

FIRST DIVISION

[G.R. No. 237982, October 14, 2020]

PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, Plaintiff-Appellee, VS. YOLANDA SANTOS y PARAJAS, Accused-Appellant.

D E C I S I O N

PERALTA, C.J.:

Before this Court is an appeal from the Decision^[1] dated November 3, 2017, of the Court of Appeals (CA) in CA-G.R. CR H.C. No. 08721, where the CA affirmed the Decision^[2] dated August 17, 2016 of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Pasay City, Branch 118, in Criminal Case Nos. R-PSY-14-08614-CR to R-PS Y-14-08627-CR which convicted Yolanda Santos y Parajas (*accused-appellant*) of qualified theft.

The antecedent facts are as follows:

On July 11, 2014, fourteen (14) Informations for qualified theft under Article 310 of the Revised Penal Code (RPC) were filed against accused-appellant, to wit:

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08614-CR^[3] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 13th day of September, 2011, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP12,935.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP12,935.00

Contrary to law. Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08615-CR^[4] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 12th day of January, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP100,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without

the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP100,000.00.

Contrary to law. Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08616-CR^[5] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 24th day of January, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP45,200.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP45,200.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08617-CR^[6] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 2nd day of February, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP17,716.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP17,716.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08618-CR^[7] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 14th day of February, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP60,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP60,000.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08619-CR^[8] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 17th day of March, 2013, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP58,014.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP58,014.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08620-CR^[9] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 23rd day of April, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP30,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP30,000.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08621-CR^[10] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 29th day of May, 2013, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP300,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP300,000.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08622-CR^[11] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 29th day of June, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP100,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP 100,000.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08623-CR^[12] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 8th day of November, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP 110,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP 110,000.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08624-CR^[13] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 8th day of December, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP58,014.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP58,014.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08625-CR^[14] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 11th day of December, 2012, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC

property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP50,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP50,000.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08626-CR^[15] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 7th day of January, 2013, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP58,014.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP58,014.00.

Contrary to law.

Criminal Case No. R-PSY-14-08627-CR^[16] for Qualified Theft

That on or about the 19th day of January, 2013, in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, Yolanda P. Santos, while being an OIC property accountant under the employ of the private complainant Dasman Realty and Development Corporation, represented by Ronald B. Bañares, with intent to gain and with grave abuse of confidence reposed upon her by the said private complainant, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and feloniously take, steal, and carry away the amount of PHP30,000.00 belonging to the aforementioned private complainant without the latter's knowledge and consent to its damage and prejudice in the aforesaid amount of PHP30,000.00.

Contrary to law.

On July 14, 2014, warrants of arrest were issued against accused-appellant.^[17] Upon arraignment, accused-appellant pleaded not guilty on the charges against her.^[18] Trial on the merits ensued.

Private complainant Dasman Realty and Development (*Dasman Realty*) is a corporation engaged in realty and development business.^[19] Prosecution witness Ronald Bañares (*Bañares*) is one of the officers/employees designated to represent Dasman Realty in the