

"THE FRAME-UP OF NARCISO & PEREZ"

SCRIPT EXCERPTS

A Political Satire

By

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Written and Performed as part of the organizing campaign to free the two immigrant Filipina nurses, PI Narciso & Leonie Perez who were falsely charged with the multiple murders of their patients at a Veterans Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1979.

CAST

3 FBI Agents

Jessica, cub reporter for the Fil-Am Star

Mrs. Bayani, publisher-editor of the Fil-Am Star

Dr. Lindenauer, V.A. Hospital administrator

MUSICAL PROLOGUE: "The FBI Song" intro is played. (Actually, it's the opening theme from the 1950s TV show, "Dragnet." As the music plays 3 FBI agents sneak in from behind the audience. They hold "magnifying glasses" as they make their way to the stage, searching for clues among the audience including people's shoes, bags, hair and facial moles, etc. Arriving on stage they sing:

FBI:

FBI, we're the FBI
And we found and identified
Poisoners in the hospital
It has to be, those two foreigners!

We're the best, like on your TV sets
FBI, we have not failed you yet
Poisoners in the hospital
It has to be, those two foreigners....

They exit.

Jessica enters in soliloquy, practicing to herself)

JESSICA:

"Hello, I'm Jessica Marquez, star report for the Fil-Am Star." Or how about: "Hello, I'm Jessica Marquez, crime reporter for the "Ann Arbor Times." Hmm... No, why not: "How do you do,

I'm Jessica Marquez, investigative reporter for the "Detroit Free Press." (returns to reality with a sigh) Actually, I'm just Jessica the cub reporter at the Fil-Am Star. But just wait and see, that's going to change someday! If only my editor, Mrs. Bayani could see how good I really am. Oh, Mrs. Bayani, Hello!

Mrs. Bayani enters, she is a rather condescending, matter of fact individual)

MRS. BAYANI: Hello Jessica, listen, I've got a very good assignment for you today, it's about...

JESSICA: (resigned for the inevitable) Let me guess, the Mrs. Filipino-America beauty contest.

MRS. BAYANI: No, not that...

JESSICA: Oh, then whose baby is having the baptism reception?

MRS. BAYANI: Jessica, listen. Johnny Quinto is out sick with the flu so I'm reassigning one of his stories to you. It's not too difficult a piece.

JESSICA: Oh thank you, Mrs. Bayani! I won't disappoint you, I promise!

MRS. BAYANI: There's not much to research because the FBI already finished their investigation.

JESSICA: The FBI!

MRS. BAYANI: Yes, they arrested two Filipino nurses: Filipina Narciso and Lenora Perez and charged them with conspiracy, mass murder and the poisoning of 58 patients at the Veterans Hospital in Ann Arbor.

JESSICA: Two Filipino nurses? Mass murder and poisonings?! Oh, my god this sounds big!

MRS. BAYANI: It's big alright -- a big disgrace to the Filipino community. Unfortunately their terrible crime is so shameful that all our people will be seen in a bad light. We must share in their shame! The FBI has investigated thoroughly. It's an open and shut case against these nurses.

JESSICA: Why do you talk like they're guilty when they haven't even had a fair trial?!

MRS. BAYANI: The two women have practically confessed their guilt. The administrator at the hospital, a Dr. Lindenauer, has made a

statement to the press. According to him, many of the patients are elderly war veterans and Narciso & Perez took pity on their sufferings. They must have poisoned them to put them out of their misery.

JESSICA: Smells pretty fishy to me. Well, I'll just have check it out when I get to the hospital.

MRS. BAYANI: Yes, but don't get carried away, Jessica. All I want is an interview with this Dr. Lindenauer and an F.B.I. representative -- after all, they are the highest authorities in this case. So now it's in the hands of the courts. (starts to exit) Oh be sure to come back in time to cover tonight's beauty queen contest.

(Mrs. Bayani exits)

JESSICA: How mysterious! How serious! But how exciting!

(Jessica grabs her coat and bag and rushes off in the other direction)

[NOTE: The next excerpt takes place several scenes later, Jessica has interviewed not only the FBI spokesman but Narciso & Perez's co-workers. The co-workers believe the two are innocent. They also spill the beans to Jessica that procedures at the hospital are poorly managed and incompetent. Understaffing is at a dangerously low level. There is poor security at the hospital so unauthorized personnel and strangers wander in and out, including patients from the mental ward. Several staffers saw a mysterious man in a green hospital gown and surgical mask at the bedside of several patients who soon afterwards died of respiratory arrests from Pavulon poisoning. There is not even a paging system in the hospital. The staff have been complaining to the administration for months since the first of the mysterious deaths. Jessica is angry at what she's found out. By the time she interviews the hospital administrator, Dr. Lindenauer, she is firing one question after another.]

JESSICA: Dr. Lindenauer, did that witness, the patient -- actually see Nurse Perez in the act of poisoning him with Pavulon?

LINDENAUER: Well, uh... not exactly

JESSICA: No? And can't this Pavulon be administered without the patient realizing it by diluting it into an I-V bag thus causing respiratory failure hours later? Therefore such testimony would not be sufficient proof?

LINDENAUER: I don't see why not.

JESSICA: Dr. Lindenauer, some of the poison victims were young and had only minor illnesses. How do you explain that in light of your theory that the nurses carried out mercy killings on aged and seriously ill patients? So Narciso & Perez could possibly be innocent, right?

LINDENAUER: (dismissive) Oh, well, never mind that. We also have a note written by one of the attack victims just before he lapsed into unconsciousness. Obviously, he was writing down the name of his poisoner. He wrote: "P-I-A." That's Nurse Narciso's nickname -- the initials "P.I." stand for "Philippine Islands."

JESSICA: (sarcastically) Oh really, well what about the letter "A?" What does that stand for?

LINDENAUER: Well, the poor patient was only half conscious and could not have been sure of the spelling.

JESSICA: How do you know the initials P-I-A didn't stand for something else?

LINDENAUER: (stressed out, overwhelmed) What else could it stand for?

JESSICA: "Pain in the Ass!" Dr. Lindenauer, aren't you afraid the court will probably throw out that evidence as inadmissible?

Musical intro to "Lindenauer's Lament" (the pop song, "Feelings"). Jessica fades into the background as Lindenauer sings his soliloquy.

LINDENAUER:

Questions!
All I get are questions
Questions from all sides of me
How can I reply?

Answers!
I've got to find new answers
The ones that I have up my sleeve
Have too many flaws!

Poisoner!
I don't know who's the poisoner
I had to think of someone
To get me off the hook.

Unfeeling
I became unfeeling

So I can blame these poisonings
On anyone I want

Why not!
Narciso & Perez
The suspects are so many
Let these two take the rap

My side!
The FBI's on my side
They came and built a case for me
And now we've got it closed!

Oh, Normal!
I want it back to normal
No questions and no pressure
(repeat and fade out)

Lindenauer exits.

NEXT SCENE: By the end of the day Jessica is back at the office of the Fil-Am Star with Mrs. Bayani.

JESSICA: So that's everything I uncovered, Mrs. Bayani.

MRS. BAYANI: Shocking! This is astonishing news!

JESSICA: Yes, but it's also good news. Narciso & Perez must be innocent!

MRS. BAYANI: By God! I'm going to write my editorial on this. I like your theory, Jessica that this is a cover-up for incompetence and negligence at that Veterans Administration hospital. The goal of hospitals is to provide decent health care, 'di ba? But that's criminal negligence going on there! And I can appreciate your angle on discrimination, too. It's really intertwined, no? In a cover-up a scapegoat is needed -- someone who others can be suspicious of -- minority people have historically been prime targets. (excited about these ideas) And immigrants too, as opposed to citizens! Immigrants who can be more easily intimidated! And who are considered expendable!

JESSICA: Less nurses and less security staff equals more profits. "Profits over people," I think that's how the saying goes!

MRS. BAYANI: This is going to be a very important editorial, Jessica! My outcry against national and racial discrimination! Uy -- Uh... am I being too radical?

JESSICA: Mrs. Bayani, sometimes I think the truth brings one to radical positions. Why, I wouldn't be surprised if you started writing pamphlets and leaflets next!

MRS. BAYANI: Pamphlets and leaflets?!

JESSICA: Yes! To reach out to as many people as possible! You know, to build support and get people to protest to the courts.

MRS. BAYANI: Well, we do need to inspire community forums and house meetings to take place.

JESSICA: Yes, a movement of protest throughout the whole country. We're talking about the power of the people over the power of the FBI! Over the government!

MRS. BAYANI: I haven't felt this good in years!

TOGETHER: (to the audience) Will you come and support the movement to defend Narciso & Perez!?!

END