

## **QUIAPO MARKET SCRIPT:**

### **VO:**

There lies at the very heart of Manila is the infamous district of Quiapo, the sanctuary of cheap and bizarre finds. The journey to Quiapo takes one to a steaming cauldron of products, some found nowhere else in the Metro.

As they say, whatever you need, you will find it in Quiapo. Quiapo is best known for its wide range of religious and even occult items –from wooden statues of the Holy Family and rosary beads to *anting-antings* and colorful lucky charms which are mostly found on Evangelista Street.

Along the streets of Carriedo and Villalobos stand stalls after stalls of ready-to-wear clothing, shoes, bags, and accessories for men, women, and kids. Most of these items are imitations of the most trendy international luxury brands. Some stores also offer unbranded locally-made products.

Household and cleaning products are also sold, as well as electronic devices. School supplies and academic books can be availed for half their price in book stores.

Hidalgo Street, known as the Camera Haven of Metro Manila, flourishes with all sorts of cameras, lenses, filters, and film rolls –brand new and second-hand alike– for all camera fans and photography enthusiasts. Some of the oldest and rarest models are also found here, all available for a much cheaper price.

Along Quezon Boulevard, under the Quezon Bridge, stores sell hand-made handicrafts and decorations made by skilled weavers, carvers, and artists from all parts of the country.

But what most of the streets of Quiapo offer is the one that truly enchants the Filipino consumer: food. A tour around Quiapo cannot pass without one noticing the hundreds of food stalls loading every available space. Vendors can be found selling street food, fresh produce, cooked meals, hot and cold treats, and even regional delicacies left and right and in the middle of streets. Cravings for established and seasoned products such as Master Hopia and Excelente Ham can be satisfied if you trot along Palanca Street.

All of these and more can be found around the Quiapo Church –and even under it, too. The Lacson Underpass, which bridges the major streets around the Church through the Plaza Miranda, is an underground marketplace that appears to be an extension of the Quiapo streets. Here, the walls are lined with shops and the pathways packed with makeshift flooring carrying the usual products found in Quiapo.

But vendors warn that buying and selling aren't the only "transactions" that rule the streets of Quiapo. A lot of the times, the vendors say, a buyer gains a purchase but loses more than the money they used to pay for it. Valuables and electronic gadgets are common targets of pickpockets and muggers disguising themselves as ordinary shoppers. Vendors never fail to advise shoppers to always be mindful of their

personal belongings, or these might end up on one of the stalls on the Quiapo streets.