a presidential candidate, is not predisposed to pay homage to Rebong by walking behind her, De Castro and Davide. On this I am sure the Filipino-Americans in continental America are absolutely against such a discriminating attitude to one who barring unforeseen events, or massive cheating, is the next president of the Philippines.