



## Razor's Edge

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

### Joe Mari Mercader . . . **Villar: In Hot Seat**

**NEW YORK, NY Jan. 19 (PinoyGlobal)** - After all these months when both sides of the isles were slinging arrows with one another, the coup d' grace or bombshell, if you will, finally exploded on the face of Sen. Manny Villar Jr. He has been found guilty beyond the iota of a doubt by the committee of the whole, that he used his powers as Senate President to inset P400 million, which was later pruned down to P200 million in the now anomalous C-5 Road Extension Project.

The long awaited decision should quell speculations that he is the victim of persecution or that there was no such illegal insertion in the budget already appropriated by the Senate.

I did not cry wolf for nothing because the committee investigating Villar found him guilty as charged just I have anticipated. For a moment I was a solitary voice in the world of cynics who ignored me when I kept saying Villar is accountable for the reported anomalous insertion in the C-5 project based on the exposé I read in the news from home. Now it's not my indignation anymore but the committee itself saying he is guilty as sin. He who laughs last laughs best, isn't it?

Rather than worrying people may lose faith in him because the decision erases any semblance of innocence on his part, instead he unleashed his barking dogs to defend him. They came up with the silly suppositions that merely accentuated Villar's corruption in the mess. It portrayed him to be as crooked as a swine's tail or a corkscrew. The symphony he orchestrated capitalized on the time the decision was rendered, a few months before the elections. They claim that Manny's political enemies are afraid that "as an independent leader he will fight for the poor and our beloved country."

This rhetoric defies decency for if taking advantage of his lofty position, first as Speaker and later as Senate President, by appropriating billions to make the notorious snake roads in the C-5 project, is not wrong, then what is? Note that the controversial snake roads begin in his bailiwick of Paranaque and works its way to Cavite passing through his 23 subdivisions. If that is not anomalous, what is? I hope he stops helping the poor if he will only use them as an excuse to commit frauds and corruption when he becomes president.

If just by thinking of fighting for the poor the government is at a disadvantage already, you can just imagine when he becomes chief executive and gives in to his "passion" of serving Juan de la Cruz. The damage will be horrendous on the economy and social order - a tsunami disaster is more like it.

The poor would be better off praying for a miracle than for him helping them: every time he does it is he who benefits from Public Works projects traversing his real estate properties that actually hike their prices in leaps and bounds, while the government pays him for the right-of-way, on top. This is what I call double jeopardy, nay shameless exploitation.

So glaring is his guilt on the issue in question that the committee of his peers ordered him to return P6.2 billion to the government. The whole enchilada is itemized in this category - P4.28 billion for the extension, P 1.8 billion spent for the original project but was wasted due to the realignment, and the overpriced payment of P141 million in right-of-way for Villar's real estate companies. Therefore, if there was any profit made in such a project it went to him not the government that suffered from the damage, according to the report.

The ones that signed are his peers and that makes the decision more significant and impartial because he has already been rubbing elbows with them through the years, some of the senators could be his compadres and commadres, yet they had no choice but to render the verdict of guilty based on the facts and testimonies of witnesses. With their closeness it must have taken a lot of moral courage for them to decide against him.

If Villar and his cohorts question the moral competence of those who signed the verdict let me point to them the list of signatories who made the decision: Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Senators Edgardo Angara, Francis Pangilinan, Francis Escudero, Jinggoy Estrada, Benigno Aquino III, Juan Miguel Zubiri, Jamby Madrigal, Panfilo Lacson, Rodolfo Biazon and Manuel Roxas. Among those mentioned are legal luminaries. Surely, they will not risk a Supreme Court rebuff if they felt even a scintilla of doubt about his guilt. The possibility alone that the high tribunal acquits Villar should he succeed in establishing his innocence before the justices would greatly impair their prestige.

It is my educated opinion however, that when he said he will fight for the poor and our beloved country, he was actually sending a subtle threat that the moment he becomes president he will be their worst nightmare. Following the concept that man is hurt most if you hit his pocket and threaten his safety, Villar might just go after their assets and impact fear for their safety as the late dictator Marcos did when he declared martial law.

Let me stress the point that Sen. Loren Legarda who is Villar's vice presidential candidate was one of those who ousted him as Senate President. The reason is precisely because of his involvement in the anomalous C-5 project. Now she sings a different song, perceiving him no longer as the sinner but a saint. Does that make sense? Lady Sen. Jamby Madrigal aptly describes the situation as "political prostitution." Need I say more?

Dear readers, now that you know the facts about Manny Villar Jr., you can now vote according to your conscience. More importantly for vote for a man of integrity not someone who is a wheeler dealer!

Trivia: We Filipinos have a way of saying "anong say mo" when something we anticipate happens. I say the same to Floyd Mayweather Jr.: what can you say now that Pacquiao made it with flying colors as clean on drugs? We Filipinos new it all the time because we know Manny is an honest

boxer and God fearing. He will be the last man to commit fraud in the ring.

All his mega fights with big names in the boxing world were won through his profess as a boxer and not by devious means as Mayweather might be inclined to. The result of Pacquiao's urine test clearing him on drugs by the Nevada Boxing Commission should shot the trap of this coward who preferred to throw away \$40 million than to suffer certain humiliation of miserably defeated by Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao. He should stop making irresponsible statements deliberately intended to smear his opponent whom he mortally fears to face in the ring.

Floyd, where you having a hangover from over dose of ego when you made the innuendo that Pacquiao is on drugs and should therefore be suggested to the Anti-Doping test or the Olympic blood and urine tests? Pacquiao was immensely hurt by that accusation because he takes pride in having won the 7 boxing titles by his skill and well earned victories.

This is the reason he has not relented to bring the matter to court to prove to boxing aficionados who love watching him cave in giants in the ring that he is decency and a clean fighter. In fact he wanted to punish this braggart in their foiled scheduled fight by making Mayweather Jr., crawl in the canvas until he hightailed sporting a yellow bonnet in his head and around his waist a yellow sash. His ego cannot imagine him crawling in the ring for safety after Pacman fires his lightning punches on his mug and head.

The ruse made by Floyd frustrated millions of boxing fans around the world who wanted to see who is really master in the ring between the two boxing icons. This is now out of the question: Floyd has shown his true color which is blinding yellow. The fault is his towering ego that he lost \$40 million. Being an American he should not worry about losing to Pacman. He should pay tribute to sportsmanship by graciously accepting defeat in the same manner that he expects Pacquiao to recognize the greater boxer if the latter loses to him.

Pacquiao is fighting a much greater boxer in the person of Joshua Clotty. If he wins Mayweather will be irrelevant and worse he will not command the price tag offered to him if he fought Pacquiao. And if I were Pacman I will not give Floyd another change to ego trip. He should retire because Pacquiao will not have to prove anything after defeating Clotty.