

THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, PLAINTIFF-APPELLEE, VS. JAIME BAYLOSIS AND ESPIDITO RUMAGO, DEFENDANTS-APPELLANTS.

G.R. No. L-34014. September 08, 1972

Ponente: CONCEPCION, C.J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/1374b4079d24/>

CONCEPCION, C.J.:

This case is before Us for automatic review of a decision of the Court of First Instance of Zamboanga del Sur, the dispositive part of which reads:

"WHEREFORE, finding the accused Jaime Baylosis and Espidito Rumago guilty beyond reasonable doubt of the crime of Robbery with Triple Homicide, taking into consideration the afore-cited mitigating and aggravating circumstances, the Court hereby sentences the said accused Jaime Baylosis and Espidito Rumago to suffer the supreme penalty of DEATH, to pay the sum of P36,000.00 that is P12,000.00 to the respective heirs of the deceased Potenciano Reponte, Crispin Reponte, and Cesar Reponte, and to pay further the sum of P91.00, the value of the property taken during the robbery, and to pay the costs.

"The accused are hereby ordered to be committed to the National Penitentiary at Muntinlupa, Rizal."

Defendants Jaime Baylosis and Espidito Rumago are accused of the crime of robbery with triple homicide. The information against them alleges:

That on or about the 29th day of March, 1971, at about 12:00 o'clock in the evening more or less at Sitio Upper Sumpot, Sumpot, Dumataling, Province of Zamboanga del Sur, Republic of the Philippines and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused armed with bolos, conspiring, confederating, and helping one another, with intent of gain, slept in the house of one Potenciano Reponte then at midnight with intent to kill, they (accused) did, then and there willfully and feloniously hack to death Potenciano, Crispin Reponte, the brother, Cesar Reponte and wound-ing Estrella Reponte a 7 years old girl, then take, steal and carry away cash money in the amount of P91.00, a transistor radio and a pair of shoes all belonging to Potenciano Reponte without his consent and against his will; and in order to conceal the crime they committed the accused burn down the house including the dead bodies of the victims to the damage and prejudice of the heirs of Reponte family."

Upon arraignment, on July 12, 1971, said defendants, assisted by their counsel de oficio, pleaded guilty to the charge under the circumstances set forth in the transcript of the stenographic notes then taken, which We quote:

"(AFTER CALLING THE CASE)

"COURT - Ready, fiscal?

"Fiscal Cadelinia - Ready, Your Honor.

"Atty. Demicillo - Appearing as counsel de oficio, Your Honor. The accused here are willing to plead guilty to the crime charged.

"COURT - Plead guilty? Wait a minute. The Court will apprise them of the consequences of their plea. This is

Robbery with multiple homicide.

(To Interpreter) All right, you interpret very well, Where are the accused?

(The two accused stood in front of the Court)

"Q Do you know that by pleading guilty to the crime of Robbery with Triple Homicide you are liable to be sentenced to suffer the penalty of Reclusion Perpetua to Death?

Put that on record.

"A Yes, we know about that.

(The two accused answered)

"Q In spite of that, are you willing voluntarily to plead guilty to the crime of Robbery with Triple Homicide, charged in the information?

(Interpreter translating the question to the two accused)

"Interpreter - (To the Court) Espidito Rumago is willing to plead guilty but he did not do it intentionally.

"COURT - No condition.

"Interpreter - Jaime Baylosis is willing to plead guilty.

"COURT - (To Espidito Rumago) No condition. If you plead guilty, no condition.

(Interpreter translating)

"Interpreter - Espidito Rumago is willing to plead guilty.

"ESPIDITO RUMAGO - I am ready to plead guilty.

"COURT - The accused understanding the consequences of their plea of guilty are willing to plead guilty.

(To Interpreter) All right, arraign the accused. (Interpreter translating the information)

"Interpreter - (After translating the information) Jaime Baylosis pleaded guilty to the crime of Robbery with Triple Homicide. Espidito Rumago pleaded guilty to the crime of Robbery with Triple Homicide charged in the information.

"COURT - What are the mitigating circumstances?

"Atty. Demecillo - Your Honor please, we respectfully request that in the imposition of the penalty the accused be extended the minimum penalty in favor of the accused with the plea of guilty as a mitigating circumstance.

"COURT - (To the prosecuting fiscal) What are the aggravating circumstances, fiscal?

"FISCAL CADELINA - Dwelling, nighttime.

"COURT - What else?

"FISCAL CADELINA - Superior in arms.

"COURT - They burned the house.

"FISCAL CADELINA - And the abuse of confidence.

"COURT - All right, decision.

(At this juncture, the decision was dictated in open court and now attached to the records)"

Thereupon, the lower court rendered the afore-mentioned decision.

In a manifestation filed, by way of brief for the appellee, the Solicitor General pointed out the following circumstances, namely:

"(A) There is nothing which will indicate the age, occupation, education and other facts which could guide this Honorable Supreme Court in determining whether the appellants acted with discernment in pleading guilty;

"(B) No attempt was made to explain to the appellants the nature and consequence of the aggravating circumstances alleged in the information; and

"(C) The plea of guilty made by appellant Espidito Rumago was not unequivocal as he attempted to qualify it by saying 'he did not do it intentionally.'"

and quoting portions of our decisions in *People vs. Arpa*,^[1] *People vs. Flores*,^[2] *U.S. vs. Agcaoili*,^[3] *People vs. Solacito*,^[4] *People vs. Estebia*,^[5] and *People vs. Aguilar*,^[6] expressed himself in favor of the alternative relief sought in appellants' brief, and prayed that the decision of the lower court "be vacated and that the case be remanded for further proceedings in the lower court in accordance with law."

To be sure, it does not appear with precision from the record before Us, that the defendants had understood clearly and fully the allegations of the above-quoted information and the implications of their plea of guilty thereto. Indeed, when His Honor, the Trial Judge, first asked the accused whether they were willing to plead guilty to the charge against them, defendant Espidito Rumago answered in the affirmative, but added that "he did not do it intentionally." It is true that this explanation of Rumago impelled the Trial Judge to state that the plea of guilty must be unconditional, and that upon translation of said statement, Rumago declared that he was willing to plead guilty, which he and his co-defendant Jaime Baylosis did immediately thereafter. Yet, considering the paucity of the record before Us, We are not satisfied that the defendants had a good grasp of the meaning of the allegations in the information against them, as well as of the full import of their plea of guilty, and that the Trial Judge was justified in not adhering to the established practice of taking some evidence to be sure, not only that the accused had committed the crime charged in the manner and under the conditions stated in the information, but, also, that the Supreme Court, in the exercise of its duty to review automatically decisions imposing the death penalty, would have sufficient data on record to be reasonably certain about the propriety of the imposition of said penalty, as indicated in the cases above-mentioned, as well as in *U.S. vs. Talbanos*,^[7] *U.S. vs. Rota*,^[8] and *People vs. Bulaklak*,^[9] among others.

WHEREFORE, the decision of the lower court is hereby set aside, and the case remanded thereto for further proceedings in conformity with law. It is so ordered.

Makalintal, Zaldivar, Castro, Fernando, Teehankee, Barredo, Makasiar, Antonio, and Esguerra, JJ., concur.

[1] L-26789, April 25, 1969.

[2] L-32692, July 30, 1971.

[3] 31 Phil. 92.

[4] L-29209, Aug. 25, 1969.

[5] L-26868, July 29, 1971.

[6] L-30932, Jan. 29, 1971.

[7] 6 Phil. 541.

[8] 9 Phil. 426.

[9] 106 Phil. 767.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.