



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
SUPREME COURT  
Manila

SECOND DIVISION

**NOTICE**

Sirs/Mesdames:

*Please take notice that the Court, Second Division, issued a Resolution dated **August 15, 2022** which reads as follows:*

**“A.C. No. 11094 (Re: Resolution dated January 28, 2016 in CA-G.R. CV No. 72647-MIN [People of the Philippines vs. Leonila Calo-Oy] v. Atty. Lel M. Blanco).** – The Court resolves to adopt and approve the Report and Recommendation<sup>1</sup> of the Office of the Bar Confidant (OBC) that respondent Atty. Lel M. Blanco (Atty. Blanco) be suspended from the practice of law for a period of three (3) months given his continuous disregard of court orders.

**ANTECEDENTS**

Atty. Blanco is the counsel for private complainant Robert Suico (Suico) in Criminal Case No. 723-14-161. While the case was pending before the Court of Appeals (CA), accused-appellant Leonila Calo-oy (Calo-oy) and her counsel died. Thus, on March 7, 2012, the CA ordered Atty. Blanco to procure and submit the name of an executor or administrator for the estate of the deceased Calo-oy following paragraph 4, Section 16,<sup>2</sup> Rule 3 of the Rules of Court.<sup>3</sup> Atty. Blanco failed to comply. Hence, on February 7, 2014, the CA declared him in contempt of court for non-compliance with its March 7, 2012 Resolution.<sup>4</sup>

Atty. Blanco requested for an extension of time to comply with the March 7, 2012 Resolution, which the CA granted, but Atty. Blanco defaulted. Thus, on

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<sup>1</sup> *Rollo*, pp. 65–66.

<sup>2</sup> Section 16. *Death of party; duty of counsel.* – x x x  
x x x x

If no legal representative is named by the counsel for the deceased party, or if the one so named shall fail to appear within the specified period, the court may order the opposing party, within a specified time, to procure the appointment of an executor or administrator for the estate of the deceased and the latter shall immediately appear for and on behalf of the deceased. The court charges in procuring such appointment, if defrayed by the opposing party, may be recovered as costs.

<sup>3</sup> *Rollo*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 2–3.

May 20, 2014, the CA ordered Atty. Blanco to show cause why he should not be held in contempt of court. However, Atty. Blanco again failed to comply. Accordingly, on August 19, 2015, the CA declared him in contempt of court. The CA also ordered Atty. Blanco to comply with its March 7, 2012 Resolution. Still, no compliance from Atty. Blanco.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in a Resolution<sup>6</sup> dated January 28, 2016, the CA ordered his arrest and detention until he fully complies with the March 7, 2012, May 20, 2014, and August 19, 2015 Resolutions.<sup>7</sup>

On June 20, 2016, the Court approved the OBC's recommendation that the case be docketed as a regular administrative case against Atty. Blanco. The Court also ordered Atty. Blanco to comment and show cause why he should not be disciplinarily dealt with for his failure to comply with the lawful orders of the CA.<sup>8</sup>

On August 22, 2016, Atty. Blanco filed his comment,<sup>9</sup> asseverating that he already complied with the CA's January 28, 2016 Resolution. He also prayed that the administrative case be dropped.<sup>10</sup>

In compliance with this Court's Resolutions dated March 12, 2018<sup>11</sup> and June 19, 2019,<sup>12</sup> the CA—Cagayan de Oro City Division Clerk of Court, Atty. Joy Marie Badal-Pamisa, confirmed that the CA, in its Resolution dated June 13, 2016, deemed sufficient Atty. Blanco's compliance with the CA Resolution dated January 28, 2016.<sup>13</sup>

On July 13, 2021, the OBC issued its Report and Recommendation<sup>14</sup> finding Atty. Blanco's behavior a "matter of concern." Atty. Blanco violated Canon 7, Rule 7.03; Canon 10, Rule 10.03; Canon 12, Rule 12.04; and Canon 18, Rule 18.03 of the Code of Professional Responsibility (CPR). Thus:

*IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING*, may we respectfully recommend that a **SUSPENSION** from the practice of law for **THREE (3) MONTHS** be imposed upon Atty. Lel M. Blanco, effective immediately upon receipt of notice. This period should allow her (sic) to reflect on her (sic) offense and serve as a warning that court orders and directives should not be taken lightly. Upon receipt of notice, she (sic) should immediately file a **MANIFESTATION** in Court to inform them of the date of commencement of the suspension. (Emphases and italics in the original)

We resolve.

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<sup>5</sup> Id. at 3.

<sup>6</sup> Id. at 2–4. Penned by Associate Justice Romulo V. Borja, with the concurrence of Associate Justices Oscar V. Badelles and Ronaldo B. Martin, concurring.

<sup>7</sup> Id. at 4.

<sup>8</sup> Id. at 7.

<sup>9</sup> Id. at 8–9.

<sup>10</sup> Id. at 8.

<sup>11</sup> Id. at 27.

<sup>12</sup> Id. at 29.

<sup>13</sup> Id. at 31–32.

<sup>14</sup> Id. at 65–66.

**RULING**

Being a lawyer is a privilege with attached duties and obligations. A lawyer is expected to live by the lawyer's oath, the rules of the profession and the CPR. A lawyer who transgresses any of his duties is administratively liable and subject to the Court's disciplinary authority.<sup>15</sup>

Here, Atty. Blanco ignored three orders of the CA to procure and submit the name of an executor or administrator for the estate of the deceased Calo-oy in the criminal case where he is Suico's counsel. To be sure, the CA cited him in contempt not only once but twice. Atty. Blanco was even arrested for his willful disregard of the CA's orders.

For his obstinate disobedience of orders of the CA, Atty. Blanco violated Rule 10.03, Canon 10 to "observe the rules of procedure and shall not misuse them to defeat the ends of justice" and Canon 11 of the CPR to "observe and maintain the respect due to the courts and to judicial officers." *Sebastian v. Bajar*<sup>16</sup> teaches:

Respondent's cavalier attitude in repeatedly ignoring the orders of the Supreme Court constitutes utter disrespect to the judicial institution. Respondent's conduct indicates a high degree of irresponsibility. **A Court's Resolution is "not to be construed as a mere request, nor should it be complied with partially, inadequately, or selectively." Respondent's obstinate refusal to comply with the Court's orders "not only betrays a recalcitrant flaw in her character; it also underscores her disrespect of the Court's lawful orders which is only too deserving of reproof."**

Lawyers are called upon to obey court orders and processes and respondent's deference is underscored by the fact that willful disregard thereof will subject the lawyer not only to punishment for contempt but to disciplinary sanctions as well. In fact, graver responsibility is imposed upon a lawyer than any other to uphold the integrity of the courts and to show respect to their processes.<sup>17</sup> (Emphasis supplied)

Moreover, in his Comment filed with the Court, Atty. Blanco simply stated that he had already complied with the orders of the CA; hence, the administrative case against him should be dropped. He did not offer any regret or remorse for his behavior. To this Court, Atty. Blanco's conduct is unbecoming of a lawyer. We stress that lawyers are particularly called upon to obey court orders and processes; they are expected to stand foremost in complying with court directives as officers of the court.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, Atty. Blanco's shameless disregard of his duties as a lawyer merits disciplinary action.

**FOR THESE REASONS**, respondent Atty. Lel M. Blanco (respondent) is administratively liable for violating Rule 10.03, Canon 10, and Canon 11 of the

<sup>15</sup> *Enriquez v. Lavadia, Jr.*, 760 Phil. 1, 8-9 (2015).

<sup>16</sup> 559 Phil. 211 (2007).

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 224. See also *Enriquez v. Lavadia, Jr.*, 760 Phil. 1, 11-12 (2015); and *Vasflor-Fabroa v. Paguinto*, 629 Phil. 230, 236-237 (2010).

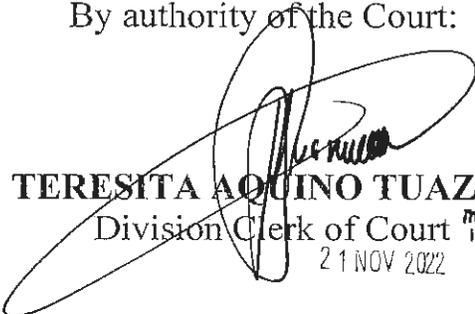
<sup>18</sup> *Robiñol v. Bassig*, 821 Phil. 28, 35 (2017).

Code of Professional Responsibility. Accordingly, he is **SUSPENDED** from the practice of law for a period of three (3) months, effective immediately upon receipt of this Resolution, with a **STERN WARNING** that a repetition of the same or similar act will be dealt with severely. He is **DIRECTED** to immediately file a Manifestation to the Court that his suspension has started, copy furnished to all courts and quasi-judicial bodies where he has entered his appearance as counsel.

Let copies of this Resolution be furnished to the Office of the Bar Confidant to be appended to respondent's personal record as an attorney, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines for its information and guidance, and the Office of the Court Administrator for circulation to all courts in the country.

**SO ORDERED.”**

By authority of the Court:

  
**TERESITA AQUINO TUAZON**  
Division Clerk of Court <sup>mm</sup>  
21 NOV 2022 <sup>11/21</sup>

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\*For circularization to all courts  
*Please notify the Court of any change in your address.*  
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