**ALING AIDA**

By Al Lim

**LOGLINE**

After learning about her son's sudden extrajudicial killing, a seemingly ordinary single mother pursues justice and truth while discovering a dangerous criminal underworld consisting of dirty cops and drug kingpins.

**BEGINNING**

After the mysterious tokhang-style death of Raffy, her son, Aling Aida starts looking for answers. She believes whatever the police reports say are bullshit because she knows her son is a studious and honorable man who will never be involved in illegal drugs. Knowing the justice system will go nowhere in solving her son's death, with the cops covering everything up, and with the naysayers and gossipmongers getting into her nerves, Aling Aida decides to take matters into her own hands. With her resourcefulness and unmatched tenacity, she stumbles upon a conspiracy that connects a handful of dirty cops with the illicit activities of a local druglord. However, after each new intel she gains by hunting down and torturing the dirty cops, it becomes increasingly evident that her son, Raffy, was indeed involved in the drug trade. And it slowly eats her up.

**MIDDLE**

As evidence shows her son is indeed involved in the drug trade, news and gossip start to spread among the people around her. After she couldn’t take their knowing stares and murmuring behind her back anymore, Aling Aida reaches a breaking point as she questions the saintly image she has of her son as well as her own sanity. Suddenly, her son's best friend Chico meets with Aling Aida and confesses everything that happened that fateful night. Chico recalled that he randomly stumbled upon Raffy, his old childhood friend, that night and invited him to some drinks to catch up. On the way home, Chico's car was flagged down by the police captain’s men (who are involved in the drug trade), as they know Chico is working for a rival of the local drug kingpin. Chico tells everything in detail, how they were intimidated by the dirty cops, how they were forced to ride with them against their will, how they were brutally tortured for kicks, and how they were finally presented to Boss Javier, the drug lord. Since Javier is a mean dick and probably high on his own supply, he toyed with them with a game of russian roulette, pulling the trigger alternating between Chico and Raffy, until the loaded chamber was pulled on Raffy, blasting his brains out. Javier then taunted Chico to send this as a message and warning to his boss and not to mess with his territory. Finally, they let him go as they cover up Raffy’s dead body, tokhang style. After telling Aling Aida, Chico broke down, stricken with guilt how everything went down, that he did not intend to bring harm to Raffy at all, that he went into hiding after all this to save his ass and could not bring forth the truth until now.

Now with a newfound reason to fight back and bring justice to her son’s wrongful death, Aling Aida decides to end it all by taking down Javier and the cops on his payroll. However, the audience learns Chico is a drug addict, so was he really telling the truth about that night or did he just trigger Aling Aida’s rage to exact revenge on the drug lord?

**END**

After learning there will be a private meeting for the cops at Javier's compound, Aling Aida invites herself to the party to wreak havoc and unleash hell on the bad guys. She takes down each and every one of the dirty cops and eventually, a gruesome encounter with Javier. Javier then reveals he met Raffy before, described him as a kid with a bright future, had he been alive. However, he insists he had nothing to do with his death. He even offered Raffy a job and he said he’d think about it. However, Aling Aida is having none of this shit. She successfully takes down the drug lord and his empire but she is in critical condition as well. As she lay dying and bloodied, Aling Aida is proud that she went to hell and back to protect her son's honor. She lays there smiling, remembering the best memories she had with her son. Once the bloodbath is over, the good cops roll in and find a dying Aling Aida. A small crowd gathers outside the compound as she is carried into an ambulance. A kid tries to record Aling Aida through his phone but other people from the crowd signaled him to stop it, to silently pay respect to this simple woman who singlehandedly took down the evil empire destroying their community.

**WRITER'S STATEMENT**

I know there are already several documentaries, short and feature films about EJK and I have seen some of them. It is indeed a serious issue (more so a couple of years ago at its height of media prominence) that has been tackled numerous times through political and socio-economic lenses.

What makes Aling Aida different is the power fantasy it sells, a callback to the lone cowboy action flicks of The King, FPJ, where the underdog hero takes justice into his own hands, but set in modern times. No political messages, no poverty porn, just a story of an ordinary woman doing whatever it takes to attain justice and defend her son's honor.

To give it a more contemporary packaging, I can see this old school take should be cross-bred with a healthy dose of current influences such as the hyperviolent blockbuster Taken (starring Liam Neeson), the unrelentless suspense of Mother (by Bong Joon-ho) carefully balanced with the gritty atmosphere and cinematography of the first season of True Detective (directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga).

I want the audience to see Aling Aida as the modern-day hero Filipinos need, the representation of their anger against a corrupt system and injustice. Amidst the daily violence going on, the sensationalized news reports and headlines, and the grim cinematic takes on EJK, I want Aling Aida to be the sort of escape people need these days. Starting out as a helpless single mother and ending up taking down an evil empire, I want Aling Aida to be the ultimate modern day Filipino wish fulfillment.

There is the physical struggle, her quest for revenge and answers against the corrupt cops, but I want to present more of Aling Aida’s internal struggle: her declining mental and psychological state when confronting the fake news, the gossips, the doubts against her son’s name and dignity, and the victim-shaming against her (nanay ng adik, anak adik, etc.). Throughout her journey, she herself would begin to doubt her son’s involvement with drugs when she’s confronted with (planted?) evidence and the overwhelming gossips, fake news, and murmurs from her neighbors until she reaches a breaking point. In the end, her son’s involvement with drugs remain unclear, but Aling Aida chooses to believe her son’s innocence because her love for her son is unconditional. This is the truth she wants to believe in.