

The Beatles' Worst Nightmare in Manila

By Oliver X.A. Reyes | May 24, 2017

60-76 minutes

In 1966, **The Beatles**—the greatest rock band in the history of the world—came to Manila to perform. The reception we gave them then was less than ideal. Here is the story of how we repelled The British Invasion and lost our souls.

In late 1991, a long silenced frequency rekindled on Philippine television sets with the plaintive chant, "Love, love me do. I'll always be true. You know I love you. So please..."

The Associated Broadcasting Company, once the crown jewel of Philippine television, had started to broadcast once more, 19 years after its operations were shut down by President Ferdinand Marcos as he declared martial law. The dictator was afraid of the free press, of the Roces family that had owned not just ABC-5, but also the Manila Times. Marcos

was ousted and now dead, so the station was now free to plead to the public once more, "...love me do."

The Beatles starred in the test broadcasts that ran for months on ABC-5 before its regular operations rebooted in February 1992. Cable television barely existed then. For loungers of every age who were not fans of Sesame Street or the weekday soaps, the hour-long Beatles reel that had newly invaded the TV space was the ideal afternoon distraction. Chronology dictated that The Black-and-White Beatles of Ed Sullivan fame lead the show: they with haircuts that only barely transgressed the ears, they with the sappy lyrics and simple but infectious beats, when the syncopations were steady. These were the Beatles, in now ghostly black-and-white, at whom the teenagers (also now black-and-white ghosts) screamed at, perhaps the most famous moments of hysteria ever captured on video.

Roll over Beethoven, but the Tchaikovskys would have been only barely threatened. Then the televised discography roughens. In "I Want to Be Your Man", Ringo suddenly, finally, sings. It is a primal growl. The reel itself at this point abruptly shifts from the clean lines of early videotape into grainy film, filmed guerilla style, the close-ups less

available. As we enter the Revolver era, the Beatles are in color but the hues are dark, moody. Beards emerge, and soon enough, we see the luscious locks of the Maharishi. It then ends, at the rooftop of the Apple headquarters at 3 Saville Row, just before the band defenestrates. We learn of a place called Tucson, Arizona, where one could not score California grass. They warn us, *Get back. Get back. Get back to where you once belonged.*

Beatles *alis diyan!* They most certainly would have been cursed at—Beatles, *puta ang mga ina ninyo!*—but newspapers would not have printed the curse words. Think of the children, you see. That’s most certainly what Imelda Marcos would have thought, standing in the Music Room of Malacañang Palace with her children (Irene, Imee, and Bongbong) and 400 of the would-be-luckiest children of Manila, waiting for 11:15 a.m. to arrive on that Fourth of July morning in 1966. The Beatles turned Godot; dictators have no patience for the absurd. Why won’t they think of the children?

Of the Beginning, of the Beginning

You're Working for No One But Me

Just Let Me Hear That Rock and Roll Music

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Of the Beginning, of the Beginning

British invaders in the Philippines have been eccentric footnotes. In 1762, 450 soldiers of the 79th Regiment of Foot were roused from their idle sleep in India and instructed to invade Manila in line with the Seven Years' War then being waged by the Kingdom of Great Britain against the Kingdom of Spain. The British Army was supplemented by around 2,000 Indian Sepoys. Manila was seized with relative ease, yet within a few years, the British army

had voluntarily slunk away, but many of the Sepoys chose to retreat instead into Cainta, where they raised families. Unlike in many other British colonies, no vestiges of English culture were imprinted on the Philippines; teatime remains the exclusive preserve of The Peninsula Manila (established 1976). But in London, before the adventure had gone sour, the public was enjoined to support the Manila expedition with a song to the tune of the patriotic ballad, “The Roast Beef of Old England”, with lyrics that now began: Let’s away to Manila, the pride of Old Spain/
Where with gold silk and diamonds great plenty doth reign.

On May 13, 1922, the British battlecruiser HMS Renown sailed into Manila Bay escorted by two destroyers. The Americans by now were occupying Manila, and Governor-General Leonard Wood made sure that the highest military honors, including a 21-gun salute, would greet His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, the heir to the British crown.

Thousands lined the streets to catch a glimpse of the would-be head of the English Anglican Church; the fences that held back the waiting crowds staked out at F.B. Harrison Street nearly collapsed.

The *New York Times* reported then that the future King Edward VII was “the first heir to the throne of a

world power to visit the Philippines.” Within hours after arriving, at the playing fields of the Manila Polo Club (then situated in Pasay), the Prince of Wales was the victim of violence. A wooden polo ball whacked by Captain Rutherford L. Hammond of the American Ninth Cavalry had struck the Prince right over the right eyebrow, leaving an inch and a half gash. His Royal Highness’s white breeches were stained with blood, his head rested in the lap of a commoner—a journalist—as the physician dressed the wound at the scene. As he left the polo grounds, the Prince of Wales waved to the crowd, remarking, “I certainly enjoyed the periods I played.” Upon the doctor’s advice, the Prince had to decline attendance at the reception staged in his honor at Malacañang Palace. Still, the women of society swooned.

King Edward VII’s great flaw was not the lack of romantic discipline that cost him his crown, it was his friendship with and admiration for Adolf Hitler. “It would be a tragic thing for the world if Hitler was overthrown,” he told a journalist in 1941, as the Luftwaffe was raining bombs over populated British cities. John Lennon himself claimed (falsely) that he was born during one such air raid in Liverpool on the night of October 9, 1940. Paul McCartney’s parents,

Jim and Mary, first met while stranded together in a basement shelter during an air raid.

The war also had the most profound impact on a hotshot lawyer and acquitted assassin named Ferdinand Marcos. While the actual war records of Marcos have since been clouded with reasonable doubt, his reputation as a war hero enabled a political career that led to his presidency. Marcos's successful presidential campaign in 1965 was attributed in large part to the charm of his wife. Imelda Marcos was the singing sensation of 1965, dropping a tune without hesitation at campaign rallies. The biggest hit of her repertoire was a 27-year-old kundiman called "Dahil Sa Iyo," a song already so embedded in the national consciousness, Nat King Cole was obliged to try his hand at it in his 1961 concert at the Araneta Coliseum. Hitmakers of a certain generation were more eager to please their foreign hosts.

You're Working for No One But Me

Brian Epstein was the son of Liverpudlian furniture storeowners who soon bought the music store next door. From that less-than-lofty perch as director of the Whitechapel branch North End Road Music Store (NEMS), he became acquainted with a little-

known band that regularly performed at the nearby Cavern Club. The four-man band (John, Paul, George, and Pete Best) called themselves The Beatles, a name that had earned them derision during their recent gigs in Hamburg as it had sounded like “Peedles,” German for a small boy’s penis. Epstein became the band’s manager, fired Pete, hired Ringo, and secured them a contract with EMI’s Parlophone label. RADA-trained, Epstein convinced the lads to eschew leather jackets and jeans in favor of suits, and to bow at the end of their performances.

There is no doubting though that Epstein’s hustle resulted in the madness of Beatlemania, and the corresponding fame and riches that enabled them to live in comfort for the rest of their lives. (Pete Best, in contrast, would spend 20 years as an officer at an employment office in Liverpool but would eventually come to perform in Manila as “the original drummer” on September 11, 2010.) When John, Paul, George and Ringo were awarded by the Queen the Order of the British Empire in 1965, entitling them to be known as “MBE,” George remarked that MBE actually stood for “Mister Brian Epstein”.

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Cavalcade's insistence on charging as high as 50 pesos a ticket. Instead, the venue that was selected was the Rizal Memorial Football Stadium

Epstein also booked their gigs, and the schedule he put them through was brutal—208 live shows in the year 1963 alone. He arranged the famous appearance in New York at the *Ed Sullivan* show, then the most popular variety show on American TV, on the condition that the Beatles receive top billing even if they were not yet well-known in the United States. Yet Epstein's undeniable skills at event management did not extend to financial management. He signed unwise contracts unvetted by lawyers that resulted in McCartney and Lennon losing ownership of their most famous songs. The Beatles were also incurring massive tax liabilities—the applicable tax rate then for super-earners such as the band was as high as 98%.

When the second Beatles film, *Help!*, was produced in 1965, a location shoot was scheduled at the Bahamas, where a tax shelter company was formed by the Beatles and the film's producers. The scheme was designed to divert the income earned from the movie away from British income taxation and into the hands of the shell company, which was named Cavalcade Productions.



IMAGE Getty

Curiously, the Philippine company that was able to entice The Beatles to come to the Philippines in 1966 was also called Cavalcade—Cavalcade International Inc. to be exact. The face of the local Cavalcade was Ramon Ramos, Jr., the owner of a fertilizer business. A year earlier, Cavalcade was able to bring the American crooner Matt Monro to perform before over 26,000 people at the Araneta

Coliseum. The opening acts at the Matt Monro concert were the xylophone-playing Panlaqui Brothers and Pilita Corrales. Cavalcade International had also produced the Manila concert of the Dave Clark Five, that other British boy band that also appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1964.

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The man with whom Cavalcade International dealt with was Vic Lewis, the great-grandson of a banjo player with the Ethiopian Harmonists, which was big in Liverpool in the 1840s. Lewis had been a jazz guitarist whose big band had been killed off by the arrival of rock and roll, then a talent agent who represented Andy Williams in Great Britain. His agency had been bought out by Epstein's NEMS, to which he was named to the board of directors. He

now was responsible as the advance man for the Beatles' foreign tours, travelling ahead of the band to oversee administrative arrangements. It was Lewis who wrote the contract that Cavalcade International had to sign. It stipulated that all income taxes connected to the tour would be borne by Cavalcade International.

The Beatles in Manila was to be at the tail end of a two-country Asian tour, the last-ever live performances the Fab Four would ever give outside of North America. First, The Beatles would perform in Tokyo, at the Nippon Budokan arena. There were spots of trouble during the Tokyo tour: a typhoon interfered, some right-wingers protested, but the Beatles professed to have enjoyed their time in Japan. After the debacle in Manila, a Philippine newspaper claimed that John Lennon had said, "I wish Japan had taken over Manila during the war."

Just Let Me Hear That Rock and Roll Music

Help!, the Beatles parody of the in-vogue spy film, was screening in Manila theaters on July 3, 1966, the day the Beatles arrived. James Bond progenies such as Dean Martin in *The Silencers*, James Coburn in *Our Man Flint*, Tony Ferrer as Agent X-44 in *Sabotage*, and Dolphy in *Dressed to Kill* were in

competition as well. Bond, Beatles, Elvis...All were cultural invaders whose arrogant swaggers were wholly alien to the *kundiman-sa-kabukiran* that had predominated just a decade earlier. The conservative, pastoral vision of the Philippines, swathed in hushed Amorsolo hues, was cast by the elders as the norm to aspire to, the roots to return to after the mopheads of Villasis were done experimenting with decadence. The day before The Beatles arrived, Imelda Marcos was serenaded with a traditional *harana* at her hometown in Tolosa, Leyte, by residents bearing bam-boo torches, singing traditional Waray folk songs; she responded in kind singing another Visayan folk song, “Ang Iroy Nga Tuna” (“My Motherland”). The scene would not have been out of place in a Doña Sisang LVN extravaganza.

Still, the kids were excited, and the adults knew it, feared it. The Manila police was placed on red alert. At least 2,000 security forces were assigned to protect the Beatles upon arrival. The security preparations for the arrival rites were said to be unprecedented in the history of Manila. Bigger than General Douglas MacArthur, when the doddering old soldier held his kiss-before-dying tour in 1961. Bigger even than Dwight David “Ike” Eisenhower,

when that other general became the first ever incumbent American president to visit the Philippines (Ike had actually lived in the Philippines from 1935 to 1939.)

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The government security coordinator, Col. Querubin Mabugat, professed nonchalance. “I don’t think there is really any difference [with MacArthur and Eisenhower]. Only this time, we’ll be confronted with so many teenagers.” The itinerary for that first day called for John, Paul, George, and Ringo to be greeted at the tarmac by a bevy of beauties offering leis (later scrapped), then a ceremony wherein Manila Mayor Yeba Villegas would hand to the Beatles the keys to the city (also later scrapped), then a motorcade to the Philippine Navy Headquarters, where they would give a press conference. The Beatles would then be whisked away onto a yacht harbored off Manila Bay. The yacht, called Marima, was owned by one of the country’s leading industrialists, Don Manolo Elizalde. In the 1920s, young Don Manolo had been better known as “Lizz” Elizalde, the clarinet player for the

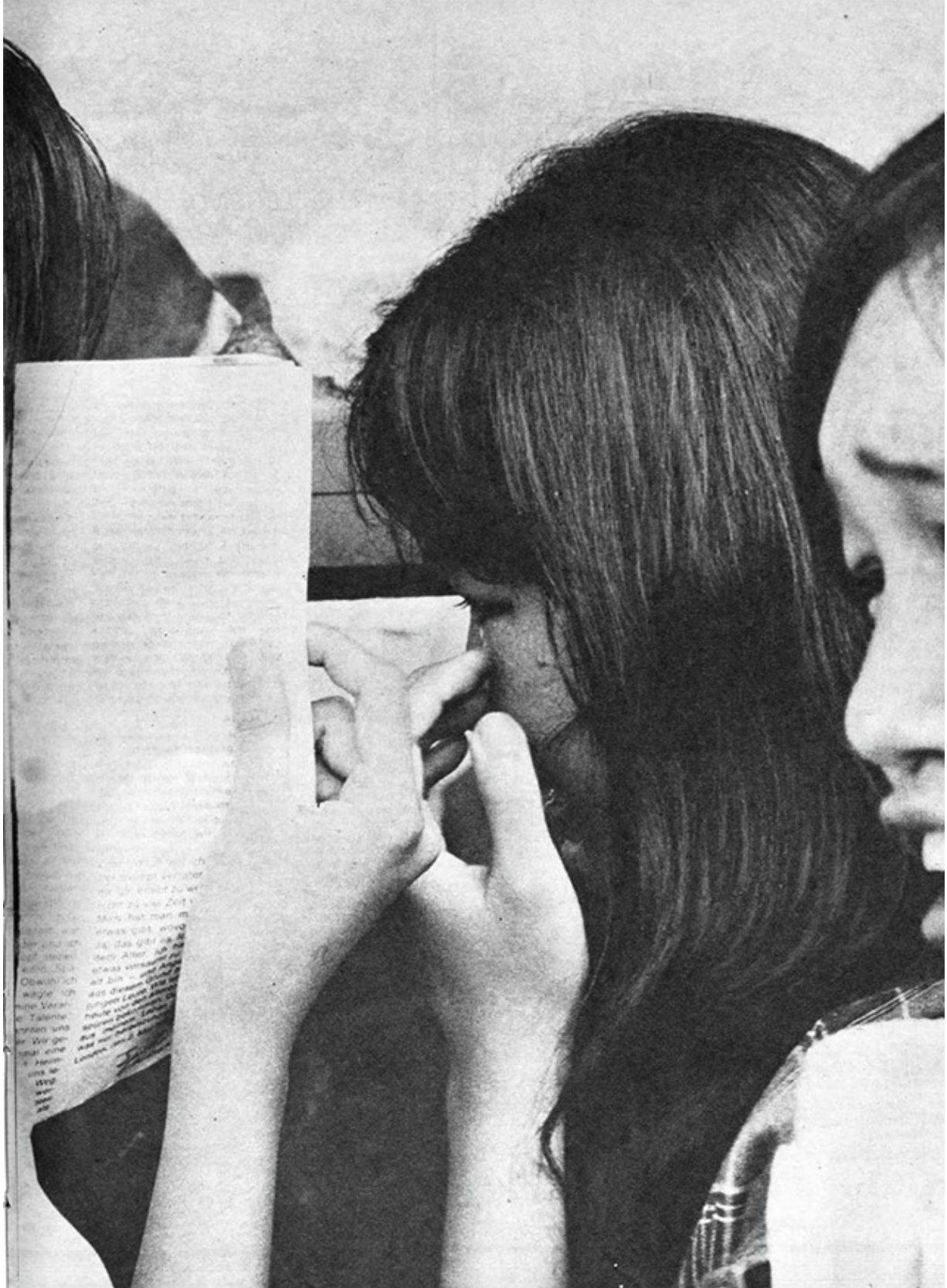
popular London jazz band led by his brother Fred Elizalde.

The security was nowhere as forbearing for the more prestigious foreign visitor also then in Manila, United States Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who arrived the day before the Beatles. The *Manila Times* columnist Joe Guevarra quipped, “Arrivals: Saturday, hairless Dean Rusk; Sunday, hirsute Beatles.” Rusk was of course scheduled to meet with President Marcos at Malacañang, the day before the Marcoses thought the Beatles themselves would pay them homage at the Palace.

During their two-hour long talk, Rusk and Marcos discussed the pressing issue of the day: the Vietnam War, which was killing untold thousands of American and Vietnamese youths even younger than John, Paul, George, and Ringo. Rusk pressed Marcos to sign a bill, which committed 2,000 Filipino engineers and security forces into the Indochinese quagmire. Rusk assured Marcos, as he and his government had assured and would assure for years to come, that the United States had the upper hand in the Vietnam War and victory was imminent—after that, maybe let’s give peace a chance.

Also in Manila, the day the Beatles arrived, was the aged James Farley, Chairman of the Board of the

Coca-Cola Export Corporation. Back in 1932, he was the campaign manager of the successful presidential campaign of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who unlike past Republican presidents, was prepared to grant independence to the Philippines. Doubtless, he would have been irked to learn that it was Pepsi that was sponsoring The Beatles in Manila. Farley, too, had his own schedule to meet with Marcos at Malacañang.



There was one more dignitary in Manila who arrived the same day as the Beatles. Erwin Griswold, Dean of Harvard Law School since 1946, was perhaps the most dominant American legal academic of his time. The staunch civil libertarian was scheduled to lecture at the University of the Philippines Law Center on

“Personal Rights Before the Law,” on the night The Beatles were heaved out of Manila.

Do You, Don't You Want Me to Love You

As they landed in Manila on July 3, 1966, The Beatles were existentially exhausted. The first Beatles film, *A Hard Day's Night*, had parodied the mania of Beatlemania, but offered no explicit clue that the boys were tired of it all, were tiring even of each other. Still, they remained trusting in the belief that Brian knew what was best for them. They signed the contracts Brian handed to them without reading a word. They assumed Brian knew what was going on.

There was no need for them to review their Manila itinerary during the flight. They just wanted to smoke their joints, wanted to be left alone. Passengers in the economy section of their Cathay Pacific flight shoved personal family photographs onto flight attendants, pleading that they be forwarded to the Beatles for autographs. None were signed. The flight captain invited the band into the cockpit. They said no.

None of the Beatles knew what exactly was supposed to happen when they landed in Manila. George assumed that the usual routine would

ensue. The Beatles would deplane with their personal luggage and their entourage, then board a car that would take them straight to the gig. In turn, thousands of young fans milling by the Manila International Airport were hoping to catch a glimpse of their motorcaded idols (as had happened before with Mac and Ike and the Prince of Wales). For a moment, at the gate of the Manila International Airport, the teenage mob was able to accost the limo bearing the Beatles. The fans kissed the car, but it sped off. There was no twisting and shouting along the streets for the fans that day.

{ George recounted: "In Manila it was a very negative vibe from the moment we got off the plane, so we were a bit frightened."

The Beatles, too, would be disappointed. George recounted, "When we got to Manila, a fellow was screaming at us, 'Leave those bags there! Get in the car!' We were being bullied for the first time. It wasn't respectful. Everywhere else—America, Sweden, Germany, wherever—even though there was a mania, there was always a lot of respect because we were famous showbiz personalities. But in Manila it was a very negative vibe from the moment we got off the plane, so we were a bit frightened."

The fellow who had screamed at the Beatles to

leave their bags was the Collector of Customs of the Manila International Airport, Atty. Salvador Mascardo. He had himself driven onto the runway to demand that the bags be handed over, swearing at the Fab Four, "You'll go back to the plane if you don't surrender those things!" That the band members were separated from their personal luggage was especially distressing. They had marijuana in those bags. They were in an unknown country, uncertain about the drug laws and the will in enforcing these. The hundreds of security forces watching over The Beatles took on a sinister aura.

As the band's road manager (and future Apple president) Neil Aspinall later described the arrival scene, it could have very well been that The Beatles were being arrested: "The army was there and also some thugs in short-sleeved shirts over their trousers and they all had guns. You could see the bulges. These guys got the four Beatles and stuck them in a limo and drove off and wouldn't let them take their briefcases with them. They left them on the runway and those little briefcases had the marijuana in them. So while the confusion was going on I put them in the boot of the limo that I was going in and said: "Take me to wherever you've taken the Beatles."

This was the first time in the Beatlemania era that the boys were all alone in a foreign country, cut off from both Neil Aspinall and Brian Epstein. Still uncertain about their friends or their bags or their fates, The Beatles were whisked to their press conference at the Philippine Navy headquarters. Only navy bands are supposed to hold press conferences at navy headquarters. Despite the circumstances, The Beatles tried to charm at the press conference. As the photographers stood up to take their photos, John yelped “Woof! Woof!,” Ringo pranced and shouted, “Shall we dance!”. Only Paul was not hiding behind sunglasses. They insisted, “[W]e’re not hiding from our fans. They’re hidden from us.”

The Beatles, through publicity man Tony Barrow, had imposed rules that would allow for a professional press conference, as opposed to a fan convention. No autographs allowed. No one under 18 allowed, except maybe The Beatles fan club chapter secretary. No standing room. A high-quality sound amplification system so that every word uttered by the lads could be understood.

John had just published his second book, titled *A Spaniard in the Works*. A reporter asked, What do you mean by Spaniard in your latest book? John

asked back, “Have you read it?” then barked, “Then read it,” after the reporter confessed that she had not.

These rules notwithstanding, the press conference that followed was predictably insipid. The absence of any shared contexts between the lads from Liverpool and the habitués of the National Press Club ensured that. Many of the questions were clearly formulated by grumpy old men. Would you be as popular without your long hair? When did you last get a haircut? How much tax do you pay? How do you solve the Vietnam War? To that last question, George earned laughs by drolly replying, Give it back to whoever deserves it. Yet it was clear that the boys were testy. When asked what their latest song was, they replied “Philippine Blues.” Few laughed. John had just published his second book, titled *A Spaniard in the Works*. A reporter asked, What do you mean by Spaniard in your latest book? John asked back, “Have you read it?” then barked, “Then read it,” after the reporter confessed that she had not.

Jean Pope of the *Manila Times* said: “John Lennon peered over his arrogant nose at the crowd.” Joe Quirino, the Ed Sullivan of the Philippines, liked Ringo most of all. “He gave serious answers and

was respectful. But his taste of clothes is atrocious. He wore a maroon jacket with white stripes, foulard shirt and pants, and shoes that defy description.”

Epstein now stood at the sidelines. He, according to one Filipino, “always looked pissed off.” He cut the proceedings short after 30 minutes with a curt announcement, “Gentlemen, that’s all.” They then proceeded to the harbor, to board the Elizalde yacht, Marima, which then pressed on towards the sea.

It's All Too Much

There is a distinct gap between how The Beatles and their team remember the Marima, and how it was reported at that time. The version recounted by Quijano de Manila (i.e. Nick Joaquin) for the *Philippine Free Press* narrates a slow-burning but sedate affair, with The Beatles being served Scotch and Cokes, a consommé, fried chicken, filet mignon with mashed potatoes, carrots and sweet peas. The only other persons authorized on board apart from the crew were two children of Don Manolo, and beauty queen Josine Pardo de Tavera Loinaz.



The Marima was to be the floating hotel for The Beatles, far from the madding crowds as seen in *A Hard Day's Night*. The boys remained relaxed throughout, playing tapes of Indian classical music. They remained nonplussed even after a group of 18 young people, Elizaldes and friends, had boarded the yacht without authorization and stayed for some moments. The party pooper, according to this version, was Brian Epstein. He was unrelentingly cranky, to the point that even the lads were twitting him about it. Soon, he demanded that they be let off the boat and into an actual hotel. The boys themselves remained nice, George even telling Josine, "We want to come back to visit when this craze has died down and we're not famous anymore."

Later accounts from the surviving Beatles depict their time on the Marima as closer to a hostage situation. George Harrison recounted, decades later,

that upon boarding the yacht, they were placed in this room. “It was really humid, Mosquito City, and we were all sweating and frightened...[N]ot only that, but we had a whole row of cops with guns lining the deck around this cabin that we were in. We were really gloomy, very brought down by the whole thing. We wished we hadn’t come.”

In his memoirs, publicist and Manila entourage member Tony Barrow explained that advance man Vic Lewis and promoter Ramon Ramos had arranged that the Beatles and their immediate aides would use the Marima as their hotel during their Manila stay. Decoy rooms were reserved at the Manila Hotel to throw off the fans. The deception utterly failed. Weeks before the arrival, the *Manila Times* already reported that the Beatles would be staying at a yacht. Nonetheless, Barrow recounts that the boys were pleased at first with the idea of prolonged isolation, more so after they confirmed from Neil Aspinall that their weed had not been confiscated. But they sweltered in the heat, they chafed at the gun-toting cops on the deck, then they learned that they and their team would be offloaded along the coast only shortly before The Beatles’ first show the following afternoon. They needed more time to prepare their suits, their instruments, and

they soon agreed with Epstein, who had been sulking the whole time on the yacht, that they needed to leave.

The uninvited arrival of the Elizalde friends onto the yacht would have likely spooked the Beatles. During their first U.S. tour in 1964, The Beatles made the mistake of attending an official function at the British Embassy in Washington D.C. As they entered, the diplomats and their guests went berserk, squealing and pushing. Elderly besotted females grabbed at the boys, demanding their autographs. One lady even managed to use a pair of nail scissors to snip a lock of hair from Ringo's head. After that mishap, Epstein declared it official policy: the Beatles were no longer to attend any official government functions, whether hosted by kings or dictators.

“It was really humid, Mosquito City, and we were all sweating and frightened...we had a whole row of cops with guns lining the deck around this cabin that we were in. We were really gloomy, very brought down by the whole thing. We wished we hadn't come —George”

In less hysterical times, November of 1963, the Beatles did agree to appear at the Royal Variety Performance, a yearly gala concert attended by the British Royal family. The Queen's mother and sister

(Princess Margaret) were the guests of honor that year. They performed before a well-heeled audience not given to the usual hysterics; this was the one live performance where they did not have to compete with the screams of the crowd. The concert is famous for one moment: right before the final number ("Twist and Shout"), Lennon begs the indulgence of the audience. "I'd like to ask your help. Could the people in the cheaper seats clap your hands," he begins. "And the rest of you, if you just rattle your jewelry."

As soon as he says this, John affects an impish grin as he ducks to avoid the jewelry that could have been thrown at him. The cameras pan to the Queen Mother, who lifts her hand and nods, to tell the crowd, yes you may do so. The Beat-les are most intriguing, she would conclude. Her daughter, Princess Margaret, chose to clap her hands instead of rattling her jewelry; the other daughter who stayed away has musical tastes, it is said, that lean towards 1950s Broadway hits.

"We're not staying one minute longer on this bloody boat," Brian Epstein screamed at Vic Lewis after managing to get hold of a ship-to-shore phone.

"There's absolutely nothing to do and we do not want to spend any more time on this ghastly little

yacht!" They were shuttled back to the Manila Hotel, where the whole team occupied a suite and six adjoining rooms. John, George, and Ringo remained in their suite; Paul reportedly got into a car and drove along the Escolta district, then the financial center of Manila.

If You Won't See Me, You Won't See Me

Had The Beatles remained on the Marima as planned, they would have been less positioned to decline the invitation to appear at the Malacañang Music Room at 10 in the morning, July the Fourth, 1966.

Imelda would say, "To tell you the truth, I don't know too much about the Beatles." (Joe Guevarra: "It seems she prefers her music long-hair but soft.") "Beatle music is too fast for me," said she who would, nearly fifty years later, be the subject of a disco musical about her life. There is no doubting though the cultural cachet a photo-op with The Beatles would have had for the Marcoses.



For all their professions of cultural conservatism, they were keen on being seen as with the times. Besides, their children were fans enough, as were the children of countless political allies, palace courtiers, and others on whom favors needed to be dispensed. Why have your children stalk the streets or even sweat it out at Rizal Stadium to see The Beatles? Of course they'll come. They may even favor us with a song or two at the Music Room. Be sure to be there, 11 a.m.

Ramon Ramos, Jr. would later claim that while The Beatles were in Tokyo, he sent them a cable advising that the Palace was inviting them to a reception on the morning of July 4th, at 11 in the morning. The reply to the cable allegedly came two days later, the day the Beatles arrived. The Beatles

were willing to attend, if the reception were to be rescheduled at four in the afternoon, right before their first show at the Rizal Stadium. Considering that the Beatles had left the yacht because of their concerns over the lack of preparation time before the concert, the alleged response claimed by Ramos, Jr. is implausible.

Paul would recount that all of them heard the police colonels banging on their door, shouting, “They will come!” George would remember that someone had come into their room, saying “Come on! You’re supposed to be at the palace.”

Peter Brown, personal assistant to both Brown and Epstein, reported in his own Beatles’ biography that their publicity man, Tony Barrow, had probably received the Ramos cable while in Tokyo, but it was unclear if the news had actually reached Epstein. Ramos claimed that at the press conference, he had reminded Epstein of the invitation to Malacañang. However, as he had done so many times on July 3, 1966, Epstein said no to another request from a Filipino.

Epstein would later claim, “The first we knew of the hundreds of children waiting to meet The Beatles at the palace was when we watched television earlier this evening [of July 4].” But earlier that day, by eight

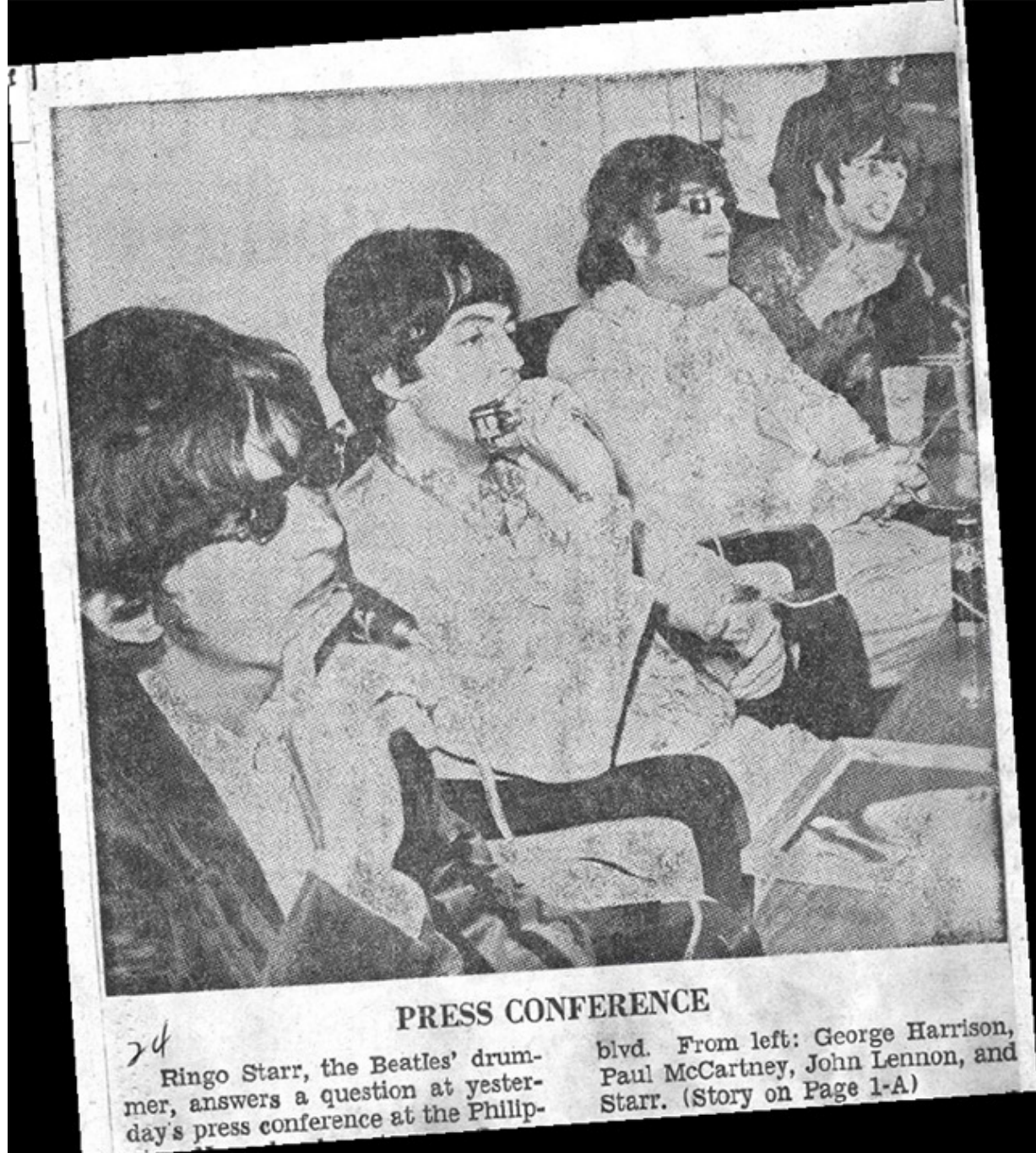
in the morning, two police colonels, accompanied by Ramos, knocked at the hotel room of Vic Lewis, demanding to know what time the Beatles would be arriving at Malacañang. Lewis, perhaps as the advance man the one person in the Beatles team most likely to have known about the invitation, claimed he knew nothing about the affair. He told the aides to bother Epstein, who was having breakfast at the Manila Hotel coffee shop together with personal assistant, Peter Brown.

What time are the Beatles arriving at the Palace, Epstein was asked. As with Lewis, Epstein claimed this was the first he had heard about the invitation. He likewise was prepared with his answer, No. The boys were asleep; the boys were tired. They needed their rest, especially after having gone onto that stupid yacht. Besides, The Beatles do not do official functions.

Epstein went up to his room, but the armed aides would not leave. The phone rang for Brian. It was John Addis, CMG, Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Philippines. The Ambassador suggested it was not a good idea for the Beatles to skip the luncheon. The Philippines was not the right country to stand on ceremony about an invitation. It was best not to insult them. Brian stood his ground. No. In the

meantime, more officers had arrived, from the Constabulary, from the Manila Police District, and even a captain from the Presidential Guard. The son of Secretary of Commerce Marcelo Balatbat waited with them. They left at noon, without The Beatles.

Some accounts claimed that The Beatles themselves had not known about the invitation until after the concerts. Yet in the 1990s, Paul would recount that all of them were awake that morning, in their hotel room. They heard the police colonels banging on their door, shouting, “They will come!” George would remember that someone had come into their room, saying “Come on! You’re supposed to be at the palace.” A television set was turned on. “There it was, live from the palace. There was a huge line of people either side of the long marble corridor with kids in their best clothing and the TV commentator saying: And they’re still not here yet. The Beatles are supposed to be here.”



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Ringo Starr, the Beatles' drummer, answers a question at yesterday's press conference at the Philip-
PRESS CONFERENCE
blvd. From left: George Harrison, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, and Starr. (Story on Page 1-A)

Paul later said he had thought that they had already declined the offer. "It's our day off." They turned the television off. Later that day, Ramon Ramos told the *Manila Times* that he had talked to The Beatles at their hotel suite, that The Beatles wanted to go to the Palace, but that Brian Epstein said no.

Eight-year-old Bongbong Marcos was quoted as saying, "I'd like to pounce on the Beatles and cut off their hair! Don't anybody dare me to do anything,

because I'll do it, just to see how game the Beatles are."

Vic Lewis claimed he had advised Epstein to reconsider. "Don't forget, we are in a foreign country and they seem hot-headed over here." Epstein replied, "I'm not thinking about it." The manager later said that even if they had actually received the invitation, The Beatles would have turned it down. "I would much rather the boys met 300 children in India than 300 kids who just happen to be at a palace because their parents know someone."

The guests that had gathered at Malacañang beginning at ten o'clock that morning comprised not just the children, but also their parents, who were friends of the Marcoses. For some of them, this was their first time to catch up with the Marcoses since they had moved into the Palace seven months earlier. The Blue Ladies, Imelda's ladies-in-waiting, were all there. Mrs. and Mrs. Richard Johnson of the Singer Company were there; they were prepared to gift the Beatles with hair dryers and souvenir electric guitars. Imelda had her own giveaways, brochures that explained the integrated social welfare pro-gram for the Philippines that she had developed. As the crowd milled around, the President walked in for a peep. He was told the guests of honor had not

arrived; he walked back into his study.

The children had first been told that a mob of fans had besieged the Manila harbor, trapping The Beatles at their yacht. They kept vigil for the next two to four hours; a normal length for most Filipinos, except for those not accustomed to waiting. By noon, the Palace servants started to clear the tables reserved for the Fab Four. One unusually precocious little girl was quoted as saying, "How can a knight of the Queen not keep his word?" Eight-year-old Bongbong Marcos was quoted as saying, "I'd like to pounce on the Beatles and cut off their hair! Don't anybody dare me to do anything, because I'll do it, just to see how game the Beatles are." The most ominous quotes were attributed by the Daily Mirror to five-year old Irene Marcos. "There is only one song I like from the Beatles, and it's Run for Your Life."

Before The Beatles did start running for their lives, they first had two shows to perform.

It's Got A Back Beat, You Can't Lost It

The Beatles had agreed to do a 4 p.m. matinee and an 8 p.m. evening show. By 2:30 p.m., traffic at M. Adriatico Street leading to the Rizal Stadium was at a standstill. Over 750 policemen were stationed in

and around the stadium. A custom-built, air-conditioned dressing room right on the football field awaited The Beatles. Outside, around 35,000 fans sweltered under the afternoon sun.

There were seven opening acts that were scheduled to perform ahead of the Beatles. Rock band Eddie Reyes and D'Downbeats with D'Cavalcade Dancers (Pepe Smith was a member of D'Downbeats, not D'Cavalcade Dancers). Crooner Dale Adriatico. Singers Angie Yoingco and Nikki Ross, better known then as Wing Duo. Pilita Corrales, already hailed then as "Asia's Queen of Song." The Lemons Three, joined by Pilita. And finally, the Reycards Duet (Rey Ramirez and Carding Castro), winners of a 1953 Quiapo singing contest who soon lived the American dream as established performers on the Las Vegas strip.

“When we got there, it was like the Monterey Pop Festival. There were about 200,000 people on the site and we were thinking, ‘Well, the promoter is probably making a bit on the side out of this.’”

The opening acts were, Nick Joaquin pointed out, “a rehash, number for number, song for song, gag for gag, performer for performer, of the first part of the recent Peter and Gordon show, which many in the audience must have seen.” It was a lineup that could

have been lifted from the Clover Theater, where the dying gasps of bodabil were airing out. Pilita Corrales was then only 26, but her signature song, the ballad “A Million Thanks To You”, had the sound and smell of the world before the war. It could have very well been sung by Vera Lynn as the bombs were falling over London, as the mums and dads of John, Paul, George, and Ringo were fornicating. The teens in the audience may have been struck listless, but their adult minders who tagged along would have gotten their money’s worth.



The Beatles arrived in two limousines after the matinee had started, as Dale Adriatico was on. There were way more people present than they had expected, and that did not please them at first. George remembered, “When we got there, it was

like the Monterey Pop Festival. There were about 200,000 people on the site and we were thinking, 'Well, the promoter is probably making a bit on the side out of this.' Within the last 24 hours, they had been through the kerfuffle at the airport, the inanity of the press conference, cabin fever at the yacht, the exodus to the hotel, the knocks at their door from policemen who wanted to bring them into a Palace. They were fucking pooped, and they had not yet performed. In the dressing room, Ringo and John lay in their beds. They turned off the television, cut off the speaker from the stage show so they need not hear Pilita sing.

Neither, it appeared, could many in the audience hear Pilita sing. As reported by the Manila Times, notwithstanding the two jumbo Vox amplifiers that had been installed by Cavalcade, the vocals emitted by the speakers drifted around the open-air stadium, drowned out by the occasional screams of fans and *hopia* hawkers. Adjustments had to be made to the sound system in time for the second show.

Paul and George were curious about the crowds; they peeked at the audience as The Reycards were performing. George asked if the show was being televised. Paul asked why the people were laughing at The Reycards. It was explained to him that the

Reycards were a comedy-and-song act, not unlike the music hall entertainments of their youth. One need only look at Carding's face in order to laugh. Paul was not intrigued enough to go out in front to look at Carding's face.

An intermission lay between The Reycards and The Beatles. The boys dressed in the attire Brian Epstein had chosen for them: black trousers, lavender printed shirts with wide collars, and lavender coats with red stripes. They started tuning their guitars while still inside the dressing room. They went onstage and waited for the curtains to part. Behind the scene, Paul started to dance the twist, and the stagehands laughed.

The Beatles performed only for 30 minutes in the matinee, and another 30 minutes in the evening show. They led with a Chuck Berry cover, "Rock and Roll Music." One of their most popular early hits, "I Wanna Be Your Man," was featured. Curiously, nothing from their most current studio album then, Rubber Soul. (A month after the Manila concert, Revolver was released.) The set list was replete with singles they had released in the two years prior: "If I Needed Someone," "Baby's In Black," "Day Tripper," "I Feel Fine." Their current hit single, "Paperback Writer," was ninth in the set list, and there were only

10 songs. “Oh baby I’m down/ I’m really down, down, down. Knockout. No encores.

Joe Quirino fawned over Ringo, claiming that he was the most spirited of the performers. Paul had been the most applauded, with every shrug greeted by screams. John though, and George too, “performed lackadaisically.”

Mother Superior, Jump the Gun

At least 80,000 people paid to see The Beatles perform live in Manila on July 4, 1966.

Tony Barrow had been bothered by what he had seen during the first show. Uniformed security guards with hefty wooden batons would beat at the kids watching from behind the fences, striking at their knuckles for no sensible reason. The kids were already behind a fence; how could they pose any danger? He returned to the Manila Hotel before the second show began, and turned on the television. Imelda Marcos was on TV, and she was not happy. She announced: “The children have all the time in the world, but we are busy people.”



Barrow, the publicity man, realized they had fucked up. He called the Roces-owned TV-5, the television station which had been granted exclusive rights to produce The Beatles in Manila, a half-hour summary of the tour that was to air for three consecutive nights at 10:30, right before the Chiquito sitcom Gorio and His Jeepney. Yes, the TV station was ready to broadcast an official statement from The Beatles. Barrow wrote the statement, then he and Epstein rushed over to the TV-5 studios so that the statement as read by Epstein could be recorded. Their efforts were in vain; as the statement was being broadcast later that night, the audio mysteriously disappeared. Brian could not sing.

Barrow remembered that even as The Beatles left the Rizal Stadium at the end of their evening show, miasma already loomed. Their police escort had vanished, and the stadium gates were locked. "This left our stationary limousines at the mercy of organized troublemakers, scores I would say rather than dozens, pressing menacingly against our

windows, rocking the vehicles to and fro and yelling insults at The Beatles which none of us could understand.” They were able to eventually escape back to the Manila Hotel. In the dead of night, the police came. They invited Vic Lewis to come with them. He was interrogated at the police station. “You represent The Beatles. Why did you not bring them to the palace.” At some point that night, Lewis and Ramon Ramos, Jr. appeared at the Press Office in Malacañang. They emphasized that this was not a deliberate snub, not an act of rebellion, but a simple misunderstanding. Lewis allowed Ramos to blame Epstein. He himself hinted at the *Manila Times* that Epstein was annoyed and angry over the whole trip. Epstein was upset about the seizure of the luggage. Epstein was mad that contrary to instructions, there was standing room at the press conference. Epstein was livid over the lack of privacy at the yacht, and the arrival of the 18 Elizalde friends. All these incidents, Lewis said, “compounded Epstein’s annoyance and wearied down The Beatles.”

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It was just before daybreak, July 5, 1966, that the police returned Vic Lewis to the Manila Hotel. He

was now in fear that The Beatles' lives were in danger.

For Getting in Your Way, While You Try to Steal the Day

“Beatles Held for Taxes: BIR detains rich mopheads”, screamed the front page of the Daily Mirror on July 5, 1966. Revenue Commissioner Misael P. Vera warned that The Beatles would not be allowed to leave at 3:30 p.m., as scheduled, “unless they pay the income tax they realized from their performance yesterday.” The income tax liability was estimated at P22,000.

At eight in the morning, a representative of the Bureau of Internal Revenue arrived at the Manila Hotel, bearing an envelope for Brian Epstein. The bill was said to be for \$80,000.00. Vic Lewis, who had negotiated the contract with Cavalcade International, was dispatched to explain matters to the taxman. He explained that under the contract and all contracts between The Beatles and local promoters, it was always the local promoter who would shoulder all income taxes connected with the tour, whoever is assessing it. Vic Lewis failed to convince. He called Epstein and suggested that they leave the country pronto. Epstein agreed. He just needed to wait for

the share from the gate receipts from Cavalcade International. No one from Cavalcade International arrived with an envelope for Brian Epstein.

The boys were awake. They ordered breakfast from room service. When no trays of food arrived, they sent their road manager Malcolm Evans, to see what was holding breakfast. There was not a Manila Hotel employee in sight when Evans arrived at the lobby. When finally someone appeared at the front desk, he gruffly announced that there was no more room service for the Beatles.

The popular television host Bobby Ng (“Jam Session”) had been doing a front-page multi-part series on The Beatles in Manila for the front pages of *The Manila Times*. That morning, he was ushered into Suite 402 of the Manila Hotel for an impromptu interview with Epstein, George and Paul, who sat atop the television set. Paul unsurprisingly played the nice guy. “We don’t want to offend anyone, especially since we’re visiting in this country. We just want to sing.” George was more sullen. “We didn’t even want to come here.”

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here.”

Paul asked if in the Philippines, the government controlled the press. Ng replied that the press was free, but the public was indignant. Paul pointed at the local papers lying in disarray. “The newspapers say, ‘Snub, Snub!’ then they say...[McCartney whispered] Oh...misunderstanding!”

The morning before, as John, George, and Ringo slept after arriving from the yacht, Paul had explored Manila. He saw the homeless sleeping on the streets just across the toniest office buildings. He took photos of what he had seen. Now, Paul started on social inequality in the Philippines, and how the people were exploited by the few with wealth, with power, with yachts and palaces. He was interrupted by Ng, who said that perhaps the people would not be so angry with them had they agreed instead to move the meeting at the Palace at another hour.

Paul was upset. “We weren’t supposed to be there in the first place. What were we going to do? Show up and say, ‘We’re here! Sorry we’re late!’ Why should we apologize for something that’s not our fault?”

After Paul insisted that they had not asked for that appointment (“How would you feel if you were told what to do?”), Ng replied that the invitation from the First Lady “amounted to an invitation from one who

represented all the people.”

John Lennon walked into the room. “We got a few things to learn about the Philippines,” he told Ng. “First of all is how to get out of here.”

Baby, I'm Determined And I'd Rather See You Dead

There remained a throng of die-hard fans waiting at a cool distance near the Manila Hotel. They would have no doubt jumped at the chance to help The Beatles unload their 60 pieces of luggage from their suites and load them into their cars. The hotel bellhops and porters had vanished. Barrow hailed the driver of the baggage truck as “the last adult in Manila loyal to our cause.” Epstein was concerned that their plane, the New Delhi-bound KLM Flight 862, would be forced to depart without them. He called the KLM office and asked to speak directly to the pilot by skyphone. He pleaded with the pilot not to leave them stranded in the Philippines. The pilot promised he would wait as long as he could.

John described the ominous ride to Manila International Airport: “All along the route to the airport, there were people waving at us, but I could also see a few old men who were booing us. There was a group of monkeys, you can't call them

anything else, waiting for us as we were to fly out of the country.” The old men had always been against them. During their first American tour in 1964, the reviews they received from the Sinatra generation were brutish. The talk show host David Susskind called them: “The most repulsive group of men I’ve ever seen.” The right-wing icon William F. Buckley said: “Not merely awful, but so unbelievably horrible, so appallingly unmusical...that they qualify as the crowned heads of anti-music.”

In the *Daily Mirror*, Airport General Manager Guillermo Jurado said that there would be no special security arrangements for The Beatles. “They will get what they deserve,” warned the airport manager, like a godfather announcing that the once-favored son no longer had his protection. When the Beatles arrived at the airport, the escalators had been turned off. The group was slowed down as they lugged their equipment. Several teenaged fans were present to send off their idols, but they were overshadowed and over-shouted by a mob of an indeterminate number of non-fans. “Beatles *alis diyan*, Beatles go home!” the mob shouted. “*Nakakahiya kayo!*” the fans would scream back, in near tears.

Who comprised this mob of Beatle-haters? D.C. Dayao of the *Manila Chronicle*, (owned by the family

of Marcos's then-Vice President, Fernando Lopez) claimed, "[t]he crowd consisted of youths and elders who happened to be at the airport to see or meet some passengers. There was no previous announcement of the mopheads' departure or the plane they would take." Balderdash. Jean Pope of the *Sunday Times Magazine* said that the airport mob stood as proof "that the Filipinos worship their First Lady." Gag. Ringo figured that "[t]hey were most probably customs men, because they were all wearing the same clothes and carried guns." Neil Aspinall recalled that the thugs had been wearing Hawaiian shirts; the same sartorial trademark of many a populist Filipino politician. The hundreds of security forces who two days earlier had escorted the Fab Four into Manila were missing, but maybe they still remained on The Beatles detail.



This was the first time The Beatles were inside the Manila International Airport, as they had bypassed the terminal when they arrived two days earlier.

Those who wanted to harm The Beatles were stationed at every exit of the customs/immigration area and the quarantine area that every ordinary passenger had to pass through. The mob stalked the entourage at every nook of the airport. Paul remembered, "We got pushed about from one corner of the lounge to another." Brian Epstein, Vic Lewis, Tony Barrow, Neil Aspinall, Peter Brown and Mal Evans all banded together to protect the boys at all costs. Someone kicked at Epstein, he fell down, his ankle seemingly sprained. He also received a punch in the face. Mal Evans was kicked in the ribs; he was bloodied by the time he got to the plane.

George quipped: “The only way I’d ever go back to that place would be to drop a dirty big bomb on it.” He never did become zen about the Philippines. “He tried to kill us, President Marcos,” George would remind the *NBC Today* audience in 1986.

John heard someone in the crowd exclaim that The Beatles were being treated just like any ordinary passenger. He reacted in disbelief. ““Ordinary passengers? What? He doesn’t get kicked, does he?” D.C. Dayao of the Manila Chronicle reported that Ringo was able to duck a punch, just before he, George, and John made it past the immigration area. Paul had already sprinted ahead of everyone else.

“I’m sure nobody got badly hurt, but that was because we didn’t fight back,” Neil Aspinall said. “If we had fought back it could have been very bad. It was very, very scary, and nothing like this had ever happened before—and nothing like it has ever happened since.”

Vic Lewis said, “I remember running across the tarmac with my hand on my back, thinking that if a bullet hit me, it wouldn’t hurt me so much...It looked like a battleground.” Seventeen years later, a man did get shot at the tarmac of the Manila International Airport, the political opponent Ferdinand Marcos feared the most.

The group had already boarded the plane and was awaiting their Argo-style escape when an ominous message pierced through the loudspeakers. “Mr. Tony Barrow and Mr. Malcolm Evans must return to the departure building.” The publicist and the road manager deplaned, uncertain of their fates. “Tell [my wife] Lil I love her,” Evans asked the rest of the group, only maybe in jest. Nine years later, the cops did shoot Malcolm Evans dead, but those were Los Angeles cops and Evans was holding an air rifle when he was shot. He had left Lil by then.

It turned out there was a plausible excuse for holding Barrow and Evans. Since The Beatles entourage had not gone through the normal immigration procedure when they had arrived, the papers of Barrow and Evans had yet to be processed. Perhaps they could have been detained further if the Marcoses wanted to. By this time though, Benjamin Romualdez was at the airport, deployed to take charge and end the drama. He would later hold court at his own embassy in Washington D.C. as Philippine Ambassador to the United States, but then, he was powerful enough simply as Imelda’s brother. Romualdez confronted one of the goons at the airport, telling him to let the Beatles be. He was not listened to, not even after the man was told that

he was talking to somebody from Malacañang. “I do not give a heck whoever you are.” Then someone told the agitator, “He is Romualdez, the President’s brother-in-law.” As the Manila Chronicle reported: “A look of awe came over the youth who [slided] away.”

They remained unnerved in the plane while waiting for Barrow and Evans to return. Epstein was hurting, bleeding. Vic Lewis came over. Did Brian get their share of the gate receipts? That’s nearly 50 percent of the performance fee, you know. Epstein erupted at Lewis. “Is that all you can think of, Vic? Bloody money at a time like this?” Lewis was having none of it from Epstein, all of this was Brian’s fault. He may have been the advance man charged with arranging the on-the-ground arrangements, but he believed it was Brian who had screwed up the invitation. He charged at Brian, “I’ll fucking kill you!” The others had to separate them. Lewis and Epstein barely spoke to each other again, but within a year, it was Vic who replaced Brian as managing director of NEMS Enterprises. Vic Lewis did get his own “Mister Brian Epstein,” honored by Her Royal Highness, The Queen in 2007, two years before his own death at age 89.

At 4:45 in the afternoon, with Barrow and Evans on board, The Beatles soared over the Manila runway.

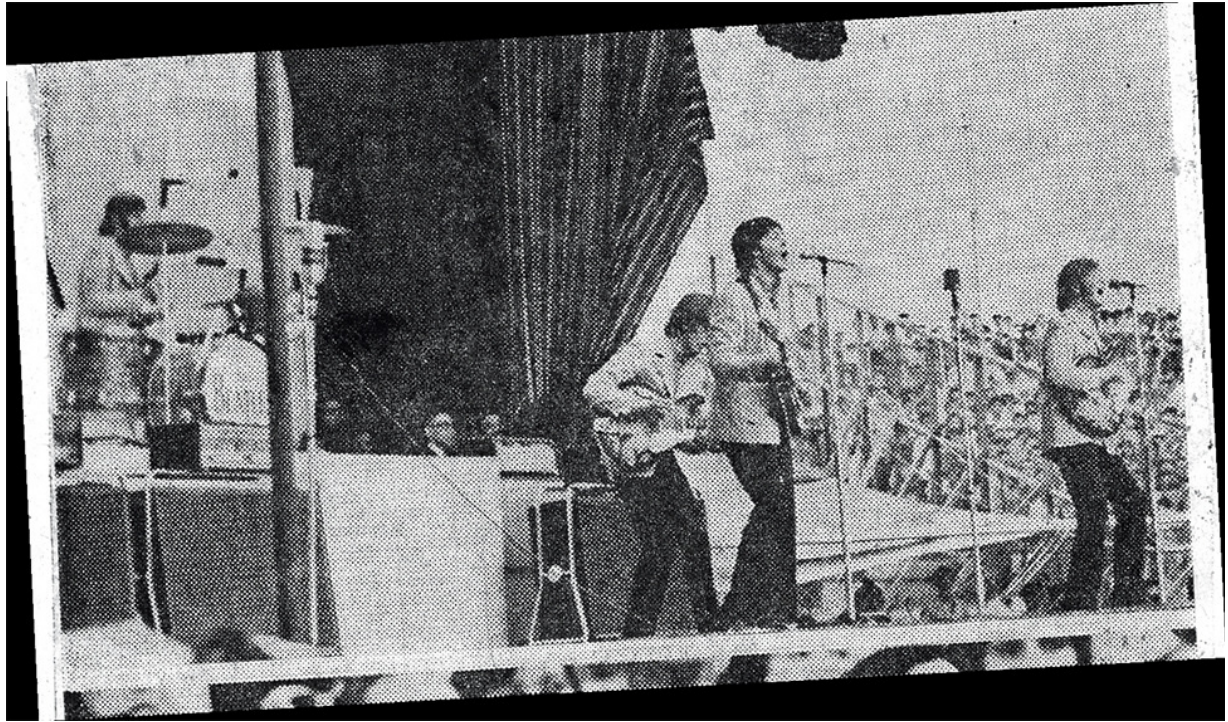
There was applause. George quipped: “The only way I’d ever go back to that place would be to drop a dirty big bomb on it.” He never did become zen about the Philippines. “He tried to kill us, President Marcos,” George would remind the *NBC Today* audience in 1986, after the dictator’s villainy had garnered global attention. “We did snub [the First Family],” he now could admit.

“Even Then, We Had Taste”

Brian Epstein started vomiting as soon as they were airborne. He was feverish, even after they landed at New Delhi. As he lay ill in his room at the Intercontinental Hotel, The Beatles shud-dered at the prospect of another world tour, which Brian had already booked for the following year. They even feared the next U.S. tour that loomed before them. “We’re going to have a couple of weeks to recuperate before we go and get beaten up by the Americans.” George said.

The veterans of this Battle of Manila reconfirmed to each other that their general had been at fault. John would conclude, “That was Brian’s cock-up, because he’d had the invitation given to him, and declined it, and never told us.” One month later, it was John’s cock-up. The Beatles are more popular than Jesus

Christ! *The Daily Mirror* did report on the total boycott on anything Beatles initiated in the province of Pampanga by the former president of Semana Santa, “a Catholic association member of the local Knights of Columbus.”



What would have worried The Beatles was the reaction in the heartland of 1960s America, the news breaking just as they were about to embark on their 14-city U.S. tour, with a new set list that featured songs from their newly-released album, *Revolver*. The Memphis city council voted to cancel the concerts scheduled for August 19, but having just defied a President, The Beatles could very well defy a city council. At the Memphis concert, someone in the audience threw a lit firecracker. When it exploded, Paul, George, and Ringo turned their heads. They thought John Lennon had been shot.

John later remembered the scene at the Manila airport. “I didn’t get kicked. I was very delicate and moved every time they touched me. Well, I think I wasn’t kicked! I was petrified!” Many in America were petrified of him as well especially as his activism hardened (the Nixon administration even tried to deport him), yet Middle America continued to consume his music, attempting wistful versions of “Imagine” at karaoke even as they blanched when it came to the line, “and no religion too.” Still, the man who shot John Lennon dead was not a government goon or a crazed fundamentalist. Mark David Chapman was simply a Beatlemaniac.

The Beatles had predeceased John by 10 years. After Manila, they would only perform 14 more live shows, all within the span of 17 days in August 1966. There would be no more world tours, excepting their 1968 sojourn to study the ashram of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi at Rishikesh, India. That too was a disaster. Ringo left after 10 days, the others lasted two months. Sexy Sadie was the single born from that experience; Lennon had originally wanted to call the song Maharishi. You made a fool of everyone. In 1984, in a ceremony at Malacañang Palace, followers of the Maharishi declared Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos as the “Founding

Father and Mother of the Age of Enlightenment”.

In 2003, Ramon Ramos, Jr., now 70, sat down to talk with Philippine Star columnist Quinito Henson and his one-time employee at Cavalcade, Bobby Grimalt, at the Hard Rock Café in Makati. The Beatles were able to escape the Marcoses, the fertilizer stored at his warehouses rotted as the government permits he needed would not be issued. He said that the reason why The Beatles refused to go to Malacañang was because they thought they would be coerced to perform for free; the TV scenes they saw the morning of July 4, 1966 featured a glimpse of a stage, with microphones and amplifiers laid out. He talked about the Marima, and now said that The Beatles had to leave because the yacht had become crowded with fans. Manila Hotel had not wanted to take them in, but acceded after management was assured that the boys would enter through the back door.

{ Paul started on social inequality in the Philippines, and how the people were exploited by the few with wealth, with power, with yachts and palaces.

The end of The Beatles as live performers came just one month after Manila neutered Brian Epstein. He was a master at staging the live events with camera-friendly angles that generously gave due to all the

squealing girls. As the boys retreated into the studio, there was less for him to do, except manage their money, at which he was a disaster. He was openly gay, at a time when bugging was still a criminal act in Britain. He had a problem with drugs, a problem with drink, and a problem with sleeping. He also preferred to lock his bedroom. No one knows what prompted him, just barely a year after the disaster in Manila, to take six sleeping pills after dressing in his pajamas. The coroner's verdict was accidental overdose, the barbiturates proving lethal in combination with alcohol. Brian Epstein was only 32.

Nothing is Real And Nothing to Get Hung About

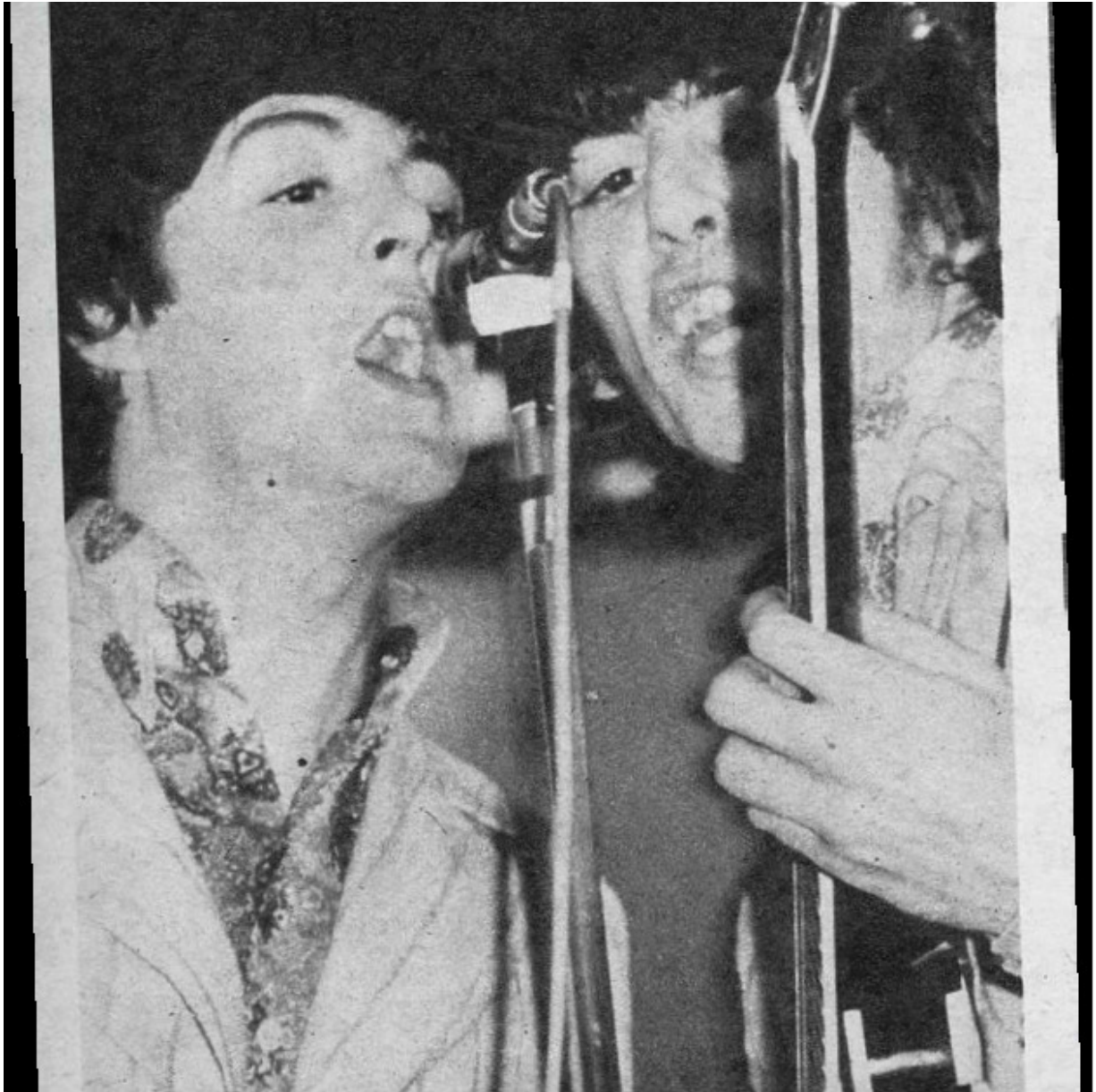
The Manila newspapers that had so distressed The Beatles in 1966 had proclaimed themselves part of a storied tradition of press freedom. As Bobby Ng had earnestly explained to Paul, the press merely reflected the anger of the public.

The politicians were certainly upset. Manila Mayor Yeba Villegas, who was supposed to have met them at the airport with the keys to the city, now said that we would have had them arrested for disturbance of the peace if they as much as performed in the streets of Manila. The Governor of Cavite, Alfredo Gimenez, warned that unless the public stopped

buying Beatles records, the brats “who have been spoiled by our patronage would forever treat us contemptibly.” Marcial F. Samson, a Caloocan councilor who sponsored a successful local board resolution banning the sale and playing of Beatles records in the city, announced that it was time that “these arrogant noisemakers be made to understand that we do not allow nor tolerate anyone whoever he is, to show discourtesy and disrespect to the Presidential family.”

The one political dissenter who was quoted as speaking out against the insanity was Senator Ambrosio Padilla, who explained that the municipal bans against Beatles records violated personal rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, and that while the band may have committed a social faux pas in rejecting the Malacañang invitation, “[I]et us not mislead our people by creating the wrong impression that by not visiting Malacañang, the Beatles have violated a law of the land.” After martial law was declared in 1972, Padilla was among a small group of Senators who marched to the shuttered Congress in an attempt to reopen the building. Their path was blocked by armed military guards. The offices of the *Manila Chronicle* had been padlocked the day martial law was

imposed; the relationship between Marcos and the family of his former vice-president had soured long after the paper had raised the most fulsome of defenses on behalf of the dignity of the First Lady.



On July 6, 1966, *Manila Chronicle* columnist Ernesto O. Granada had asserted that “a Beatle fan is mentally under-developed”. On September 22, 1972, Granada was being hunted by the Philippine Constabulary. The Lopez-owned Channel 3, which produced Bobby Ng’s Jam Session, was permanently closed and Ng relocated to Canada

where he became the afternoon drivetime DJ for CJVB Vancouver from 1973 to 1977. Channel 5, which had betrayed Brian Epstein by cutting off the audio as he broadcast his explanation for the boys' absence in Malacañang, would remain closed from 1972 until 1991.

Martial law may have been declared only in 1972, but even in 1966, bullies were in control. Reason, rule of law, good taste and even human decency all yielded to the currency of raw power. We had started our flirtation with absolute monarchy. Our representatives in government, our mouthpieces in the media, fawned over the King and Queen and fronted themselves as pawns in defense of the realm against the mop-haired knaves and other imagined enemies.

The Beatles may have thought kindly of Eleanor Rigby when they wrote about her plight. Yet we learned that when Eleanor was uncastrated and rich enough to buy her dream world, no one was saved. Imelda Marcos has yet to be buried. When she dies, she will likely lie beside the half-wax effigy of the husband, whom George Harrison unlovingly called a twat. Thousands will endeavor to line her coffins, to say prayers for her soul and to her grace. Sexy Sadie, what have you done? You made a fool of

everyone.