

JULIANA PAYOMO, PETITIONER, VS. O. FLOYD, CAPTAIN, U. S. MARINE CORPS, RESERVATION OFFICER, OLONGAPO NAVAL RESERVATION, RESPONDENT.

G. R. No. 17427. February 17, 1922

Ponente: STREET, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/g-r-no-17427/>

STREET, J.:

This is an original application for the writ of habeas corpus in behalf of Calixto Mendigoren to secure liberation from detention at the hands of Captain O. Floyd, Reservation Officer at the Subic Bay Naval Station, Olongapo, in the Province of Zambales. A citation to show cause why the writ should not issue having been served, due return was made by the respondent on February 25, 1921. Later this court of its own motion requested the Attorney-General to appear in representation of the respondent, as provided in subsection (b) of section 1661 of the Administrative Code; and at about the same time an order was made for the issuance of the peremptory writ of habeas corpus, requiring the respondent to have the detained person before this court on March 23, 1921, to be dealt with according to law. At the request of the Attorney-General, the order for the production of the detained person in court was waived; but on the date stated both parties appeared either in person or by counsel, when by consent an order was entered admitting the detained person to bail, and the respondent submitted as part of his return a printed copy of the Laws and Regulations for the Organization and Administration of the United States Naval Reservation, Olongapo, Philippine Islands, approved July, 1920, by Rear Admiral C. B. Morgan, Commandant. The cause was then orally argued and submitted for determination on the issues thus presented.

It appears that by an executive order dated November 26, 1902, President Roosevelt proclaimed a Naval Reservation at Olongapo, in the Province of Zambales, Philippine Islands. After defining the limits of the Naval Reservation, it was declared in this proclamation that said reservation and all land included therein should be under the governance and control of the Navy Department. At a later date the control thus vested in the Navy Department was delegated by the Secretary of War to the Commandant of the Naval Station at Olongapo; and on July 20, 1920, Rear Admiral C. B. Morgan, U. S. N., as such Commandant, promulgated certain rules and regulations for the reservation under the title of "Laws and Regulations for the Organization and Administration of the United States Naval Reservation, Olongapo, Philippine Islands." These regulations exhibit an orderly scheme for the organization and administration of the government, both military and civil, throughout the reservation, including Olongapo, which is a town, containing nearly ten thousand inhabitants, located within its confines.

Among the provisions contained in this little Code, pertinent to the matter now in hand, is subsection 5 of Article I, which creates the office of a reservation police judge and confers on him original jurisdiction over all infractions of the laws and regulations aforesaid. It is further declared that, in determining the penalties to be imposed on offenders, the police judge shall be limited to such fines and punishments as might be imposed by a justice of the peace in a civil community for like offenses under the Penal Code of the Philippine Islands.

As to cases brought before him which are beyond the jurisdiction of a justice of the peace, the police judge is directed to turn the accused over to the local justice of the peace, to be bound over to the Court of First Instance of Zambales.

As is readily discernible from the tenor of this provision, the purpose in creating the office of the police judge evidently was to confer on him a criminal jurisdiction substantially identical with that of an ordinary justice of the peace, so far as relates to infractions of the Laws and Regulations promulgated by the Commandant for the government and administration of the Olongapo Naval Reservation.

Before the police court thus constituted, Calixto Mendigorin, a civilian resident of Subic, Zambales, was arraigned on February 12, 1921, for violation of subsection 13, Article II, of the Laws and Regulations aforesaid, which provision prohibits the cutting of timber on the reservation without a permit from the proper officer. Though it does not affirmatively appear that any complaint or information was formulated against the accused in writing, he was duly appraised of the nature of the charge against him; and after trial in accordance with the procedure appropriate in criminal causes, he was found guilty and fined for two distinct offenses, to wit, P200 for the unlawful cutting of timber on the reservation, and another P200 for attempting to cut timber on the reservation. The court further assessed damages against him in the amount of P600 for unlawful trespass, making a total of P1,000. No part of this amount having been paid by the accused, he was placed in confinement by the respondent reservation officer, being given to understand that he would be released upon presentation of an acceptable bond for the payment of said P1,000, within a reasonable time.

Proceeding now to the questions of law arising upon the facts stated, it must be premised that this court, or for that matter any Court of First Instance in the Philippine Islands, undoubtedly has jurisdiction to set a civilian person at liberty if unlawfully arrested or detained by the military or naval authorities of the United States. In this respect we have the same authority as the federal courts in the United States. It is true that in the case of *In re Calloway* (1 Phil., 11), this court held that the courts of the Philippine Islands had no authority to release persons imprisoned by military authority. This decision, however, was based on General Orders No. 70, then in force, which expressly denied to this and other courts in the Philippine Islands the right to set at liberty any prisoner arrested in pursuance of military orders. But the law on this point was changed by Act No. 136, in relation with Act No. 190, which came into effect subsequently to that decision. Our authority in the matter is now general, subject only to the restrictions expressed in section 529 of Act No. 190, as amended.

In this connection we do not overlook the fact that the courts of the various States comprising the American Union do not exercise jurisdiction over applications for the writ of habeas corpus to discharge a person detained under the authority of the Government of the United States. (12 R. C. L., 1219.) But this familiar limitation on the powers of the State courts is based upon the subjection of the States to the authority of the Federal Government; and the result is that the application for relief in such case must be made to some court organized under the laws of the Union. As there is no United States court, properly speaking, in existence in these Islands, the jurisdiction to hear and determine such an application as that now before us is necessarily vested in the courts that are here organized and operating under the authority of the laws of the United States, that is, in the Supreme Court and our Courts of First Instance.

The next point to be observed upon is that, where the detained person is held in restraint by virtue of a judgment rendered by a military or naval court, tribunal, or officer, no court entertaining an application for the writ of habeas corpus has authority to review the proceedings of that tribunal, court, or officer in the sense of determining whether the judgment was erroneous. The only question to be considered is whether the court, tribunal, or officer rendering the judgment had jurisdiction to entertain the case and render judgment at all. As was said by the Supreme Court of the United States in a case where the writ of habeas corpus had been sued out to liberate a

person detained by virtue of the sentence of a court-martial, the civil courts exercise no supervisory or correcting power by the writ of habeas corpus over the proceedings of a court-martial and no mere errors in their proceedings are open to consideration. "The single inquiry, the test, is jurisdiction. That being established, the habeas corpus must be denied and the petitioner remanded. That wanting, it must be sustained and the petitioner discharged." (In re Grimley, 137 U. S., 147; 11 Sup. Ct. Rep., 54; 34 L. ed., 636. See also 12 R. C. L., 1240; 21 Cyc, 326.) As otherwise stated the rule is that the proceedings of a military or naval court cannot be reviewed upon habeas corpus when it appears that such tribunal had jurisdiction over the offense charged and that the offender was a person amenable to its authority. (McGorray vs. Murphy, 80 Ohio St., 413; 17 Am. & Eng. Ann. Cas., 444.)

The sole question therefore in the case now before us is whether the reservation police judge, constituted as above stated, is a person, or court, lawfully empowered to hear and determine a criminal charge of the character of that upon which Calixto Mendigorin was tried and convicted. In our opinion it is clear that he had not this authority.

The question involves a consideration of the fundamental relations of the Army and Navy of the United States to the Civil Government of these Islands; and any discussion of the matter may well begin with an opinion of the Attorney-General of the United States, dated December 10, 1906, wherein the status of the Naval Reservation at Olongapo was considered. (26 Opinions, Atty.-Gen., 91.) By reference to that opinion, it will be seen that the Secretary of War had propounded to the Department of Justice a question as to the extent of the jurisdiction of the Navy Department over persons and property within the limits of said reservation, and particular inquiry was made as to whether the jurisdiction of the Navy Department was of such character and extent as to exclude the civil powers of the Philippine Government. The answer was in the negative.

Briefly stated, the position there taken is that the Government of the Philippine Islands is one of the branches, or dependencies, of the Government of the United States; that it has been endowed by Congress with authority to make its laws effective in the military and naval reservations; and that the jurisdiction of the Navy Department over the reservation in question is not of such character and extent as to justify it in the assumption of the functions of government or to exclude the operation of the civil powers of the Government of the Philippine Islands. It is also pointed out in said opinion that the Philippine Commission had enacted a law (Act No. 530) with especial reference to the conditions prevailing in the military and naval reservations and had made it a penal offense to cut timber thereon without lawful authority. As is observed by the author of the opinion referred to, this Act (No. 530) shows a definite assertion of jurisdiction by the Philippine Government over such reservations, though coupled with a scrupulous intention to support the national rights and aid the reservation purposes. (26 Opinions, Atty. Gen., 97.)

If that opinion is correct—and we believe it is—it necessarily follows that the naval authorities have no power to set up a court, or office, in the Olongapo Reservation with jurisdiction over matters cognizable under the penal laws of the Philippine Islands; for if the functions of the civil courts of the Philippine Islands can be excluded at one point, the whole civil system can be superseded altogether.

One of the considerations showing that the Navy Department has no authority to make laws binding on the civil population and set up a court in the reservation to enforce those laws is found in the Act of Congress and the Presidential order under which the reservation was set apart. The power of the President of the United States in the premises is derived from section 12 of the Act of Congress of July 1, 1902, known as the Philippine Bill, which recognizes the power of the President of the United States to designate for military and other reservations "land or other property" acquired by the United States under the Treaty of Peace with Spain. It will be noted that the language there used is confined to the reservation of "land or other property." It does not confer governmental jurisdiction. "It deals with property belonging to the Government; but does not grant the power to exercise the

functions of government." (26 Opinions, Atty.-Gen., 98.)

Then, again, when the reservation in question was created by proclamation of the President of the United States, it was placed under the "governance and control" of the Navy Department. This expression ("governance and control") means no more than would be implied by the same words in any ordinary grant of franchise to any other entity. That is, it has reference to the administration of the property by the Navy Department for the use for which it was intended, and this, be it understood, in subjection to the general laws of the land. It is a rudimentary principle that a court cannot be created without direct legislative authority; and in this case no legislative authority whatever can be adduced for the establishment of the special office, or court, of the reservation police judge in the reservation.

The relation between the Civil Government of the Philippine Islands and the military and naval arms of the Government of the United States is accurately defined in the first paragraph of section 498 of the Administrative Code of the Philippine Islands (1917), which declares that the acquisition by the United States of land in the Philippine Islands for reservation purposes does not withdraw such land from the operation of the laws of these Islands except in so far as the same shall militate against or be inconsistent with the uses for which the property is held by the United States. This provision recognizes the fact that the military and naval authorities have an Incontestable right to use the reservation for military and naval purposes; and we have no hesitancy in expressing our conformity with the Attorney-General of the United States on the proposition that military control up to the limit of military necessity is paramount. But it is unnecessary for us to attempt here to define what the uses are to which the property may be legitimately put. These uses must be discovered from time to time as particular occasions arise. It is enough to say here that that provision cited does not confer a charter for the exercise of the functions of government over the civilian population of the reservation.

But it is said that experience has shown that a special tribunal of the character of that filled by the reservation police judge is exceedingly useful to the Olongapo community and convenient to the naval authorities in maintaining order in and around that centre. In this connection attention is directed to the fact that Iba, the provincial capital, is 60 kilometers distant from Olongapo; and it seems to be supposed that the exigencies of the police administration in Olongapo would not be served as well in criminal matters by a local justice of the peace as by a police judge constituted under the laws and regulations promulgated by the Commandant. A complete reply to this argument—and the only reply that can be made—is contained in the opinion to which we have already referred, in which the Attorney-General of the United States says:

"I do not think that the arguments ab inconvenienti which are advanced—the extent of the territory, the existence of local municipalities, the necessities of sanitation, the imperfections of native administration—can be heard to vary the rules of construction and enlarge the authority." (26 Opinions, Atty.-Gen., 98.)

Another consideration which shows conclusively that, in this particular case at least, the police judge was without authority to pass sentence upon Calixto Mendigorin is found in the limitations imposed on the jurisdiction of said judge in the very article which creates the office. It is there stated that the fines and punishment to be meted out by the police judge shall be the same as those that might be assigned to similar offenses by a justice of the peace of the Philippine Islands. Upon examining the laws of the Philippine Islands, however, it will be found that our justice of the peace has no jurisdiction over the offense of cutting or destroying timber upon land reserved for military or naval purposes in these Islands; for by section 2661 of the Administrative Code (1917) said offense is made punishable by a fine in an amount not exceeding P1,000 or imprisonment for a period of not exceeding twelve months, or both, in the discretion of the judge. The penalty, or penalties, imposable under this section are not within the competency of the court of a justice of the peace; and any prosecution under that section must be conducted in a Court of First Instance. The circumstance that the two fines which were in fact imposed by the

police judge in this case are not in excess of the jurisdiction of the justice of the peace does not bring the case within the jurisdiction of the police judge. The test of the limit of jurisdiction is not in the amount of the fine actually imposed but in the amount which may be imposed under the law applicable to the case.

Our conclusion is that Calixto Mendigorin is entitled to be at liberty and that the bond heretofore executed for his temporary enlargement should be discharged. It is so declared, without special pronouncement as to costs. Writ granted. So ordered,

Araullo, C. J., Avanceña, Villamor, Ostrand, Johns, and Romualdez, JJ., concur.

DISSENTING

MALCOLM, with whom concurs JOHNSON, J.,

I must dissent. In my opinion the Supreme Court of the Philippine Islands is on dangerous ground when it releases on habeas corpus a prisoner convicted after a fair trial by the police judge of the United States Naval Reservation at Olongapo. The effect of the majority decision is that a civil agency of the United States in the Philippine Islands encroaches on the rights of a separate and distinct agency of the same sovereign power, and thereby overturns a well-considered and successful plan of government which has been established by naval officials for peculiarly naval purposes.

On American occupation of the Philippine Islands, the Government of the Islands was entrusted, to the military. Subsequently, pursuant to action by the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States, there was set up alongside of the military branch of federal authority, a civil branch of the same authority. From that day to this, there have existed in the Philippine Islands two, and possibly three, agencies of the United States, created either by the President or the Congress, acting under the Constitution, to serve the country in widely different capacities. The first American agency, the army and the navy, was created for a special military service. The second American agency, the Government of the Philippine Islands, was created with the broad and general powers of civil government. Neither the army and the navy nor the Government of the Philippine Islands has any right to interfere with the exercise of powers by the other, an independent and co-equal authority.

That these statements may not be taken as unauthorized, permit me to write down in corroboration what the United States Supreme Court and the Philippine Supreme Court have announced. In the great case of *Grafton vs. United States* ([1907], 206 U. S., 333), it was said by our highest tribunal that "the Government of the Philippines owes its existence wholly to the United States, and its judicial tribunals exert all their powers by authority of the United States. The jurisdiction and authority of the United States over that territory and its inhabitants, for all legitimate purposes of government, is paramount." In the case of *Tan Te vs. Bell* ([1914], 27 Phil., 354), the Supreme Court of the Philippine Islands flatly refused to interfere with the Commanding General of the Philippines Division of the United States Army, although the Commanding General had proceeded pursuant to no civil law. It was there held that neither agency of Congress, the Army, or the Government of the Philippine Islands, should trespass on the powers of the other agency. It was said that "Congress did not intend that the Army, liable to the call of duty in this country on the same business it performed in other parts of United States territory, should * * * be deprived of any of its general powers, or hampered or restricted in the due performance of its duties, by the local laws."

When the Congress of the United States came to consider the respective powers of the federal agencies which it desired to set up in the Philippine Islands, it provided in section 12 of the Act of Congress of July 1, 1902, "that all the property and rights which may have been acquired in the Philippine Islands by the United States under the Treaty of Peace with Spain, * * * except such land or other property as shall be designated by the President of the United States for military and other reservations of the Government of the United States, are hereby placed under the control of the government of said Islands, to be administered for the benefit of the inhabitants thereof, except as provided in this Act." Otherwise stated, in plain phraseology, the military branch of the United States Government was to retain the control of the military and naval reservations, while all the remaining property acquired by the United States from Spain was to be administered by the civil branch of the United States Government in the Philippines.

In conformity with the Organic Act, President Roosevelt in an executive order dated November 26, 1902, prescribed the limits of the Olongapo Naval Reservation and stated "that these are reserved for naval purposes and said reservation and all land included therein are hereby placed under the governance and control of the Navy Department." This governance and control has in turn been delegated by the Navy Department to the Commandant of the Navy Station at Olongapo. It is under this authority, which thus goes back to an Act of Congress and an executive order of the President, that the Commandant has duly promulgated laws and regulations for the organization and administration of the United States Naval Reservation at Olongapo.

The form of government provided for the naval reservation is quite elaborate. There are to be a commandant, a captain of the yard, a reservation officer, a reservation police judge, a reservation justice of the peace, an auxiliary reservation justice of the peace, a reservation treasurer, a resident deputy provincial treasurer, a reservation medical officer, tenientes, a town council, a board of health, a reservation forester, and a school board.

The reservation police judge is appointed by the Commandant. He is given original jurisdiction over all cases brought to trial in violation of the naval laws and regulations. In assigning fines and punishment, the police judge is guided and limited to those which would be assigned by a justice of the peace in a civil community for like offenses. The reservation justice of the peace is appointed by the Governor-General of the Philippine Islands on the recommendation of the Commandant. In deciding cases, the justice of the peace is controlled and limited by the laws of the Philippine Islands in so far as they apply to the jurisdiction of a justice of the peace.

The reservation forester is appointed by the captain of the yard and has general supervision over all the timber of the reservation outside of the navy yard. He is empowered to enforce all reservation laws, regulations, and orders in connection with forestry on the reservation. It is specifically provided that "the cutting down of trees, vines, or forest material of any character, without permission, is prohibited."

In other portions of the laws and regulations it is provided that only persons and their families who work or have their places of business on the reservation are allowed to live therein. Occupancy of land by civilians on the reservation is a privilege which will only be granted to those who fulfill the reservation requirements. The remaining portions of the laws and regulations relate to such subjects as identification cards and cedula; liquor and gambling; fishing and boats; animals and vehicles; firearms and hunting; births, deaths, and marriages; public markets and shops; sanitary provisions, and schools.

The naval reservation for which this governmental Charter was provided has an area of approximately 40,000 acres. It affords a residence for over ten thousand inhabitants, mostly citizens of the Philippine Islands. The naval reservation has a large wealth of timber upon it which, owing to its proximity to the industrial part of the navy yard, is a valuable asset to the navy, and towards which timber the Navy has adopted the policy of careful conservation. The reservation is maintained solely for naval purposes. It was because a resident of the reservation

who had been permitted to live in the reservation as a privilege, had damaged the valuable timber of the reservation in an amount between two and three thousand pesos, in violation of the naval laws and regulations, that he was tried and convicted by the reservation police judge provided for by these laws and regulations.

The establishment of a naval reservation does not serve to withdraw the reserved lands from the operation of the local laws. This has been authoritatively decided by the Attorney-General of the Philippines and the Attorney-General of the United States, and has been tacitly admitted in practice by the naval authorities. (1 Op. Atty.-Gen. P. I., 326; 2 Op. Atty.-Gen. P. I., 690; 26 Op. Atty.-Gen. U. S., 91.) There is, however, a "divided jurisdiction," the United States occupying the reservation for military purposes only, while the local government occupies it for the purposes of civil government and the administration of its laws. (*Burgess vs. Territory of Montana* [1888], 1 L. R. A., 808.)

Philippine law (Adm. Code of 1917, sec. 498) expressly provides that the retention by the United States of land in the Philippine Islands for reservations and naval bases "does not withdraw such lands from the jurisdiction of the Philippine government or from the operation of the laws of the Philippine Islands." On the other hand, the same provision of law is careful to add that "No branch of the Government of the Philippine Islands having authority on or over lands reserved for the military purposes of the United States, and no civilian residents thereon, shall interfere with the military administration or the use of such lands for military purposes."

While the jurisdiction of the naval authorities over the Olongapo reservation is not exclusive of the Philippine government, conversely, the jurisdiction of the Philippine government is not exclusive of the naval government on the reservation.

The forestry laws of the Philippine Islands are not in force on the military reservation. This, likewise, has been expressly held by the chief law officer of these Islands and the chief law officer of the United States. (2 Op. Atty.-Gen. P. I., 690; 3 Op. Atty.-Gen. P. I., 161; 26 Op. Atty.-Gen. U. S., 62.) If this be so, it must follow that the attempt of the Philippine Legislature (Adm. Code of 1917, sec. 2661) to punish the unlawful cutting of timber on military reservations is abortive because an unlawful interference with the property rights of the Federal Government; while the penal provisions of the United States Criminal Code (Criminal Code, sec. 50 as amended by Act of Congress of June 25, 1910) are also inapplicable because of there being in existence in the Philippines no federal court to enforce the same. The only really pertinent penal provisions are, consequently, those found in the laws and regulations for the organization and administration of the United States Naval Reservation.

In order to leave no doubt as to the jurisdiction of the military tribunal over the offense charged, a few words as to the power of the naval commander are in order. It is, of course, elementary that no State of the American Union, much less an unorganized territory of the United States, can presume to interfere with the Federal Government in the performance of its authorized functions. The military law is supreme within its proper sphere. The utility of the military establishment rests primarily upon its prerogative to deal summarily wherever it has jurisdiction. The United States Supreme Court has said that it is "an incontrovertible principle that the Government of the United States may, by means of physical force exercised through its official agents, execute on every foot of American soil the powers and functions that belong to it." (*Ex parte Siebold* [1879], 100 U. S., 371; *Cunningham vs. Neagle* [1890], 135 U. S., 1; *In re Debs* [1895], 158 U. S., 564.) The Attorney-General of the United States (26 Op. Atty.-Gen. U. S., 91, 92), in the course of the opinion which has been strictly adhered to and relied upon in the majority decision, said: "The power of a military commandant over a reservation is necessarily extensive and practically exclusive, forbidding entrance and controlling residence as the public interest may demand. The police power of the Government over lands set apart for its purposes, wherever situated, is essentially untrammelled. The extent to which the Government may go in the exercise of this power is measured by the exigencies of the particular case. (*Cornfield vs. U. S.*, 167 U. S., 518, 525, 526.)"

The military courts, which are set up by naval commandants pursuant to their paramount authority, have been referred to by the Navy Department as "exceptional military courts * * *. These exceptional military courts, unlike the court martial, derive their sanction from the Laws of War and not from the enactments of Congress." (Naval Courts and Boards, pp. 17, 18.) The reservation police court provided for on the Olongapo Naval Reservation is one of these "exceptional military courts." Such courts form no part of the judicial system, but are more in the nature of branches of the executive department of the government. Such courts, like the court martial, are more of a disciplinary agency founded upon exigency, sanctioned by precedent, and needful for the preservation of military rights. In the establishment of such a court the naval authorities are answerable to the United States alone, so long as their activities are directed toward carrying out the military administration.

The majority decision recognizes that the proceedings of a military court cannot be reviewed upon habeas corpus when it appears that the military tribunal has jurisdiction over the offense charged and that the offender is a person who is amenable to its jurisdiction (*McGorray vs. Murphy* [1909], 80 Ohio St., 413), and the thesis of this dissent is not alone that the military tribunal, the police judge of Olongapo, has jurisdiction over the offense charged but that no other court in the Philippine Islands has jurisdiction. The Supreme Court of the Philippine Islands is without jurisdiction to interfere with the naval authorities and the so-called court which they have established for naval purposes when this court deals with a person who has violated the naval laws and regulations. The Supreme Court is without jurisdiction in this matter to issue a writ of habeas corpus for the discharge of a person who in reality is held under color of authority of the United States by an officer of that government. (*Ableman vs. Booth* [1859], 21 How., 506; *Tarble's Case* [1872], 13 Wall., 397.)

The majority decision, in conclusion, places faint reliance on the proposition that the police judge exceeded his jurisdiction because section 2661 of the Administrative Code provides a punishment for persons who shall cut timber on a military reservation in an amount not exceeding P1,000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding twelve months, or both. But, as already stated, this provision of Philippine law should not be considered as having any force or effect in the military reservation. Be this as it may, however, if the person convicted has any grievance, he should air the same in an appeal to the higher naval authorities and not in a writ of habeas corpus filed in the civil courts. Not only this, but it must be remembered that justices of the peace—and the police judge is said to have similar jurisdiction—in the capitals of provinces are given by Act No. 2131 jurisdiction to try parties charged with an offense committed within the province in which the penalty provided by law does not exceed two years' imprisonment or a fine of P2,000 or both such imprisonment and fine. There is nothing in this technical argument.

Habeas corpus should not issue.

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.