

GMA Slams Door on Cristine for 'Bad Behavior'

By Ricardo F. Lo
Philstar.com

IT happens all the time. Like the mythological character Icarus who burns his wings while trying to fly, wrongly thinking that he can soar on his own, many showbiz denizens start having, ehem, grand illusions when they feel that they have made a "name" for themselves, only to collide with painful reality. Ouch!!!

Let's hope that the law of gravity doesn't catch up with Cristine Reyes on whom GMA Network has just slammed its door with a "good riddance" tag stuck at her back.

You see, these past few weeks, Cristine has been blithely showing up in shows on rival channel ABS-CBN, among them *Wowowee* which is hosted by her "special friend" Willie Revillame, saying that her contract with GMA has expired.

"She is welcome to leave," according to a statement from the GMA Corporate Communications Dept. (CCD). Meaning, if she wants to go, by all means go!

Here's the full statement furnished *Funfare* by GMA's CCD:

"GMA has decided to drop Cristine Reyes from its roster of talents because of her attitude and behavior. She is welcome to leave. The Network has a lot more serious artists to assign important projects to and develop into fine, professional actors. That being said, GMA Network has now closed its doors on Cristine."

Another FilAm actress starting to shine in Hollywood

There's another FilAm actress who is making a name in Hollywood. She's none other than Liza Lapira who is in the cast of Columbia Pictures' new thriller *21* which opened last week at No. 1 in the US and North American box-office with a \$24.1-M gross.

Most recognized in Hollywood for her turn in the Showtime series *Huff*, Lapira plays Kianna in *21*, a key member of a group of M.I.T.'s most gifted students that heads to Las Vegas every weekend armed with fake identities and the know-how to turn the odds at blackjack in their favor. By counting cards and employing an intricate system of signals, the team can beat the casinos big time.

Also starring Kevin Spacey, Kate Bosworth and Jim Sturgess (*Across the Universe*), *21* is based on the novel *Bringing Down the House*, the true story of the very brightest young minds in America—and how they took Vegas for millions.

In the film's production notes, Lapira says that she was astounded by the chance to work with Spacey.

"I was so excited to find out that I got this role with Kevin in the movie. I know it's a cliché thing to say, but just watching him work, I learned a lot."

Two weeks prior to filming, Lapira and the other actors who play the MIT team of card counters spent time with card consultant Kyle Morris to



Cristine Reyes
Photo courtesy of www.igma.tv

learn how to play the game.

Lapira explains, "Before being in this movie, I never thought playing blackjack was fun. But thanks to 'research,' we got to go to a lot of cool places. It didn't feel like we were working!"

Lapira, who pronounces her name Lisa, will next star in *Repossession Mambo*, opposite Jude Law and Forest Whitaker.

Lapira made her mark in television with a recurring role on Showtime's Emmy award-winning show *Huff*. She played Maggie Del Rosario, Oliver Platt's long-suffering assistant.

Her film credits include *Domino*, *Brown Sugar* and *LA Blues*. Her notable credits on television include guest appearances on *Grey's Anatomy*, *Monk*, *The Sopranos*, and *Sex and the City*. She has also recurring roles on *Law & Order: SVU* and *NCIS*.

She is originally from Queens, New York, and moved to Los Angeles in 2004.

Opening across the Philippines in May, *21* is distributed by Columbia Pictures, local office of Sony Pictures Releasing International. ■

Sarah Records Duet with Backstreet...

From PAGE B4

Na by actor-turned-musician Chuckie Dreyfus; and *Mr. Deadma* by newcomer Drizzle Nuniz.

Sarah, together with fellow singing champions Rachelle Ann Go, Christian Bautista and Mark Bautista, recently performed in the cities of

Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal in Canada; and in San Jose, Houston and Anaheim in the US. ■

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Entertainment Bits



Ruffa Gutierrez

Yilmaz Press Con to Worry Ruffa?

Yilmaz Bektas recently warned estranged wife Ruffa Gutierrez of his press conference which will be held in Istanbul, Turkey on April 11, according to her statement made with the Philippine Entertainment Portal.

"*Marami raw siyang sasabihin tungkol sa akin.* I'm supposed to be worried at *magsasalita na naman siya tungkol sa akin*," said Ruffa about the scheduled event.

A previous interview with the couple generated an impression that the two already were in good terms after a publicized separation due to speculated wife-beating. Just last week, however, Yilmaz made a surprise visit to the actress right after the released photos of the Turkish businessman with Miss Universe 2006 Zuleyka Rivera.

High Society Blogger Now a Radio Host

The blogger who exposed local elites in an unusual light will already be co-hosting radio station

Magic 89.9's *Good Times with Mo, Mojo and Grace*.

Originally hosted by DJs Mojo Jojo (Joseph Paul Pacis Javier), Grace Lee (Lee Kyung Hee), Andi-9 (Andrea Manzano) and Mo Twister (Mohan Gumatay), the morning program features games and conversations *Ang Yabang Mo, Gay or Straight?*, *Cute Boy Alert*, and *Forbidden Questions*.

"I'm very happy about it [the show]," the Australian said. "I'll go on at 7:30 am, which is 10:30 am in Australia. I have no idea what we'll talk about. I'm going to call direct. They've [the station's officials] arranged for that."

Gabby Says Sorry to Jolina

"*Pasensya na Jolina kung nasaktan ka*," former matinee idol Gabby Concepcion said in an interview with *Showbiz Central*, apologizing to Jolina Magdangal, his supposed co-star in the upcoming film *I Trust and Love You (ITALY)*.

He explained that he did not intend to hurt her by backing out from the film. "*Pero nagkakataon talaga na ang script ay pinagkaka-*



Gabby Concepcion

sunduan din ng artista bago nila gawin," he said.

The singer-actress-host, meanwhile, expressed happiness for the two of them saying, "Happy ako for him dahil yung comeback na gusto niya nagawa niya at saka, yun, makikita na niya yung family niya."

Dollywood Declares Best Supporting GF

In her column *Dollywood* at the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Dolly Anne Carvajal pronounced singer and the daughter of actress Zsa Zsa Padilla, Karylle Tatlonghari, the best supporting girlfriend to her beau, drama-actor Dingdong Dantes.

Carvajal relayed that Karylle is delighted to have her own band, the *Marimar* lead actor's birthday gift to the young singer, and her reaction to intrigues about her boyfriend's team-up with Marian Rivera.

"I don't wanna answer questions related to their show. I leave it to Dong. I'm happy he reigns on prime time and he's getting great feedback," Karylle reportedly said. (AJ)

'Gabby Factor' Kicks...

From PAGE B1

Big star

One reason for this is the fact that Gabby was a big star before he left for the States—with some 60 movies in his filmography. It also helps a lot that, even after more than a decade, Gabby still looks like a star, so he needn't be relegated to father roles from here on in.

Then, there's the fact that Gabby's departure was hounded by controversy, so people are eager to see some loose ends finally tied up. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Gabby is still "psychologically" linked in people's minds to ex-wife Sharon Cuneta and their daughter, KC Concepcion, both important industry players. So, fans want to see how, even if only on a professional level, Gabby will figure in projects involving them. That's how the "Gabby factor" kicks in!

With all of these interest-

enhancing elements, going for him, Gabby should do well here in the coming months. This early, there's talk about his starring in a *Maalaala Mo Kaya* drama special, a film and a *teleserye*. —Not bad for a veteran actor whose comeback has only just begun.

A possible fly in the ointment is the report that Gabby had earlier signed up for a GMA Films movie, but didn't push through with it due to scripting issues (his assigned character may not have been an important enough player as far as the plot's central conflict was concerned). His role has since been taken over by Dennis Trillo.

If this is a previous contractual obligation, will it preclude Gabby's accepting a new film offer from another studio? —Well, there's always television—but for a star's comeback to be truly eventful, a movie would surely help.

Show biz fans hope that

these and other possible wrinkles can be ironed out to everyone's satisfaction, so Gabby's comeback bid can fly high. They also trust that he can be cast opposite ex-wife Sharon and daughter KC in a major project.

Obvious reasons

—Uh, not so fast. The prospect of Gabby costarring with Sharon sounds dodgy, for obvious reasons, and the project with KC would have to wait, since she's expressed the wish to first costar with her mother.

Despite these rough spots, Gabby's comeback bid still looks promising, so we'll be looking forward to seeing him acting, at least on the small screen, real soon.

The bigger question is, how will his career shape up on the long term? Comebacking stars in their 40s don't have an easy time, so Gabby has his work cut out for him to make his initially exciting comeback prospects more permanently triumphant. ■

Sharon on Gabby: I Finally Got...

From PAGE B1

caught up with Sharon, who granted a phone interview as she was motoring to a Makati recording studio on Tuesday night, three days before her flight to London, where she is currently shooting the Star Cinema drama *Caregiver*.

On the phone, Sharon sounded harassed, as she was obviously being hit from all sides—juggling school, work, family.

To top it off, the Gabby issue had to explode in that very same week.

She candidly admitted that she is torn about the Gabby comeback.

"The industry lacks good leading men like him," she explained.

At the same time, she is not so keen about a proposed Sharon-Gabby reunion movie, with their daughter KC (whom she fondly calls their "eternal connection") thrown in for good measure.

"People say there's clamor [for such a movie]," she noted.

"I have no problem with that. But the point is: Does he want to do it?"

Another crucial consideration: "Does KC want to do it?"

Easy target

"I believe KC wants to establish herself first as an actress, away from the shadows of her parents," Sharon clarified. "It's best for KC's first movie to be a solo [starrer]."

She agreed with Gabby that such a project would be an easy target for intrigue-mongers.

Sharon pointed out: "No amount of money would be worth the peace of mind of my husband (Sen. Francis Pangilinan) and my two young daughters (Frankie and Miel)."

Sharon's priority is to shield her daughters from controversy. "We have no time for negativity," she insisted.

In any case, she reiterated that she and Gabby are "civil" to each other.

The last time they talked was on the cell phone, when KC visited Gabby in San Francisco

two years ago.

Phone exchange

"I was talking to KC, who was on the way to the airport, bound for home," Sharon recalled. "She suddenly gave the phone to Gabby."

It was a pleasant conversation, she recounted. "He told me he was happy that KC grew up into a wonderful young woman. I told him that she loved and respected him deeply, even if they didn't see each other for so long."

To break the earnestness, Sharon cracked, "I guess that says something about the kind of person I am. Then, he said thank you."

When she put down the phone, Sharon said, "I started crying. After all these years, I finally got a thank you."

Should she bump into him in the hallways of ABS-CBN, Sharon insisted, "I would say hi to him. I don't expect to be immediately chummy with him, but I'll be cordial."

As she jokingly inquired earlier (when told about Gabby's contract with ABS-CBN): "We're *Kapamilya* again?"