

**By Lolo Bobby M. Reyes of Sorsogon City, PH, and West Covina, CA**

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People, including many Filipino Americans, were stunned recently after Travis, the chimpanzee, was killed by police after he attacked a Connecticut woman. Travis, the ape, had an unusually close relationship with his owner, Sandra Herold. Travis, who weighed 200 pounds, ate the finest food and drank wine from long-stemmed glasses. He took baths with Ms. Herold, cuddled with her in bed, and brushed her hair every night. But Travis was not a monkey from the Philippines although the ape acted like a Filipino traditional politician (*trapo*).

To read more about the misadventure of Travis, please click this link:

<http://news.aol.com/article/chimp-attack/345471?icid=200100397x1218727289x1201255193>

## Filipino Fun Facts (Part 8): Monkey Tails, oops, Tales - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

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\* And speaking of politics and monkey business, it appears that Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has corruption as the equivalent of the proverbial 800-pound gorilla that wrecks havoc on the nation's economy and governance. Now, Poet-pundit Fred Burce Bunao asks if the First Gentleman weighs even half of that? ( **Webmaster's Note:** *To read an article of similar rhetorical question*

,  
please go to  
[The Arroyo Administration's "Incredible Bulk"](#)  
)

\* Also recently the Chicago-based Field Museum presented a dwarf cloud rat from the Philippines. The rare rat species, last seen over a century ago in the mountainous northern Philippines, was rediscovered by American and Filipino biologists in April 2008. To read and view the photograph of the rat from the Philippines, please click this hyperlink:

<http://news.aol.com/article/polar-seas-species/344939?icid=200100397x1218399597x1201244861> ( **Webmaster's Note:** *To see the picture of the Philippine cloud rat, please go to "Animal Discoveries" and scroll down to photo 7 of 22 . If you are confused why the author suddenly talked of rats instead of monkeys, he would probably argue that Filipino **trapos** are like rats doing monkey business. LOL*  
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\* Caveat Emptor. Readers should be ware that there is another Filipino website that publishes "fun facts," which are neither funny nor factual. It carries lots of false claims like the supposed Filipino founder of the City of Los Angeles, California. Contrary to the claims of <http://www.philwebservices.com>  
(Please go to: [fun-facts.html](#)

),  
we have proven beyond reasonable doubt that there was no Filipino founder of Los Angeles as per this article,  
[How the Hoax About a "Filipino" Cofounder of L.A. Started. And Cofounder \(sic\) Wasn't Even](#)

### Filipino?

. A Filipino was not even the founder of the Los Angeles Zoo but did you know that its first monkey came from the Philippines?

\* Did you know that the Philippines used to be the number-one source of monkeys used in American laboratories and medical research centers? But there is no truth to the rumor that some imported monkeys from the Philippines escaped from a laboratory in Northern California, established a colony and founded a chapter of the Filipino-American National Historical Society (FANHS) or the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA). While it is true that there may be some monkey business in the FANHS and/or in the NaFFAA, it is absolutely preposterous to claim that some of their Northern-California chapters were founded by Philippine monkeys. This writer is the first journalist on record to defend the FANHS and the NaFFAA from such a preposterous claim.

\* Did you know that Philippine monkeys were the models for the ape-inspired "See No Evil, Hear No Evil, and Talk No Evil" caricature?

\* Did you know that the title of the original 1933 "King Kong" movie was coined by a Filipino cook? The story says that the film's producer, director and script writer hired a Filipino cook. One day, while the cook was preparing dinner, the producer asked the Filipino what name he would give to the giant monkey that would be the main character of the coming film. The Filipino thought that the producer was asking for the name of the vegetable that he was cooking and so he replied, "Kang kong." And so, that was how the name of the reel giant ape came to be. The hard-of-hearing producer thought that he heard "King Kong" as the Filipino cook's reply.

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\* Did you know that when the Philippines was a colony of the United States, some American wise guys came up with a ditty about apes that became a nursery rhyme? The song was, "Monkeys Have No Tails in Far Zamboanga." But actually it was not meant to be insulting to the Filipinos, especially the Muslim Filipinos. The Americans actually wanted to write, "Monkeys can't have tales in Far Zamboanga" but you know how some Caucasians are that bad when it comes to grammar and spelling.

\* Did you know that in the 1970s the liquidation squads of the New People's Army were called the "Sparrows" while the Philippine Army's counterparts were called the "Monkees"?

\* Did you know that some people in the Bicol Region of the Philippines, especially in the Province of Sorsogon, call the monkey as "okai" (spelled also as "ukay")? On the other hand, most of the Filipinos call the monkey as "unggoy." But it is not true that the Chinese term for a "monkey" is "ong-goi" (sic).

\* But did you know how "okai" came to be the term in some parts of Bicolandia? Well, the oral history says that the occupying American soldiers hired a native cook for their garrison's kitchen in Sorsogon town in the early 1900s. The soldiers would often ask the cook to buy beef but the money given to him was not enough. So he bought the cheaper meat from slaughtered monkeys and passed them on as beef. The American soldiers never knew that it was monkey meat that they were eating. From time to time, the Filipino cook would ask how the meat tasted and the soldiers would answer, "Okay." And "Okay" became "okai." O.K., ngarud? ( **Webmaster's Query** )

*Was it the same cook hired by the "King Kong" movie producer?*

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\* Did you know that the same Sorsoganon cook was also a song writer? So, he composed this ditty, “ *Okai sarap iluto lalo na kun may lambanog-an . . .* but then a Tagalog composer copied the Bicol rhyme and rhythm and thus a popular Filipino song goes by these lyrics, “  
*O kay sarap mabuhay, lalo na kung my lambingan*  
. . .”

\* And finally did you know that the Filipino term for monkey became a heated piece of controversy during the jury trial of the libel case filed by Mrs. Lourdes Ongkeko against Bobby Reyes (this writer, of course)? The trial happened in August 2002 at the Los Angeles Superior Court.

\* Did you know that Mrs. Ongkeko testified while she cried (like a Hollywood actress) that the defendant insulted her by calling her as a “monkey”? Her lawyer asked the plaintiff what particular term did Bobby Reyes use in mocking her? She claimed that the defendant called her, “OngKenkoy”? When I cross-examined Mrs. Ongkeko (as I was acting as my own attorney), I asked her the real Filipino term for a monkey and she said that it was “Kenkoy.” Mrs. Ongkeko denied that Filipino terms for a monkey are either “unggoy” or “tsongo” or “matsing.” Since Mrs. Ongkeko hailed originally from Baguio City, I did not ask her if she knew what “okai” or “ukay” meant. But the plaintiff claimed that in Baguio City, people called the “ape” as “monkey.” Yes, the native language of the people of Baguio is English (???) and not Ilocano or Ifugao or Kalinga-Apayao.

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\* Did you know that a wannabe Filipino lawyer lied in court during the said libel trial by claiming also that “OngKenkoy” was the Filipino term for “monkey”? Well, the plaintiff’s lawyer presented Dante Ochoa, a law graduate and a former president of the Filipino-American Depressed Club, oops, Press Club of Los Angeles. When I cross examined Mr. Ochoa, I immediately asked him the Filipino term for a “monkey.” The plaintiff’s lawyer objected on the ground that the direct examination of Mr. Ochoa did not touch on the “OngKenkoy” topic. The presiding judge sustained the objection. But I remembered our days at the Moot Court at the Ateneo de Manila College of Law. And so I asked questions that could “lay the predicate,” to borrow the term of our Ateneo law professor. I asked Mr. Ochoa his educational background and he said that he had just finished law. Next I asked him if he ever became a court interpreter (because I recalled that he did so) and he answered in the affirmative. And so I was able to ask him finally the Filipino term for a “monkey” and the plaintiff’s lawyer did not object at that time. Mr. Ochoa said that it was “OngKenkoy.” Yes, on that day at the Superior Court, Mr. Ochoa turned himself into a “Kenkoy” (clown).

\* Did you know that Mrs. Ongkeko’s attorney presented next a sitting Superior Court judge in the person of the Honorable Mel Red Recana? Did you know that it was a historic day in Filipino-American history? It was the first time in annals of the Filipino-American community that a Filipino Superior Court judge was presented as a witness in a libel case between two Filipinos. It was also a first time that a judge like the Honorable Recana would be cross-examined by a Filipino journalist who was representing himself In Propria Persona. (Webmaster’s Note: It is the same Judge Recana as mentioned in [Filipino Fun Facts \(Part IV\): How Filipinos Named States and Cities. Plus Fables and Fairies](#) )

\* And did you know that Judge Recana, who hailed also from Bicol Region, was not asked the Filipino and/or the Bicolnon terms for “monkey”? Why? When Judge Recana answered during my cross-examination that never did he see or experience seeing the defendant act with malice in community events where he (the judge) was a participant or an observer, I ended the proceeding. And submitted the case for decision by the jury – without presenting any witness of my own. (I did not bother to ask the judge the questions that I had about monkeys, OngKenkoy and Mrs. Ongkeko.)

\* Did you know that in my excitement, I failed also to present formally the pieces of evidence that I submitted earlier in the trial? In the end, I won five out of the seven issues but the jury asked me to pay Mrs. Ongkeko \$10,000 but did not give her the right to collect a reimbursement of her lawyer's fees and cost of the suit and other expenses that were estimated to exceed \$100,000. A juror said – after the verdict was read -- outside the courtroom that had I presented witnesses to corroborate my allegations, the jury would have awarded Mrs. Ongkeko one measly American dollar as actual damage. The issues of awarding the plaintiffs, Mrs. Ongkeko and her husband, punitive damages at \$500,000 each were denied by the jury. The jury dismissed also the libel case insofar as Mr. Ongkeko was concerned and his claim for actual (and punitive) damages. The jury also decided in the negative the issue of whether the defendant acted with malice.

\* Did you know that there was a Filipino woman who was a member of the jury in the Ongkeko-versus-Reyes libel case? Perhaps up to now, when asked about what the jury did most during the libel case, she would probably reply, “ *Ayon, kaming mga jurors pa-unggoy unggoy na lang* during the trial.” # # #