

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 254, LAS PIÑAS CITY
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PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES,

- versus -

CRIM. CASE NO. 23-0319

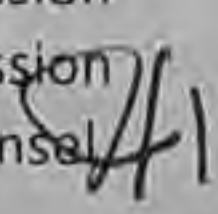
DG GERALD BANTAG y QUITALEG, et.al.,
Accused.

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ORDER

In today's continuation of Pre-trial via partial video conferencing, DSP Olivia I. Laroza-Torrevillas, Senior SP Lincoln Asencion, ASP Eric Orpisa and Sr. SP Charlie Guhit appeared in court for the State. Atty. Nikki A. Garcia of the Public Attorney's Office was also present for accused Joel Escorial while defense counsel Atty. Salvador Quimpo for accused Christopher Bacoto failed to appear. PDL Joel Escorial was present in court while PDL Christopher Bacoto appeared via video conferencing. Mr. Roy Mabasa was also in court as representative of the private complainant.

In the course of the pre-trial, the prosecution and the counsel for accused Joel Escorial, Atty. Garcia, entered into the following stipulations:

1. Accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** executed an Extra Judicial Confession dated October 17, 2022 marked as prosecution's Exhibit "F" and a Supplemental Extra-Judicial Confession dated October 22, 2022;
2. That the signature appearing on top of the name **Joel Salve Escorial** is his signature;
3. Accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** executed his Extra Judicial Confession dated October 17, 2022 and Supplemental Extra-Judicial Confession dated October 22, 2022 willingly, voluntarily, and without duress;
4. Accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** executed his Extra Judicial Confession dated October 17, 2022 and Supplemental Extra-Judicial Confession dated October 22, 2022 in the presence and assistance of counsel 

Atty. Daniel T. Alviar; and

5. Accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** affirms and confirms the truthfulness of the allegations contained in his Extra Judicial Confession dated October 17, 2022 and Supplemental Extra-Judicial Confession dated October 22, 2022.

Atty. Nikki Garcia, counsel for accused Joel Escorial y Salve manifested that the said accused is willing to enter a plea bargaining agreement whereby accused Joel Escorial y Salve will change his plea of Not Guilty to "**Guilty**" as an accomplice in the crime of Murder. The prosecution and the private complainant represented by Mr. Roy Mabasa, interposed no objection to the said plea bargaining arrangement.

After conducting a searching inquiry in Tagalog to accused Escorial as to the voluntariness of his plea and whether or not he understood the consequences thereof, and upon further explaining to him the consequences of his intended plea of guilty to the **lesser liability of ACCOMPLICE TO THE CRIME OF MURDER**, further taking into account the consent of the prosecution and private complainant to the offer to plea bargain to the lesser liability of an accomplice to Murder, the plea bargaining agreement of the parties is accordingly **APPROVED**.

Subsequently, when re-arraigned and after reading to him the Information in Tagalog, a dialect he speaks and fully understood, accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** entered a plea of **GUILTY** as an **ACCOMPLICE TO THE CRIME OF MURDER**.

Enter plea of **GUILTY** into the records insofar as accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** is concerned as an **ACCOMPLICE TO THE CRIME OF MURDER**.

WHEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, the Court hereby renders judgment insofar as accused **Joel Escorial y Salve** is concerned, as follows:

Finding accused **Joel Escorial y Salve**, **GUILTY** beyond reasonable doubt as **ACCOMPLICE TO THE CRIME OF MURDER**, and he is hereby sentenced to suffer an indeterminate penalty of imprisonment of **EIGHT (8) YEARS AND EIGHT (8) MONTHS OF PRISION MAYOR MEDIUM AS MINIMUM TO SIXTEEN (16) YEARS OF RECLUSION TEMPORAL MEDIUM AS MAXIMUM**.

Said accused shall remain in detention with the PNP Custodial Center until further orders.

In regard to the Motion for DNA Examination filed by the 

prosecution, given the oral manifestations of prosecution and taking into account the allegations made in the motion, the counsel for accused Ricardo Zulueta is hereby directed to file a Comment on the said Motion within ten (10) days from notice, afterwhich the pending incident shall be deemed submitted for resolution.

In the meantime, considering the absence of Atty. Salvador Quimpo, counsel for accused Christopher Bacoto, set the continuation of the proceedings insofar as said accused is concerned on **June 24, 2024 at 8:30** o'clock in the morning, as previously scheduled.

The Branch Clerk of Court is directed to issue a Produce Order to secure the attendance of the accused for the said hearing.

SO ORDERED.

Las Piñas City, May 6, 2024.


HAROLD CESAR C. HULIGANGA
Presiding Judge