

FIRST DIVISION

**[A.M. NO. P-06-2174 (OCA-IPI NO. 03-178-P),
July 25, 2006]**

**JERLYN S. LANUZA, COMPLAINANT, VS. JANET M. CEPE, COURT
STENOGRAPHER III, REGIONAL TRIAL COURT, BRANCH 38,
ALABEL, SARANGANI, RESPONDENT.**

R E S O L U T I O N

YNARES-SANTIAGO, J.:

In a sworn letter-complaint dated September 22, 2003,^[1] complainant Jerlyn S. Lanuza charges respondent Janet M. Cepe, Court Stenographer III, Regional Trial Court of Alabel, Sarangani, Branch 38 with misconduct, partiality, and violation of professional responsibility.

Complainant alleges that she assisted her 15-year old niece, Honeylyn S. Jayme, in filing rape charges against the latter's father, Roberto Jayme. While said criminal case was being investigated by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), complainant claims that Honeylyn and her other sibling were staying with her and her mother, Josefina A. Samijon. This led to threats of filing kidnapping charges from Roberto Jayme and respondent.

On September 6, 2002, Roberto, together with respondent and their other companions, went to the house of her mother and demanded for the custody of his children. The group went back the next day and had a confrontation with complainant and her brother, Edilberto "Toto" Samijon, Jr., before Barangay Captain Umbra Pantolima.^[2] Complainant claims that heated discussions ensued which were interrupted by respondent from time to time and was thus reminded that the meeting concerns family matters.

Thereafter, respondent filed cases for Slander^[3] and Grave Threats^[4] against the complainant and her brother. Complainant alleges that said cases were filed to influence Honeylyn to withdraw the rape charges against her father. Complainant thus accuses respondent of meddling in family matters and frustrating the administration of justice by showing partiality to a party in a case filed before a trial court.

In her Comment,^[5] respondent denies the accusations against her and avers that the present case is merely a ploy to get even with her due to the criminal charges she filed against complainant and her brother. Respondent explains that she merely accompanied her friends, spouses Roberto and Jocelyn Jayme, in taking custody of their children when complainant suddenly and without provocation shouted for her to leave. Complainant continued hurling insults and even stated that she is not afraid of any case she may file against her. Meanwhile, respondent saw the brother of complainant draw a gun and threatened her with it. Respondent avers that these