



Razor's Edge

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The Day Of The Jackals

NEWYORK, NY Oct. 20 PinoyGlobal) - As usual, the preliminary comes prior to our main issue. Thunder is brewing in the political front and predictably the Palace tenant is the diva orchestrating the legal drama in the Supreme Court (SC). Atty. Romy Macapinlac, who is a tuta of madam Gloria Arroyo, spearheaded a petition in the SC to stop the Comelec from imposing the ruling that cabinet members who are running for public office next year, should resign their positions.

The petitioner argued in the high court that candidates are not under obligation to resign their jobs until the period of campaigning starts after they file their Certificate of Candidacy on November 30. I cannot divine the rationale of why they would want to wangle a few more days in office, when that would not make a bit of difference unless something is rotten in Denmark.

Will they exhaust the service oriented resources of their respective offices to enhance their chances of winning in the elections? Will those few days from now to November 30 spell the difference between victory and defeat? The whole enchilada is highly unlikely and it stinks, to boot.

Sure they will scrape the bottom of the barrel for the leeway of a few days. But is the nitty-gritty of it to loot their offices and abscond with the booty? From the ambiguity of the hidden purpose we can surmise a sinister plot. Oh, yes their legal arsenal will appear formidable but there will be nothing basically congruent with fairness to political opponents.

From the foregoing the electorate should be aware by now that administration candidates are already predis-

posed to less than ideal intentions, and therefore should not be trusted with elective positions that have a fixed tenure.

And now on with the main course. As early as my first years on radio and television as a political commentator back home, I always felt elated when listeners reacted to my views even when they disagreed with me. Their comments, good or bad, were euphonic to my ears because they proved I had listeners: that was highly encouraging for a budding broadcaster like me back then. To this day I sport the same mania: interaction from the public is a good chart in my ledger.

Accordingly, in my long years as a self-imposed fiscalizer (a word coined by Filipinos to mean - a critic of public servants going awry); I encountered some individuals who tried to be smart alecks by disagreeing with me at every turn. I have been called a harbinger of negative issues that irked their ears and sparked bad feelings in their hearts, which I took in the spirit of sportsmanship. I respected their contrapuntal views though many were puerile and downright stupid.

Nevertheless I hit back saying, read my lips: with your frame of mind it seems it has not occurred to you that wittingly or unwittingly you have assumed the attitude of a rampaging pit bull out to mangle or waylay someone who is trying to help our beleaguered compatriots. Accusing me of being negative does not hold water; it's utterly preposterous given my underlying well-meaning intention.

One crucial angle was ignoring the reason for my beef (fight), which was not with the government but with corrupt officials. Those who took issue with me were

shooting from the hips. Championing the cause of the nation is commendable not condemnable as their violent mental disposition presupposed.

Truth to tell, I merely embellished the issues to impact on our readers the error of electing recalcitrant venal politicians to office. On the theory that once bitten twice shy, people would know then what to do with scalawags seeking for election and this was to cast their names in the dustbin. Pretty much this was the message of my commentaries then and columns today.

If crusading against corruption is evil then I am wicked. But I beg to differ because noble intentions are shibboleths of goodness and can never be accursed with sordid motives.

There is nothing wrong with being a critic. What is wrong is misleading the public to be prejudice against honest-to-goodness critics whose consuming desire is to protect the welfare of Juan de la Cruz, not the selfish interests of political animals.

Ironically, those comedians who vilified me are themselves rabidly judgmental underscoring their unwarranted bias against the freedom of the press. Their convictions gyrated where the pot of gold under rainbow was, depicting the unreliability of their "principles." That more or less explains the folly of their critique against well-meaning journalists.

I have come to the conclusion that my detractors merely want to say, "Hey people, look at me, I am Ms./Mr. Elite who exudes refinement, and I am so sensitive that I cannot countenance negative language against anybody, be he a corrupt public official or Mr. Clean himself." Fine. But what would the world amount to without fiscalizers? For that matter, is it not conclusive that a government without anybody checking on its performance is bound to be abusive, because power is maddening? History is replete with instances of despots and tyrants born out of licentious governments.

What is worse, a critic that checkmates on rotten people occupying government positions, or cowards who close their eyes to the infernal ravages of poverty because they do not want to read or hear negative things like ostriches burying their heads in the sand when there is danger? The calamity of it all is that they even have the temerity to enjoin others to follow their despicable example of cowardice.

This hypocrisy, which is riddled with irresolution, is

an argument to abolish the media as a whole since bad news is printed in newspapers, heard on radio, disseminated on television and the Internet. But should we abolish the media to give in to the distorted minds of a few?

What would life be without press freedom? Democracy will merely be a paper tiger; it will not even prance like a horse marching in the streets. If with the Constitution guaranteeing our rights, still those freedoms are boldly trampled upon or violated by the very guardians (public officials) of those rights, what more if they were nonexistent, jettisoned by scoundrels in power? Whatever our problems now, without critics they will be dwarfed by the miseries that will cascade on the people if corrupt officials continue to rule the country.

My officious faultfinders are confirmed cowards! Disagreeing with me, on the guise that they cannot stand strong language, is the height of hypocritical cowardice, more so when they pretend to come as gurus or pedagogues, which is the refuge of a jackal. I am not intemperately swinging back at them without reason, but if there is anything I hate "kilig to the bones" it is hypocrisy. My retaliation is fraught with rightful indignation.

This is precisely why I salute Sen. Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal who has fought tooth and nail, hammer and tong former Senate President Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. until now, for illegally inserting P400 million into budget for the now notorious C-5 road extensions that benefit his property in the area. That puts Villar on the list of undesirable presidential wannabes, in my book.

In fact, Jamby used the very statement of a Senate official, a certain Adriano, who admitted in the investigation that he was told by Senate President Villar to order the staff to include those anomalous insertions. Jamby's naked courage shows that she has the solid balls of Pacquiao, fighting the Goliath Senate President at the time. Expectedly, it cost Villar his lofty position because soon after he was removed as Senate President.

Like I said in a previous column, my task as a media man or call it molder of public opinion, would be considerably sweet and easy if I just played the violin for the powers-that-be instead of bird-dogging them. Criticizing corrupt officials is even mild. There is a school of thought that if the government fails to serve the interest of the people it is the right of the citizens to revolt to change that government. I never encouraged this violent upheaval because I believe it unwise to burn the house just to kill a mosquito.

The infirmities in the government can be cured

with the election of candidates without blemishes to their integrity. Sen. Noynoy Aquino III is in the forefront of those running for president as a man of integrity.

Modesty aside, just as I have critics so do I have supporters who feel grateful that I take the cudgels for the poor because the elite conveniently play dumb for selfish motives that might impinge with their personal interests. But on the other hand, wouldn't it be grossly wrong to be unmoved by the miseries that our people suffer when hunger and poverty stalks the nation?

On some occasions I had readers kissing me unabashedly in Filipino restaurants and in the few parties I attended, making me feel I am as cute as a roly-polly Chinese baby whose slit eyes disappear when he smiles. Of course, these instances are isolated and even rare, but they nevertheless happened which disputes those who begrudge me for the "negative" I write about, according to them. Again they overlook the fact that I am just forewarning the people so that they are forearmed. Hasta la vista amigos.