

EN BANC

[A.M. No. 2002-6-SC, February 05, 2003]

**ALEJANDREA GURO AND ABSAMEN C. DOMOCAO
COMPLAINANTS, VS. SUSAN M. DORONIO, FISCAL CONTROLLER
I, FMO, ACCOUNTING DIVISION, OCA, RESPONDENT.**

DECISION

PUNO, J.:

This is an administrative case initiated by a complaint, dated November 5, 2001, against respondent, Susan M. Doronio, by the complainants, Alejandrea L. Guro and Absamen C. Domocao, Stenographer III and Clerk IV, respectively, of the Shari'a District Court, 4th Shari'a Judicial District, Marawi City.

Complainant Guro alleged that sometime in September and October 2001, she applied for a Supreme Court Savings and Loan Association (SCSLA) Multi-Purpose loan and a Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Salary loan. She was surprised to learn that in September 2001, someone was granted the loans in her name and the funds released to the said impostor. Upon verification, she found out that someone purportedly bearing the name "Alejandrea L. Guro" was given the proceeds of the loan upon the guarantee of respondent, Susan M. Doronio, an employee of the Accounting Office of the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) and the Liaison Officer of the Supreme Court with the GSIS. Guro was also informed that Myla, a GSIS personnel, became suspicious and refused to release the proceeds of the loan to the impostor, but allegedly, Susan urged her (Myla) to release the check. The impostor likewise received the proceeds of the SCSLA loan illegally using complainant's name and forged signature.

Respondent Doronio denied complainant's allegation that she prodded Myla to release the check. She contended that she has been doing liaison work with the GSIS and PAG-IBIG for more than three years and accommodating similarly situated employees without any complaints. Respondent asserted that she guaranteed the loan of the impostor even if a requirement was lacking because the impostor showed a Supreme Court ID, which to her (Doronio) appeared genuine, and thus satisfying herself that said person is an employee of the Court. She also claimed that she is as much a victim as the complainants, and that she did not have any bad intention in guaranteeing the loan of the impostor as "I wouldn't sacrifice my job just so a person completely unknown to me would be able to defraud other people."

[1]

Complainants suspect that Mr. Binang S. Jaruni, his two wives and Amilyn M. Casan-Ali, the wife of former Judge Casan-Ali, are the persons behind the syndicate, and in their complaint, pray that the deductions from their salary be immediately stopped and that an investigation be conducted to prevent future similar occurrences.

On January 21, 2002, eleven (11) judges and employees of the Shari'a Circuit Court, Shari'a District Court and Municipal Trial Court in Cities, sent a letter addressed to the Chief Justice, asking that they be included as Joinders to the complaint, alleging that they are similarly situated with the complainants.

The complaint was forwarded to Atty. Eden T. Candelaria, Deputy Clerk of Court and Chief Administrative Officer of this Court for appropriate action.^[2]

In a Memorandum dated April 9, 2002, the Complaints and Investigation Division, Office of Administrative Services of this Court (*hereinafter*, Investigating Body) submitted the following recommendations:

"ALL THE FOREGOING CONSIDERED, it is respectfully recommended that:

- 1) (R)espondent Ms. Susan Doronio be suspended for three (3) months without pay for negligence in the performance of her duty;
- 2) (T)he OAS, OCA, be directed to devise an effective management control in the processing of loan applications;
- 3) (M)eanwhile, the FMO, OCA be directed to cease and desist from deducting the GSIS loans and SCSLA loans subject of this complaint from the salaries of Alexandra (*sic*) Guro and Abesamen C. Damocao (*sic*), until receipt of the investigation report of the NBI."^[3]

In the same report, the Investigating Body ratiocinated:

"A careful review of the complaint and the comment of Ms. Doronio unearth(s) an irregular practice in the release of the salary/policy loan checks. Respondent Doronio by her own admission showed that she was careless in the performance of her duty as liaison officer. Her act of accommodating check claimants from the GSIS by vouching their identities as employees of the Court although she does not really know them is highly detestable. Such a practice will definitely reward unscrupulous individuals to the prejudice of unsuspecting court employees. It is the Standard Operating Procedure for lower court employees that loaned checks are officially mailed to the employees concerned. The only exception is when the employees themselves personally follow-up their loan applications. **It is never the duty of the liaison officer to guarantee their identities. The only duty of the liaison officer is to make sure that the remittances, loan applications and checks are immediately transmitted to the GSIS/OCA Offices concerned but never to individually release them.**"^[4] (*emphasis supplied*)

We agree with the findings of the Investigating Body. "A public servant is expected to exhibit, at all times, the highest degree of honesty and integrity and should be made accountable to all those whom he serves."^[5]