

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, PETITIONER, VS. THE HONORABLE INTERMEDIATE APPELLATE COURT AND KENNETH WONG MAN LEUNG ALIAS KIANA SO, ALSO KNOWN AS KENNETH WONG MAN LEUNG, ETC., RE...*G.R. No. 70513. October 13, 1986*

Ponente: NARVASA, J.

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In behalf of the Republic, the Solicitor General has appealed from the judgment of the Intermediate Appellate Court[1] affirming that of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of Iloilo City,[2] which granted the petition for change of name of private respondent pursuant to Rule 103 of the Rules of Court. The change of name approved by both Courts is from "Kenneth Wong Man Leung alias Kiana So ** (or) Wong Man Leung, Kenneth Wongman Leung alias Kiana So, Leung Kenneth Wong Man, Leung Kenneth, Wong Man Leung Kenneth (Kiana So), Kenneth W. Leung (alias Kiana So), Kenneth Wongman Leung, Kenneth Wongman Leung (alias Kiana So), and Kiana Chuen So,"[3] to simply, "Kenneth Kiana So."

The facts are not in dispute.[4]

Private respondent, hereafter simply referred to as Kenneth, was born in Hongkong on November 3, 1953. He came to the Philippines as a British subject sometime in 1969. He was then known as Wong Man Leung, which is the name set out in his Alien Certificate of Registration[5] as well as in his SSS Personal Data Record.[6] He was baptized on March 2, 1975 at the Parish Church of Sta. Maria at Iloilo City, and given the Christian name, Kenneth; his baptismal certificate declares his full name as Kenneth Wong Man Leung. Ten months later, in the same church, he married Maylinda Yap, his name in the marriage contract being Kenneth Wong Man Leung alias Kiana So. He was naturalized as a Filipino citizen on February 10, 1976 in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 836. In his Certificate of Naturalization, his name is given as Kenneth Wong Man Leung alias Kiana So; and this, of course, is how his name is recorded in the Office of the Local Civil Registrar of Iloilo City. Other documents set forth his various names and aliases: the certificate of birth of his son, Dexter, states his name as Kiana Chuen Co; the SSS Member's Data Change or Additional Report states his name as Wong Man Leung Kenneth (Kiana So); his income tax return declares his name as Leung, Kenneth Wong Man, and the official receipt evidencing payment of the tax has his name written as Leung, Kenneth; the official records of Solid Gas Inc., Iloilo, of which he is the General Manager, show his name to be Kenneth Wong Man Leung alias Kiana So; his residence tax receipt and all the clearances obtained by him from the City Court, the Court of First Instance, the City Fiscal, and the police authorities of Iloilo City, give his name also as Kenneth Wong Nan Leung alias Kiana So. It was his wish to rid himself of such a burdensomely long name as Kenneth Wong Man Leung alias Kiana So and to avoid confusion resulting from inadvertent but frequent rearrangements of its various parts; his desire to adopt not only a shorter and more easily identifiable name, but also a Filipino name which would associate himself more closely with his countrymen by adoption; and the further fact that he has since come to be publicly known as Kenneth Kiana So, which prompted Kenneth to seek and obtain judicial approval of his change

of name.

The Solicitor General asserts that both the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court and the Intermediate Appellate Court erred in approving the change of name because -

- 1) there was neither allegation nor proof on Kenneth's part of "the name by which he was registered in Hongkong upon his birth," a fatal defect;^[7] and
- 2) the evidence "failed to show proper and reasonable cause for changing his alleged true name."^[8]

The assertions are not persuasive and will be rejected.

The Intermediate Appellate Court has correctly ruled that at the time Kenneth filed his petition for change of name, the records of the Local Civil Registrar officially showed his name to be Kenneth Wong Man Leung alias Kiana So, this being the name under which he sought and was granted Filipino citizenship by naturalization pursuant to PD No. 836. His petition did therefore state his real or official name^[9] and fulfilled the jurisdictional requirement in this regard. Moreover, the petition also alleged his former name as a British subject, "Wong Man Leung" as then appeared in his alien certificate of registration.

The finding by the Intermediate Appellate Court that the evidence established sufficient justification for a change of name --- i.e., there is a sincere desire on Kenneth's part to adopt a Filipino name to erase signs of his former nationality which will unduly hamper his social and business life; his change of name will do away with aliases which should be discouraged, apart from the fact that it will avoid confusion and will be "for the convenience of the world at large in addressing him, or in speaking of or dealing with him"^[10] --- is a finding of fact which this Court can not and will not review in the premises.

WHEREFORE, the appealed Decision of the Intermediate Appellate Court is affirmed, without pronouncement as to costs.

SO ORDERED.

Yap (Chairman), Melencio-Herrera, Cruz, and Feliciano, JJ., concur.

[1] Rendered on March 22, 1985 in AC-G.R. No. CV-67311.

[2] Dated March 24, 1980, in Sp. Proc. N-78-2-1045.

[3] Rollo, p. 50.

[4] See Order, JDRC, Rollo, pp. 48, 49-50; Decision, IAC, Rollo, pp. 52, 53; Appellant's Brief, pp. 2-6; Rollo, p. 55.

[5] No. G-234974 dtd. Jan. 21, 1975.

[6] Entered Dec. 9, 1974.

[7] Citing *Yu Chi Han v. Republic*, 15 SCRA 454; *Ma Chik Kin v. Republic*, 34 SCRA 4; *Ng Yao Sing v. Republic*, 16 SCRA 483; *Tan v. Republic*, 4 SCRA 1128 (Appellant's brief, pp. 9-10; Rollo, p. 55).

[8] *Id.*, pp. 11-12.

[9] *Jesus Ng Yao Seong v. Republic*, 62 O.G. 4408; *Chomi v. Local Civil Registrar of Manila*, 99 Phil. 1004.

[10] *Calderon v. Republic*, L-18127, April 5, 1967, cited in *Martin, Rules of Court*, Vol. 3, p. 690.

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