Kris Aquino reacts to allegations that Noynoy had psychological problem

By: Noel Orsal

Kris Aquino mocked the medical bulletin's "lack of research." "My brother, for as long as I've known him, has no alcohol tolerance, namana niya 'yan from my dad. As in he breaks out in highs pag umiinom, so hindi talaga 'yan ever naglasing. Anybody who knows us talaga, and then, di ba, gagamit ka pa ng priest na ang daling ma-interview? Kaloka, sana gumamit sila ng ano talaga, somebody na namatay na now, para hindi na puwedeng i-refute, di ba?" she told PEP in an exclusive interview.

Mark Angelo Ching

In Philippine politics, every election year is not only about candidates wooing the voters. It's smear-campaign season. Candidates belonging to rival political parties are usually targeted in contests that range from criticism to outright mudslinging.

For instance, in the 1992 national elections, Miriam Defensor-Santiago called rival presidential candidate Fidel V. Ramos a "liar" and a "thief." Ramos then called Defensor-Santiago "hysterical." In 1998, Joseph "Erap" Estrada's womanizing habits were used against him. In 2004, Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was repeatedly called "corrupt."

Character assassination figured even way back, during the 1897 Tejeros Convention, the first presidential poll in the country. During the day of the voting, where Emilio Aguinaldo emerged victorious, a demolition job against his contender, Andres Bonifacio, was carried out in which the Philippine hero was accused of embezzling the funds of Katipunan, the revolutionary group that he founded.

This year's mudslinging, however, takes the cake as the most vicious in recent history. Perhaps it's because the May 2010 elections is a make-or-break situation for the Philippines—a disastrous election could seal the country's doom, many people fear.

Sen. Manny Villar's alleged secret ties with Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo still hits the headlines, along with assertions that he was not really born poor as he claims. Sen. Noynoy Aquino is continually called "incompetent." Former President Joseph Estrada, on the other hand, is still being hit with previous accusations against him. Sen. Jamby Madrigal's gender is even questioned.

NOYNOY'S ALLEGED PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS. The target of the most recent mudslinging effort is Sen. Aquino, who was accused of being mentally incapable of leading the country due to psychological problems.

Actress and TV host Kris Aquino's reaction to these recent allegations against her only brother is a mix of amusement and displeasure.
In an exclusive interview with PEP (Philippine Entertainment Portal) managing editor Karen Pagsolingan yesterday, April 12, the Queen of All Media said she wants to laugh that the accusation was "fake" and lacked research. She is also offended that her mom, former Pres. Corazon Aquino, was "blamed" in the bogus medical report as the cause of Noynoy Aquino's "depression."

"Siguro, matatawa ka na lang talaga, kasi gagawa ka na lang ng something fake, hindi ka pa nag-research nang maayos. Hahaha! Di ba? Kung gusto mo na paniwalaan ka, do your research, hello?" said Kris mockingly.

She added, "The only thing I totally, totally want to express my extreme displeasure about is they drag my mother into it. Kasi, di ba, part of the psychiatric or psychological evaluation was that Noy became depressed dahil sinasamahan niya ang mom. Di ba? Sa psychiatrist, gano'n. E, parang gusto ko silang murahin lahat because why are they are dragging my mother, who's already in heaven, into an issue like this?"

In the spirit of accuracy in journalism, PEP looked for a copy of the medical bulletin of Noynoy on the Internet. The only blog that posted the bulletin, Political Amateur (politicalamateur.wordpress.com), was entirely deleted on April 9. A cached copy of the blog, however, can still be viewed in Google. Pinoy Gossip Boy, on the other hand, posted jpg photos of the three-page document.

Page one of the medical bulletin states that Aquino's alleged condition was discovered when he accompanied his mother to her psychiatrist.

**ABS-CBN REPORT.** On April 8, ABS-CBN's *TV Patrol World* reported that Sen. Noynoy Aquino allegedly suffered from bouts of severe depression.


The news anchor added, "Nakapirma sa dokumento si Father Carmelo "Tito" Caluag. Thirty-six years old si Aquino noon at senior manager sa Hacienda Luisita."

While Davila was speaking, *TV Patrol* showed onscreen the details of the said psychiatric record. It stated, "History of Present Illness: The patient is 36-year-old single male with a history of profuse salivation and labile moods since his childhood. His sister reported that he had been listless, withdrawn and depressed over the past 10 days."

It added, "He was preoccupied with his inner thoughts, brooded and felt melancholy. He appeared quite elevated and irritable when he spoke of the loss he was feeling when he recounted his relationship with his girlfriend." Davila said the girlfriend referred to in the report was a flight attendant.

The disputed report also revealed that Aquino allegedly smokes two packs of cigarettes a day, that he experimented with marijuana as a teenager, and that he was a solitary drinker.
In the end, the report said, "Recommended treatment in continuing, regular psychotherapy sessions, including CBT [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy], until the depressed state of the patient is lifted."

Davila continued, "Nakausap namin si Aquino sa kampanya niya sa Nueva Ecija, at itinanggi ang nilalaman ng record. Itinanggi rin ni Father Caluag na may pinirmahan siyang psychiatric form ni Aquino."

**AQUINO REACTS.** In the same segment of *TV Patrol World*, Ces Oreña-Drilon, who was in Cabanatuan City with Sen. Aquino, narrated the presidential aspirant's reaction.


"Nagpahayag din ng pagkakadismaya si Senador Aquino, dahil kailangan niyang tumugon sa mga walang basehang akusasyon na ipanapakalat sa Internet, at sa text," the reporter said.

ABS-CBN showed Sen. Aquino talking to Oreña-Drilon. He said, "Tito Caluag will be one of the first people to tell you he would have difficulty recalling when I ever drank from the time when I was a student to the present. I have a low tolerance for alcohol."

Oreña-Drilon asked Aquino: "You would almost say it's a fake?" The solon just nodded his head.

Oreña-Drilon then addressed the viewers. "Sabi ni Senador Aquino ay inaasahan din niyang magsalita ang Psychology Department ng Ateneo. Kaya lang ay kailangan idaan sa tamang proseso. Pero formal nilang itinatanggi na meron silang ginawang psychiatric evaluation form ukol kay Senator Aquino."

She continued, "Sinabi ni Senator Aquino na noong 18 years old siya ay na-heartbroken siya sa isang girlfriend. Sabi niya may mga detalye doon na siguro half-truth ano? Totoo nga na unang-una siyang na-in love noong panahon na 'yon at na-heartbroken siya kaya't parang na-depress siya.

"Pero yung ibang detalye doon, kagaya ng nakalagay din na sa report na 'yan na ang una niyang trabaho sa kanyang pagbalik sa Pilipinas ay sa Hacienda Luisita. Sinabi niya na ang una niyang trabaho ay sa Mondragon. At ukol naman sa pag-iinom, alam naman ng mga kaibigan niya na hindi siya...mahina ang tolerance siya sa alcohol at hindi rin siya umiinom ng pinagbabawal na gamot. Yun ay tahasang itinanggii ni Senador Aquino."

(Mondragon Philippines once held exclusive distributing rights to Nike apparel in the country.)

"Unang beses niya lang talaga nakita yung report na 'yan, at sabi niya, natawa na lang siya na sabi niya, na hindi na talaga karapat-dapat na tugunan ang mga nilalaman nung dokumento na 'yan," Oreña-Drilon said in ending the report.

**VILLAR REACTS.** ABS-CBN's report did not carry the reaction of Sen. Manny Villar, Nacionalista Party's standard bearer. On Saturday, April 10, Villar was interviewed in dzMM, where he denied that the document came from his camp.
The presidential aspirant, however, asserted that Aquino should refute point by point the issues raised in the document, instead of completely dismissing it as black propaganda.

"First of all, that document did not come from us. But the allegations were serious. Did he really consult a doctor? At least, he denied he ever saw a psychiatrist. For example, did he really use marijuana? The allegations of major depressive disorder, is that true or not?" Villar told dzMM.

Villar said voters have the right to know the state of health of candidates running for office. This is why he challenged Aquino to undergo a psychiatric evaluation exam.

"There's a far more dangerous scenario than the blind leading the blind, and that is for a mentally challenged person to lead a nation of millions," he said.

Aquino has refused Villar's offer, asking his opponent to take a lie-detector test instead.

"REVEAL YOUR SOURCES." On April 9, the day after the TV Patrol report, NP spokesperson and senatorial candidate Gilbert Remulla asked ABS-CBN to reveal the alleged sources from his party that sent them the document.

In a report from the network's news website, Remulla was quoted as saying that the document could not have come from them because the six possible sources—Sen. Manuel Villar, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, Rimpy Bondoc, Adel Tamano, NP executive director Atty. Vicky Loanzon, and himself—have "already denied that they were the source of the document."

Remulla added that had they been the source, they would not give the documents to ABS-CBN, which they perceive as "biased" for Aquino.

The former ABS-CBN reporter also added that the credibility of both ABS-CBN and NP would be "in jeopardy" if the sources are not revealed. If the network still does not choose to reveal the sources, Remulla said it should offer an apology.

STANDING THEIR GROUND. In a statement released on the same day as Remulla's statement, Maria Ressa, head of ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs, said they will stand their ground and they will not reveal the names of the sources of the document.

"We respect the confidentiality of our sources. While it's tempting to take the Nationalista Party's challenge, it violates a sacred rule of journalism.

Two sources from the Nacionalista Party - independently - gave ABS-CBN an alleged psychiatric analysis of Sen. Benigno Aquino III before it started to spread online and on text.

Two weeks ago, we revealed that sources from the the Liberal Party gave ABS-CBN documents questioning Sen. Manuel Villar's ad before the information spread online and on text.

It's our job to be transparent to the public we serve."

"IT'S FROM NP." Despite NP's denial that it was the source of the document, Kris Aquino still believes otherwise.

"Hello, it came from Karen Davila's mouth [herself], na it was Nacionalista Party that gave her the report. And we have that on tape," Kris told PEP. "Okay, ganito yun. My sister was about to have dinner na, so tinape niya talaga at ni-record niya yung TV Patrol that night... So we have it,
na sinabi ni Karen na Nacionalista Party ang nagbigay sa kanila nung tape. She gave the report and she said that on the national television. Oh, hello, hindi pa ba klaro kung gaano ka-desperate sila?"

Kris said she was only reacting because she wants to stress that former President Cory Aquino cannot be dragged into this issue.

"Di ba, parang for all Filipinos, we respect the dead and we allow them to be in peace. And I don't think my mother who restored democracy for our country will accept this kind of treatment."

She and her sisters will not be derailed either by mudslinging instances like these, Kris added.

"Why will we waste our time? Every single day of our lives we're campaigning. My sisters are now in Antique, and I don't know kung saan-saan sila nangangampanya. My sister Viel naman is finalizing because Governor [Vilma Santos] is shooting a commercial with Noy on Saturday. And me tomorrow [April 13], I'll be in Tarlac! So, parang wala kaming time na pagpaguran sila kasi mas pinagpaguran namin ang Philippines, ang Philippines, all-out ang support kay Noy, so manigas na lang sila!"