



Razor's Edge

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Massacre Eyewitness Give Detail Story of Vicious Cruelty

NEW YORK, NY Dec. 14*PinoyGlobal*) - I literally went ballistic screaming as I read the testimony of the local official who was an eyewitness to the gruesome massacre in Maguindanao last November 23. I could not believe what I was reading that no less than Chief Inspector Sukarno Dicap, PNP deputy provincial police director was in cahoots with the insane Mayor Andal Amputuan Jr. on the macabre plan to kill everybody in the entourage of Mrs. Mangudadatu. The poor lady was only going to file her husband's certificate of candidacy for governor in Shariff Aguak.

Chief Inspector Dicap told the leprechaun looking mayor on the phone that "the Mangudadatu convoy already passed Tacurong City and fast heading to Maguindanao." Later he excitedly called back saying: "They are here Datu. We blocked the Mangudadatus. Here in Malatir." Right away, Andal Jr. told him "to look for the files of Toto Mangudadatu." That's how brazen he was about the motive behind the impending massacre.

That day was indeed a disgrace for the men in uniform because when the killing began Mayor Ampatuan ordered some policemen to help shoot the victims, which they did with alacrity! Mayor Andale himself shot some of the victims while laughing like a demented hyena enjoying his orgy of killing helpless men and women.

If it was not the account of a local official who witnessed the carnage, I would have thought someone was describing a fiction violent movie he just saw. This premeditated cold-

blooded bloodbath could not be possible in a civilized nation like the Philippines, so I believed. But the detailed story of the local official who witnessed the killings was so disarming my doubt was immediately erased.

The witness categorically testified that he heard Governor Andal Ampatuan Sr. tell his blood-thirty son on the i-com radio - "You know what you must do" - after the young Ampatuan reported "they are here already", alluding to the arrival of Mangudadatu's convoy. That was all his son needed to hear. At the spur of the moment he ordered his murderous hoodlums to shoot at will, which they did with gusto.

A media man, Jimmy PAL- AK Cabillo, who obviously knew Andal begged for his life saying "Ako ito Datu. Please have mercy. This is PAL-AK Datu." But the demon in human form (Andal) callously shot him just the same depicting his sterile heart which he got from his conscienceless father's murderous instinct. The older Ampatuan is notorious for his short temper. In the recent past he too murdered some political rivals and those who dared to defy him. With the father and son team the massacre last November was unstoppable.

Mayor Andal matter-of-factly told his men to finish those who still showed a heartbeat of life and make sure that they were dead. A casual listener is liable to conclude that he was talking about wild animals that had to be slaughtered until they are without any semblance of life. There were gorier details, which would be too tedious to recite here suffice it to

say the gridlock of murders on that fateful day in Maguindanao, was evident at the scene of the crime.

What I deplore is the reaction of our people and politicians who condemned the president for declaring state of emergency in that region, particularly Sultan Kudarat and Shariff Aguak that appeared to be the hotbed of political skirmishes and where the brutal killings and rape took place.

I have been lambasting the president on a lot of issues, but the state of emergency, which she just lifted due to the tremendous pressure from every sector of society, instigated by the opposition, was absolutely necessary to cope with the boiling situation in the area. The people and relatives of the Ampatuans were hostile and agitated enough already. They could have started a full blown rebellion on cue from the remaining head of the clan, after the subsequent arrests of many members among them Governor Andal Ampatuan Sr., the patriarch himself, his son Zaldy, governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) along with other elected Ampatuans who were picked up by the military and police as either suspects or directly involved in the dreadful murders. The relatives with private armies and unlimited guns and ammunition could have retaliated if the government was not fast enough to confiscate their war arsenal.

I went along with Pres. Arroyo on the state of emergency in that area simply because the Ampatuan clan is a living cancer that could strike violence on the country's wobbling peace and tranquility, and perhaps destabilize the nation completely. It is bad enough that the Philippines was on the news around the world describing it as a killing fields, a no-man's land or disaster waiting to happen. With the Ampatuans on the loose, the Philippines would really be a virtual Bermuda Triangle.

No doubt about it, the adverse propaganda had a telling effect on our tourism industry. Would-be tourists were intimidated with mortal fear to travel to the Philippines with the Ampatuans on the loose. They are the country's Bermuda Triangle on legs.

In a way I fill vindicated. It has been my tenacious conviction that the source of abuses and unchecked murders in a given province back home, is done by the controlling political

dynasties, which the government euphemizes as warlords with private armies. It never admitted that these so-called warlords are virtual demi-gods in whose hands the fortunes and lives of their constituents rest. Political dynasties are enclaves of power lorded over by a single family and everything happens on the say so of that ruling family. This is exactly how the Ampatuans dominated their region – with a murderous iron hand.

The euphemism is clearly to soft pedal the impact of the words political dynasty, which means governing a province with an iron-hand. And this is precisely what has happened in Maguindanao. The Ampatuan political dynasty ruled their people with tempestuous tantrums. No constituent would dare challenge or disobey them for to do so meant instant death the way Saddam Hussein's cruel son Uday dispensed justice during the halcyon days of his dictator father. Dismantle all the political dynasties in the country and peace will reign again while democracy is restored in our midst.

I never hesitated to write in my columns that the crime wave prevailing the country, has been the obra maestro of the demi-gods lording over their dynasties that thrives because of the political patronage they enjoy with the president for favors rendered during elections. In Maguindanao for instance, the enemies of Madam Arroyo as a rule would get zero in the polls, and her votes were always zoomed to the stratosphere via the "bawas-dagdag" (shave and add) method of cheating.

This is seen in the glaring discrepancies of the registered voters and the actual votes. For instance the population could only be so much in a given area and yet her votes would exceed the number of trees, birds and dead people in the small towns she wins with flying colors. This is possible because of the impunity enjoyed by the private armies terrorizing voters. Sad to say, the private armies are also part of the uniformed soldiers and policemen whose abuses come with the blessing of the Palace Tenant.

End political dynasties and you ink the will of the people once again in our democratic government: short of that peace and clean elections will just be an elusive dream, an ivory tower we can never live in.