

Filipina migrant among dead in NY massacre

PAGE A1 ◀

them Dolores Carbonilas Yigal, from Cebu province, who had been living in the United States for two years.

The dead included the gunman himself, Vietnamese immigrant Jiverly Wong, 41, who killed himself on hearing the approach of police sirens, officials said.

The center is a stepping stone for recent arrivals, many of them with poor or nonexistent English-speaking skills.

Yigal was learning English there as she dreamed of getting a job working with children, her American husband Omri Yigal said.

"She wanted to learn English so she could find work," he said.

Police arrived at the Yigals' house on Saturday night to tell him his wife was among the dead.

"They said she probably went quickly so she didn't suffer, I pray," Omri said in a shaky voice.

DFA condoles

Ed Malaya, spokesperson of the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs, said the Philippine Consulate General had sent an official to Binghamton to provide assistance to the Yigal family.

Binghamton has always been a lure for immigrants. More than 7,100 immigrants, most of them Asians, have settled in Binghamton since 2005, according to city statistics. They are a cosmopolitan mix of Kurds, Chinese, Filipinos, Africans, Iraqis—but only a fraction of the city's predominantly white population of 43,000.

Police Chief Joseph Zikuski said most of the dead had multiple bullet wounds.

It was the nation's worst mass shooting since the April 16, 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, considered the bloodiest killing spree in modern US history. On that day, a South Korean student majoring in English shot dead 32 people before aiming the gun at himself.

The bespectacled Wong, who had taken classes at the center to improve the broken English that had left him feeling isolated, had burst in wearing body armor and shooting two handguns—a 9 mm and a .45 caliber.

The dead included four Chinese nationals, Beijing state media said.

Receptionist was a hero

Receptionist Shirley DeLucia, 61, played dead, then called police despite her injuries and stayed on the line while the gunman remained in the building.

"She's a hero in her own right," Zikuski said.

DeLucia remained in critical condition. Police said she and three other hospitalized victims were all expected to survive.

Con Thi Thach, 53, an immigrant from Vietnam, had scuttled in late for her 10 a.m. English class, where other immigrants were taking turns trying to discern the meaning of the phrase "in the black." Some thought it might relate to the black market, others were puzzled at why a color would have any other meaning.

It remains unclear why Wong strapped on a bulletproof vest, barged in on the class and opened fire.

Perhaps most implausible of all is that the killer was one of their own—as well as a son of one of their own.

The gunman's father was well known in the area through his work years ago at the now-defunct World Relief Organization, helping new arrivals. He would hook people up with a doctor, help them get on food stamps. (*Inquirer.net*)

US Bank to look into investing in the Fil-Am community

PAGE A1 ◀

Richard K. Davis, Current Chairman of the Board, President, and CEO of US Bank and a few of his partners, visited and spent a few hours at SIPA headquarters on Thursday, April 2, to see "up close the great things that are happening here in Historic Filipinotown."

Davis was in Los Angeles to speak at Greenlining's 16th Annual Economic Summit at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels.

The *Asian Journal* caught up with Davis at SIPA and discussed the importance of the banking industry to reach out to ethnic communities.

AJ: Good afternoon Mr. Davis. Tell us what brings you out here today?

RD: I wanted to see some of the community activities that are supporting this great [Filipino] market. Historic Filipinotown is something that I have heard a lot about. [SIPA Executive Director] Joel [Jacinto] has spoken a great deal about it. Bob of Greenlining is also very supportive of this and he wanted us to see up close the great things that are happening here."

AJ: When I was listening in to the presentation a moment ago, you had mentioned how completely unaware you were of the potential of the Filipino community. Please elaborate on that.

RD: Well, it's a joint responsibility. You guys [Filipinos] need to tell your story better and we need to listen better. Days like today really move those things together. We had a chance to come out and see it first hand, we had a chance to have our attention completely focus on what your mission is, and now, we'll be much more focused on helping in the future."

AJ: How important is that to collaborate with ethnic communities like you had mentioned during the presentation the Hispanic, and now possibly the Asian market?

RD: It's very important but it's not just ethnic. Banks are supposed to be in the community. In the original days, 150 years ago, when banking started it was all about helping the community. Banks basically took money from customers that needed to be safely kept and would turn around and lend it to people who have a dream. And a 150 years later, here we are in different communities. What's so neat about this and Historic Filipinotown and everything that you guys have all done is it gives us another place to find that core or that nerve center so we look forward to opportunities like this to get closer to communities and [the Filipino community] has done a great job creating a place to gather.

AJ: You just toured Historic Filipinotown, what's your reaction? What do you think of this place?

RD: We did [tour Historic Filipinotown]. It's great. It seems to me you [Filipinos here] have a great opportunity to tell your story outside of Filipinotown... From what I understand this is the gateway for people as they immigrate into the states, they often come here to this community and what I would say to you is when they move out to the Greater Los Angeles County and Orange County and other places to keep coming back here [to Historic Filipinotown] as their place to keep connected.

AJ: Last question, where do you go from here now that you know about the Filipino community and have attained all this knowledge about us?

RD: Well, I came here with the head of our business in California. We have a number of [Filipino] employees. So we are going to go back and learn more about our own involvement with the Filipino community, Filipinotown, and our own employees who are Filipino. We'll take this as a learning step to see what we can do more for us, for you [the Filipino community] and together we'll be better. (*Joseph Pimentel*)

OFWs holding on to cash, says labor group

PAGE A1 ◀

In a best-case scenario, the ILO said up to 30 million people could be out of work.

The labor leader also said the government report did not include OFWs who lost their jobs because their foreign employers did not renew their contracts.

While he respected the decision of many OFWs to boost savings and spend less due to the economic turmoil, he said the cut in spending "is not good, as this could send the local economy into a deeper slump."

The crisis should compel the Philippines to coalesce with oth-

er leading remittance-receiving countries, such as India, Mexico, China and Russia, and push for lower global money transfer charges, he added.

Herrera said OFWs and their families here could save up to \$1.1 billion (P52.8 billion) annually if current money transfer fees

that average 13.5 percent per transaction would be cut by half.

Citing World Bank projections, the TUCP said foreign workers around the world would most likely send home only \$290 billion this year —\$15 billion short of the \$305 billion they sent home in 2008. ■

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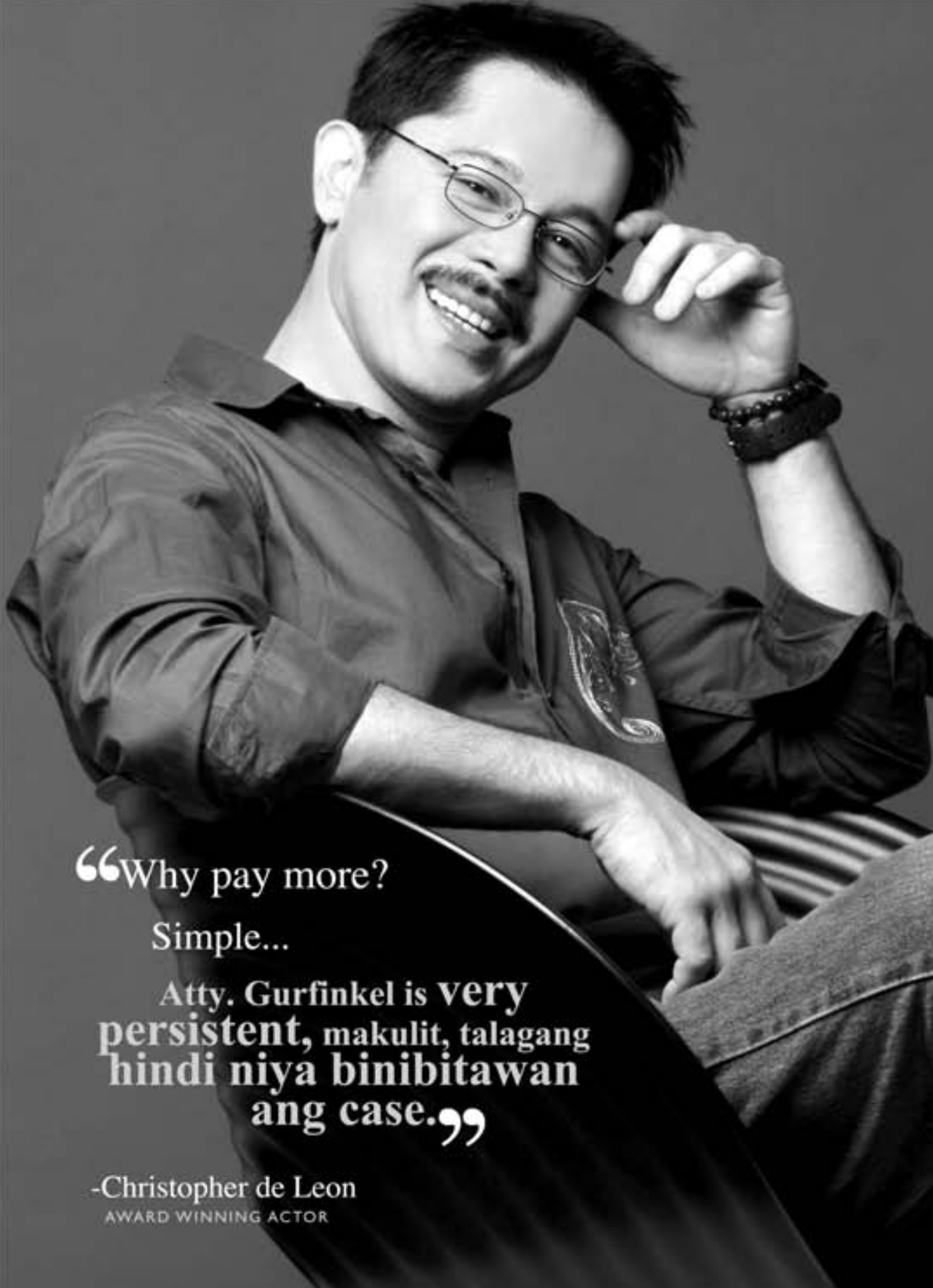
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