

Title: People of the Philippines v. Judito Coritana

Facts:

- **March 2, 2001**: Accused-appellant Judito Coritana and an unidentified co-accused (John Doe) allegedly robbed and raped the cashier (AAA) at an eatery in Tacloban City.
- **5:00 AM**: AAA's co-worker went to the market, leaving AAA alone. Two men, including the accused-appellant, entered the eatery and ordered food. The old man poked a knife at AAA's waist while the accused-appellant took money from the drawer.
- **Event Sequence**: The old man forced AAA into the bathroom, tied her up, and raped her. He then called the accused-appellant, who also raped AAA.
- **Aftermath**: The assailants took additional items and left AAA tied and blindfolded in the bathroom. AAA's co-worker returned to find her, and they went to the police immediately.
- **Arrest**: Accused-appellant was arrested on March 10, 2001.

Procedural Posture:

1. **Trial Court**: RTC of Tacloban City, Branch 6, convicted Coritana of robbery with rape, sentencing him to reclusion perpetua.
2. **Court of Appeals (CA)**: Affirmed the RTC decision but modified civil liabilities.
3. **Supreme Court**: The case was brought on appeal, with no new briefs filed as parties adopted arguments from lower court proceedings.

Issues:

1. **Identification of the Accused**: Was the accused-appellant positively and accurately identified?
2. **Liability Despite Denial of Rape Participation**: Can the accused-appellant be held liable for rape if he denied direct involvement?
3. **Conviction of Theft not Specifically Alleged**: Should the accused be convicted of theft for items taken during robbery?

Court's Decision:

- **Identification**: The Court held that the victim's immediate and consistent identification of the accused-appellant was credible and sufficient. Familiarity with the accused and identification of his voice supported her testimony.
- **Liability**:
- **Conspiracy Principle**: The Court ruled that as long as conspiracy to commit robbery is proven, all conspirators are liable for rape, even if not all physically participated in the act.

- **Rape Incident**: Since it was established that rape occurred during the robbery, the co-conspirator is equally liable.
- **Robbery and Theft**:
- **Crime Classification**: All stolen items, including those from the eatery and personal belongings of AAA and Teresita, were part of a continuous robbery event.
- **No Separate Theft Charges**: The Court noted that robbery covered all incidents of taking property during the criminal spree, thus separate theft charges were unnecessary.

Doctrine:

- **Special Complex Crime**: Robbery with rape is treated as a single, indivisible offense when robbery is the principal intent, and rape occurs on its occasion.
- **Conspiracy Liability**: When conspiracy is proven in robbery, all participants are liable for rape irrespective of their direct involvement in the act.

Class Notes:

- **Key Elements in Specific Crimes**:
- **Robbery with Rape**:
- Intimidation or violence during taking property.
- Taking of property is primary, rape occurs on its occurrence.
- **Conspiracy**:
- Liability extends to all conspirators for crimes committed in furtherance of the conspiracy.
- **Statutory Provisions**:
- **Revised Penal Code Articles** on robbery, rape, and conspiracy.
- **Article 63**: On penalties where no aggravating circumstances are present.

Historical Background:

This case is set against the backdrop of persistent crime and the judicial push for stringent penalties in the Philippines. The case underscores judicial efforts to affirm penalties for heinous crimes involving sexual violence and to emphasize accountability when conspiracy and collective criminal actions are established. The decision reflects existing laws on complex crimes and conspiracy, reinforcing that a perpetrator can be liable for all consequences brought about by their criminal association.

This comprehensive analysis demonstrates the judicial process and reasoning, reaffirming doctrines essential for law students and practitioners regarding robbery, rape, and conspiracy in the Philippine legal context.