I somehow ended up in New York Times Square's tallest billboard

...and other things I say when I meet someone for the first time

October 10 2023
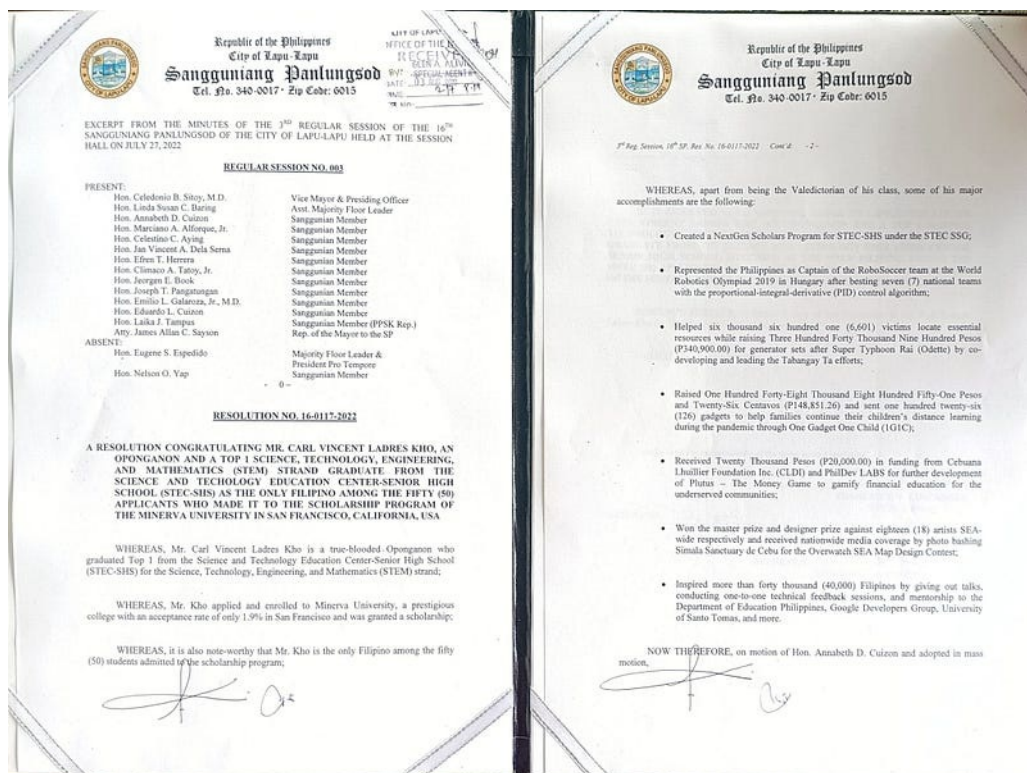
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The first few words that came out of my dad's mouth when I received my acceptance letter for an American university *(as someone living on a small island in the Philippines)* were,

> "Sorry—but we can't afford this."

So I did what anyone in that situation would do: I designed and built a [website looking for sponsorships](#).

The accompanying video for my website launch.

Because of this, the mayor of my city sponsored a portion of my tuition!

Fancy paperwork 📄📃

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and then I usually go:

Helloooo, my name is Carl 📄📃📄📃, a sophomore at Minerva University.

I study in one country per semester.

I have spent a year in San Francisco ▣▣▣▣ and four months in Seoul ▣▣▣▣.

I am currently in Germany ▣▣▣▣ for the winter. You'll then see me in Argentina ▣▣▣▣ and India ▣▣▣▣ for my third year. I'll finally top it off with Taiwan ▣▣▣▣ and London ▣▣▣▣ for the last.

I'll then be returning to San Francisco for a month to graduate.

The reason? [Minerva's](#) global rotation program.

My first Minerva feast in SF!

I'm a Computer Science Major and a Neuroscience Minor working towards non-invasive Semantic Decoding **and/or** Agriculture Robotics.

How were your assignments graded?

I have a long (informal) history with design. I started with graphic design because back in the Philippines, essays were graded on:

1. The content (50%)
2. The *border design* (50%)

I sucked with arts and crafts, so I turned to Canva (2016).

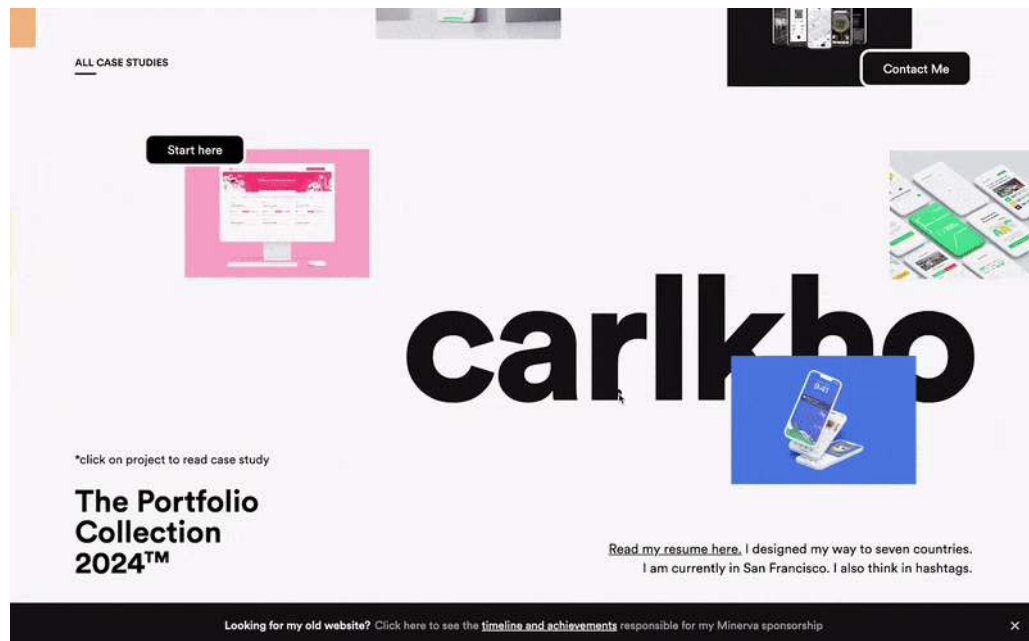**Opportunities opened up and snowballed from there** (in chronological order)**:**

1. Brand designer ([freelance [old portfolio site]](#)—99d)
2. Design for Creative Social Media Marketing ([volunteer](#))
3. T**hePremierePro-AfterEffects guy** ([hackathons era](#))

These led me to my first UI/UX Internship at [Symph](#)! Thanks to the team's trust and culture, I eventually became a full-time Creative Front-End Developer pioneering Webflow and no-code solutions.

No Coping Mechanisms were Harmed in the Making

Before I talk about getting to time square, let's do a rewind.

Before Minerva, I was already a full-time designer in high school working at [an established startup foundry](#), where I helped the top businesses in the Philippines.

Design Portfolio Plug—carlkho.com

However, I've always wanted to pursue research and development.

In my final year of high school, I sought international education. I took the IELTS English proficiency test and the SAT. The Philippines didn't have free access to it, so I had to spend around $600 for both tests.

I was about to be accepted at the University of British Columbia. I even got into their four-year, fully-funded undergrad scholarship!

Well, partially. I was on the waitlist.

That felt like a stab to my heart. I felt like a failure.

So my coping mechanism was to do something anyone would do: apply to every available international scholarship.

However, the Philippines did not have such a database, so, again, I did what anyone would do: I created and launched an initiative with a group of nine friends called *Padayun Ko (*"I Will Continue" in my native language).

Bonus: This initiative went on to be integrated into my school. Handled by the Student Government

Because of that, I got to be in talks with other people in the education sector, and good karma returned to me when I heard about Minerva, its pedagogy, and the financial aid that comes with it.

Remember my [for-sponsorship website](#)?

It was made in Webflow! **Webflow was the reason for my appearance in New York Times Square.**

During my time in SF, I got the chance to:

1. Compete in creating a website in under 10 minutes
2. Join Webflow Conf 2022 as a scholar, and
3. Eventually, get into an *excruciatingly intense* dad joke contest with Vlad and McGuire (photos at the end).

Webflow Speed Build 2022 Contestants

In the following summer, Webflow contacted me during my summer internship in Boston* for a *personal branding opportunity (much love to Veronica).*

Turns out it was for their 10th year anniversary + biiiig rebrand (I likey).

Long story short: I was treated like a king as soon as I flew into San Francisco (again) and I can now call myself a model. 🖼️🎞️

TIL: I have a butt chin. Thanks to the hardworking crew!

Congratulations, we can now skip the formalities when we talk.

> If you're a recruiter—pretend I wrote this article professionally.

Feel free to say hi to me on LinkedIn.

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Shoutout to [Vitoria](#) for giving me the push to write this over acai 🀫 🀫

Unsolicited Gallery

"Bold Moments" at Webflow HQ

"Do you dive?"

Minervans started calling me Figma boy ¯_(ツ)_/¯

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