



REY AND JOVITS BASK IN THE TROPICAL SUN OF PLANTATION BAY, CEBU

REY DAVID: ANOTHER TRIP BACK HOME

Jovits and I were in the Philippines on vacation only last year, during April and May of 1997. On August 22, we were on a red-eye flight going back there. It wasn't so much a vacation as it was a visit to Mother, who is suffering from Parkinson's Disease. Mike and Gina, Paul and Joy and baby Lizzie, Sarah and Ed, all were at the airport to welcome us and take us home. Dad had committed to staying at home to care for Mother full-time.

I was happy to see everyone at home, especially babies Lizzie and Nicole (Sarah and Ed's newborn), whom I was seeing for the first time. They were positively two of the prettiest little babies I've ever seen, and not just because they were my very first nieces.

The first thing I did at home was go to Mother and Dad's room. I saw Mother half-sitting up, half-reclining in bed, in a state of fragile rigor. I spoke happily to her, as if everything was perfect in the world again. After a few moments of speaking to her, she spoke back to me, saying I love you several times. She repeated her litany to me just as she used to more than

two years ago, when she and Dad were here in the States and she had two years less of debilitation from Parkinson's Disease. After some time, with her eyes trained intently on me, Mother changed her litany to I love you too. She spoke in a clear voice heard easily across the room. After a while, she began repeating, I missed

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you. I simply smiled and spoke back to her, failing to notice the silent shock that went through the people around me.

Mother spoke these words of endearment to me for a long time, probably several minutes. It was only later that I learned from the others that she had hardly spoken at all in recent weeks. She hadn't spoken to Gina at all, who arrived one week earlier, and she hadn't spoken lately to Mike, who had been there for eleven months already. It was a minor miracle that she spoke at all. More amazing was that she specifically said those things to me within seconds of see-

ing me.

Everyday until Jovits and I would leave two weeks later, I made a practice of coming to see and talk to Mother. I could tell those brief moments were very special to her. Despite her condition, I would see the intensity of her gaze on me, the tremendous efforts she made to speak to me, the voiceless pleas,

her eyes and lips and hands raised to me. Her frail hands would clasp my fingers like a vise, entreating me to stay. It was painful for me to see

Mother that way. But I always kept a happy and playful face with her. After all, I was in fact happy for those moments I was with her.

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Because Gina was leaving and heading back to the States within a few days, our schedule was hectic. On August 24, (Monday), Jovits and I, Gina, Toto (Jovits's brother) and Luz (his wife), flew to Cebu and arrived at Plantation Bay, the newest five-star beach resort in Cebu. It boasted a huge man-made salt-water lagoon, a fresh-water

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swimming pool, an artificial waterfall and water slide, several Jacuzzis and whirlpools, all enclosed within a number of first-class cottage buildings. There were also tennis courts, Jet Skis, electric shuttle service, miniature golf, para-sailing, 24-hour personal butler service, top-rate restaurants, shops and salons, paddleboats, a massage spa, and a game room.

We took our lunch at a restaurant in the middle of the lagoon. We played various games in the Game Room – Billiards, Foosball, Air Hockey, Pinball, Darts, and the Karaoke machine. We had dinner at a fine restaurant on the beach. While the others went biking around the complex, I got a massage.

The next day, we rented a couple of Jet Skis. This being my first time, I tried to make it memorable by going as fast as I dared. We dipped into the stone-hewn whirlpool and Jacuzzi, and swam around the lagoon and the fresh-water pool, before having breakfast.

In the afternoon, we took a shuttle to downtown Cebu. At a hotel restaurant, we feasted on crabs, lobsters, green mangoes, fish and others. Afterward, we took a taxi to the historic sites in Cebu. The rest of the trip downtown was a shopping excursion for fruits (including my 30 green mangoes) and native sweets.

On August 26 (Wednesday), before we left the resort for our flight back to Manila, we rented a paddleboat, took pictures, played some Table Tennis, dipped into the whirlpool, and returned to the Game Room for more Karaoke and

billiards.

The next day, accepting the titas invitation, Jovits and I, Mike and Gina, joined Tita Peewee, Tita Bingbing and Bubbles for a fine

Filipino lunch buffet at Ang Hang restaurant in Remedios Circle. What a loquacious group of people we were!

The rest of our stay in Manila consisted of shopping at MegaMall, Shangri-La Plaza, Glorietta, and Greenbelt. I took advantage of services being so cheap by pampering myself with facial treatments, a haircut and shave, and massages. And I indulged in my favorite native dishes everyday. Jovits caught up with old friends from Cocobank and relived their happy



EVERYONE'S ALWAYS GAME FOR A GROUP PICTURE! CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: MIKE, REY GINA, JOVITS, MOTHER, AND DAD.

entire day, or at least until the owner drags us out after closing-hours. Sarah would join Jovits and me and Jovits's family to a water amusement park. On occasion, Jovits and I, Mike, Paul and Joy, Ed and Sarah, would dine out together and play billiards long into the late hours of the night.

On August 30 (Sunday), Mike, Gina and I served as three of the godparents to baby Nicole during her Baptism ceremony. The Reception was held at Cabalen, a

Filipino buffet restaurant.

Tita Wanda was there just to see me and Jovits. Dad, Tito Rene and Tita Bibot, Tito Eddie and Tita Bingbing, Jimboy and MaryAnn, Bubbles and Bingo, and

dozens of other people were there to join in the celebration. Jovits came to join us directly from a trip to Zambales.

On September 4 (Friday), after being stuck in insufferable traffic for two and a half hours, I arrived at Tita Bingbing's house in time enough for the meal to still be considered dinner. Dad and the rest of the House of David, Tito Rene and Tita Bibot, and of course, Tito Eddie and Tita Bingbing and the Juarez

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'The next day, we rented a couple of Jet Skis. This being my first time, I tried to make it memorable by going as fast as I dared.'

times together. Dad and I would have lunch at the neighborhood restaurant and get caught up. Mike and I would play tennis, and spend time at the Mall and the movies. Gina, Mike, and I, would go to the Shangri-La's ZU, the most happening dance joint in town. Paul and Joy would take me to their favorite hang-outs for dinner. Ed and Sarah would take me to a ritzy resort in Tagaytay. Ed, Mike, and I, would play multi-player war games at an Internet Caf for the

children and grandchildren, were all there.

On September 6, after some 19 hours since we left NAIA, Jovits and I were back home. I was exhausted, sleepy, and I reeked. The traffic, the driving, the heat, the lack of water in Manila, and the recent stock market slide, had taken their toll on us. Jovits and I were sorry to leave. But I was also happy to be back home.

Bringing Jovits into ProBusiness (where I work) from Wells Fargo last year proved to be a brilliant idea. Now we drive to work together, her commute is a lot shorter, her pay is better, and the frequent parties that the rapidly-growing company holds suits Jovits's taste just fine. In the company's IPO first year anniversary bash, Jovits was awarded the \$500 prize for coming up with the name of the company's flagship suite of products — ProBusiness Online. This early, she has already left a permanent legacy.

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Kuykuy



When Mayleen and I moved to New Jersey, we were already expecting a baby. We took the time to find a place we really liked. We knew we would be staying for a while. We lived there for the next five years. It was our home, our place. We were the masters of our domain. Even though I knew that we would probably have to move after our residency training, I really loved living in New Jersey.

WE'RE BACK HOME! ...Uh, Not Quite

by JONDI LAICO

CEBU, PHILIPPINES - As you've probably heard, Mayleen, the kids and I moved back to the Philippines from Clearwater, Florida. For those who wanted to visit Disney World and other attractions, I'm sorry but it's motel time again. Anyway, we were still an hour's drive away from Orlando. As the title says, "We're back". But not quite all the way back. We're settling down in Cebu, Mayleen's hometown. Most of you will probably think we're in Cebu and not Manila because I'm a little "under the saya". The official reason is that there are too many neurologists in Manila, and until this year, there were only two in Cebu. That's my story and I'm sticking to it. There are actually myriad reasons why we moved to Cebu but the bottom line is that it's actually the best place for us right now. And we're here to stay. We're home. But where is home? I've lived in Manila, New York/ New Jersey, Florida, and now Cebu.

When I arrived in the U.S., I rented the first apartment available. It was in Astoria, which is in the borough of Queens in New York City. That was the first time I had my own place (the apartment I shared with my classmates in medical school doesn't count). Of course that was my home at that time. But I was never very comfortable there, never really at ease. I took the apartment because I needed a place urgently. I always meant Manila whenever I said "home". However, when I did visit Manila, I didn't really feel like I was back home anymore when I stayed in our house in Parañaque. With everybody but Jim having moved out, it felt like Jim's place now, not like my old house. I actually felt more at home when I first visited my parents in California, even though I had never been to their place. Everybody was there.

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Florida was different matter altogether. The Tampa Bay area is wonderful. The weather is almost always sunny. The traffic is much less than NYC. The people are a lot more pleasant. Everything is cheaper. The seafood is terrific. The great beaches are only minutes away. Mickey Mouse, Universal Studios, and Sea World are just an hour or so away. We had a bigger, newer, better-maintained and cheaper apartment.

We hated living in Florida. I really can't figure out exactly why. The only great thing about our stay in Florida is that Aiyan was born there. Maybe I missed New York City's attitude. You actually still feel like a New Yorker even if you live across the Hudson River. I really loved that place.

Now we're in Cebu. Only Mayleen comes from here. I'm from Manila but like Kuykuy felt something special for the New York/ New Jersey metropolitan area. Aiyan, the Floridian, doesn't get a vote - she's only five months old. I didn't speak a word of Cebuano when I first got here. I'm still learning. I recently asked Kuykuy, who is now four and a half years old, which of our "houses" he liked best. I was surprised when he said that he likes Cebu

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Aiyan



WE'RE HOME...

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the best. During our first month here, he kept wanting to go back the "brown house". That's what he calls our apartment in New Jersey. He didn't like our "white house", our Florida apartment. Since he's just a small kid, I assume that he refers to the general area, and not just the particular apartments. He also showed this by his preference of schools. He likes his current school best, followed

by his New Jersey school, even though he practically grew up in New Jersey. He had been going to that "school" since he was one and a half years old. We've only been in Cebu for four months. He didn't like his Florida school at all. He keeps referring to Florida as if it were Aiyan's place. He was fonder of New Jersey. I guess that the entire time we were in Florida, he still considered New Jersey his home. But now, he likes Cebu best.

I couldn't understand why at first. I'm still not sure I do. I thought about my own preferences. I enjoyed my time in New Jersey very much. Not so in Florida. But

our reasons for moving to Cebu were not about which place is more "fun". After we had Aiyan, we believe it is the best situation for our kids and for us to be with our kids. I don't mean to generalize that the Philippines is a better place to raise kids. We all have to do our own thing. There is a short story entitled *Home is where ... (the heart is)*. The title tells you what the message is. I believe that home is where your family is. When I was younger, it was where Mom and Dad were. Now that I'm a Dad, it is where my children are. That is where my heart is.

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Reporting from Southeast Asia...

Nov. 16, 1998

From my deckchair on the MS Nieuw Amsterdam:

We are on the 27th day of our Southeast Asia Cruise. Right now we're at sea, but since we're 16 hrs. ahead of the U.S., hopefully I'll make Cris's deadline of Nov. 15 by FAXing this today. Tomorrow, it's "Good Morning, Vietnam" because we dock in Danang, Vietnam. We have been to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Sabah, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam and Hongkong, and enjoying very nice weather all throughout.. Mostly, what we noticed was evidence of the economic boom that was and find it hard to believe that this economic boom is gone - the cruise passengers were impressed by the cities we visited and enjoyed the low prices. Dan and I enjoyed the food courts, usually on the top floor or in the basement of

shopping centers. We gorged on the familiar vegetables cooked in coconut milk and other native dishes that are similar to but slightly different from Filipino food. Kuala Lumpur was a very pleasant surprise. We wouldn't mind going back there, but Bangkok is still my favorite. Dan especially liked the \$5 shirts.

Six months ago, our cruise was to South America. We went down the coast of Chile, rounded Cape Horn and went up the coast of Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Trinidad and then through the Carribean, ending up in Florida. It was a beautiful cruise as well, made more enjoyable for us by the Spanish influence all throughout the area. We look forward to the next cruise.

But it is very true that there is no place like home, be it ever so humble as Morton. So now, we look forward to seeing the whole family for Thanksgiving, a few days after we get back (safe and sound, we pray). Brandon and Christopher wanted very much to come with us on this cruise, but there is the matter of school, so they thought of possibly FAXing their homework home at every port. Great idea, Brandon; it would have been very educational, as it was even for us. Maybe next time...

- Nini Laico Elizaga

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