



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila
FIRST DIVISION

SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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NOTICE

Sirs/Mesdames:

Please take notice that the Court, First Division, issued a Resolution dated March 11, 2020 which reads as follows:

“G.R. No. 246160 – PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, plaintiff-appellee, versus RODOLFO IGLESIAS y ACOSTA, accused-appellant.

After a careful review of the records of the case and the issues submitted by the parties, the Court finds that the Court of Appeals, Special Fifteenth Division (CA), did not err in promulgating the Decision¹ dated July 30, 2018 in CA-G.R. CR-HC No. 09410. The facts, as borne out by the records and the transcripts, sufficiently support the conclusion that accused-appellant Rodolfo Iglesias y Acosta (accused-appellant Iglesias) is indeed guilty of Rape under Article 266-A of the Revised Penal Code, as amended. The issues and matters raised before the Court, the same ones already raised before the CA, were sufficiently addressed and correctly ruled upon by the CA.

It is well-settled that in the absence of facts or circumstances of weight and substance that would affect the result of the case, appellate courts will not overturn the factual findings of the trial court.² Thus, when the case pivots on the issue of the credibility of the victim, the findings of the trial courts necessarily carry great weight and respect as they are afforded the unique opportunity to ascertain the demeanor and sincerity of witnesses during trial.³

- over – four (4) pages ...

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¹ *Rollo*, pp. 3-13. Penned by Associate Justice Ramon Paul L. Hernando (now a Member of the Court) and concurred in by Associate Justices Marlene B. Gonzales-Sison and Jhosep Y. Lopez.

² *People v. Gerola*, 813 Phil. 1055, 1064 (2017).

³ *People v. Aguilar*, 565 Phil. 233, 247 (2007).

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After a judicious examination of the records and transcripts of stenographic notes of the instant case, the Court finds no cogent reason to vacate the Regional Trial Court's (RTC)⁴ appreciation of the evidence, which was affirmed *in toto* by the CA.

The Court agrees with the findings of the CA that even assuming accused-appellant Iglesias and AAA⁵ were in a relationship, the prosecution sufficiently established the element of force. AAA explicitly stated in her cross-examination that she told accused-appellant Iglesias that she did not want to have sex. She pushed and slapped him but despite her efforts to fight back, accused-appellant Iglesias pinned her down until she could no longer move and forcibly inserted his organ into AAA's vagina.⁶ Undoubtedly, the element of force was sufficiently proven.

As regards the purported inconsistencies in AAA's testimony, *i.e.*, whether the house was accused-appellant Iglesias' house or that of his sister and whether AAA went to school or to her house immediately after the rape,⁷ the Court agrees with the CA that the same relates only to minor and irrelevant matters that do not at all affect the credibility of AAA.⁸ The Court reiterates that errorless statements and testimonies cannot be expected, especially when a rape victim is recounting details of a harrowing experience.⁹ In fact, minor inconsistencies are more consistent with human nature and experience and serve to strengthen rather than destroy a victim's credibility.¹⁰

In the same vein, accused-appellant Iglesias' defense of denial cannot outweigh the detailed testimony of AAA that he had sexual intercourse with her against her will. The Court has oft pronounced that denial is an inherently weak defense which cannot prevail over the positive and credible testimony of the prosecution witness that the accused committed the crime. Thus, as between a categorical testimony which has the ring of truth on the one hand, and a mere denial on the other, the former is generally held to prevail.¹¹ It bears

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⁴ See Decision dated May 25, 2017 of the RTC of San Mateo, Rizal, Branch 75 in Criminal Case No. 11002, penned by Presiding Judge Beatrice A. Caunan-Medina; see *CA rollo*, pp. 49-74.

⁵ The real name of the victim, her personal circumstances and other information which tend to establish or compromise her identity, as well as those of her immediate family, or household members, shall not be disclosed to protect her privacy, and fictitious initial shall, instead, be used, in accordance with *People v. Cabalquinto* [533 Phil. 703 (2006)] and Amended Administrative Circular No. 83-2015 dated September 5, 2017.

⁶ *Rollo*, pp. 10-11.

⁷ *Id.* at 7.

⁸ *Id.* at 8.

⁹ *People v. Lagramada*, 436 Phil. 758, 771 (2002).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *People v. Piosang*, 710 Phil. 519, 527 (2013).

reiterating that “[t]he testimonies of child victims of rape are generally accorded full weight and credit. When a child victim says that she has been raped, she says in effect all that is necessary to show that rape was committed x x x. As we have said in numerous cases, a young girl’s revelation that she has been raped, coupled with her voluntary submission to medical examination and willingness to undergo public trial where she could be compelled to give the details of her ignominy, cannot just be dismissed as a mere concoction.”¹²

Further still, accused-appellant Iglesias’ claim that AAA’s actuations after the rape incident, *i.e.*, that she went to accused-appellant Iglesias’ house even after the first purported incident, belie her claim of rape, similarly lacks merit. “Behavioral psychology teaches us that people react to similar situations dissimilarly. There is no standard form of behavior when one is confronted by a shocking incident as the workings of the human mind when placed under emotional stress are unpredictable.”¹³ This is all the more true for a 14-year-old child, who is not even legally qualified to enter into basic contracts. The RTC correctly found that children cannot be reasonably expected to behave like adults, especially when faced with such a traumatic experience.

As regards accused-appellant Iglesias’ claims that AAA wrote an unsigned letter purportedly admitting that her father wanted her to file this case against him deserves no consideration. The purported letter was not offered in evidence and does not appear in the records. As such, it cannot be given any probative weight.¹⁴

In view of the foregoing, the Court is convinced that the prosecution proved accused-appellant Iglesias’ guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, the appeal is **DISMISSED** for lack of merit. The Court hereby **ADOPTS** the findings of fact and conclusions of law in the Decision dated July 30, 2018 of the Court of Appeals, Special Fifteenth Division in CA-G.R. CR-HC No. 09410. The Decision finding accused-appellant **RODOLFO IGLESIAS y ACOSTA** guilty beyond reasonable doubt of Rape, defined and punished under Article 266-A of the Revised Penal Code, as amended, in relation to Article 266-B is hereby **AFFIRMED**.

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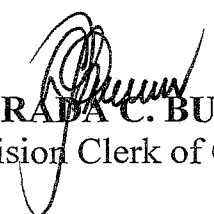
¹² *People v. Fraga*, 386 Phil. 884, 905 (2000).

¹³ *People v. Patentes*, 726 Phil. 590, 590 (2014).

¹⁴ RULES OF COURT, Rule 132, Sec. 34.

SO ORDERED.”

Very truly yours,


LIBRADA C. BUENA
Division Clerk of Court

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Court of Appeals (x)
Manila
(CA-G.R. CR HC No. 09410)

The Hon. Presiding Judge
Regional Trial Court, Branch 75
San Mateo, 1850 Rizal
(Crim. Case No. 11002)

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