

May 12, 2009 - DAY 01 RECAP: TEE-HEE... MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!



Pix credit to NAREE

He is now walking the same soil and pavement that I have walked on! For the 1st time, has gone through the same infamous EDSA traffic that I go through daily; Is breathing the same polluted air am breathing; Is enduring - but maybe not ☺ - the same hot weather that makes SPF more relevant than ever.

Yet TODAY will be forever etched in my memory as one of those perfect days. A day as sweet as the mangoes he has sampled this afternoon and which I seasonally enjoy [NOTE: The Philippine-grown mango is known to be the best tasting, worldwide. The best ones locally are cultivated from Guimaras Island, Visayas Region]

So, did I see David today? NOPE. Nevertheless, May 12 will remain a perfect day for me. Read on and find out why ☺

PART 1 – AIRPORT ESCAPEDE

Our day started at 5AM. I picked-up LOUISE, an AP Archie to bring the banners, gifts and flowers to the airport. We reached the airport at 6AM. A number of Archies were already there. After all, David tweetered he was heading off early to bed for an early flight to Manila, right?

David... David.. David... His plane landed at 2:47pm LOL. So what did we do, all that time?

At the Arrival Area, it turned out that the Archies were not aware of the increased security at NAIA. No permit was secured and that the protocol is to secure it at least 3 days in advance. oh...oh... Being the Golden Archie in the group, I was called upon to talk to airport officials. Which worked in our favor actually cos well... tenacity is not my middle name for nothing :)

The Mission: Secure a pass for the fans at whatever cost, whatever form permissible!

At the outset, this was the objective cos we wanted to make sure that our David experience the much vaunted Filipino hospitality. Sounds easy, right?

NOPE. Cos of N1H1 (formerly known as swine flu), security alert was high. As in all special passes/permits had been cancelled which means only those connected with the concert production and its media partners would have limited access. Fan clubs, out.

But I have my own agenda: which was to turn around the impression that our David has no pull or is a lesser draw than the other David. Plus, that it was David's camp who were hard to deal with, refusing M&G, had many restrictions, etc.. -- believable?

Time and again, David reminds us that when things happen, they are meant to happen that way. I quite agree.

I also think that when things DO NOT happen, it is for a greater reason...

Got those feedbacks from the promoters and media partners I talked to. This was like a lead that I had been carrying in my heart a month prior to arrival. It got heavier after seeing my concert ticket:

<http://i101.photobucket.com/albums/m57/jackryan1/initialconcertticket.jpg>

See what I mean? [Note: TicketNet and the next batch of tickets from TicketWorld corrected this inequity]. Whichever way, our pleading had been made for us. So how can we achieve both targets?

8AM, so off we go to the 1st line of defense

Louise and I found ourselves talking to the Corporal's Office (I think that is what she is called haha). They were nice and sympathetic to our "cause" but because of N1H1, we were in a bind.

ME: We are not asking for special access in the lobby. We are not after talking or meeting David at this point. All we want is to have a secure spot where his entourage will pass by so David can see us, his fans & our banners!

OFFICER: We cannot give you that info. Nothing was coordinated with us re his arrival. Cook's was coordinated.

ME: (Ignoring the last sentence, lest I lose it) But Filipinos are known for being ingenious (ma-abilidad). Surely at your level, there has to be a way to help us without leaking sensitive info?

OFFICER: Why don't you talk to the Media Affairs or the Customer Relations Office? They may be able to assist you to gain access to Archuleta. Here is my number and let me know immediately if you got what you need. If not, let me see what we can do.

LOUISE/ME: Thank you, thank you!

LOUISE: (taking out her LAST copy of David's CD from her bag) Thank you mam for your help. (Officer was visibly touched, I was floored! her last CD!)

8:10AM, off to the 2nd line of defense

LOUISE: Will go back to group to update them.

ME: Ok. (Approached the info desk, explained our situation with CRO... then they called someone, talked to him on the phone... then he was there with me, then we went back to 1st line of defense)

More discussion until an arrangement was reached but with a condition: Their boss needs to approve it - the assistant general or something.

OFFICER: Ok, please come back in an hour when our boss is already here.

ME: I understand. Thanked everyone & left. TIME: 8:30am

By this time: we got AP's text update that David's flight is delayed. Good, given the circumstances.

9:30AM 3rd line of defense

ME: Am back :)

OFFICER: (smiling, offered me a seat) Oh, he just arrived! You can now go with him to his office

He was actually behind me all along! So we talked, again explained our situation. He was very nice and said that if only there were no N1H1 alert, there would have been no problem assisting us. But he was curiously looking at me and was incredulous that that is only what we wanted. He was probably thinking: where is the catch? LOL. Our plan was ok with him but under those special circumstances, even he needed to go through his boss. So he asked one of the staff to escort me to the General's office -- the actual head of the airport security!

9:45AM 4th & last line of defense

Staff explained the situation to the secretary. General was in a meeting so I have to talk to EA. The staff & EA talked some more. Then the friendly staff motioned for me to approach and whispered that she thinks we can broker an agreement w/ the EA. So we talked. She was also very helpful and very professional and actually tried a couple of ideas with another department. She was more familiar with Cook so I showed her the magazine that I had with me - yes SF! I the LIFE STORY MAG was with me - but I wasn't giving that up!

Then she told me that they cannot do anything. They received several requests also from other groups but not one was approved. *"Besides there was no time as he is coming in at 1PM via Singapore Airlines"*, she said.

I corrected her. That can't be Archie cos he was coming from UK, so he should be taking Qatar Airways. As both were using aliases, they doubted me. I told them I am sure of my info - that was Cook arriving at 1pm. If Archie was not in the morning flight, then he took the 2nd and last flight of the day from UK. At this point I was getting visibly getting antsy.

STAFF: Are you OK, mam?

ME: (hunched and uncovering my face with my hands) But that can't be. This is such a simple request. All I know is that we are known as the most hospitable people in the world and we - the official DA fan club (hey, using official actually got their attention) - cannot even give our Idol a simple welcome?

EA: Ok, let me see what else I can do...

ME: Please, cos you know, am not going back there and tell those rabid fans who has been up as early as 4AM that all of their efforts would come to nothing (shaking my head)

EA: (Talking to someone on the phone & I heard her say to the other person on the phone) Ok, let's try that.

By this time, the General's meeting was over. When our request was explained to him, he also gave that incredulous look and asked if that was all we wanted -- to have a spot in the arrival area, line up, show our banners and wave to David. SIMPLY welcome him, N1H1 or not.

FINALLY AN APPROVAL! With the condition that we behave and not cause any security problem. *(Somebody joked that they should hire me as my intel was good - bwahahahahahahahaha!)* TIME - 10:30AM

Went back to the 1st line of defense to deliver the good news. I was to come back an hour before David's ETA. By this time, KRICKET of AP texted us that David is arriving on the next flight. Went back to the group who were clueless to the drama LOUISE & I had to go through that day. I got a kick when I saw them waiting with the GMA7 TV crew! We decided to move out and wait in a much cooler place and have lunch.



Pix credit to XENO

PART 2: OPLAN MABUHAY IS A GO!

With David's delayed arrival, we had time to alert more Archies to come esp those who thought David had landed. We were only 20 at that time so reinforcement was needed.

THIS MADE ME LOVE THE ARCHIES MORE: Knowing that Cook was arriving at 1pm, it dawned upon us that there was no other fan group in the vicinity which we found weird. I figured, they probably tried getting permit the week before but the tight security foiled their plans...

Unknown to us, 3 Archies decided to go down the arrival area curious about Cook's arrival. With one banner on hand, they had the luck of being there at the right time as Cook's van pulled out of the arrival area. Seeing no other organized fan group around, they used our banner for DA to welcome Cook, but only after folding the banner to hide "Archuleta". Cook's van stopped in front of them and they saw Cook waved through the car's tinted glass. We only found out about this when the 3 Archies came up to where the group was huddled. ☺

At 2PM, I headed to the corporal's office and joined the security detail which would assist us. XENO, an Archie who came from New York had a bag of pastries for DA. She willingly gave it up so we can give it as a token of gratitude for the wonderful airport officials! As David would say - *"Thanks you guys!"*

There was a point during the negotiations that I had to give out my business card. When they found out I was working for a financial company, we started talking about the global financial crisis, etc... At the end, they were looking at me intently as if thinking: *hmmmm... she IS sane, so what is she doing here?*

I told them – *"I know that look! And though hard to believe, I have a respectable position in the company! Am not some cra-zeh old woman! LOL."*



Pix credit to XENO

The airport officials even gave us a better location than the original plan of splitting the group into 2 spots to ensure that if David missed the 1st set of banners, there was still another chance for him to see the other set. But the Archies thought that it would be best if we remained intact for maximum effect. They were right!

You see this great spot immortalized on youtube & the TV news. Let me end my story, with the following tidbits gathered from airport staff & media:

1. DA landed at 2:47 alright & was expected to come out of the airport straight into the arrival area between 3:15-3:30pm. I was told that after immigration, he was to spend about 15 minutes in the VIP lounge, same as DC.
2. With more Archies by that time, reinforced by walk-ins interested to join the festivities - cos it was like fiesta at out post- we waited like 45 minutes more. I was already getting antsy cos it was taking DA too long to come out.
3. Then one press guy came out and stationed himself by my side at the security post, parallel to David's van. I asked where DA was & why was he (the press guy) out already?
4. He said he already had enough pix and he couldn't stand the pandemonium inside. The VIP Lounge was crazy. Everyone, as in everyone from Duty Free staff, airport staff, immigration and stewards/stewardesses wanted a piece of Archie. Notice in the posted vids at youtube or the news aired that DA could almost not move/walk and the cameras were almost touching his face with all the people wanting to get close to him?!
5. Another press guy added: *"Grabe sa loob! Ibang klaseng hatak. Lutang yung bata! (his hand positioned under his face)"* ROUGH TRANSLATION: *"It is crazy inside! That kid's pull is really different. He glows!"*
6. I asked a couple more press people (TV and print), how come Cook got out faster. According to them, not much pax in the VIP Lounge and not much craziness inside from the airport staff. One press guy said: *"Paano suplado!"* TRANSLATION: *"Cos he is a snob!"* I pointed out that his brother just passed away...
7. One security officer even commented, *"This is even crazier than the welcome Manny Pacquiao got! WOW!"*
8. Meanwhile, the Archies were interviewed & filmed by several press people.

Back at my post as we wait for David to come out of the airport, the security detail asked me: *"Mam, are there other celebrities you would still welcome today?"* (Like I do this for a living, huh?!) I almost guffawed! I think am a marked woman in that terminal. Their faces were priceless.

MY REPLY: No, only Archie. I actually didn't come here for Cook. Promise! (w/ raised hand) Oh, but wait... there is still the departure...

SECURITY: Ah that's ok mam! That will be a different team!

Bwahahahahahahahahahahaha!

When we were sure that David was coming out, mayhem ensued. One airport official told the press, *"For me, that is the real story!"* (pointing to the strategically located Archies)

In less than 3 minutes - from the airport's exit door to his vehicle - David was gone. His van didn't stop in front of the Archies as expected. See footage from NAREE's vantage point -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oINnxS7qZc>

We realized quite insanely why: he wasn't in the van. As the entourage sped off with the van leading it, we realized belatedly that he and Jeff were in the next car. So the van was blocking their view and it was only when the van turned left that David saw the Archies with their colorful banners! I saw him turn around at the back of the car to catch a last glimpse of his Archies. I bet he was saying: *OhMyGosh!*

We scurried to my car & headed to the hotel while screaming and singing our lungs off! By dinner time, youtube was flooded with the airport scene; GMA-7 and ABS-CBN broadcasted their respective coverage.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pLCIwEU-1o> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9yZYRX7qPg>

Not a big draw?

Has no pull?

May I say: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?! Such a perfect day! ☺ (*while grooving to Bill Withers's "Lovely Day"*)

PART 3: DINNER WITH MIKE & ELI



We met Eli & Mike at the hotel lobby. After all the photo opps, the group invited the guys to dinner. Found out later that while we were having dinner with Mike & Eli, the 2 Davids were having dinner with the Sony execs.

Some juicy tidbits we learned from Mike & Eli:

1. DAVID WILL RELEASE ZG & WITH A NEW AND BETTER MIX! Mike confirmed this – woo-hoo! Mike said they cranked up the mix - GAH! Jive finally saw the light. Mike sent them a last minute offer. Jive's acceptance came only last week. Why Jive didn't like ZG in the 1st place - Mike said he also didn't get it. I suppose the UK reaction sealed the deal for them or probably the tons of mail they are getting from the fans. LOL
2. From the UK Tour, Mike & Eli shared that they had quite an unbelievable reception, except for Oxford. It wasn't bad but Oxford was not as excited as the other venues. I just teased him that they are probably getting spoiled getting the audience all worked up ☺
3. While on tour, the band gets plenty of R&R - as David does the PR round.
4. Except for Kendra, none of them are Mormons. I seem to recall reading somewhere that declared they were. But they really see how important is David's Faith to him and totally respect him for that.
5. Remember all the wondering why the band didn't blog during UK? That was because the internet connection was very bad there! Can you believe that?! Well David did say it was lame... The 1st blog we got from the band was from ELI - on the plane on their way home LOL.
6. For them so far, Manila was the best & warmest reception they've ever had. And totally unexpected. I countered *"No — it was Malaysia. David couldn't get out and had to use another route to avoid the mass of fans waiting for him"*. Mike corrected me - *"But we weren't there..."* Hah! That totally escaped me!

7. And where was ALEX? He wasn't feeling well. Too much alcohol on the plane. Me thinks he forgot he was going to a tropical place LOL
8. KENDRA rarely gets out of her room which drives Mike nuts.

MIKE & ELI asked if we have seen the latest concert videos — hah! As if he needed to ask that, right?

Anw, he said that if we are blown away by David in his UK tour — we better get ready for May 16.
DUN-DUN-DUN-DUN!

Oh my... Fearless Productions better prepare an ambulance if that's the case!

Thanks to NAREE & XENO for the vids & pix of our lovely time with Mike & Eli:

1st attempt: SAYING HI TO MANILA FANS
<http://www.sendspace.com/file/97whzs>

2nd attempt: SAYING HI TO MANILA FANS
<http://www.sendspace.com/file/6lossn>

MIKE & ELI SAYING "MAHAL KITA" (I LOVE YOU)
<http://www.sendspace.com/file/tg11lr>

[PHOTO BELOW HYPERLINKED - <http://www.mediafire.com/?jntwojmtlnj>]

