

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

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There are countless stories of immigrants to the United States that Anglicized their names when they became American citizens.

Such were the stories of Filipino immigrants Pacifico and Porfirio. Now, let us hear their tall tales, oops, narratives . . .

Pacifico hailed from Southern Philippines. His original nickname was “Pac.” But he did not like people asking him questions like “Pac, you called me?” Or “Pac, you sent this letter?” Pac wanted to become a journalist and/or a lawyer. But he failed to study in a school of journalism or in a college of law. Yet he still persisted in his chosen fields and worked as a second-stringer of a broadcaster. He often gave also legal advices for a fee to some “clients.”

Thus, some of his acquaintances and even a few of his friends called him “Fake.” A fake journalist and a fake lawyer. But like most people in the Philippines, Pac’s critics could not pronounce properly the “F.” And they had a harder time pronouncing the long “A.” So, when his critics called him a “Fake,” they actually sounded like they were saying “Peek.”

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Our man, Pacifico, actually preferred being called “Peek” instead of “Pac.” So when somehow he got to immigrate to the

United States

, he opted to change his first name from “Pacifico” to “Pex” after he became an American citizen. After all, “Pex” sounded like “Lex” and he still wanted to become a lawyer in America

even when he could not pass the rigorous requirements of law schools in

California

. And yes, he loved to dabble in journalism, as there was no prerequisite Board or Bar exam to take in order to write or broadcast.

The Story of Porfirio

On the other hand Porfirio hailed from Northern Philippines. He came from the so-called “Ilocoslovakia,” as coined by Max V. Soliven, then the dean and doyen of Filipino columnists.

Porfirio studied engineering in a college in Ilocoslovakia and earned 12 units of English as course requirement. But he loved the works of a fellow Ilocano, Isabelo “Don Belong” de los Reyes, who was considered the “Father of Filipino Folklore.” Porfirio loved to hear stories about fairies and fables, especially those written by Don Belong. He loved so much the world of Aesop that friends called him “Mr. Fairy Tale.”

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{xtypo_quote} **Editor’s Note:** To read a biographical sketch of Don Belong, please click on this link, [Isabelo de los Reyes, Founder of the Philippine Labor Movement, Among Other Titles](#) {/xtypo_quote}

Porfirio’s dream to migrate to the United States did not become a fairy tale. He was able to obtain an immigrant’s visa but then he could not pass the engineering Board exam. So he decided to become a real-estate salesman.

When he decided to become a naturalized American citizen, he opted to change his first name. He was tired of people cracking jokes that he spoke “poor English” because he was named “Poofirio.” He remembered the sobriquet, “Mr. Fairy Tale,” that his buddies used to tease him in Ilocoslovakia. So he chose “Perry” for his first name. At least it sounded like “fairy,” one of his most-favorite topics.

Mr. Perry could not make money in the real-estate business. And so he converted his residence to a board-and-care facility. He had lots of time. Then he remembered that the press was called the “Fourth Estate.” Aha, Perry thought that it was the fourth line of Real Estate – after Brokerage, Escrow and Title Insurance. And so he decided to become a “journalist” after his wife sent him to a Filipino grocery to buy vinegar, shrimp paste and fish sauce. Besides, he could ask the patients of his healthcare facility to serve as his proofreaders and copy editors. Nobody could question his credentials as a member of the Fourth Estate because he was a licensed real-estate salesman.

How Immigrants Pacifico and Porfirio Got to Have Anglicized Names of “Pex” and “Perry” - MabuhayRadi

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Perry decided to continue with his writing career even if Poet-pundit Fred Burce Bunao (now deceased) called him a “copy editor.” Perry often copied verbatim from the Google and other search engines and passed them on as his own works. This led another professional journalist to call him the “Perrytale,” oops, “fairytale” writer.

The rest of the tall tales about Pex and Perry is now history, to use an oft-quoted cliché.

(To be continued . . .)

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