

**Title:** People of the Philippines vs. Pedro Gonzales (157 Phil. 249, G.R. No. L-3365)

**Facts:**

- Relationship and Background:** Pedro Gonzales, a 36-year-old tuba-gatherer, frequently visited the house of Primitivo Aurelio and Margarita Agpao in Sitio Libertad, Puerto Princesa, Palawan. Teresita, the couple's 11-year-old daughter born on January 6, 1954, called Gonzales "Lolo" and had been the object of his sexual interests for about two years before the incident.
- Incidents Leading Up to the Crime:** Gonzales allegedly had sexual intercourse with Teresita multiple times before the key date of July 23, 1965.
- July 23, 1965 Incident:** On this evening, Teresita's parents left the house to gather tuba but returned unexpectedly. Gonzales, having an established pattern, stayed back in Teresita's room. Mrs. Aurelio noticed unusual movements indicating sexual activity and confirmed Gonzales was with Teresita.
- Discovery and Immediate Reactions:** Mrs. Aurelio confronted Gonzales who offered weak excuses. She called for her husband, and upon examination, found Teresita's pantie wet.
- Legal Proceedings Initiated:** The next day, Mrs. Aurelio filed a complaint for rape. A preliminary examination was conducted by the Municipal Judge, where Teresita affirmed her illicit encounters with Gonzales, stating the last one occurred on the previous night. Gonzales also admitted to his actions in his statement.
- Medical Examination:** Dr. Iluminada Holgado confirmed that Teresita had been deflowered, with lacerations and contusions in her vaginal area.
- Court of First Instance:** The Fiscal filed an information for rape on August 23, 1965. The trial concluded on July 26, 1966, convicting Gonzales, sentencing him to life imprisonment with a recommendation for pardon after 30 years.
- Appeal to the Court of Appeals:** Gonzales contended errors in the trial court's reliance on testimonies and argued that his admissions were involuntary. The case was certified to the Supreme Court due to its nature.

**Issues:**

1. **Was the trial court correct in concluding Gonzales had carnal intercourse with Teresita based on the testimonies and his statements?**
2. **Were Gonzales' admissions and statements voluntary and credible?**
3. **What penalty should be imposed in accordance with the applicable laws at the time of the crime?**
4. **Should the accused be entitled to a pardon recommendation after 30 years?**
5. **Is Gonzales liable for civil indemnity to Teresita?**

**Court's Decision:**

1. **Credibility of Testimonies and Statements:** The Supreme Court upheld the trial court's reliance not only on Mrs. Aurelio's testimony but also on Gonzales' own incriminating statement and Teresita's clear declarations. The evidence overwhelmingly confirmed the sexual acts.
2. **Voluntariness of Admissions:** The Court found no evidence of coercion or duress in obtaining Gonzales' statement. The presumption of voluntariness was supported by details in the statement only Gonzales could have provided.
3. **Penalty Imposed:** The crime committed was simple rape as Teresita was below twelve years of age. By law (Art. 335, Revised Penal Code), this warranted reclusion perpetua, regardless of aggravating or mitigating circumstances.
4. **Pardon Recommendation:** The Court removed the trial court's recommendation for pardon, emphasizing that under Article 27 of the Revised Penal Code, this is determined by executive clemency, not judicial recommendation.
5. **Civil Indemnity:** The Court ordered Gonzales to pay Teresita an indemnity of Php 12,000, recognizing her nonage incapacitated her from consenting to the sexual acts.

**Doctrine:**

- **Rape of Minors:** Sexual intercourse with a girl below twelve is rape regardless of consent or lack of resistance.
- **Voluntary Admissions:** Self-incriminating statements made without evident coercion are admissible and credible.
- **Penalty for Rape:** Reclusion perpetua is imposed for rape of minors according to Article 335 of the Revised Penal Code.

**\*\*Class Notes:\*\***

- **\*\*Rape (Article 335, Revised Penal Code):\*\*** Carnal knowledge of a woman through force, intimidation, or when she is below twelve years old.
- **\*\*Voluntariness of Confession:\*\*** A voluntary confession is admissible. The presumption of voluntariness applies unless overthrown by evidence of coercion.
- **\*\*Penalty:\*\*** Reclusion perpetua applies, unaffected by generic mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

**\*\*Historical Background:\*\***

Rape laws in the Philippines were stringent against sexual crimes involving minors. This case exemplifies the judiciary's firm stance, ensuring severe penalties and upholding children's rights, reflecting broader societal and legislative shifts towards protecting minors and imposing harsher punishments on sexual offenders during this period.