Since CIA played a part in the destiny of the Marcoses, I thought this  
interview may be of interest.

Enjoy. :)

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Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos August 1987 Playboy Interview

Introduction by Interviewers Ken Kelley and Phil Bronstein:

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On a good day, Ferdinand Marcos rises with the sun, does a few  
stretching exercises and gazes out at his domain: a couple of acres of  
grass and flowers in the hills of Honolulu, with a decent view of  
Diamond Head. His wife, Imelda, wakes up a few hours later and prepares  
for her day: tending the rows of dark-red bougainvillaea she's planted,  
pottering about in her garden--an assemblage of clay pots with plants  
from the homeland enclosed by a mesh of chicken wire. She then plans the  
day's main events--lunch and dinner. The rosary beads she fingers keep  
her constant company. Theirs is a classic study in bathos--how the  
mighty have fallen. For 20 years, they ruled supreme as the president  
and first lady of the Philippines. Elected president in 1965, Marcos  
declared martial law in 1972 in the face of what he called "lawless  
elements" and the Communist-led insurgency and effectively turned his  
country into his own personal fiefdom. For 14 years, he consolidated his  
rule, resisting calls for fair elections, confident in his support by  
successive U.S. Governments, which were always eager to have a firm ally  
securing the two giant U.S. military bases in the Philippines. As  
martial law stretched into the Eighties, there were increased reports of  
systematic looting of the public purse and more and more disregard for  
human rights. Meanwhile, Marcos had named Imelda first governor of Metro  
Manila; she assumed vast control over the city's life. Always obsessed  
by "beauty," she determined to leave her mark by gutting slums and  
erecting a huge cultural center in Manila, where she could entertain  
such famous friends as George Hamilton, Cristina Ford and Ronald Reagan.  
She also made the most of her position by jet-setting around the globe  
and meeting world leaders (Qaddafi, Castro, Mao, Kosygin, the shah, the  
Pope, to name a few), sometimes negotiating in her husband's stead. Her  
lavish taste for the finer things in life, the huge--some said  
obscene--amounts of money she spent on furs, jewelry and shoes, and her  
reputation for dealing harshly with perceived enemies earned her the  
title in the world press of Steel Butterfly. "An enchanted fairy tale"  
is the way Imelda Marcos likes to describe her political and marital  
union with her husband. The fairy tale began to sour quickly in 1983,  
when the Marcoses' major opposition leader, Benigno Aquino, returned  
from exile in the United States and was assassinated moments after his  
commercial flight landed in Manila. Although Philippine army troops had  
been on hand to meet him, under the command of Ferdinand Marcos'  
military chief of staff, General Fabian Ver, Marcos maintained that a  
Communist gunman had somehow made his way through the ranks and shot  
Aquino. International opinion said otherwise; Marcos was pressured into  
ordering a special court to investigate the matter. The middle class of  
the country took to the streets in an unprecedented display of  
opposition, which was covered by international television. When Ver was  
officially acquitted and reinstated to his army post, the political  
pressure from the United States--the Reagan Administration having been a  
particularly staunch supporter of the Marcos regime--and the daily  
demonstrations in Manila led Marcos to call for a quick election. His  
opponent was Aquino's widow, Corazon, and her campaign pledge to rid the  
country of corruption led to a mass movement. An international team of  
observers, including a delegation from the United States Congress, was  
dispatched to watch the polling places in the February 1986 election.  
The reports of vote fraud were unambiguous: Marcos was the reported  
winner, but the election was rigged. The pressure at home and from the  
U.S. continued unabated. Demonstrations increased. President Reagan  
dispatched his friend and advisor Senator Paul Laxalt to tell Marcos of  
U.S. concerns. Still, Marcos resisted. But within two weeks of the  
election, a key player, defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile, switched  
sides. He joined with Corazon Aquino to engineer a bloodless revolution.  
Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, along with an assortment of family members  
and staff, were forced to flee the Malacañang Palace in the middle of  
the night, leaving half-eaten dinners on the table. After a stopover in  
Guam, they ended up in Honolulu. There they have been "marooned"--Imelda  
Marcos' word--ever since. Aside from gardening and stargazing, the  
Marcoses spend a lot of time trying to avoid appearances before two  
American grand juries convened to investigate their finances--and those  
of the Philippines, since they were intertwined for more than 20 years.  
The Marcoses' reported wealth--his salary as president was less than  
$6000 a year--is in the billions and is supposed to include real estate  
in Manhattan, entire corporations, countless foreign bank accounts.  
Although they insist, as did General MacArthur, that they will return to  
the Philippines, many observers feel that their "retirement" in Hawaii  
is appropriate. Both Marcoses grew up while the Philippines was an  
American protectorate; and when they reminisce about the past and talk  
about the present, the tone of the conversation is almost that the  
Philippines, after all, is the 51st state--more American than America.  
Both have the ultimate colonial mentality. Still, their desire to  
return, however far-fetched, seems sincere. Their eyes fill up when they  
talk of it, in impassioned speeches, in poetry, in bursts of song.  
Reclaiming their power in the Philippines is something they consider  
their divine destiny. PLAYBOY sent West Coast-based free-lance writer  
Ken Kelley and San Francisco Examiner reporter Phil Bronstein to  
Honolulu for a week to conduct the "Playboy Interview" with the deposed  
couple. Here is Kelley's account: "I asked Bronstein to be my  
co-interviewer because he's been covering the chaotic Philippine scene  
for the past five years and knows Filipino politics on both sides of the  
Marcos fence. Most important, I knew that Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos  
trusted him to give a fair depiction of their predicament, even though  
some of his reports about them in the Examiner were quite scathing. He  
was the first reporter in the palace the night the Marcoses fled. "I  
also knew that PLAYBOY had tried to interview Marcos while they were  
still in power, only to have the deal fall through at the last minute.  
And, indeed, this one almost did, too: After the session had begun,  
Ferdinand began waffling about whether or not he wanted to go through  
with it. He was persuaded by Bronstein to carry on, perhaps aided by the  
reporter's spirited piano playing to accompany Imelda's versions of '  
Sentimental Journey' and ' Don't Fence Me In.' "Some of the old forms  
were followed. We drove up to chez Marcos and waited a good half hour  
before being admitted--beefy security guards shuffled about, but here  
the hired help were watching ' Wheel of Fortune' on a TV set in the  
vacant garage. "Duly admitted, we waited an hour or so before Ferdinand  
Marcos emerged, impeccably attired in his pinstripe-wool suit. The  
temperature was around 90 degrees, and he didn't even sweat a drop. He  
did appear to have a lot of trouble walking. He teetered and tottered  
about, one step at a time. "I figured we would be lucky to get an hour  
out of him. Wrong. We interviewed him for several hours in his living  
room; and as we talked, he became rejuvenated and would vigorously  
gesticulate when trying to emphasize a point--it was a remarkable  
transformation. So much so, in fact, that Imelda Marcos, who had  
arranged the daily lunch spread, one o'clock on the dot, was waving her  
hands in obvious displeasure--'Get in here now' motions. "There was  
fraud on both sides. But mine was not massive." "Eventually, we did.

"We ended up spending seven hours around that immense table, a piece of  
wood that seemed ten yards long. Ferdinand--'Mr. President,' as he  
prefers to be called--sat at the south end of the table with Bronstein  
and his mike, while I sat at the other end zone with 'Ma'am,' Imelda's  
official appellation, my tape recorder running. "It was a fascinating  
interplay. Bronstein was at one end, I was at the other; and although  
we'd have a lot of uninterrupted one-on-one discussion, Imelda has a  
finely tuned ear. And a strong voice. Occasionally, while talking with  
me, she'd interrupt the Bronstein-Ferdinand conversation to interject  
her own opinions, to which her husband would sometimes reply with  
exasperation. "Talking with Imelda Marcos is like talking with the  
Filipina version of Maria von Trapp--she sings her point of view so  
often, songs from Broadway classics to nursery rhymes she'd learned as a  
child. She does it to make her point in a light way. Her husband, on the  
other hand, likes to lighten things up by telling lawyer jokes; having  
been one for so long, he knows them all, and so does everybody he's  
telling them to, and the staff cracks up because he's telling a  
joke--he's Marcos after all. But when you boil it down to sheer  
entertainment value, Imelda wins hands down. She plays her living room  
with gusto. "During our luncheon session, the conversations were  
repeatedly interrupted by calls from the Philippines. Some were taken in  
the dining room, some just outside; but Ferdinand's and Imelda's  
responses could be still heard. His voice was much more low-key; hers,  
much more animated. 'Now you make sure that you get your act together,  
combine all the liberation forces, make sure that the Moslems and the  
Christians get together and we'll free the country and become one nation  
again,' she shouted at one point. It was not just for the benefit of the  
reporters' ears. Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos desperately want to return.  
And that was the topic with which we began our conversations.

Interview:

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PLAYBOY: Mr. President, if you were somehow to return to power in the  
Philippines, what would be the first thing you would do?

FERDINAND: Immediately stop the corruption taking place under Madame  
Aquino.

PLAYBOY: The same corruption that many feel drove you from office in the  
first place?

FERDINAND: That is the popular perception, encouraged by the media. What  
is never mentioned is that Madame Aquino's family has been one of the  
largest landholders in the Philippines for centuries.

PLAYBOY: How would you stop this alleged corruption?

FERDINAND: Arrest everybody engaged in it. Madame Aquino doesn't have  
the nerve to do that.

PLAYBOY: So if you went back into power, you would arrest Mrs. Aquino on  
corruption charges?

FERDINAND: No, I would just prevent her people from participating in all  
the enterprises they are engaged in. Like Peping Cojuangco [Aquino's  
brother]. He should just be anesthetized. [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: Speaking of corruption, your old friend former defense minister  
Johnny Ponce Enrile, who helped stage the revolt against you, said he  
committed fraud for you during the last presidential election, the one  
you claim you rightfully won.

FERDINAND: Come on! Come on! He doesn't have the guts to commit fraud.  
He is a guy who always orders somebody else to do the dirty work.

PLAYBOY: Don't you concede it was possible that there was fraud during  
the elections?

FERDINAND: Yes. There was fraud on both sides. But mine was not massive.  
In the last weeks, my opposition was using greenbacks to buy votes. We  
have the sworn statements of some of these people.

PLAYBOY: Did you give these statements to the team of U.S. observers  
that charged your side with voter fraud?

FERDINAND: The team didn't really bother. One gentleman--I won't name  
him--visited one election precinct, then went to the bar and made up  
stories about us.

PLAYBOY: Thinking back about your downfall, do you now think you relied  
on people who betrayed you? How did you know whom to trust?

FERDINAND: It came down to a choice between bad and worse.

PLAYBOY: Meaning?

FERDINAND: Meaning General [Fidel] Ramos or General Ver. How can you  
choose? One guy, Ramos, is a weakling, and his people are traitors. The  
other, Ver, would give his life for you--but he's too rough. He kicks  
people--things like that. Like Patton.

IMELDA: [Speaking at the other end of the table] I used to tell him,  
"The palace is a snake farm."

FERDINAND: Still, I think the first lady and I acquired an instinct in  
determining who can be trusted. We flatter ourselves in believing we  
have been largely right.

IMELDA: Our instincts? Well, remember, he's a very linear thinker--very  
precise, logical, one, two, three. But I think very . . . woman, very  
holistic. So sometimes he thinks I'm dumb and spaced out.

PLAYBOY: What's an example?

IMELDA: I'll tell him this or that guy is no good. He'll say, "Wanna  
bet? His credentials are this, that, fantastic; he comes from Harvard or  
wherever." I'll say, "Funny, but he just doesn't look right."

PLAYBOY: And you always mistrusted Enrile?

IMELDA: Yes, and I'm sorry I was proved right.

PLAYBOY: Mr. President, Mrs. Marcos says you are rational and logical,  
yet others say you are superstitious. Don't you believe in special  
numbers and carry a talisman?

FERDINAND: I am not superstitious. But I do believe in clairvoyance. I  
believe in extrasensory perception. I believe in telepathic messages. I  
get the idea to watch out for a particular fellow--he may have a pistol  
in his pocket, ready to shoot me.

PLAYBOY: Does your clairvoyance tell you anything about a possible  
return?

FERDINAND: Yes. I have that feeling. God, or the Big Guy up there, my  
guardian angel, tells me. I keep asking, "Give me a sign if I can  
return."

PLAYBOY: Any signs so far?

FERDINAND: So far, the sign has been "Don't move yet."

PLAYBOY: What about the move you made in January, when there was a  
private jet waiting for you at Honolulu Airport to fly you back to rally  
your supporters just after an attempted coup?

FERDINAND: No, no, wait a minute. Let's clarify this. There was someone  
representing this fellow who made inquiries to us here, but we never got  
in touch with anybody--except when they were already here and sent word  
they were available [laughs] if we wanted to use them. I said, "After  
all this hullabaloo, how can I accept your offer? I'm not going to be  
shot down in the middle of the Pacific. That's not the graveyard I  
choose!"

PLAYBOY: You mean because the matter had become so public?

FERDINAND: Yes, all the hubbub that was created. But back to your  
question: Do I believe in the spiritual, in the effectiveness of, well,  
communicating with your God? Yes. And I believe you will have to make an  
accounting to Him after death. Say you'd killed so-and-so. I would have  
to say, "Yes, Lord, forgive me." If I did. Like, for instance, He would  
probably ask me, "Weren't you a participant in the conspiracy to kill  
Benigno Aquino?" And, of course, I'd tell Him, "You know better than  
that, Lord, because I was sick; I wasn't even working at the time it  
happened. I really ripped into the office of security."

PLAYBOY: Does that mean you still believe in the lone-assassin  
theory--that the gunman, Rolando Galman, managed to penetrate all the  
airport security that your friend and military chief of staff General  
Fabian Ver had set up?

FERDINAND: I don't "believe." I know.

PLAYBOY: Yet you announced that theory even before your own  
investigators had concluded their study.

FERDINAND: That was because the American Ambassador and the State  
Department people were pestering me, along with my other critics.

PLAYBOY: What would you have done with Aquino if he had not been  
murdered?

FERDINAND: Bring him back to prison! Because he already had a death  
sentence over him, there was no need to assassinate him. All you had to  
do is bring him back to prison and let the execution take place.

PLAYBOY: You mean you would have killed him anyway?

FERDINAND: Throughout my 20 years in office, I executed only one  
prisoner--a heroin dealer who took pride in having destroyed the lives  
of so many Filipinos. Aquino, though, he was a sly one. He kept calling  
me to see if he could negotiate his way into the government. He even  
tried to do that a couple of months before he came back.

IMELDA: I ran against Aquino [in congressional elections]. He was no  
threat to the president and me. I beat Aquino by more than 1,000,000  
votes.

PLAYBOY: But, Mrs. Marcos, he was in jail at the time.

IMELDA: Well, my God! That was the most romantic place to be in! I  
would like to be in jail when I'm running for office. No, my conscience  
is clear on Aquino. After [the assassination], people suspected me of  
conspiring with General Ver, but I'd be surprised if I've spoken ten  
sentences to the general in the past 20 years. In fact, when I called  
him, he would be terrorized.

PLAYBOY: Mr. President, wasn't Aquino's assassination the turning point  
for you? If he hadn't been killed, wouldn't you still be in Malacañang  
Palace?

FERDINAND: His assassination just added to the resolve of the U.S.  
embassy to try to knock me out. It was [former U.S. Ambassador to the  
Philippines Michael] Armacost, I think, who masterminded the whole  
thing. But, look, he's now number three in the State Department. Let's  
not pick a quarrel with him. We have enough enemies.

PLAYBOY: The first lady is signaling us that it's time to eat.

FERDINAND: Well, she's the mistress of the house. In the Philippines, we  
say that once the lady of the house has spoken, you say, "Amen." [There  
is a break for lunch, during which Mr. and Mrs. Marcos agree to keep  
taping the interview. Mrs. Marcos has laid out a buffet lunch.]

IMELDA: You know, these are all my recipes. I don't make the food  
myself, but they're all from my family tradition. Let's see--why don't  
you sit down next to me. [Mrs. Marcos is at one end of the table, the  
president at the other.]

PLAYBOY: Mrs. Marcos, do you feel a bit of cabin fever, overseeing the  
running of a small compound here in Hawaii, instead of the glory you  
once commanded?

IMELDA: No, because I feel that this is just an intermission in my life.  
I don't have as much to do as I did when I was in my country, but I feel  
very happy. I have my garden to tend to. My bougainvillaeas are  
blooming, and I feel hopeful.

One of the things for which I pat myself on the back is that I have not  
missed my possessions. It would be wonderful if I could see them once in  
a while, but I have a good memory. Malacañang Palace will always stay  
with me.

PLAYBOY: Still, to go from dining with heads of state to gardening--it  
must bother you.

IMELDA: What bothers me more is that the press has got it all wrong. My  
husband, a great humanist, is called a tyrant! A great dict----uh, I  
mean a great democrat is called a dictator! That bothers me. Fighting  
for the Philippines is like fighting for America, because we are one in  
spirit. And yet you leave the Philippines, this jewel of a country, in  
the hands of a coconut!

What bothers me even more is that being here in America, the most  
beautiful country in the world--oh, why do you let Japan outsmart you,  
beat you? Let me show you something. [Gets up, goes out of the dining  
room and returns] Look at this--what's this?

PLAYBOY: It looks to us like Uncle Sam in a clown outfit----

IMELDA: It is! Uncle Sam as a clown, and when you wind it up, it has a  
music box underneath that plays God Bless America. This is what American  
kids buy now. What a disgrace to us Americans----

PLAYBOY: Us Americans?

IMELDA: [Laughs] I can't believe I said that , us. [Knocks on her  
temples] Can you imagine, me being an American? But you see what I am  
saying--in America, this is what is being offered to American kids for  
playthings. Look at this one, too.

PLAYBOY: It's a sort of G.I. Joe with a walrus head and long tusks  
holding a bazooka.

IMELDA: That's what it is. [Detaches bazooka and fingers it] These  
walrus fangs--that's what they painted on our pictures in the  
Philippines after Cory Aquino took over, all over the place, fangs  
everywhere on the posters of me and the president. [Turns over toys]  
Let's see where these things were made--I knew it! Japan. The country  
saved by America after it tried to destroy America--they turn around and  
do this thing to America, and America just gobbles it all up. It's so  
terrible. Children, American children, are buying Japanese toys that  
ridicule America.

PLAYBOY: Why do you have these items, then, if you're so disgusted by  
them?

IMELDA: My grandchildren wanted some toys, and someone bought them. If I  
were a policeman, I'd shoot them down, these symbols of America. My  
friends in the Philippines tell me that they're now making Cory Aquino  
dolls that look like those horrible rag dolls--what do you call them?

PLAYBOY: Cabbage Patch Kids?

IMELDA: Yes, those. And they're ugly. All the time I was in the  
Philippines, they never made a doll of me. I guess it's not my fault,  
because I'm not ugly.

PLAYBOY: Whereas Mrs. Aquino is?

IMELDA: No comment. [Laughs] I just believe in beauty. Take PLAYBOY, for  
instance. PLAYBOY really shows beautiful women in a way they can be  
admired. Some people call it pornographic, but I don't think so. I think  
PLAYBOY shows the beauty of the female body. Goya did the same thing a  
century ago. Americans have always admired beauty, and I admire  
Americans because of that. But--look at these toys! This is not beauty!

PLAYBOY: We recall that you had something of a problem with naked  
pictures of yourself way back when----

IMELDA: Yes, I got into trouble during the 1965 election. Somebody  
mounted my face on naked pictures. I was so furious--they were very  
naked, very ugly bodies. If they had used Marilyn Monroe's body, then I  
would have had no problem. I might even have ordered some. [Laughs]

But, again, I just don't understand why, when you have the most  
beautiful country in the world, you let other countries outsmart you.

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[captions for pictures no doubt in this section. Sorry. mk]

BEFORE THE FALL. The Marcoses presided over Malacañang Palace in 1982.  
Four years later, they took more modest quarters in Hawaii.

WORKING OUT. Marcos showed his fitness to rule in an exercise video tape  
shot in Hawaii and then released in the Philippines.

HIGH NOTE. Imelda Marcos, pianist in exile, claims that in 1944, she  
sang before General MacArthur and the entire U.S. Eighth Army.

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PLAYBOY: What would be a better system?

IMELDA: There should be only one leader. Too many cooks spoil the broth!  
You have the Congress, a very strong Congress; you have the Justice  
Department--

PLAYBOY: You mean the Judiciary----

IMELDA: Yes, that. And then you have the President, and then you have a  
fourth--the media! Who think of nothing but perceptions.

PLAYBOY: Mr. Marcos began with a system like ours. You had in the  
Philippines the Batasang Pambansa, your own congress----

IMELDA: Yes, and that is why Marcos changed it. Originally, it was like  
yours, but it did not work, because we were all spread out--7150  
islands. So Marcos changed it to a parliamentary system.

FERDINAND: Excuse me, you're wrong. The reason was that in the old days,  
the congress system ended up with some congressmen blackmailing the  
president when the president tried to--well, systematize the expenditure  
of public funds. Why? Because a lot of the congressmen were collecting  
bribes.

IMELDA: I didn't know this.

FERDINAND: If we hadn't stepped in, the entire system would have  
collapsed.

IMELDA: And as the days went by, it would have----

FERDINAND: Please hold on! Instead of the simple martial law we  
declared, the alternative would have been the commander in chief's  
taking over the entire government.

PLAYBOY: Of course, your critics charge that that's exactly what you  
did.

FERDINAND: You must understand that I was also protecting my life and  
the life of my family. After the 1969 election, two American gunmen were  
caught in an attempt to assassinate me.

IMELDA: And they were hired by----

FERDINAND: Hold it! They were hired by Eugenio Lopez, Sr., and many  
other of my enemies. Many of them confessed. Even when Eugenio came to  
the Malacañang Palace to confess and apologize--he was coughing all over  
the place--I just said, "You didn't need to come here. I know what's  
going on. Furthermore, the lies you have spread about me and my  
wife----"

IMELDA: The president and myself----

FERDINAND: Hold it, hold it! Lopez apologized to me. He said, "I had  
nothing to do with the assassination plot, but I admit that the  
information I published about your wife was fabricated." [U.S. press  
reports tell a different story: A member of a prominent family, Eugenio  
Lopez, Jr., was imprisoned without formal charges for two years, while  
his family refrained from public criticism of the Marcos regime and  
turned over more than $400,000,000 worth of holdings--including a  
newspaper and a broadcasting network--to Marcos' relatives and  
supporters. In 1974, Lopez Sr., then dying of cancer, visited the  
Marcoses at the palace, but his son was not released. Lopez Jr. then  
went on a hunger strike, and his family spoke out against Marcos. It was  
not until 1976 that Marcos first charged Lopez Jr. with attempted  
assassination.]

IMELDA: The worst things he'd published were stories that I was stupid!  
And that I hadn't grown up across the street from where General  
MacArthur had his headquarters--that I grew up in a little shop. Can you  
imagine that?

PLAYBOY: Why were you called stupid?

IMELDA: I went to a Benedictine convent for my entire education. And in  
this yearbook that you'd autograph for your classmates, I would miss an  
E or an I or whatever. At least I wrote some words.

FERDINAND: She was also the student-council president.

IMELDA: That's not the point--a psychiatrist came to look at how I  
wrote, and he said, "She thinks faster than she can write." I always  
mistake words when I write, even today. [Marcos leaves to take a phone  
call.]

PLAYBOY: Earlier, we were talking about the betrayal by Enrile----

IMELDA: On the day we arrived here, knowing exactly that the main  
culprit of the coup was Johnny Ponce Enrile--J.P.E., Marcos called him.  
Can you imagine that--calling your enemy----

PLAYBOY: Who had been your friend for 20 years?

IMELDA: Exactly. But Marcos said, "You take over the prime ministership  
of the parliament and I will support you." Imagine! Mrs. Aquino did  
not offer the prime ministership to J.P.E.!

PLAYBOY: Did that make you angry? That your husband had----

IMELDA: I was very angry. All of us were in a state of shock. This man  
Enrile, the one who caused all of these problems--it was so terrible. We  
suffered all these indignities when we left. We were dumped into a  
C-141, were all on top of each other; there was no opening in the  
airplane, and we could barely breathe, and it went from so cold to so  
hot--it was a plane meant only for cattle! So on the day, the very  
moment, we arrived in Hawaii, he put in a call to J.P.E., saying he'd  
support him.

PLAYBOY: And how did you react?

IMELDA: I said, "You are insane!" [Marcos returns to the room in time  
for that remark.]

PLAYBOY: Mr. president, what do you think?

FERDINAND: Take her, take her, please. [Laughs]

IMELDA: I'm serious. Mrs. Aquino abolished the constitution, abolished  
the parliament--and they talk about Marcos as a dictator? Marcos as  
oppressive? Marcos, a tyrant? Mrs. Aquino, do you think that if you  
destroy Marcos, the Philippines will flourish? If Marcos was the  
problem, OK; he's out. Why do you have to spit at him, curse him, kick  
him?

This woman, Aquino, she is satanic. In the name of God, she used God to  
package communism, these crazy things.

PLAYBOY: Mr. President, if you do not succeed in going back, how do you  
think history will remember you?

FERDINAND: I cannot answer that yet. There are several scenarios.

PLAYBOY: Meaning you still hope to return?

FERDINAND: Let's put it this way: History is not through with me yet. I  
still believe that justice, no matter how slowly, it grinds. But it  
grinds exceedingly well.

PLAYBOY: Well, let us put it this way: When you hear your wife refer to  
you as honest, generous, loving and the most wonderful man on earth, do  
you believe her?

FERDINAND: [Pauses] I am a full man.

IMELDA: No, you're a whole man.

FERDINAND: Right, I'm a whole man.

PLAYBOY: Which means?

FERDINAND: Most of the Third World people have lost the values that made  
them a whole man--the perception of dignity, the true meaning of freedom  
and the willingness to fight for that freedom.

IMELDA: Can I grab your pen for a minute? I can draw it for you, to show  
what I mean. [Takes pen and draws circles, squares and other shapes]  
We're talking about the whole man--body, mind and spirit. You give the  
body what is good and makes him healthy [draws circle]. Give the mind  
the truth to make him educated [draws stars over the circle]. And then,  
when everything is in harmony, he is whole and starts to smile [draws a  
smiling face over the other drawings]. And if you take off one part of  
that, the picture will look like a crocodile, and we are not content  
with that. We want fulfillment and happiness to make a truly happy face.  
If he has an unhappy face, it's this [draws an upside-down heart]. Mind,  
body and spirit--and we all have a happy face!

PLAYBOY: Is this semeiology a way of expressing a, what shall we say----

IMELDA: I call it a theology. It's a little presumptuous, but it is  
correct. I made a theology toward a new human order, using symbols. And  
I call it Seven Portals to Peace. [Takes pen in hand again] Here I'm  
going to use only the numerical symbols of one and zero. Number one, how  
does the children [sic] draw a tree? Zero and one. See? As long as there  
is one tree on the planet, there will be infinity to bring about  
ecological order. [Keeps drawing]

Number two, as long as there is one woman--this is the sex symbol of the  
woman--and one man, the phallic symbol, there you have it: woman and  
man. So there will be infinity and there will be a human order. Are you  
following me?

PLAYBOY: We're trying. Please go on.

IMELDA: Number three, as long as you're not thinking of the dollar and  
going in circles for the dollar like a porcupine, man will be the  
center, and man will flourish, the dollar will go around and there will  
be an economic order. Using only zero and one! Zero, zero, zero, zero,  
zero. And man is the center. And here's number four--I always say the  
problem is also an opportunity. I don't solve problems. I recycle  
problems into assets.

PLAYBOY: Of course, your financial assets, many of which are being held,  
have been of great interest to the U.S. media.

IMELDA: That's my problem. I have an American mind; I'm honest and open.  
That's what my problem is and the problem of America is--we tell  
everything.

PLAYBOY: You haven't told everything to the courts about your assets.

IMELDA: My dear, I will survive. Assets----

PLAYBOY: Such as, of course, the shoes in your palace closet----

IMELDA: At least there were no skeletons in my closet, no? [Laughs]  
People forget. In the Philippines, shoes are now 60 pesos a pair--that's  
three dollars. And this business of my having 3000 pairs of shoes--even  
if I'd had 10,000 pairs of shoes for 20 years, that's only $30,000. Many  
people spend a lot more than that in ten years.

The thing is, I was promoting anything that was Filipino--I was the  
first lady; remember that.

PLAYBOY: Did you wear only Filipino shoes?

IMELDA: Well--I was not always parochial, let's say. [Laughs] But I did  
wear a lot of Filipino-made shoes. Look at these, for instance. [Takes  
shoe off right foot] This is Oleg Cassini, franchised in the  
Philippines, and it was made in two hours. [Holds up shoe for  
inspection] In Italy, the shoes would have taken two days to make. Two  
days!

PLAYBOY: Yes, but if they'd been made in Italy, they wouldn't have  
rubber soles, as yours do, would they?

IMELDA: They still stand up for wear. The point is, by making these  
shoes, we were able to give jobs to our people. Shoes were not even my  
weakness.

PLAYBOY: What was?

IMELDA: [Laughs] I'm certainly not going to say it out loud for PLAYBOY;  
are you kidding? Seriously, my weakness was trusting people I shouldn't  
have trusted.

FERDINAND: One thing about her shoes--she lost a shoe on a state visit  
to China, because so many people were bugging her. Later, when the media  
publicized the 3000, we joked that we should have taken them all along  
on that trip.

IMELDA: I got along the rest of the day in China with one shoe by  
wearing a long gown. But when I got back to the hotel, I threw that shoe  
away. Then, a few days after we got back to Manila, the Chinese  
ambassador came to call. He had with him the shoe I had thrown away!

The moral is, never throw shoes away, because they will catch up with  
you. [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: President and Mrs. Reagan made their own state visit to Bali  
last year. Were you disappointed that you didn't get to speak with them  
in person?

IMELDA: [Pauses] No, I was happy that we got to speak with them on the  
phone. We were grateful that they remembered to call, that they took  
time to speak with us. I had spoken with Mrs. Reagan during the final  
days in Manila.

PLAYBOY: Really? You spoke with Mrs. Reagan on the phone during that  
period?

IMELDA: Yes. On the day the palace was under attack by rockets, she said  
to me, "Come, Mrs. Marcos, I invite you to the United States." The  
Reagans were very sweet and wanted us to be their guests. I had to say  
that I would be the last to leave my country. Unfortunately, the Reagans  
were then fed lies by bureaucrats. But I surely appreciated their humane  
concern.

PLAYBOY: Has it ever occurred to you, now that the Reagans have their  
own troubles with the Iran/contra crisis, to call up Nancy Reagan and  
return the favor--tell her to just hang in there, that sort of thing?

IMELDA: Yes, I feel there will be a time for all of that, but I don't  
want to be presumptuous. They're smart enough to do this thing right,  
and what President Reagan did has a moral foundation to it.

PLAYBOY: Selling arms to Iran has a moral foundation?

IMELDA: You just cannot argue with me about it--President Reagan did  
what he did because he wanted to protect America. Reagan's number-one  
oath is to protect America. And the system would not help, so he had to  
go an illegal way. But it was morally right!

And, of course, I understand what it is like to be in distress. Last  
year, just before Thanksgiving, we were getting so congested in our home  
here--people were getting hotheaded with each other, wounding each  
other, hurting each other; it was like everybody had his own foxhole. So  
then some of our people came and said, "Mr. President, we are leaving;  
we can't stand this anymore; we're up to here." [Points to neck]

PLAYBOY: A mutiny?

IMELDA: A mutiny. So the president said, "Gentlemen, this situation  
reminds me of my namesake, Ferdinand Magellan." He said, "When Magellan  
and his crew had not seen land for many months as they were  
circumnavigating the globe, Magellan went before all of his men and  
said, 'Gentlemen, today we are no longer ordinary mortals. We have just  
turned into gods. And let us thank the Lord for this great privilege of  
having been so deprived, so humiliated, and given all these indignities,  
because these are all instruments for heroism and greatness.'

"And I promise you," said Marcos, "that this is one fight no one will  
lose--even if we fail, we fail as martyrs for freedom." There were  
three or four minutes of silence; then everybody stood up and saluted  
Marcos and said, "We're sorry, sir." I have never seen the president in  
a more glorious and shining moment than then. When I saw this, I had to  
go and embrace the president. I said, "Hallelujah, this is something!"  
And ever since then, things have been fine with our staff.

PLAYBOY: You think of yourselves as gods, then?

IMELDA: Yes, because we are on a divine mission.

PLAYBOY: Which is?

IMELDA: To return to the Philippines to reclaim our destiny.

FERDINAND: We are part of the achievement of being a god. That is what  
we are about now. An ordinary mortal would not be able to stand it. All  
of our statements now have to prove that we have not gone back to being  
ordinary mortals.

IMELDA: And even if we fall----

FERDINAND: We'll fall as martyrs for the cause; we'll fall with honor.

PLAYBOY: You've said you would do anything to keep the "flame" alive----

IMELDA: The flame of freedom!

PLAYBOY: What, exactly, does that mean?

FERDINAND: I'm willing to die! If necessary. But I don't think that may  
be necessary. ... I will not be surprised if by the time this appears in  
print, we are enjoying the Manila sunsets. [Marcos leaves to take a  
phone call.]

IMELDA: After you've been deposed, after a leader has fallen, he's  
suddenly ugly, a crook. Somoza! The shah! Everybody! You know who was  
the first to call us when we got here? The shah's widow.

But, again, why did Marcos proclaim martial law? Because the Communists  
were already pounding on the gates of Malacañang Palace and in congress.  
Did Americans realize why we did it? No!

PLAYBOY: What Americans did hear were the many allegations by  
human-rights groups, such as Amnesty International, of the terrible  
things the Marcoses had ordered done to people----

IMELDA: Human rights! Human rights! How about human right? We chose to  
be with America, not the Communists, and that's why we're now being  
crucified!

PLAYBOY: You keep invoking the Deity. Do you think God has something  
special in mind for you?

IMELDA: Yes. I think He has something special in mind for me. This has  
been too much of a preparation. And I don't just believe in God--I make  
God real. I want to be surrounded by what is beautiful. I want to do  
beautiful things.

FERDINAND: [Returning to the table] My doctors have been telling me to  
take my nap. I said I had an interesting interview with PLAYBOY. They  
asked, "Are they making you the centerfold?" [Laughs] Maybe we should  
send them the immigration commissioner's picture.

IMELDA: They can't use your picture; I don't want you to look too  
healthy now. You'll be forced to sit down before the grand jury in  
Virginia [about alleged misuse of U.S. Government funds]. [Laughs] Me, I  
recycle everything--even being in jail would be very positive for me if  
they called me to a grand jury.

FERDINAND: I do not want to go home that way. [Laughs]

IMELDA: Andy, tell them about your bitterest enemy.

FERDINAND: You're talking about the guy who tried to turn me into a  
queer, which I'm not and don't intend to be!

PLAYBOY: A homosexual political enemy?

FERDINAND: We won't mention his name.

PLAYBOY: Yet enemies of Marcos had real reasons to fear you; didn't  
they?

IMELDA: OK. What so terrorizes a lot of people in the Philippines who  
would fight against Marcos is that, always, all of Marcos' enemies  
somehow go and get sick, or something terrible happens. [Laughs] From  
time immemoriable [sic].

FERDINAND: Unfortunately, my enemies are slowly dying away. And so the  
game is not as exciting as it used to be. I am surprised at the way they  
are disappearing from the scene.

PLAYBOY: Some people charge that, over the years, you have been  
responsible for some of their disappearances.

FERDINAND: Let them say what they want. It's not true.

PLAYBOY: What if something terrible were to befall Cory Aquino?

FERDINAND: The Communists will probably try to kill Madame Aquino and  
blame it on me. It's in their blood.

PLAYBOY: It's in their blood to kill Cory?

FERDINAND: What do you mean, Cory? Everybody! All the leaders of every  
party, including ours. All she did was release from jail the 441 most  
prominent Communist leaders our government had spent years trying to  
track down! The way the Communists are conducting themselves, even if  
Madame Aquino survives the elections, she will not last the year. [The  
interview resumes in the living room.]

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about the hours before your downfall. Why didn't you  
try to mount a counterattack with troops loyal to you?

FERDINAND: I could have had the Malacañang Palace bombed. I could have  
done a number of things to ward off the attackers. But I had another  
plan. I was going to cut off all the palace's utilities and then  
infiltrate the defense building--friends of Enrile's are also friends of  
mine. So I called him and said, "Let's stop this foolishness." Enrile  
promised me he would try to work it out; but by that time, I suspect,  
Cory was already in touch with him--through the Americans.

PLAYBOY: Why do you suspect that?

FERDINAND: Because I received a threat that the Marines would be used  
against me. The U.S. Marines! I got a formal note--unsigned--from I  
won't say whom, but it was a high-ranking U.S. official. [Marcos has  
elsewhere named former Ambassador Stephen Bosworth as the official who  
threatened him. Bosworth denies this.]

PLAYBOY: How did you respond?

FERDINAND: I said, "You show me this note, but signed by President  
Reagan, and I'll surrender to you." I mean, if President Reagan was  
declaring war on me--what the heck! I surrender! I face reality! I'll  
go to the President and say, "I'm your prisoner; what's happening?"  
[Laughs]

PLAYBOY: Yet it seems clear that the order for you to step down came  
from the President.

FERDINAND: I seriously doubt it. It was the diplomatic-level people at  
the U.S. embassy. The policy there was to get Marcos out. There was a  
U.S. Senator there whose 24-year-old daughter felt insulted because  
there was a party she wasn't invited to attend. [State Department  
sources say that no one of that description was in the U.S. embassy at  
that time.] I talked with President Reagan later and I think he was  
unaware; he was misled.

PLAYBOY: And the assassination of Aquino, as we have discussed, was  
crucial.

FERDINAND: The Aquino assassination added to the resolve of the U.S.  
embassy to try to knock me off. But I'm not going to fault anyone. All I  
know is that somebody from a Senator's office [presumably that of  
then-Senator Paul Laxalt, who served as go-between during that period]  
called and said, "You'd better get out of there. Even gunboats will be  
used against you." So I immediately issued an order that if any  
American gunboat came into Manila Bay, or if the Marines landed, no  
firing. [Laxalt denies this and says that Marcos was "terrified" by  
reports of gunboats, which Laxalt checked out. Laxalt then called Marcos  
to assure him that there was no such threat.]

PLAYBOY: So, in effect, Senator Laxalt told you that you had to cut and  
run.

FERDINAND: No, he never said those words to me. In fact, I do not know  
what Laxalt's memory is, but the truth is that I did not talk with him  
before the events that ended in my departure from the Philippines. I  
talked with him afterward. [Laxalt says this is not true and that he and  
Marcos spoke several times before his departure.] If he had ever said  
those words to me, I would have said, "May I talk to President Reagan?"

PLAYBOY: And what would you have said to your old friend President  
Reagan?

FERDINAND: I would have said, "You know you're ordering the use of  
American troops and violating the law. You are supposed to submit this  
to the Congress within 90 days."

But the President did not know what was happening to us. I know this  
because he stopped off in Honolulu last year, on his way to Bali, and he  
gave me the impression that he did not know. It was all underlings. The  
same type of underlings that, in my case, I say stole so much money from  
the Philippines.

PLAYBOY: Since you bring it up, do you know what your net worth is?

FERDINAND: Yes. But I'm not about to tell you. [Laughs] The true answer  
is yes and no. My net worth is covered by the documents I have, and I am  
ready to show them at the proper time. My enemies say I have deposits in  
the Bahamas, in Panama. Now, I'd like to see those, because I don't have  
any paper on those.

They claim I'm worth--how much? Thirty billion? I say, "Show me the  
paper, and we can split it. You take 29 billion, give me one billion and  
let's say goodbye like friends." But they have to find it first! And  
not in pesos--in American dollars! [Laughs]

IMELDA: You remember The Wall Street Journal had stories that either the  
money didn't exist or Marcos was smart to have hidden it so well. Which  
was it, Andy?

FERDINAND: Well----

IMELDA: You were smart! [Laughs] [Mrs. Marcos leaves for a while.]

PLAYBOY: Earlier, when you talked about America, and when Mrs. Marcos  
referred to "us Americans," it seemed as if your history is so tightly  
intertwined with U.S. history----

FERDINAND: Look, I learned the Gettysburg Address before I could read.  
We were under the U.S. educational system. But my grandfather headed the  
revolutionary forces and fought to the death!

PLAYBOY: Against the Americans?

FERDINAND: First against the Spanish, then against the Americans. So I  
knew about American history through his stories, and I was fascinated by  
American heroes--Teddy Roosevelt, all the guys my grandfather fought. I  
guess I was always fascinated by America.

PLAYBOY: So you grew up in an essentially American way.

FERDINAND: Yeah, with hopes of going to Harvard, only I was ordered into  
the military. But I had, I remember, a yellow convertible, a Chrysler  
fireball, all kinds of other cars. I lived the bachelor existence.

PLAYBOY: A pretty lavish one, too. You had some early success as a  
lawyer, didn't you?

FERDINAND: Yes, I was earning a good living, because I had a reputation  
for having represented myself successfully before I got my law degree.

PLAYBOY: What case was that?

FERDINAND: I was accused of murder. In '39. The guy testifying against  
me as an eyewitness was someone I'd never seen before. I jumped on him  
right in court and started to choke him. I was strong and forgot myself.  
I was actually in jail when I took my bar exam and, of course, everyone  
said, "He'll never be able to concentrate and take the exam." But I am  
the type who can put aside tensions and worries, and I took the exam,  
passed it and began handling big cases right away. Although I  
specialized in corporate law, I decided to practice some criminal law,  
for the sake of the criminals who had been in the penitentiary with me.

Anyway, when you're a lawyer in the Philippines, you're automatically  
considered presidential material. One of my first cases was that of a  
bon vivant charged in a gold-mining scam. He was living quite the  
bachelor life.

PLAYBOY: Unlike yourself? Didn't you say you led a fast life--cars,  
ladies?

FERDINAND: God, we're returning to sex! I try to avoid it. The answer  
is yes and no. There's a saying in the Philippines, "You can be hungry  
in the eyes but no further than that." My greatest fear was that  
someday I might wake up and discover somebody I was not in love with  
beside me in bed. I was afraid I would go crazy and shoot myself. So I  
promised myself I would never have an affair to the extent that a woman  
could, well, corner me into a shotgun wedding. So I kept window  
shopping. But when I met Imelda, I was swept off my feet. I proposed to  
her in the first 30 minutes.

PLAYBOY: What persuaded you?

FERDINAND: First, I made her stand up to find out how tall she was. She  
was about my height, and I said, "I guess you'll do." I told her I felt  
bells, I smelled roses, I could quote poetry the whole night through--I  
had never felt like that about any other woman.

PLAYBOY: And you did not even kiss her until----

FERDINAND: The altar. She was very circumspect and had a chaperon before  
we were married. Our wedding was in '55, and I was running for congress,  
and she started having these migraine headaches. [Both were involved  
with others at the time of their wedding, which was in 1954, and Marcos  
was already a congressman.]

We went to the doctors and they told me the headaches were caused by my  
desire to become involved in politics. They said, "Either you give up  
politics or she will not be able to perform normally as a wife." So I  
said to Imelda, "I'll give up politics. I'll practice law, write books  
and amass a fortune--part of which I could put into a foundation for the  
poor." But she cried, "I cannot make you give up your life's ambition!  
Everyone says you will run for president in 20 years!" I beat them by  
nine years, by the way--I ran for president 11 years later. But  
basically, she said, "I'm going to be a politician's wife."

PLAYBOY: Then it must have hurt when, over the years, she was portrayed  
as the ultimate dragon lady.

FERDINAND: Of course. She was not anything like that. She was not  
ambitious. She was not grasping.

PLAYBOY: Then why is the world's perception of her the opposite?

FERDINAND: Because she did not bother to explain herself--I had to do  
it. In the early days, she was always afraid of appearing before a  
crowd--until I got her to sing. She'd always been a good singer. When  
she was a kid in the Benedictine convent, she lived right across the  
street from General MacArthur's headquarters, and he used to have her  
come over and sing for his staff.

PLAYBOY: And you then began to sing together as a campaign trademark,  
right?

FERDINAND: Yes. Before I knew it, she was also delivering speeches.

PLAYBOY: And----

FERDINAND: And she stopped having migraine headaches. [Laughs]  
[Mrs. Marcos rejoins the interview.]

PLAYBOY: We've heard that there is an interesting story about your first  
public appearance as a singer. What year are we talking about?

IMELDA: Oh, don't ask me this! It was 1944, and I was singing at a  
garden party in the MacArthur compound. I sang a song--God Bless the  
Philippines--and Irving Berlin, who was there, heard me. He came up to  
me and embraced me and said, "Dear girl, this song is God Bless  
America!" I said, "No, this is God Bless the Philippines." He said, "I  
composed this song, and it's God Bless America." I said, "There's no  
difference, because America and the Philippines are the same." He said,  
"No, no, no. Almost the same but not really the same; this song is  
really meant for America." So Irving Berlin went off into a little  
corner and stayed for a while. He came over to me and said, "I must have  
a piano." So he went to our house right across the street and played a  
new song. "I have this new song for you," he said--Heaven Watch the  
Philippines. "You'll learn this," he said, "and tomorrow there's going  
to be a big show I'm going to present. You'll premiere this in front of  
40,000 men." So the next day, I sang it in front of the entire Eighth  
Army, with General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Halsey, and  
I had a backup chorus of 200 soldiers! You should have seen me!  
[Irving Berlin, 99, says he composed the song in 1945, not 1944, and  
"definitely not" for Mrs. Marcos. Pentagon sources say that it is highly  
unlikely that such an event took place during that period.] This is how  
I first became public--I was ten or 12 years old. [Laughs] I still do  
love to sing, but I don't get much of a chance anymore.

PLAYBOY: Perhaps you could sing a song or two for us. We'll play the  
piano. [Phil Bronstein, one of the two interviewers, sits down at the  
piano.]

IMELDA: Well . . . all right. Let's start with Sentimental Journey--do  
you know it?

PLAYBOY: We'll try.

IMELDA: [Gives a rousing rendition] "I'll be counting every mile of  
railroad track that takes me back./Never thought my heart could be so  
yearny,/[Slowly, then more upbeat] Like a child in wild anticipation./.  
. . [Breathy voice] Never thought my heart could be so yearny./Why did I  
decide to roam?/Got to take the sentimental journey, sentimental journey  
hommmmmmmmme."

PLAYBOY: Bravo.

IMELDA: Now let's try Don't Fence Me In. [Sings with great gusto] "I  
want to ride to the ridge where the West commences,/Gaze at the moon  
till I lose my senses. . . ./Don't fence me in. [Winds up] Oh, baby,  
now, don't fence me in. Don't you fence me in!" [Applause]

PLAYBOY: Do you have a secret desire to be on Broadway?

IMELDA: I do have an offer to do a show. It's called Aloha. It has seven  
beautiful songs, and it's the story of Hawaii. In it, the queen, Alika,  
comes out beautifully dressed in her lei and grass skirt and long  
hair--my hair is long, anyway. But the nice part is, my first public  
appearance will be with beautiful things in my hair, wearing a grass  
skirt--and without shoes! [Laughs] I'm going to make money on those  
shoes, you know. How is that for recycling a problem into an asset?

PLAYBOY: Is there a singer whom you particularly admire?

IMELDA: Elvis Presley. He was ahead of his time, because he had deep  
feelings. He had the privilege of deep feelings because he was deeply  
loved by his mother, Gladys. He was able to appreciate deep, profound  
beauty in sounds. And he started a musical revolution. They say all  
revolutions start from love.

PLAYBOY: Including the Aquino revolution?

IMELDA: No! That was started in vengeance!

PLAYBOY: Your own love story was pretty special, according to President  
Marcos----

IMELDA: Yes, it was made in heaven. I've been so blessed. Our life is a  
fairy tale.

PLAYBOY: Yet the rumors persist about extramarital affairs. Yours, for  
instance, with George Hamilton.

IMELDA: Well [pauses], at least he's goodlooking, isn't he? I'm in good  
company, because he's got one of the most beautiful women in the world  
as his girlfriend, Elizabeth Taylor. We are beautiful women, beautiful  
people. Why does the press lap up all this stuff? Because we are all  
beautiful people. But George Hamilton and I were never more than good  
friends.

PLAYBOY: Then, too, there has been much publicity of late about your  
husband's alleged affair with a starlet, Dovie Beams de Villagran, a  
former B-movie actress who claims she was once his mistress.

IMELDA: [Laughs] Wait a minute! I know better. I have a special  
sensitivity about these things. You can tell when they're playing hooky.  
We're too close. I would be able to tell if he was with someone else.  
[Mrs. Marcos leaves for a while.]

PLAYBOY: Mr. President, your own health became the topic of speculation  
through the last years of your presidency. There were reports that you  
were a candidate for a kidney transplant. Is that true?

FERDINAND: I was ready for a transplant, yes. But when I came to the  
U.S. in 1982 and the doctors saw the results of my kidneys' performing,  
they laughed me off the operating table. I said, "Be frank with me; do I  
need one?" Because I might have had to give up my duties as president,  
and I said I would have to settle my affairs and would like to die in  
the Philippines--or, better yet, live in the Philippines. They said,  
"Don't worry."

PLAYBOY: Kidney dialysis is a procedure that many people cannot afford.  
Yet when the Aquino forces took over the palace, they found seven  
dialysis machines.

FERDINAND: That's right, seven. When a doctor friend of mine was asked  
why I would need seven dialysis machines, he said I probably had seven  
kidneys. [Laughs] The truth of the matter is, we were preparing for a  
battle, so we were setting up an emergency hospital. The first wounds in  
battle are usually those that affect your kidneys. That's why they were  
there.

PLAYBOY: There was also a stir raised on American TV when a video of  
your own version of a Jane Fonda workout was broadcast. Was it to show  
people in the Philippines that you were healthy, despite the rumors?

FERDINAND: To be frank, I did not intend for it to be shown in the  
Philippines, though it was. I wanted it as a record of how I was  
feeling. Somebody apparently got hold of it and sold it.

PLAYBOY: How could that happen?

FERDINAND: That's like asking how someone can tap my phone--but they do.  
The telephone company even told me so. I wrote a letter to the State  
Department complaining, but to no avail.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk briefly about some of the world leaders you've met.  
Can you give us some thumbnail sketches of the greatest--Mao Tse-tung,  
to start?

FERDINAND: I admire all leaders who attain their objective, no matter  
what their politics. I appreciated Mao because it was always said that  
no one would ever be able to unite China. He did. He probably killed  
more people than were lost in World War Two, but at least he kept to his  
objective--until the last few years. He wiped out Chiang Kai-shek.

PLAYBOY: Did Fidel Castro impress you?

FERDINAND: Yes, very much. A flamboyant person. He impressed me in this  
sense: He's one of the leaders who believe that in war, as in love,  
deceit is acceptable. [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: And Margaret Thatcher?

FERDINAND: Her? The Iron Lady? Don't they say she's the best man in  
England? [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: Didn't you say, when Mrs. Aquino ran against you, that it was  
beneath your dignity to run against a woman?

FERDINAND: Oh, no! Not all women are that incompetent!

PLAYBOY: Yet didn't you have Mrs. Marcos negotiate the Tripoli Agreement  
with Muammar el-Qaddafi in 1977, when you were seeking to have him cease  
funding the Moslem rebels on the Philippine island of Mindanao?

FERDINAND: Yes, Mrs. Marcos had been over in Libya for a few days, and I  
talked with Qaddafi through her efforts. In 15 minutes, we had reached  
an agreement through the persistence of Mrs. Marcos.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't she threatened by the P.L.O. during the trip?

FERDINAND: Yes, they were going to bomb the plane she was on. And so all  
the macho soldiers, including Ramos and Enrile, abandoned her and took  
another plane back to Rome. She stayed on the plane, on the theory that  
the P.L.O. didn't kill women. I said, "Knock on wood," because they had  
killed women. [Mrs. Marcos rejoins the interview.]

IMELDA: So, what are we talking about here?

PLAYBOY: World leaders and your role in dealing with some of them.

IMELDA: Who?

PLAYBOY: Qaddafi.

IMELDA: Oh, him. You know, I really went out of my way to be friends  
with Qaddafi. The stories I could tell! But I will tell you this: I  
think he has a real problem because he was spoiled by his mother--whom I  
met and who is a wonderful lady--but it's this whole Arab macho thing.

PLAYBOY: Mr. President, is there one achievement you're proudest of  
during your 20 years in office?

FERDINAND: Yes. Getting rid of this slavish colonial mentality in the  
Philippines. Converting a people to learn their own past, to stand up  
for themselves. None of that whining, beggary, mendicant posture.

PLAYBOY: Do you think the people appreciate that?

FERDINAND: Why do you think they cling to these ideas even after I'm  
gone? It's only because of me. Those young kids--they're not just  
fighting for Marcos but for what he may have taught them. I was a  
symbol. Those in their 20s knew no other president except me. They knew  
Marcos as a guy who could crack jokes, who could demystify the  
complicated philosophy of life. He could quote Rousseau and explain  
it--which no one had ever done.

IMELDA: That was one reason the U.S. was so fascinated by us, as well.  
When we were elected, we were called the Kennedys of the Far East. I  
remember that The New York Times, Life, Time, Newsweek covered us. I  
even had my own articles in Reader's Digest. Because we were fighting  
for the same thing America stands for. This estrangement now is just an  
interlude, an intermission. Wait till the second time around. It's going  
to be a big, big love affair. [Sings] "Love is lovelier the second time  
around. . . ."

PLAYBOY: Yet your reputation now, both in the U.S. and in the  
Philippines, is of your wealth and extravagance in a poor country----

IMELDA: What the president and I see in the Philippines is not what you  
see. When you go to the Philippines, you see poor people. You must  
remember how poor they were yesterday.

PLAYBOY: Still, your own extravagance----

IMELDA: I always believed there was no extravagance in good taste. There  
was no extravagance in what I did and bought for my country. I lost my  
mother, the prime giver of love, when I was nine. We were poor. Then,  
years later, when I was able to give, I was crucified for it. If you  
want to be intimate with poverty, be a poor relation. And I was. I came  
from a third-class province of a Third World country to become leader of  
the country for more than 20 years, to travel in all the major corridors  
of power in my time. Isn't that something?

PLAYBOY: When you sang Don't Fence Me In, we couldn't help feeling that  
you were singing that your soul does feel fenced in, living in exile.

IMELDA: It's a divine birthright to live and die in one's country. I  
never willed and desired to be born in the Philippines--it was just  
destiny.

PLAYBOY: If you got the opportunity, would you go back to the  
Philippines without President Marcos?

IMELDA: The president is no longer here in mind and spirit--this is only  
the shell of a man. He's physically in Hawaii, but his mind and heart  
are in the Philippines.

PLAYBOY: Yes, but if he had to stay here--let's say for health  
reasons--and you had the chance to go back by yourself, would you go?

IMELDA: Yes, oh, yes, I would. Right at this moment, I'd go home. It's  
the only place I'm obsessed with. Thirty-five years ago, I went to  
Manila with a youthful face, a dream and five pesos in my pocket. This  
time, I will not go home even with a face, because I've been deprived of  
my honor and my dignity. I'll go back with five pesos and make billions  
and billions of dollars, because what I do comes from the heart and the  
brain--I've got both.

PLAYBOY: Mr. President, we'll be winding up now----

FERDINAND: Did I tire you? Did I bore you? As long as I did not bore  
you.

PLAYBOY: Not at all. But one more question: something we alluded to  
before. You said you're not yet ready to say what your place in history  
will be. But how would you want your epitaph to read?

FERDINAND: I don't . . . what's the lawyer's epitaph? Here Lies A  
Lawyer----

IMELDA: Who Lies No More.

FERDINAND: Who Lies Still.

PLAYBOY: Your epitaph, Mrs. Marcos?

IMELDA: One word: Love.

PLAYBOY: And your place in history?

IMELDA: I just want to be in heaven.

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ciao

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Mike

"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the  
lamp of experience. I know no way of judging of the future but by  
the past."

-- Patrick Henry