

[ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 46, November 25, 2002]

**IMPOSING THE PENALTY OF DISMISSAL FROM THE SERVICE OF
JOSE B. DAGUMAN, ASSISTANT CITY PROSECUTOR,
PROSECUTION OFFICE, CITY OF MANILA**

This refers to the administrative complaint filed by then Department of Justice (DOJ) Secretary Serafin R. Cuevas against respondent Jose B. Daguman, Assistant City Prosecutor, Prosecution Office of the City of Manila, for grave misconduct, dishonesty, conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service and conduct unbecoming a public officer.

The facts of the case, as found by the DOJ in its letter of October 1, 2001, are as follows:

"On April 30, 1999, complainant Estrella R. Garama went to the office of the respondent to inquire and seek assistance on behalf of her husband Russ L. Garama who was presented for inquest before him on April 29, 1999. Belen Perez and Pompia Ramos accompanied her inside the office. Respondent informed the complainant that the bail recommended for her husband's provisional release is P100,000.00. Informing him that she did not have that amount, respondent talked to Pompia Ramos, a province mate, who in turn informed the complainant that the respondent was asking for P6,000.00. Respondent told the complainant that the amount was for the police officers. Thereafter, he will prepare the release papers. Since the complainant did not have that amount, respondent asked her to give at least half the amount. Complainant was able to borrow from Belen Perez the amount of P3,000.00 consisting of small denominations, which she gave to the respondent. Pompia Ramos witnessed the respondent receive the amount. Thereafter, he instructed the complainant to find the means to produce the balance of in order that her husband will be released on Monday, May 3, 1999.

On May 1, 1999, complainant was informed by her neighbor Saldo dela Torre that the respondent was looking for her at her house. Not being able to talk to the complainant, respondent gave her a call in the evening inquiring if she already had the money to which she replied in the negative. The following day, respondent returned to her [complainant's] house located at Nepomuceno St., Quiapo, Manila, to inquire about the balance. Complainant was able to see the respondent at his house on May 4, 1999, when she asked to be furnished with copies of the inquest documents considering that Franco Galo, her uncle who was going to lend the money was asking for it. Complainant met her uncle on May 5, 1999. Upon asking the documents, her uncle said that her husband is under detention and he needs to submit his answer to the complaint against him. They went to Malacanang to see a certain Jude P. Fajardo. The latter

prepared a letter addressed to Atty. Samuel Ong of the National Bureau of Investigation. Complainant was able to talk to Atty. Ong who in turn referred her to NBI agent Antonio Suarez. She relayed to him that respondent demanded from her the amount of P6,000.00 but was only able to give half the amount, and that she was still demanding for the balance. Upon the instruction of agent Suarez, complainant made a call to the respondent at around noon informing him that she only had P2,000.00. Inquiring whether her husband could be released, respondent directed her to proceed to his office where they can discuss the matter. Later in the afternoon, agent Suarez produced the P2,000.00 placed in an envelope. NBI agent Julma Dizon-Dapilos, who is to be complainant's companion posing as her aunt, instructed her to hand over the money to the respondent only when he makes the demand. Around 4:00 P.M., complainant arrived at the respondent's office. She introduced agent Dizon-Dapilos to the respondent, who immediately inquired about the money. Responding that she was only able to produce P2,000.00, respondent instructed her to place the money inside the drawer. As directed, complainant removed the money from the envelope, folded it and placed it inside the table drawer which was opened by the respondent. Agent Dizon-Dapilos inquired if the complainant's husband could be released. The latter answered that it was already late in the afternoon and that they should return at around noon the following day. She again inquired if it was possible to release complainant's husband in the morning. The respondent replied in the negative since he was busy but he will try his best. At that instance, complainant stepped out of the room and apprised agent Suarez about what transpired inside the room. In the meantime, agent Dizon-Dapilos announced to the respondent that he is being placed under arrest. He was read his constitutional rights. While complainant was waiting inside an NBI vehicle, she saw the respondent being escorted by the NBI agents. They all proceeded to the NBI office.

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The defense raised by respondent Daguman consists mainly of denials and explanations concerning the commission of the offense. Respondent, in seeking his exoneration, avers that the reason, why the present case was filed against him is because of the fact that complainant was embarrassed and humiliated when he shouted at her inside his office on April 30, 1999 that her husband is a snatcher. He explains that the reason why the inquest records remained in his office is because his secretary failed to turn them over to the docket section on May 3, 1999, in view of the latter's absence.

In support of his defense, respondent submitted the following pieces of documents: Exhibit T, a sketch showing the interior of respondent's room at the City Prosecution Office of Manila; Exhibit '2', sworn statement of Roger Roxas dated June 21, 1999; Exhibit '3', sworn statement of Asst. City Prosecutor Exequiel Y. Sison, Jr., dated June 18, 1999; and Exhibit '4', sworn statement of respondent dated June 21, 1999.

Formal charges of grave misconduct, dishonesty, conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service and conduct unbecoming of a public