

FIRST DIVISION

**[A.M. No. P-04-1800 [OCA IPI No. 01-1243-P],
March 25, 2004]**

JUDGE BRICCIO B. AQUINO, COMPLAINANT, VS. LETICIA U. ISRAEL, CLERK OF COURT I; JULIET L. DUPAYA, COURT STENOGRAPHER; ULYSSES D. DUPAYA, CLERK IV; ROSELLER O. ISRAEL, CASHIER I; EMIL A. SIRIBAN, PROCESS SERVER; JAMES D. LORILLA, PROCESS SERVER, RESPONDENTS.

DECISION

YNARES-SATIAGO, J.:

Fighting between court employees during office hours is a disgraceful behavior reflecting adversely on the good image of the judiciary. It displays a cavalier attitude towards the seriousness and dignity with which court business should be treated. Shouting at one another in the workplace and during office hours is arrant discourtesy and disrespect not only towards co-workers, but to the court as well.^[1]

On July 26, 2001, the respondents, all court employees of Municipal Trial Court of Lal-lo, Cagayan, Branch 2, engaged in a verbal tussle which resulted in physical violence.

When ordered^[2] to explain their participation in the aforesaid incident, the respondents submitted their respective versions of the facts.

Respondents Ulysses and Juliet Dupaya alleged that at around 10:00 a.m. of July 26, 2001, Juliet Dupaya and Leticia Israel had a heated argument. Ulysses, husband of Juliet, approached the two and told them to stop. Ulysses brought his wife to the office of the Clerk of Court followed by Leticia Israel. When the Dupaya spouses entered the office, respondent Roseller Israel, Leticia's husband, suddenly stood up from his desk and made a gesture to attack Ulysses. In defense, Ulysses pushed Roseller backwards. Respondent Emil Siriban attacked and boxed Ulysses in the face and in other parts of the body. Respondent James Lorilla intervened and prevented Emil from further attacking Ulysses.

Roseller and Leticia alleged that at around 10:00 a.m. of July 26, 2001, while the two of them were sitting inside the Office of the Clerk of Court, the Dupaya spouses arrived and confronted Leticia. Ulysses asked Leticia in a threatening voice, "What do you want now?" He raised his hand as if to slap the latter. When Roseller asked Ulysses what was wrong, the latter cursed him and hit him on the right cheek with his fist.^[3] Thereafter, Ulysses turned to pick up a chair but respondent Emil Siriban told him not to harm Roseller. Ulysses turned towards Emil with his fist closed. Sensing danger, Emil swung his right hand towards Ulysses but failed to hit him. He threw another punch and hit the right neck of Ulysses. Roseller then pushed Ulysses towards the door of the office where the two of them grappled and fell to the