

## Alec Baldwin's 'Filipina mail-order bride' remark irks senators

THREE senators took offense recently with the statement of American actor Alec Baldwin that he was thinking about getting a mail order bride from the Philippines.

Senators Loren Legarda, Ramon Revilla Jr. and Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said Baldwin's remark made the Filipina a subject of ridicule.

Legarda said by making the remark, Baldwin insulted the

Filipino race and *Pinays*.

"Incidents of mockery against our race happen again and again, again and again we must not fail in our strong condemnation and resounding assertion of our dignity," Legarda said.

"Let us make it clear to the world: Filipino women are not for sale. Not even for sale to Hollywood actors," she said.

Facilitating or arranging a marriage between a Filipina and a foreigner is prohibited under Republic Act 6955 of the Anti-Mail-Order Bride Law of 1990.

Zubiri said Filipinos should not let Baldwin's rudeness pass and that the actor must make a public apology.

Zubiri and Revilla said Baldwin must be declared "persona non grata" by the Philippines if he would not apologize.

Revilla said the remark "is truly insensitive and uncalled for."

"For him, it is funny but to the millions of Filipinos, it is mockery. Bad joke, not worth laughing," Revilla said in a statement.

Being a celebrity, Revilla said Baldwin should be more prudent in issuing statements.

"And he must know what he is talking about. Apparently, he is not aware that here in the Philippines we don't tolerate mail order bride schemes that is why we enacted the Republic Act No. 6955 or the Anti-Mail-Order Bride Law," Revilla said.

Revilla, also an actor, hit back at Baldwin, saying that if Baldwin's "arrogance" would be the basis, his bride would be surely "unlucky."

"Subukan niyang pumunta dito sa Pilipinas nang maghalo ang balat sa tinalupan (Try to come here to the Philippines and there'll be trouble)," Revilla said.

In his May 12 interview on *The David Letterman Show*, Baldwin said he would like to extend his family and have more children.

"I'd love to have more kids. I'm thinking about getting a Filipina mail-order bride at this point or a Russian. I don't care, I'm 51," Baldwin said.

The audience laughed at Baldwin's remark and prompted the show's host, Letterman, to say: "Get one for me (also), for later."

There have been several instances in the past when the Filipina had been degraded in international media. There was Teri Hatcher on *Desperate Housewives* saying she wanted to make sure she would not be attended to by a doctor who attended a medical school in the Philippines.

Then there was the BBC program *Harry and Paul* portraying a Filipina maid in undignified and laughable postures. A Hong Kong writer also called the Philippines a "nation of servants."

"To let this pass without a sound of protest is the height of insensitivity and callousness on our part, Filipino leaders," Legarda said. (*PhilStar.com*)

## Charice 'Note to God'

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Beyoncé's *Halo*, and Coldplay's *Viva La Vida*.

On the iTunes chart, Charice's single is ahead of Eminem's *Beautiful*.

Charice was again featured in a high-profile show on May 9 at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, where she performed with Foster in a tribute concert for Celine Dion.

**June 12 celebration**

On May 24, Charice will make her second appearance as a guest on the Italian musical variety show *Ti lascio una canzone* (Leavin' You a Song). Its producers reportedly insisted that she return after having sung in the

## Why GMA 7 junked RP's 'Idol' version

by BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.  
*Inquirer.net*

IT'S a harsh "reality" but it's a fact. GMA 7 program manager Hazel Abonita explained why the network didn't renew *Pinoy Idol* and, instead, launched a new reality singing contest, *Are You the Next Big Star?*

Abonita said FremantleMedia, "Idol" franchise owner, offered the show for renewal with GMA 7. "We asked for creative leeway to take Filipino culture into consideration, but Fremantle refused."

Pinoy peculiarities should be factored into the rules for a singing contest, she said.

**Crucial factors**

For instance, Abonita pointed out, "Filipinos are clannish, family-oriented and regionalistic. A Pinoy contestant gets full support from parents and immediate relatives, and even from extended family members and province-mates."

Can it be said then, that in the Philippines, wealth and the ability to buy text votes are crucial factors as well?

"Yes," Abonita conceded. "Also, our country is smaller compared to the United States, where voting in one state cannot affect voting in another state."

On *Next Big Star*, which premiered May 16, text voting is limited to the Bottom Three and the Grand Finals, director Louie Ignacio said.

"On this new show, the finalists will be narrowed down with the help of five judges and a jury composed of music professionals," he said.

Unlike *Pinoy Idol*, where the judges could only give comments to influence viewers, the new show counts the judges' votes in the final tally, said Perry Lansigan, executive producer.

**Viewer culture**

"The jury consists of representatives from campus choral groups, singers and teachers from UP, Lyceum, Ateneo," said Abonita. "Among the judges are Randy Santiago, Mon Faustino, Danny Tan, Pops Fernandez and Anne Quintos." The show is hosted by Regine Velasquez.

Abonita said these changes were culled from years of producing singing contests. "After three years of *Pinoy Pop Superstar* and a year of *Pinoy Idol*, we've learned to adapt to the culture of viewers."

Lansigan concurred. *Next Big Star*, he said, is "an original concept specially designed with Filipino culture in mind. It's tailor-made for the needs and preferences of *Pinoy*." ■


program's season premiere in April.

She comes home to Manila on June 8 to participate in the Philippine Independence Day celebrations on June 12. She flies back to the United States on June 13 to finish recording her album.

Charice's local music label, Star Records, has released her second Philippine album, *My Inspiration*, which features original compositions by Filipino songwriters and a cover of Helen Reddy's *You and Me Against the World*—in which she duets with her mother Racquel, who informally trained her to become a singer.

*My Inspiration* has likewise landed at No. 2 on the best-selling local albums chart of Odyssey Music & Video, a nationwide record store chain.


Charice is scheduled to have a major concert on June 27 at SMX Convention Center beside SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. ■



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