

# The Execution of P

The Philippines

## Brillante MENDOZA



Genre: Drama  
Format: 35mm  
Estimated Running Time: 100 min.

Budget:  
US\$800,000  
(HK\$6,200,000)

Producers:  
Ferdinand LAPUZ  
Didier COSTET

Writing Credits:  
Armando LAO

Production Company:  
Centerstage Productions

HAF Goals:  
Funds

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Execution of P* tells the story of a young man, a college graduate with a degree in criminology, who wants to earn some real money so he can marry his girlfriend. A former classmate invites him to join a little one-time job with a group of professionals which will pay him P\$2,000. He joins but it doesn't take long for him to realize that this "small job" involves killing a woman and chopping her body into pieces. He soon comes to understand that he'll only be allowed to leave this "brotherhood" at the cost of his life, and the lives of his loved ones. Without meaning to, he's become trapped in a life of crime.

## SYNOPSIS

Peping, a criminology student, is recruited by his schoolmate, Abyong, to work as a part-time errand boy for a local syndicate that collects protection fees from various businesses in Manila. Aside from Abyong, the group consists of three policemen who take orders from a high-ranking military official who runs the syndicate incognito.

The easy money Peping earns is spent mostly on his girlfriend, Cecille, who's also a student. When she gets pregnant, Peping decides to marry her, but to marry her he'll need some real money. Abyong contacts Peping to join a "special project" that pays more than normal. Everyone knows that Madonna, an ex-prostitute turned night club manager, is skimming protection money but she hasn't turned over the cash because she was the one-time mistress of the gang's leader, known only as the Captain.

It's early evening when the gang picks Madonna up at her club and drags her into a van where, to Peping's shock, she's tied up and gagged. They take her to an empty residential house and lock her up while awaiting the "go" signal from the Boss. To pass the time, the Captain orders Abyong and Peping to go buy some beer.

They take a taxi downtown, near the bus station, where the stores are still open and on the way Abyong gives Peping a gun, courtesy of the Captain. Abyong goes to the bathroom and Peping considers running away on the nearest bus. Twenty minutes later Abyong hasn't come back and Peping begins to panic. He can't find him anywhere and he realizes that Abyong has made a run for it. Should he escape as well?

Peping boards the first bus to Manila and prays it'll leave soon. Just then he gets a text message from the gang, asking what's taking so long. He texts back, informing them that Abyong has disappeared. No reply. The silence is ominous. The bus is about to pull out when Peping gets off, buys the case of beer, and goes back to the safehouse.

When he gets back he's surprised to see Abyong there: it was a test, and he passed. Everyone has some beers, and the Boss gives the word. Madonna is executed their regular way: first she's raped, then stabbed to death, then her body is chopped into pieces and dumped around the city.

The gang heads back to Manila and has an early breakfast. The Captain pays Peping who instantly grabs a taxi and heads home. He orders Cecille to pack up and they race to the bus station and get on the first bus heading for Peping's hometown. Mentally and physically exhausted, he falls asleep instantly.

The bus is moving mechanically along the highway. Suddenly, everybody is awakened by a loud cry. Peping wakes up with a start. He just had a nightmare. The passengers all laugh at him.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film once more illustrates my personal philosophy that we should be happy with our simple lives – and if we can't, then we should be ready to face the consequences of our complex desires. The fulfillment of those desires can be deceiving and trapping.

The narrative perspective is sociological. It reinforces the power of the super structure, albeit the structure is operating on the other side of the law. Characterization is behavioral and spontaneous. The characters react instinctively and in real time. The depiction of the execution is not graphic but indirect, adopting the point of view of Peping who, serving as lookout, can only see the rape and murder thru the half-open door of the room. Plot design divides the narrative into two acts, the first one covering a school scene, the marriage counseling scene, and the collection scene involving sidewalk vendors, all of which happens during the day and are felicitous in mood. The second act covers the harrowing execution which commences in the early evening and lasts until the wee hours of the following morning.

## DIRECTOR

Brillante MENDOZA was born in 1960 in the Philippines. His first feature film, *The Masseur*, won a Golden Leopard award at the 2005 Locarno Film Festival, the Interfaith Award in Brisbane and the Audience Award at the Torino Film Festival. His other five feature films have won numerous awards, including Best Actress at the South African Film Festival and a Netpac Award at the Jeonju Film Festival for *Summer Heat* in 2006. He won Best Film and Best Director for *The Aeta Teacher* at the Cinemanila Festival in 2006. His film *Slingshots* (2007) was an official selection of the Pusan, Toronto and Berlin Film Festivals. *Serbis*, an HAF 2008 project, was in the Official Competition of the Cannes Film Festival 2008.

## PRODUCER

Ferdinand LAPUZ has executive produced several films by Brillante MENDOZA, including *The Aeta Teacher* and *Slingshot* as well as *Serbis* which was selected for the main competition of the Cannes Film Festival. He has also worked as a sales agent for a number of independent features in the Philippines, including *Magnifico* and *The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros* and he represented *Babae sa Breakwater* (2003) which was selected for the Cannes Film Festival Director's Fortnight and was the first Filipino film to play Cannes since 1989.

Didier H. COSTET became involved in the independent theatrical business at the 1984 Cannes Film Festival. He worked for an independent French firm and bought movies from American companies such as Samuel Goldwyn, Lorimar, Vestron, and New World, as well as looking after their releases in France. In 1992, he opened his own Paris-based distribution company named SWIFT Distribution. *Serbis* marks the first film that COSTET produced and co-financed.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

Centerstage Productions Inc. are a group of independent filmmakers who have brought honor to the Philippines through their films which have won awards at many major international film festivals. Its projects include *The Masseur*, *The Aeta Teacher* and *Summer Heat*. Its latest productions were *Slingshot* and *Serbis*.