

THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, PLAINTIFF AND APPELLEE, VS. MORO HAJAN, DEFENDANT AND APPELLANT.

G.R. No. 27012. August 11, 1927

Ponente: MALCOLM, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/g-r-no-27012/>

MALCOLM, J.:

This is an appeal taken by Moro Hajan from the Court of First Instance of Sulu where he was convicted of the crime of murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

If we are to accept the story told by the two witnesses for the Government, Masturi and Jammang, these two, together with Munisan, the victim, and Hajan, the accused, gathered in the early evening of July 13, 1926, at the house of Hajan in the sitio of Daung Dung, municipal district of Pata, Province of Sulu, to listen to some old music. Hajan after concluding his playing left the house. The others waited for his return for some time, but eventually the three Moros also departed. When they arrived near the mosque of Daung Dung, Munisan, who was walking in the rear, was suddenly and treacherously attacked by Hajan, who, with one sweep of his barong, chopped off the head of his unsuspecting victim. If on the other hand we are to believe the testimony of the accused, then it must result in a finding being made that he had nothing to do with the crime. He was at the time a municipal policeman and claims he had had trouble with his accuser, the Moro Masturi,

There concur a number of circumstances which, if we were to convict, would make out of this case a sheer travesty on justice. In the first place, it is admitted by both the prosecution and the defense that absolutely no motive for the commission of the crime has been shown, and though proof of motive is not indispensable to conviction, yet a void in the evidence in this respect discloses a weakness in the case for the prosecution. In the second place, while the witnesses Masturi and Jammang left the island where the murder took place, the accused remained in that vicinity, which does not accord with the biblical injunction that the wicked fleeth. In the third place, the star witnesses for the Government first denied all knowledge of the event, only later to place the blame on the accused, which rather shakes one's confidence in their credibility. In the fourth place, the two Government witnesses would have us accept as true their statement that, although walking in front, they were able to tell by the light of the moon that Munisan had been beheaded by Hajan, whereas an examination of a calendar for the month of July, 1926, reveals that there was no moon at all on the date when the crime is alleged to have taken place. Since the historic example set by Abraham Lincoln in the Armstrong murder case who discredited the principal witness for the prosecution by producing an almanac which proved that at the time the witness said that the moon was shining in great splendor there was in fact no moon but total blackness over the scene, this physical fact has been used to test the veracity of testimony. And lastly, the findings of fact made in the lower court are none too comprehensive.

Concluding, therefore, that the defendant and appellant has not been proved guilty of the crime imputed to him, it becomes our duty to reverse the judgment appealed from and to acquit the accused, with costs de oficio. So ordered.

Avanceña, C. J., Johnson, Street, Villamor, Johns, and Romualdez, JJ., concur.

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.