SECOND DIVISION

[G.R. No. 143156, January 13, 2003]

TEDDY MOLINA, JULIET PASCUAL, ISAGANI YAMBOT, AND LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC, PETITIONERS, VS. HON. COURT OF APPEALS AND RAYMUNDO A. ARMOVIT, RESPONDENTS.

RESOLUTION

QUISUMBING, J.:

This petition for review seeks the reversal of the resolutions dated September 30, 1999[1] and May 2, 2000[2] of the Court of Appeals in CA-G.R. SP No. 54397. Both resolutions dismissed herein petitioners' special civil action for certiorari due to their failure to: (a) include certified true copies of the orders dated July 9, 1997 and June 29, 1999 of the Regional Trial Court of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Branch 21, and other pleadings referred to in the petition; and (b) implead the RTC judge as a nominal party.

The facts, as culled from the parties' pleadings, are as follows:

On May 2, 1996, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* published a news item, which reads in part:

> **PACC coddled GO,**
> **2 NBI execs claim**
> By Teddy Molina
> and Juliet Pascual
> PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

> **x x x**

> **NBI agents reportedly raided a vacation house in San Fernando, La Union, owned by Raymundo Armovit, Go's lawyer, in September. They missed Go, who left the house hours before the agents came.**

> The source said Go was also in Vigan in November, during which he attended the wedding anniversary of a movie couple.…[3]

On May 3, 1996, the same newspaper reported that:

> **NBI exec says Go**
> **tipped off by PACC**
> By Teddy Molina
> and Juliet Pascual
> PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

> **AN OFFICIAL of the National Bureau of Investigation in Northern Luzon accused the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission of leaking out to Rolito Go a planned raid by NBI agents on a vacation house in San Fernando, La Union, where the convicted killer was hiding at the time.**
>
> **The raiders belonging to the NBI Special Operations Group missed Go but found some of his personal belongings near the house's swimming pool, the source, who asked not to be identified said.**
>
> **This happened in September at the vacation home of Go's lawyer, Raymundo Armovit, or eight months before the PACC arrested him on Tuesday in Lubao, Pampanga.**
>
> "After the La Union raid, it was hard to track Go because he was moving as if he was receiving advice," the source further claimed.…[4]

As a consequence, private respondent Raymundo Armovit filed a complaint for libel against petitioners, alleging that they caused to be published reports that maliciously accused him of harboring and/or concealing a convicted murderer.

In a resolution dated October 31, 1996, the Provincial Prosecutor of Ilocos Sur found probable cause and recommended the filing of an Information for libel against petitioners.[5] Accordingly, on November 28, 1996, two Informations for libel were filed with the RTC of Vigan, Ilocos Sur.[6]

On December 12, 1996, petitioners sought a review of the resolution dated October 31, 1996 by the Office of the Regional State Prosecutor. The latter reversed the findings of the Provincial Prosecutor and directed the latter to withdraw the Informations filed.

However, the RTC of Vigan, Ilocos Sur denied the motion to withdraw the indictments on the ground that there was probable cause for the filing of the Informations. Petitioners moved to reconsider the denial, but this motion was similarly denied.

Petitioners then elevated the case to the Court of Appeals via a special civil action for certiorari, docketed as CA-G.R. SP No. 54397.

On September 30, 1999, the appellate court resolved the case as follows:

> WHEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, the petition is hereby DISMISSED.
>
> SO ORDERED.[7]

The Court of Appeals found that the copies of the assailed orders of the trial court were purportedly certified, but there was no showing whatsoever of the authority of the person who certified the same. Moreover, the seal of the trial court could not be identified on the copies of said orders. Furthermore, the petition was not accompanied by all the pleadings and documents pertinent thereto.