Supreme Court E-Library

reconsideration and for reinstatement of his appeal, particularly in the light of the Solicitor General's favorable endorsement thereof, rather than the arbitrary and inflexible denial thereof would have meant one case less in the Court's full docket and served to save its time and attention from unproductive matters such as this and leave it for the study and determination of meritorious and truly controversial cases.[11]

ACCORDINGLY, the appellate court's resolutions of September 17, 1973 and December 6, 1973 are hereby annulled and set aside. The case is remanded to the appellate court which is directed to admit petitioner's brief as accused-appellant and to give due course to his appeal and decide the same on the merits. No costs.

Makalintal, Ruiz Castro, Makasiar, Esguerra, and *Munoz-Palma, JJ.,* concur.

FIRST DIVISION

[A.M. No. 60-MJ. May 27, 1974]

EVANGELINE VALLE, *complainant, vs.* **MUN. JUDGE JUAN G. ESGUERRA,** *respondent.*

SYLLABUS

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS; COMPLAINT AGAINST A MUNICIPAL JUDGE; CHARGE OF HAVING KNOWINGLY RENDERED AN UNJUST JUDGMENT; COMPLAINT IS DISMISSED BUT RESPONDENT IS ADMONISHED. — The decision rendered by the respondent judge acquitting one Carmen Esguerra of the charge of physical injuries allegedly committed upon the person of Valle merely

---

[11] See Mintu *vs.* CA, 53 SCRA 114 (1973), cited in Mun. of Tiwi *vs.* Cirujales, L-37520, Dec. 26, 1973.

Supreme Court E-Library

stated that after evaluating the declaration of all the witnesses of both parties as well as the documentary evidence introduced by them, the court was of the opinion that the prosecution failed to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt. The decision does not contain a statement of the facts proved upon which the acquittal is based. This omission is in violation of Section 77 of the Judiciary Act, as amended by Republic Act 6031, which provides that judgments on the merits rendered by municipal and city judges shall state "clearly the facts and the law on which they are based x x x." This Court has no basis upon which to judge the respondent as having knowingly rendered an unjust judgment. Still, he nevertheless was in error in rendering the decision that fails to comply with the requirements of law. Accordingly, the administrative charge against respondent judge is dismissed. He is, however, admonished to comply strictly henceforth with the provisions of law hereinbefore cited in the preparation of his decisions and warned that a repetition of the same omission will merit stern disciplinary action.

TEEHANKEE, *J., Separate Opinion:*

1. **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS; COMPLAINT AGAINST A MUNICIPAL JUDGE; CHARGE OF HAVING KNOWINGLY RENDERED AN UNJUST JUDGMENT; RESPONDENT ENTITLED TO PRESUMPTION OF GOOD FAITH IN INSTANT CASE**— In the absence of a compelling showing on the part of complainant that respondent had wilfully acted with malice or gross incompetence amounting to bad faith in rendering his *unreasoned* judgment absolving for insufficiency of evidence the accused in the physical injuries case before him, respondent is entitled to the presumption of good faith, since it is not clear that at the time of trial and rendition of judgment, Republic Act 6031 which converted all city and municipal courts into courts of record was already being implemented.

2. **ID.; ID.; ID.; ID.; SUCH PRESUMPTION NOW UNAVAILING WITH THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT 6031.**— Now there is no longer any question as to the full implementation of Republic Act 6031 and that all city and

Supreme Court E-Library

municipal courts are now courts of record such that the very rendition by a judge of a city or municipal courts of a judgment which does *not* clearly state the facts and law on which it is based constitutes a grave transgression of the constitutional and statutory mandate and would *per se* be a ground for grave disciplinary action against him.

DECISION

RUIZ CASTRO, *J.*:

The respondent Juan G. Esguerra, municipal judge of Taytay, Rizal, stands charged in this administrative case, filed by Evangeline Valle, with knowingly rendering an unjust judgment. The judgment referred to absolved one Carmen Esguerra of the charge of slight physical injuries allegedly committed upon the person of Valle.

After the respondent filed his answer, the complainant and the respondent manifested that they had no further evidence to present.

For reasons not found in the record, no stenographic notes were taken of the testimonial evidence adduced by both the prosecution and the defense during the trial of the criminal case, despite the fact that the Taytay municipal court was at the time already a court of record; but it can be gleaned from the memorandum of the defendant that she pleaded self-defense. The decision rendered by the respondent judge acquitting Carmen Esguerra merely stated that after evaluating the declarations of all the witnesses of both parties as well as the documentary evidence introduced by them, the court was of the opinion that the prosecution had failed to prove the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt. The decision does not contain a statement of the facts proved upon which the acquittal is based. This omission is in violation of Section 77 of the Judiciary Act, as amended by Republic Act 6031, which provides that judgments on the merits rendered by municipal and city judges shall state "clearly the facts and the law on which they are based . . ."

This Court has no basis upon which to adjudge the respondent as having knowingly rendered an unjust judgment. Still, although

Supreme Court E-Library

the respondent might have acted in good faith, he nevertheless was in error in rendering the decision that fails to comply with the requirements of law.

ACCORDINGLY, the administrative charge against the respondent judge is dismissed. He is, however, admonished to comply strictly henceforth with the provisions of law hereinbefore cited in the preparation of his decisions, and warned that a repetition of the same omission will merit stern disciplinary action.

Makalintal, C.J., Makasiar, Esguerra, and *Muñoz Palma, JJ.*, concur.

TEEHANKEE, *J.*, *concurring:*

I concur with the main opinion on the ground that in the absence of a compelling showing on the part of complainant that respondent had wilfully acted with malice or gross incompetence amounting to bad faith in rendering his *unreasoned* judgment absolving for insufficiency of evidence the accused in the physical injuries case before him, respondent is entitled to the presumption of good faith, since it is not clear that at the time of trial and rendition of judgment, Republic Act No. 6031 approved on August 4, 1969 which converted all city and municipal courts into courts of record and therefore required that as mandated by the Constitution[1] their judgments as such courts of record must state "clearly the facts and the law on which they are based[2] was already being implemented.[3]

While inferior courts had not yet been converted to courts of record under Republic Act 6031, Rule 5, Section 14 merely provided that their "judgment shall be in writing and signed by the municipal or city judge, but it need not contain findings of fact or conclusions of law."

---

[1] Art. VIII, Sec. 12, 1935 Constitution; Art. X, Sec. 9, 1973 Constitution.

[2] Sec. 77, Judiciary Act, as amended by R.A. 6031.

[3] Judicial notice is taken that the provisions of R.A. 6031 providing for stenographers and personnel to enable the inferior courts to properly discharge their functions as courts of record took a considerable period of time to fully implement.

Supreme Court E-Library

But now that there is no longer any question as to the full implementation of Republic Act No. 6031 and that all city and municipal courts are now courts of record and to dispel any unjustified inference from the main opinion that complaints for knowingly rendering an unjust judgment may be dismissed when the judgment does not contain a statement of the facts and law on which it is based, I wish merely to stress that the very rendition by a judge of a city or municipal court of a judgment which does *not* clearly state the facts and law on which it is based (prescinding from the question of validity or nullity of such a "judgment") constitutes a grave transgression of the constitutional and statutory mandate and would *per se* be a ground for grave disciplinary action against him.

FIRST DIVISION

[G.R. No. L-26526. May 27, 1974]

GAUDENCIO E. ANTONINO, substituted by **MAGNOLIA W. ANTONINO, administratrix of his estate,** *plaintiff-appellee, vs.* **BRIGIDO R. VALENCIA,** *defendant-appellant.*

SYLLABUS

1. **REMEDIAL LAW; APPEAL; FINDING OF FACT OF TRIAL COURT, SUSTAINED.—** The Court finds that no error was committed by the trial court in finding that the press release issued by the office of defendant as Secretary of Public Works and Communications was issued or caused to be issued by him and the contents thereof to be published in the metropolitan press and in not giving credence to defendant's vague denial and to the vague testimonies of two newsmen who could not pinpoint the source of the press release which they simply found on their desks in the evening but nevertheless accepted at face value and wrote up the contents thereof as published in