

Thanks Steve for your email but it seems that you are misinformed and misguided in some of your analysis. I'm a very honest and straightforward person. So I will try to be a straightshooter in my response as possible. I will call it as I see it.

First of all, I just wanted to call your attention to your comment which said "**Luisa Marshall interviewed**

**Jojo during the Ati Atihan festival (January, 2010) and suggested that he take this event to an outdoor**

**street parade platform which he did."** Correct me if I'm wrong but upon reading your comment, it seems to me that you're trying to make it appear that I got the idea to celebrate the event outdoor from Luisa's suggestion. I want to correct that. It's not Luisa who suggested that I take this event outdoor. Actually, prior to the interview I already discussed and told Luisa that there's a plan to take the celebration of Pinoy culture outdoor. This plan has been discussed prior to the Ati-atihan celebration with City councilors. Luisa's comment on her video interview regarding this matter was predicated on my prior conversation with her when we were discussing the context of the interview. I'm very thankful for Luisa and Simply The Best's support but let's make the fact straight. I don't want you to create any form of public impression that somehow Luisa originally (directly or indirectly) suggested it.

### Pinoy Fiesta

Now with regards to Pinoy Fiesta, I'm not sure where you're getting the information that the Hirit management team is not open for public suggestions/concerns/criticisms in the celebration of Pinoy Fiesta and then you unfairly commented that it is "a huge mistake". Of course there's no such thing as perfect event but we addressed our shortcomings in the best way possible. Although there are still some areas that need improvements but we're proud that Pinoy Fiesta becomes bigger and better every year. Based on the post-event feedbacks from community leaders and Fil-Cans who actually took part in the celebration, I would say 90% of the participants and spectators enjoyed and proud of it. Roughly 5-10% was adamantly saying that the celebration was very badly mismanaged. It's too bad that you and Luisa were not there last year to witness the history making celebration of 2012 Pinoy Fiesta. It was the biggest and the grandest Filipino cultural celebration by far.

Since you're not actively involved in the Filipino community and in the Pinoy Fiesta celebration except when we hired and paid you for your service to provide the sound system for Pinoy Fiesta two years ago, I will give you a little background of Pinoy Fiesta to give you some sort of understanding and enlightenment.

For the past 3 years, we always call for a Hirit community meeting not only once but a number of times. In the first 2 years of Pinoy Fiesta, we had our meeting at St. Patrick hall and last year it was held at Multicultural Helping House and Pinoy Buzz studio. We openly invited everyone to attend the meeting. Open discussions and suggestions were made from various community leaders and members. It was a very interesting, informative and lively meeting. There's a feeling of community and belongingness amongst the participants. So proud to be Filipino-Canadian when you witnessed various community leaders come together to openly discuss and made suggestions for the Pinoy Fiesta celebration.

I think this is one of the reasons why we have so much support in the community because they always felt that they're part of Pinoy fiesta from the get go. Hence, they've been participating annually and more groups are joining every year. But it's kinda odd that the very people who never attended a single meeting in the past 3 years are the very people who are now blowing their own horn and calling people behind closed door

and keep on criticizing Hirit management for somehow not being "open and not getting stakeholders involvement".

With regards to your question if Pinoy Fiesta is Pinoy Buzz event - my answer is NO. As you pointed out Pinoy Buzz had a huge exposure at the 2011 Pinoy Fiesta. It's because they're a major event sponsor. Pinoy Buzz sponsored the popular Filipino actor Derek Ramsey and his entourage. Pinoy Buzz management spent huge amount of money as a form of their marketing investment for their Pinoy Buzz TV show. And I think it was a right and smart marketing decision for PB to chose Pinoy Fiesta. It created a huge buzz in our community. In the 2012 Pinoy Fiesta celebration, TFC Canada/ABS CBN exclusively sponsored the artists for the event. Hence, TFC got a massive exposure through Piolo Pascual and the holding of TFCKat final during PinoyFiesta. Now this year, whoever is our major event sponsor will get the same marketing exposure. I'm glad that Pinoy Fiesta was able to provide an effecient marketing platform for our event sponsors. At the end of the day what matter to the Pinoy Fiesta management is to make everyone happy including our event sponsors. Of course as expected there will always be some issues and concerns but as the founding chairman of Pinoy Fiesta - the buck stops with me because I mostly made the final executive decisions.

I also noticed that Luisa and her group were so consumed with Pinoy Fiesta and Hirit Team. It looks like that in the past year this group's community life revolved around Pinoy Fiesta and Hirit Team members. I would like to suggest to Luisa and her group to expand their community involvement. Maybe they can also concentrate their efforts and energy in getting involve to the various Philippine Independence day celebration. I heard about the scheduling issues last year for the North Van celebration and other event organizers including the Historama sponsored by the Consulate. Maybe they can help with that. Or maybe in the SPIDS celebration, they can help and partner with your friend organizer in making plan to improve SPIDS. Or maybe get in touch also with the Slocan, Richmond and New Wesminster Philippines Independence Day organizers, I'm pretty sure they will appreciate your involvement. These are all independence day celebrations that the Fil-Cans involvement and support are necessary because we are all "stakeholders" and as you pointed out maybe you can also passionately suggest to them to "allow an open platform for people" to see and decide the ins and outs of their plans. Maybe you, Luisa and her group can take an active role in openly managing these Philippine Independence Day celebrations or in any other community event.

I read your suggestions for Pinoy Fiesta. Thank you so much. I appreciate your feedbacks and desire to make Pinoy Fiesta better. I will surely keep your comments and suggestions into consideration. But don't worry so much about Pinoy Fiesta, with all the ups and downs we faced in the past 3 years of organizing Pinoy Fiesta, we learned a lot and made adjustments every year when it's necessary. And we are proud to say that we made Pinoy Fiesta bigger and better each year. In fact this year the City Special Event Committee during our post Pinoy Fiesta analysis meeting said that with some correctable minor problems, overall "we did an excellent job" in managing the event. We truly made the Fil-Can community proud.

By the way, I really wanted to suggest to you, Luisa and her new group to focus more in helping other community events that really needs it. Those other events also wanted to hear your passionate comments and suggestions for the betterment of their event. To give others a fair chance to learn from your group's organizational skills please don't concentrate more of your time to Pinoy Fiesta because we are are just doing fine. I think others need it more. But any way, thank you for all your suggestions. Truly appreciated.

**Other matter - my personal opinion.**

To be honest with you Steve, I'm very hesitant to reply to your email because I don't think you, Luisa and her new found group are honest brokers who really wanted to make a difference for the common good. I personally read the long (somewhat vicious) message of Luisa sent to others undermining the event and supporters of Hirit. I was also aware that she's participating in meetings whose agenda is not necessarily for the community but basically to put others down. I found it ridiculous to read your email talking about "common good" and "for the benefit of the community" when the actions of Luisa and her "new group" preceding this email were pointing to the opposite direction. I read private messages from members of this new group spreading rumours and baseless accusations against Hirit members of bullying and physical intimidation. And to top it all, this "new group" even went into the extent of organizing the so-called community seminar about "community empowerment" when after what has been said and done on that seminar, it was primarily an attempt to undermine the reputation of certain individuals. These acts were so vicious, malicious and personal. It made me sick to my stomach.

Thinking about it, it seems to me that you, Luisa and this new group's agenda is not so much for the community but to somehow ruin Janice Lozano, Roc Juatco, Pinoy Buzz and the Juatco family. I arrived in this analysis because I distinctly remembered that you and Luisa invited me for a dinner in a Greek restaurant (4 years ago) and basically talked bad things about Janice, Roc and the Juatcos. And then specifically warned me not to get close and trust them. I couldn't forget that because I found it strange and disturbing that you would invite me specifically just for you to talk bad about other people and I was not even personally close to you at that time. But I didn't pay so much attention to your suggestions then because I'm a very independent-minded person. I am my own man. I want to personally know someone first then make my own independent assessment. It's been my guiding principle that I will rise and fall based on my own personal choices and decisions and not on somebody else's influence. I haven't talked about this fact but now because I just want to make some perspective to what's happening.

Let's fast forward - four years later (It's now 2013) and you are still talking about Pinoy Buzz, Janice, Roc and the Juatco's personal issues and cases. Luisa's personal long message which I referred to earlier was full of vicious and malicious personal attacks directed towards Janice, Roc and the Juatcos. If you will ask me regarding the veracity of Luisa's message, I will not share with you the identity of my very reliable sources because I made my word that I will keep it confidential until they are ready to publicly reveal the message and to get involved in all this community drama. But if you want to verify it, I encourage you to talk to Luisa and review all her emails and messages then she will know what I'm talking about.

If your group's true intention is not necessarily for the advancement of Fil-Can community unity but to address the personal injustice suffered by others, as a legal professional myself, I'll advise you guys to seek legal counsel or legal action and not to involve the community in this personal/private issues or cases through intrigues, insinuations and character bashing. Please note that we are a nation of laws and not of men. Let's all be professional in our dealings.

However, if you passionately wanted to advocate social justice for the disadvantaged sector/individual of our community I encourage you all to join an organization that solely deals with social injustice. Let me know and I can refer you to one. I can even share with you guys some other cases that require attention and maybe you can help them too.

Further to that long vicious message sent by Luisa that I read, kindly tell her that:

- 1) there was no case filed against me and others in the Supreme Court. To spread this falsehood is contemptuous. Court cases are public records -you can easily check the court docket anytime.

2) the artists and producers who participated in Pinoy Fiesta were there to honestly support the event and to showcase our culture. I hope Luisa will stop questioning the integrity and intention of those who participated in the last Pinoy Fiesta in which she wasn't even there.

The more I think of it, the more it becomes vividly clear to me what's the real intention and agenda of this "new group". How can someone claim that they're for the common good and who wants Pinoy Fiesta to be better when they themselves are responsible for calling people to undermine the event and encouraging them not to support us.

I have already accepted the fact that there's so much hypocrisy in our community. After 3 years of successful celebration of Pinoy fiesta I already learned some valuable lessons in dealing with our community. Looking forward to 2013, I will remain focus in doing things that will uplift the Fil-Can community and that will make my family, friends and community proud. There will always be bumps in the road but with God's guidance we will overcome.

May God bless us all!

Jojo

***P.S. I shared this message to my Hirit Family for their information. If you also want to share this message to Luisa and her new group please do so.***