

# Fil-Am robbery case underway

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL  
AJPress

THE movie *Ocean's Eleven* inspired a Fil-Am to steal more than \$1.5 million from an Indian Casino, according to his attorney. Rolando Luda Ramos, 27, is accused of masterminding a million dollar heist at the Soboba Casino in the Inland Empire two years ago. This week Ramos and getaway driver Eric Alan Magdale Aguilera criminal trial got underway in the Inland Empire.

Ramos and Aguilera are charged with more than 10 felonies, including kidnapping, robbery, burglary, and false imprisonment. According to the Riverside Press Enterprise, Ramos attorney Richard Briones-Colman described the Fil-Am "a nerdy guy who makes dumb jokes" and had watched *Ocean's Eleven* about 50 times before the heist. Ramos had joked with Aguilera about hatching such a robbery while working as a security guard

and surveillance technician, processing millions of dollars daily, Briones-Colman said. Sheriff officials arrested Ramos at a hotel near LAX a few days after the heist. Officials allege that during the robbery, Ramos ordered ten employees inside the vault. He hog-tied and gagged several of the employees, and pepper sprayed at least one person before running off with an estimated \$1.5 million of cash inside a black duffel bag. ■

# Fil-Ams protest GMA's visit

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LOS ANGELES—THEIR chants from the street could be heard from inside the Sheraton Hotel. Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made a brief visit to Los Angeles and held a breakfast event at the Sheraton Hotel last Saturday, June 20. And demonstrators from across Southern California made their voices heard. Chanting, "What do you really want? What do you really, really want? Justice!" a group of about 20 Filipinos gathered outside the Sheraton protesting the president's visit. "We came here today to tell Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that we don't approve of her con-ass (Constituent Assembly) and human rights violations," said Kuusela Hilo, vice chairperson for Bayan USA.

"It's important for us to be here because we part of the Filipino people even though we are overseas," she added. "We support the country's economy but most importantly, we support the country and the movement to keep the country a national democracy. We don't want charter change." A few weeks ago, the Philippine House of Representatives passed a controversial resolution 1109, a Charter change measure seeking to convene Congress into a constituent assembly. Senate and House leaders are planning to vote on the issue next month. Meanwhile, other groups have set a Manila-wide protest rally on June 30 to start the countdown to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's last year in office, according to the Inquirer.net. ■

# Pinoy tries out for NBA D League

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Aguilar to the *Asian Journal*. "You get a chance to compete with other people trying to make it to the next level too. You know they are going to give it their best. You can see how you compare yourself with them." At 6'10", Aguilar has a big chance on making it to the NBA. The former Ateneo basketball star became the first Philippine born player to sign a Division I scholarship when he accepted a basketball scholarship to Western Kentucky University (WKU) two years ago. Now, he's hoping to be the first Philippine born player to make in the league. Coming out of the Philippines,

a lot of hype followed him to the US. However, nagging injuries while at WKU prevented him from fulfilling his potential. Despite the lack of production in college, NBA scouts in attendance at the pre-draft camp noticed the lanky Filipino game. "He's got a lot of potential," said Hernando Planells, Scout for the Director of Scouting Services for the NBA Marty Blake. "Athletically, he can run with the best big mans out there. He's long, athletic. He's great." Planells added, "Athleticism is the key to the game. Whether it's international or the NBA so I think he has the potential to do some damage."

Aguilar's coach during the two-day tryout was also impressed with the Filipino. However, he referred Aguilar as a bit of a 'tweener,' a player who is able to play two positions, but is not ideally suited to play either. "I liked that he's long," said Ben MacDonald, Assistant Coach for the Eerie Bayhawks of the NBA D-League. "He can run the court well for a guy his size. He has good hands. He finishes around the basket pretty well. He just needs to find his game." MacDonald explained that although Aguilar has the height of a big power forward or small center, that he's better suited as a small forward.

"He needs to find what kind of post moves he's able to make. He needs to make that outside 15 to 18 foot shot on a more consistent basis," MacDonald said. "I think what happened to him is that because he's so tall other coaches have made him into a center. I think he's better suited as a small forward especially in the NBA. And if he does play small forward, he needs better defensive skills because he'll be guarding guys like Kobe Bryant." MacDonald added that Aguilar should pattern his game after current Detroit Piston player Rasheed Wallace. MacDonald said that Wallace has great post moves and can make outside jump shots. Aguilar said that his experience during the pre-draft camp was great. He also said that it's going to be tough. "It's going to be hard but it's not impossible," said Aguilar. "This is just a stepping-stone. I've already spoken to a lot of teams. Hopefully, I can do well." Aguilar knows that he has a whole nation rooting for him. He

said that he's thankful for being able to be in this position. "Thank you to all the supporters out there," he said. "Hopefully, I can achieve my goals and people will recognize the Philippines." Aguilar will fly home to the Philippines this week. He'll join the Philippine National team that will compete in the Jones Cup and the FIBA Asia Men's basketball championships in China. Japeth Aguilar, is the son of former PBA star Peter Aguilar. (Joseph Pimentel)

# Treading the Ateneo Way

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sustained the telling of the highlights of the history of the university. Accompanying the text are rare photographs from the Jesuit Archives, culled and enhanced by the production team of this commemorative coffee table book. What actually brings the story and images together is the magnificent design concept that was well thought-out and wonderfully executed. The book not only contains astounding keepsakes from the old days but also captured moments from the recent success of the Blue Eagles at the University Athletics Association of the Philippines (UAAP). "The remarkable collection of black-and-white and sepia images alone serves as a scintillating reminder of how a distinctive timeline is etched in our memory, from the very beginning, when 10 Jesuit missionaries—six priests and four coadjutor brothers—arrived in Manila aboard the frigate Luisita on June 13, 1859, after close to a century of the religious order's expulsion from the Philippines in 1768," writes Philippine Star columnist and Palanca Hall of Fame honoree Alfred Yuson. *Balikbayan Magazine* reviewers agree. "The book is beautifully designed, making photographs speak for themselves, in an image-as-history narra-

tive. The well thought-out structure of the images and the history according to Fr. Arcilla gives the coffee table book a classic feel, a worthy remembrance of the long academic tradition of the Ateneo way of life and style," they wrote in its newly released July issue. *The Ateneo Way* is also set to reach American shores with the partnership of the Asian Journal Publications and Muse Books, the publisher of the coffee table book. Weeks after the release of the book to kick off the university's sesquicentennial, Asian Journal publisher and CEO Roger Oriel paid a courtesy call with Fr. Arcilla at the Jesuit Residence inside the Ateneo de Manila University Campus in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Joining him was Muse Books publisher Ramoncito Ocampo Cruz. "We are happy to bring this book to the Ateneans in the United States," says Oriel, after receiving a copy of the book from Cruz and Fr. Arcilla. The book will soon be launched in major cities in the US through Asian Journal Publications. For information, call at (213) 250-9797 or Media Wise Communications, Inc. at (632) 922-7583 / (632) 435-5725 or The Ateneo Sesquicentennial Secretariat at (632) 426-6001 loc. 4083. ■

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