



Razor's Edge

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Tell Us Something Different

NEW YORK, Sept. 9 (PinoyGlobal)- Recently, the Department of Justice filed charges of murder against 38 policemen, which included Col. David Quimio and Supt. Jireh Fidel in connection with the massacre of 10 innocent people in the RCBC bank robbery in Cabuyao, Laguna - last May 16. This brings us to square one, what's new?

Charging policemen with murder is futile exercise let alone time consuming when the results are trendy acquittals. Truth to tell many of such cases end up in the freezer if they are not thrown out of court as justified homicide notwithstanding the extent of forensics and ballistics findings. It's not surprising therefore that many Filipinos just gnash their teeth when policemen are involved in murder cases and get out unscathed.

On the other hand, it is also unwise to doubt every indicted police officer that invokes self-defense on a murder charge bearing in mind the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, or shall I say influential? Be that as it may, this palpable bias undermines justice and makes us unduly prejudice against the police in general. The wheel of justice has to move on until it catches the fiend/s in human form. We grossly support this philosophy so long as due process is not subjected to hype.

Sad to say, a majority of those brutally killed by policemen in so-called "shootouts", are in reality fall guys. Barbaric as it seems this is done to show result on a crime that has been sensationalized in newspapers in which the police department is made to look inept and incompetent for not scoring any arrest, least of all solving the crime. Conspicuously, the murders perpetrated by policemen have a unique history of being dismissed as self-defense, which accounts for the cynical view of people on the blind lady of justice.

We may grant that some shootouts took place and therefore the homicides were justified. But what of those that did not, must we also accept the fantasy of a n in epic drama about a shootout simply because the police says so? The infamous Kuratong Baleng rubout was entered in the military and police blotters as a shootout when reports to the contrary were overwhelming, do we have to swallow that too? What about the double murder of Bobby Dacer and his innocent driver, which from all indications was purely to silence Bobby from exposing anomalies in the administration, if the trial was consummated and an acquittal judgment was rendered did we have to accept that too as infallible judgment?

These are glaring examples that police reports could not always be depended upon for that would be reducing justice to a melodrama to appease the victims' families and the public in general. Only a simpleton is susceptible to believe a demeaning stupidity and the Philippine public is not a population of idiots.

In hindsight many cases against policemen go nowhere, more so if the killings are politically motivated. The public has a cynical view on this self-defense mantra, because it has become so much of a pattern as corruption is to the Arroyo administration. Lamentably, public complacency has encouraged more police killings either in self-defense or by executing the victims who could be innocent people.

When confronted with a blank-wall in a murder case, a cop would nonchalantly rote "it was a shootout" when in fact he acted as prosecutor, judge and executioner of the suspect he killed. This is exactly why the families of 3 particular shooting victims - Barangay Capt. Vivencio Javier, Angelito Malabanan and Rolando Lachica

- say they were brutally murdered, on the mere suspicion that they were members of the gang that robbed RCBC where 10 innocent employees were massacred. The families vehemently deny the victims were involved in any shootout with the police. Their executions were without due process, the families bewailed.

The police, of course, maintain the killings were the aftermath of a shootout. Don't the people anymore deserve a better answer than that overused "self-defense" excuse? This is no trifling matter: we maybe talking here of innocent victims. To believe the police line would presuppose that people are brain-dead, numbskulls incapable of synchronizing sound thinking with sensible judgment. I can almost hear the public chorus, "Give me a break maaan!"

Why is it impossible for the police department to be original for a change and admit that policemen are humans - therefore susceptible to commit errors in judgment like shooting innocent victims by mistake? Haven't they read, "To err is human"? Give us some credit that we still have a working mind not paralyzed brains. It's not that the citizenry debunks all contentions of a shootout because then we will be putting ourselves in the genre of unfair people who do not believe in hearing the other side. But the incidence

of shootouts are too incredibly common as a defense in murder cases involving policemen, and to accept them hook, line and sinker negates that simple people can think logically.

We can also factor in the possibility that indeed there was a shootout, in which the victims fought the arresting officers because desperate criminals are capable of anything for self-preservation. That probability however, is highly unlikely: almost zero possibility given the standard answer of the police to charges of cold-blooded killings. Ask Dirty Harry, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, he may have good answers. As a former police officer he may have the statistics.

Court records are full of instances of rubout, which makes it redundant to repeat the litany of statistics on this subject relevant to the brutal killings of the three mentioned above. The truth however has still to be resolved in court. But judging from the rush killings of the 3 suspects of the RCBC bank robbery-massacre, the police have a lot to prove whose fault it was when they mowed down the Barangay Captain and his two companions. An impartial judge is likely to ask - tell us something we don't know! #