

The News UpFront (TOP STORY)

-The bare-faced lies and the false accusations did not fly even as the mother-daughter tandem and their roomer tried hard to look and sound convincing. A Superior Court judge simply rejected Edna Consing Concepcion's plea for a restraining order to stop the Philippine Village Voice from writing about her questionable deals on behalf of her own Philippine American Business Improvement Districts (PhilAm BID).

EDNA CONSING CONCEPCION'S FALSE CHARGES  
**Judge Upholds Freedom of the Press,  
Throws Out Plea for Restraining Order**

**By the Philippine Village Voice**

SAN DIEGO - A Superior Court judge, short of publicly scolding - for making false charges - a co-chair of a Filipino community organization being linked with alleged money fraud, threw out on Wednesday (Oct. 3) a petition for restraining order filed against a local reporter.

In a ruling that basically upheld the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and of the press, Judge Laura J. Birkmeyer, said "it is not inappropriate" for journalist Romeo P. Marquez to go and cover public events.

"Unless there's a credible threat of violence," the judge explained, the court can not consider issuing a restraining order to stop Marquez from doing his job.

Judge Birkmeyer said the allegations by Edna Consing Concepcion that she was being stalked, harassed and threatened by Marquez lacked "clear and convincing evidence" and did not rise to the standards of the law.

Concepcion, a co-chair of a recently-formed group called Philippine American Business Improvement Districts (PhilAm BID), had filed for a restraining order to stop the flow of stories about PhilAm BID's questionable deals. She claimed that her reputation was being damaged by Marquez's articles that she said had alleged that she was fraudulent in her business deals. "He's been using derogatory words. . . he always hides in the First Amendment," she whined.

Written by Romeo P. Marquez

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Judge Birkmeyer, however, said that "reputation is not an issue here". She explained the court will take matters related to safety like her claims of stalking, harassment, violence or credible threat of violence.

Concepcion had clothed her plea with a false declaration that she was being followed, harassed and threatened at least eight times even when she was purportedly going to the Balboa Navy Hospital as a "recovering from cancer" patient.

Her girlhood chum and roomer Marilyn C. Mesina, co-chair in PhilAm BID; and her daughter, 27-year-old Rea Concepcion, testified to bolster Concepcion's false accusations. But the judge did not buy their declarations.

Mesina looked pale and tense as she took the witness stand. And so was Rea Concepcion. Both were gasping for answers when queried by Marquez's lawyer John Quinn.

For example, when asked to identify the vehicle that the two Concepcions professed to have seen "stalking" her on several occasions, the mother and daughter could not make out its type and brand. The older Concepcion said it was a red Ford truck; the younger Concepcion said she didn't know.

Questioned by the judge if she had observed Marquez "stalking" Concepcion, Mesina said: "I wouldn't say so". Queried again if he had threatened her, she said: "I didn't hear him issue a threat".

Mesina admitted she lives in Concepcion's house in the City of Chula Vista. She said she felt that "someone seems to be following her (Concepcion) around and she's afraid".

Quinn said the restraining order being sought by Concepcion was for an "illegal purpose"; the venue of which was not the Superior Court's.

"In the United States, you don't restrain people from talking," he said. The court basically agreed with that argument.

Quinn explained later: "This is an ulterior and unlawful motive, not merely a complete waste of the court and counsel's time, but a clear abuse of process. She claims to be advised by lawyers and police officers: that seems equally fantastic given the issues and evidence she has presented".

When the judge asked earlier how many witnesses she would present, Concepcion replied by introducing her husband Dante and what she called the "prominent" members of the community.

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The judge repeated the question and only then did, still uncertain of the number, she mention two, her daughter Rea and friend Marilyn Mesina. She looked as if she was waiting for volunteers.

None came through even as her friends who attended the hearing sat mute in the audience, including those from the scandal-ridden Council of Philippine American Organizations (COPAO), namely: Rita Andrews, Priscilla Garrovillas and Rudy Liporada; Tony Pizarro, Betty Bael and an unidentified Chinese-looking man and woman.

Before the hearing started, Concepcion and her retinue of supporters and plain kibitzers sat and walked around, happily exchanging stories and giggling among themselves. Almost three hours later when the restraining order was denied, their happy faces turned sour and their cheerful countenance was gone.

As was her inclination, Concepcion dragged other people who may or may not know the exact truth of her claims or if she was just exaggerating.

For instance, Concepcion told the judge that she was advised by San Diego Police Capt. Cesar Solis to go ahead and file for a restraining order against Marquez, apparently after she convinced him that she was being stalked and harassed. She also mentioned a Capt. Webb who made the same advice.

Marquez had exposed Concepcion's behind-the-scene deal with Microsoft over a sponsorship of the FilAm Trade and Cultural Expo that the One Vision One Voice Movement and the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce had initiated and staged on Feb. 17 at the San Diego Concourse.

Microsoft joined as a "titanium" sponsor, which meant donating \$10,000 to the Expo.

Concepcion, who had undermined OVOV and FACC and fronted her own PhilAm BID, apparently changed the sponsorship form that showed that a "titanium" sponsor had to put in \$15,000, which Microsoft did.

The \$5,000 discrepancy was later transferred to PhilAm BID. Concepcion had said earlier that Microsoft had become a PhilAm BID member by subscribing to the "diamond" category.

In reality, PhilAm BID's diamond membership meant paying \$2,000 fee. When confronted with that question, Concepcion explained she spent the difference (\$3,000) to advertise and promote Microsoft and its new One Follow Me service.

"I was upset and shocked with the lies and deceit of Edna Concepcion," Samson said earlier.

He recalled the incident when OVOV's Dr. Maria Lourdes Reyes showed him the original

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solicitation flyer listing a titanium sponsor for \$10,000 instead of \$15,000.

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