

Documentary on Jho Low sheds light on 1MDB fiasco

Malaysiakini

19 October 2023

Indra Sathiabalan

FILM REVIEW | Well-produced and presented, 'Man On The Run' is a documentary that revolves around international fugitive Low Taek Jho (Jho Low) and the role he allegedly played in a scheme to exploit Malaysia's sovereign fund 1MDB (established in 2009).

The movie involving Low is something everyone in Malaysia should watch, at least once.

Directed and executive produced by Cassius Michael Kim, who gained unprecedented access to key individuals in the saga, this documentary is both gripping and eye-opening.

There are already stories about this available in news reports and books, but this documentary allows us to hear it from those who were investigating one of the biggest financial scandals of all time, as well as one key person who is deemed to be at the very heart of it.

Presented in chronological order from the time Low appeared on the radar with his lavish Hollywood parties (even shouting “Malaysia in the house”), we learn how he used his friendships with highly placed or highly connected individuals (such as Riza Aziz, stepson of former prime minister Najib Abdul Razak) to help not only fund his lavish lifestyle but also questionable business dealings.

The filmmakers also explain Najib’s involvement in the whole fiasco and the lengths he went to cover it up.

Suspending publications, forced resignations of the top brass in government agencies, arrests (whistleblower Xavier Justo, then opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim), and even the mysterious death of prosecutor Anthony Kevin Morais are all deemed to be connected to hushing matters up, and this documentary applies scrutiny to the allegations.

It features interviews with noted journalists such as Sarawak Report’s Clare Rewcastle-Brown, Wall Street Journal’s Bradley Hope and The Edge’s Ho Kay Tat, as well as Justo, local politicians, American journalists, and law enforcement officers.

The icing on this proverbial cake is the interview with Najib himself.

The fact that he allowed himself to be interviewed speaks volumes about the man. Najib's denials were not only priceless but laughable at times.

Playing a recorded conversation of him saying the exact opposite of his denials was the right touch on the part of the filmmakers.

When Najib said, "The system failed me", it drew a lot of giggles in the cinema. He blamed everyone, including Low and those whom he "trusted".

When the interviewer brought up former US president Harry Truman's famous phrase - "The Buck Stops Here" - about the top person having to bear responsibility, Najib's discomfort was evident and the jailed ex-premier's denials sounded even lamer.

We would have loved to have seen Najib's wife, Rosmah Mansor, but she politely declined to be interviewed. Unsurprisingly, many who enjoyed Low's generosity back then had declined to be interviewed.

The filmmakers also hit the streets and asked regular people what they knew about 1MDB, and it is not surprising to note that they barely had a clue.

The reality, as we can see in real life and the documentary, is that life is already hard for them, and it will continue to be hard.

'Man On The Run' is a must-watch and is available in selected GSC cinemas beginning Oct 19. If you think you already know enough about Low and 1MDB, you will be surprised at how much more you can learn about the scandal from this documentary.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/683350>