

THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, PLAINTIFF-APPELLEE, VS. ISIDRO GAMLOT, DEFENDANT-APPELLANT.

G.R. No. L-6909. May 26, 1955

Ponente: BENGZON, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/2c1a61becb6f/>

BENGZON, J.:

Appeal from the decision of the court of first instance of Baguio sentencing Isidro Gamlot to life imprisonment and to pay P6,000.00 to the heirs of Rufo Baldasan, the man he murdered in sitio Nalseb, Municipal District of Kabayan, Benguet, Mountain Province.

Principal witness against the prisoner was Teresa Tobias, the widow of the deceased, who declared that in the night of September 18, 1951, she was awakened by repeated knocking at the door of their house, and that having opened it, she met Isidro Gamlot, with a companion; that Gamlot pushed her out saying he was going to shoot her husband; that she wanted to scream, but Gamlot threatened to kill her if she did; that the accused then entered the one-compartment dwelling and at a distance of about two meters fired three bullets at the sleeping Rufo Baldasan; that she rushed back to embrace her "wounded husband, but was dragged away by Gamlot, who compelled her to escape with him, that very night, to Sayangan, Km. 52 of the Mountain Trail where they arrived the next morning; that there she stayed in the house of one Into, whose wife Juanita gave her a dress and some money for her transportation to Baguio; that when she started for Baguio, she was rejoined by Gamlot who invited her to a shed, where they had sexual intercourse (thru intimidation according to her); that thereafter he conducted her to the house of Salia, his cousin, in "Bontoc, and the latter brought her to the house of his sister Rosa in Natonin; that in this last house, Gamlot and Teresa practically lived as husband and wife, he having had carnal knowledge with her many times; that about a year afterwards she was found and when investigated by the authorities she at first declared it was one Pil-ong Markes who had killed her husband, said Pil-ong being in love with her; that she made such false imputation at the suggestion of the Mayor of Natonin, after the latter had come to know from her own lips that said Pil-ong had previously wooed her.

Additional details supplied by other witnesses and by Teresa herself, disclose that Teresa Tobias, 16, was married by her parents to Rufo Baldasan, 25, it being a loveless match. On her wedding day she escaped and went to work in a vegetable garden in Sayangan owned by Into, and there she met Isidro Gamlot, who almost immediately paid court to her - she was admittedly attractive. About nine days afterwards, Rufo Baldasan, accompanied by her sister and brother found her, and brought her - back to their house in Nalseb; but three days later she fled again to the garden of Into where she stayed for about six days, until her sister and husband took her back to Nalseb. Gamlot renewed his attentions this second time, and evidently was rewarded or given hopes, because the girl confessed to him that "she could not have two husbands". Here is obviously the motive of the assassination, which took place almost two weeks after: Gamlot naturally understood that he could have her "if" her husband should disappear. And he acted boldly and swiftly by killing the latter.

There is no question that Rufo Baldasan was shot dead. There is also no question that Teresa disappeared that night, and went to live first in the house of Salia, and then in the house of Rosa (sister of the accused) until she

was discovered and taken by the authorities.

The accused denied having murdered Baldasan, and tried to lay the blame on the man (Pil-ong) mentioned by Teresa Tobias before the town officials of Natonin, even on her, some defense witnesses having testified to admissions she allegedly made of having slain her husband.

The trial judge whose peculiar province is to resolve questions as to the credibility of witnesses has thoroughly examined the testimony, in a quite extensive and exhaustive decision covering the principal issues of fact, and expressly accepted the account given by the eye-witness, Teresa, which account appears to be amply confirmed by the undeniable circumstance that immediately after the shooting she took flight with Gamlot and maritally lived with him for almost a year.

Appellant insists in his printed brief that Teresa's testimony implicating him should deserve no credence because it is full of material contradictions, inconsistencies and improbabilities. No. less than nine such contradictions are listed and fully set out; besides, three improbabilities are described.

We have given close attention to the quoted passages. But the inconsistencies which the industry of counsel has spotted in the course of her long testimony are more apparent than real; and may admit of explanations harmonizing the whole story. The nature and form of some questions, the emphasis given to certain words or ideas might have prompted the witness to respond in terms inaccurate because incomplete, even erroneous, because of mistaken assumptions.

But judges know how to make allowances for variations in the declarations of a witness, and what with their advantage of having observed his gestures, features, demeanor and manner of testifying, their conclusions are not usually disturbed, unless substantial reasons warrant a different course of action.

Teresa obviously saw her husband's assailant. Perhaps the killing was committed with her previous knowledge or consent. And except for her effort to minimize her own part in the grim occurrence, (which may explain some of her inconsistencies)[1] she gave a version that in its main features appears to be wholly believable, human nature -primitive and unrestrained- being prone to grab what it desires, obstacles or no obstacles, law or na law. The picture was essentially this: Gamlot wanted Teresa as a mate, her husband stood in the way, and had to be liquidated.

The fact that Teresa lived, for over a year, under the protection of Gamlot and his relatives, -not to mention her sexual relations with him- constitutes sufficient assurance that hers was not a tale designed to send an innocent person to jail. Neither may the suspicion be entertained that Gamlot's prosecution was a convenient means to cancel her (possibly) guilty connivance in the murder of her unfortunate husband; because it was enough for her to declare that she could not recognize the midnight assassin and that she escaped to live with friends, either sorely disappointed, or for fear of being unnecessarily harassed.

Then there is this Pil-ong Markes on whom the defense points the accusing finger. The trial judge believed Teresa's explanations that when investigated by the Mayor of Natonin she happened to mention Pil-ong Markes as one of those who had sent her some love letters and said official advised her to declare it was this person who had slain her husband. At that time Teresa was accompanied by Rosa, and in all probability she indicated Pil-ong Markes, to avoid having to squeal on Gamlot. And the mayor, perhaps in good faith counselled her to stick to her story, believing it to be the truth. Yet as the record shows, Pil-ong was too young (14-year old) to think of, or attempt any homicidal expedition; and in the face of Teresa's testimony in court, no doubt may now be entertained as to the real culprit,

As we said before, there is a possibility that Teresa knew beforehand, or consented to, or abetted the killing of her

husband, (The Fiscal should further investigate this). There is also the possibility that she had no such previous knowledge; but that after the deed had been consummated, she voluntarily went with Gamlot -albeit reluctantly at first- because she was then an unmarried woman. At any rate, there is no reason to refuse her credence, it being improbable that she would perversely allow her one-time lover to undergo a life-long confinement in Muntinglupa.

The crime is murder committed in the dwelling of the victim. But the aggravating circumstance is compensated by the ignorance of the accused which the trial judge has noticed. Life imprisonment plus indemnity are provided by law.

As these are the penalties imposed in the appealed decision, the same is hereby affirmed, with costs. So ordered.

Pablo, Padilla, Montemayor, Reyes, Bautista Angelo, Labrador, Concepcion, and J.B.L. Reyes, JJ., concur.

[1] A desire for self-justification could sometimes lead to unintended inaccuracies.

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.