

### Title:

The People of the Philippines vs. Eduardo Ukay y Monton A.K.A. "Tata", Teodulo Ukay y Monton A.K.A. "Jun-jun", Guillermo Dianon A.K.A. "Momong"

### Facts:

In Davao City on June 12, 2007, Eduardo Ukay, Teodulo Ukay, Guillermo Dianon, and Oca Ukay were implicated in two criminal cases. The first, a Frustrated Murder charge involving Jesse Gerolaga victimized by Eduardo and Oca Ukay; the second, a Murder charge for the death of Anthony Aloba implicating Eduardo, Teodulo, Guillermo, and Oca Ukay. Accused pleaded not guilty. A confrontation at a convenience store escalated when Anthony Aloba asked Guillermo Dianon to quiet down during an argument, leading to a series of assaults resulting in Aloba's death and serious injury to Jessie Gerolaga. The defense narrative differed, attributing the initiation of the conflict and the subsequent assault to Anthony, Jessie, and others.

The case moved to the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Davao City, where in 2013, Eduardo was found guilty of Frustrated Murder, and Eduardo, Teodulo, and Guillermo were convicted of Murder. The decision was affirmed with minor corrections by the Court of Appeals (CA) in 2018 concerning the award of damages. Unsatisfied, the accused-appellants escalated the matter to the Supreme Court.

### Issues:

1. Whether the Information concerning the crime was sufficient, specifically regarding the allegation of treachery.
2. Whether treachery and other qualifying circumstances were appropriately considered.
3. The relevance of procedural remedies not availed by accused-appellants.
4. Determination of the crimes based on the absence or presence of treachery.

### Court's Decision:

The Supreme Court modified the CA and RTC's decisions, holding that the convictions for Murder and Frustrated Murder cannot be upheld due to the insufficient proof of treachery. Instead, it found the accused-appellants guilty of Homicide and Frustrated Homicide, accordingly adjusting the penalties and compensatory damages. It cited procedural law, noting the accused-appellants' waiver of daft Information disputes by not filing appropriate pre-trial motions.

### Doctrine:

The Supreme Court clarified and applied the doctrine concerning the sufficiency of Information in criminal charges, emphasizing the necessity for factual averments demonstrating the existence of qualifying circumstances such as treachery. It also reasserted principles concerning waivability of Information defects and recast the guidelines for establishing treachery in qualitative terms.

### Class Notes:

- Elements of Murder under Philippine law require the killing to be attended by qualifying circumstances such as treachery.
- Allegations of treachery must be supported by factual circumstances, not merely by legal conclusions.
- Waivability of Information defects: an accused must actively seek correction of any defects in the Information—failure to do so constitutes a waiver.
- In crimes involving physical assault, the presence of treachery upgrades the crime to Murder or Frustrated Murder; its absence results in the offenses being categorized as Homicide or Frustrated Homicide, respectively.
- Supreme Court guidelines require that any Information alleging the presence of broad qualifying or aggravating circumstances must state the ultimate facts concerning such circumstances for the Information to be legally sufficient.

### Historical Background:

This case provides insights into the procedural and substantive nuances of Philippine criminal law, particularly regarding violent crimes and the delineation between murder and homicide. It reflects the judiciary's rigorous approach to ensuring fairness in the application of legal principles and the protection of constitutional rights, such as the right to be informed of the nature and cause of accusations against an individual.