

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINT AGAINST SHERIFF SALES T. BISNAR, REGIONAL TRIAL COURT, BRANCH 78, MORONG, RIZAL.

A.M. NO. 05-7-458-RTC. August 25, 2005

Ponente: YNARES-SANTIAGO, J.

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YNARES-SANTIAGO, J.:

In an undated letter, a Concerned Citizen of Morong, Rizal, charged Sheriff Sales T. Bisnar, Regional Trial Court of Morong, Rizal, Branch 78, with conduct unbecoming of a court employee. Complainant averred that Sheriff Bisnar is often seen participating and making bets in cockfights, sometimes during office hours.

In his comment dated March 30, 2005, Sheriff Bisnar admitted attending cockfights but denied doing so during office hours.

In the Agenda Report dated July 21, 2005, the Office of the Court Administrator recommended that Sheriff Bisnar be reminded to be more circumspect in his actuations, especially his involvement in activities which may adversely reflect on the entire judiciary.

The Code of Conduct for Court Personnel[1] provides that in performing their duties and responsibilities, court personnel serve as sentinels of justice and any act of impropriety on their part immeasurably affects the honor and dignity of the Judiciary and the people's confidence in it.

The Court has said time and time again that the conduct and behavior of everyone charged with the administration and disposition of justice - from the presiding judge to the lowliest clerk - should be circumscribed with the heavy burden of responsibility and free from any suspicion that may taint the well-guarded image of the judiciary. The conduct of judges and court personnel must not only be characterized by propriety and decorum at all times, but must also be above suspicion. Verily the image of a court of justice is necessarily mirrored in the conduct, official or otherwise, of the men and women, from the judge to the lowest employee, hence, it becomes the imperative sacred duty of each and everyone in the court to maintain its good name and standing as a true temple of justice. Thus, every employee of the court should be an exemplar of integrity, uprightness, and honesty.[2]

Public office is a public trust. Public officers are servants of the people, not their rulers. Their conduct must be above suspicion, and their action must at all times be characterized by propriety and decorum. They should be examples of integrity, uprightness and honesty.[3]

We agree with the OCA that although there is no specific provision in the Civil Service Rules which prohibits a government employee from participating in a cockfight, respondent sheriff's presence thereat, nonetheless, elicits a bad impression. His presence adversely affects the integrity and honor of the entire judiciary.

WHEREFORE, Sheriff Sales T. Bisnar of the Regional Trial Court of Morong, Rizal, Branch 78, is REPRIMANDED for committing an act of impropriety and ADVISED to be more circumspect in his actuations especially his involvement in activities which may cast doubt in the integrity of the judiciary.

SO ORDERED.

Davide, Jr., CJ, Quisumbing, Carpio, and Azcuna, JJ., concur.

[1] A.M. No. 03-06-13-SC. Took effect 1 June 2004.

[2] *Astillazo v. Jamlid*, 342 Phil. 219, 232-233 (1997); citations omitted.

[3] *Castillo v. Buencillo*, Adm. Mat. No. P-97-1241, 20 March 2001, 354 SCRA 641, 649.

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