



Travis Kraft

Model turned
Cyber Chief

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In 2007, Travis Kraft grabbed a video camera and shot himself instructing how to cook adobo. The video was put up on the internet and people started discovering it and passing it along to all their friends making it a popular viral video. Now Travis is back with a DVD of his recipes entitled Salo-Salo. I sat down with the actor/model turned director to get the story about how all this came to be.

Sharon: You are well known for your work as a model in America and in Asia. I recently saw you in a photo spread with Lindsay Lohan in Harper's Bazaar and in a commercial for Courtney Cox's show *Dirt* in which they built the whole thing around you. To be doing instructional cooking videos must be a big change.

Travis Kraft: That's part of what makes them funny. It is so out of character for me to do an instructional cooking video, especially ones where I am speaking Tagalog. I am a big guy with a funny accent. It would be like if Arnold Schwarzenegger decided to take over for Martha Stewart for a day.

Sharon: Why did you make the American Adobo video?

Travis: A couple of years ago, I was at one of the big networks in the Philippines for a meeting with someone from the network. While my manager and I were waiting in the lobby, I noticed the posters on the wall of the shows they were currently doing. One was *Mobil Kusina*, a cooking show. I figured I could be a guest on it since I took many cooking classes in high school. When we went into the meeting I mentioned that they should have me as a guest on that show and told them that I could come on and cook something and even do it while speaking Tagalog. The lady from the network looked at me funny and just thought that I was pulling her leg so guesting on that show never happened. A year or so later I was back in Los Angeles and bought a new video camera. I was trying to think of things to shoot just for fun and I remembered how I never got to be on

that cooking show in the Philippines. I already knew how to shoot because I went to college for film and television production and one day we had a lesson on how to shoot a cooking segment. I shot it real quick and when I watched it I thought it wasn't bad. I uploaded it a few places on the internet and thought maybe a few people would see it and it would make them smile.

Sharon: After it was uploaded people started discovering it and it became a big thing. What can you say about that?



Travis: Yeah, it took on a life of its own. I had no idea that people would get to like it so much! Every day I get emails from around the world from people telling me how much they enjoyed it. I never anticipated getting so famous for cooking. It is not what I really wanted or expected in life but I am glad that people like something I created so much.

Sharon: Now you are back with a sequel, *Salo-Salo*.

Travis: Yeah, it's a bigger, better, and crazier video. I figured if I am

going to do a sequel I didn't want to do the same thing again. This one is heavier on the comedy and more movie-like. It is still a cooking video but it touches upon the fact that I am well known as a cook now and plays off of that. In a way, it is the continuing story of what was started in the first one.

Sharon: This one involves other people too.

Travis: This was my first time directing a video this big and it was my first time being in charge of so many other people. We had a great cast of young people like Yce Tan, Joyce Kao, Tim Javines, Romeo Cristal, Christine Calacsan, Miki Hayashi, and Aaron Robinson. It was executive produced by Fil-am playwright Madley Katarungan and produced by Filipino architect Manuel Santiago and Hollywood businessman Lance Keefer. "Salo-Salo" means "Lets get together" and I am very proud that I was able to bring together such a diverse group of people. We had Fil-Ams, Caucasians, African-Americans, Filipino immigrants, and a girl from Japan. All these different types of people got together with the goal to create something to honor Filipino culture.

Sharon: Anything else you'd like to add?

Travis: I really appreciate all the people that have been emailing or coming up to me on the street and telling me how much they like what I do. It seems to have made people happy and ultimately that's what I am trying to do. I am trying my best to put something positive into the world. I just want people to smile.

Early this year Travis formed Poolboy Films, an independent film and video production company. After the huge You Tube success his American Adobo cooking demo video garnered, the first project produced by Poolboy Films is "Salo-Salo," a follow up instructional cooking video celebrating Filipino food and culture which Travis directs and stars in. **h!**

Visit Travis on the net at www.traviskraft.com and his company www.poolboyfilms.com