

Written by

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CHICAGO (*FAXX/jGLI*) – The .45 caliber pistol was invented by Mr. John Browning to stop cold a raging *juramentado*, a Muslim armed with a *kris*, a jagged sword, on a suicide mission for martyrdom to kill Spanish and American invaders in Mindanao at the turn of the 19th century. These *juramentados* were the precursors of the suicide bombers in some Muslim extremist countries scaring the hell out of their visiting military forces.

But I never had any inkling that my once *pilyo* (mischievous but lovable) younger cousin, who had grown to become a policeman in my mother's native town of Matnog in Sorsogon in the Philippines, would be felled by bullets from a .45 caliber pistol (<http://tinyurl.com/ppp6bso>). He was treacherously shot from behind his head allegedly by "suspected communist rebels." My cousin was neither a Muslim nor a *juramentado*! And he did not deserve to die from such cowardly act.

I don't know if his murder was personal vendettas by his unseen enemies, whom he owed huge personal debts. But his enemies should have been men enough to face him or should have brought instead a case against him before the court of law if they wanted to settle a score. And not to resort to salvaging him!

If reports were true that Virgilio "Bilyong" Miguel Garra had drawn the ire of the rebels, I don't know how he earned such wrath.

From what I know, the rebels only go after the big fish in the community, who oppresses the community. They usually go after ranking military officers, chiefs of police or mayors, who violate the people's human rights. But not Bilyong. For the simple reason that he had lost any power and influence in the municipality after he retired from the police force that would enable him to commit human rights violations.

BILYONG DID NOT WORK IN LUCRATIVE PH BUREAUCRACIES

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Bilyong did not make any money from the police force that should give rebels reason to “levy tax” from him. Unlike some of his rich neighbors, who made it big after brief stints with the Bureau of Customs and other Philippine government bureaucracies. Nor was he on the take in the lucrative Matnog ferryboat station franchise, a favorite milking cow by incumbent Matnog mayors.

Bilyong ran as a municipal councilor of Matnog in the last local elections. As expected he lost because he had nothing to offer but public community service, like his late father, Jose “Papa Tote” Garra, who was Matnog’s long-time Municipal Secretary. Bilyong had no money to buy votes either. So, how would he make the rebels’ blood boil when he did not even have a clout?

If his enemies were politicians, why would politicians still go after someone who is already down?

I do not know who shot and injured him when he was still in the police force when I last saw him in 1998. Perhaps, police homicide investigators probing his murder should revisit his old case that reached the court.

From initial reports from my sources in Matnog, Bilyong was shot from behind his head in front of his house, which is near a Highway Patrol Group.

If this were so, why would the rebels still take special interest on a penniless election loser?

If Bilyong were shot near the Highway Patrol Group, why would the shooter/s be too brazen enough to fire shots within the hearing and visual distance of the Highway Patrol Group? Were the shooter/s in cahoots with the Highway Patrol Group? If not, did the Highway Patrol Group pursue the shooter after the shooting? If not, why not?

A lot of times after rebels conduct an operation, they usually claim responsibility right after the fact that, in effect, clears the military. I have yet to hear any claim of responsibility from the rebels for the slaying of Bilyong and their reasons for salvaging him!

If the military reports were true that Bilyong was felled by a bullet from a .45 caliber pistol, was the gun used a “colorum” or a “paltik”? If it is, then, the chance of identification of the gunman is next to impossible.

GUN’S FINGERPRINT OR DNA

If not, then, this government-issued firearm can be matched to the serial number of the gun, which is only issued to a military officer.

In the U.S., and I hope in the Philippines, too, all registered firearms are “test fired” twice. One shell is sent to the owner of the firearm and the other shell with the expended bullets is sent to the FBI.

If the gun is used in a crime, the bullet recovered from the crime scene can be matched to the

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bullet and the gun formation that the gun manufacturer sent to the FBI, that is, if the recovered bullet is not completely messed up.

A Filipino American friend, who is also a gun owner, told me, when manufactured, gun's "rifling impressions" (the inside of the barrel where bullets pass through) are different from another gun of the same make. Although, built by the same factory, using the same machine and material, the gun's "firing pin and shell ejector mechanism" are also unique from another gun, and are the equivalent of the gun's fingerprint or DNA.

If only the shell casing is recovered near the crime scene, gun matching is still possible as the gun leaves very distinct marks on it. The ballistic investigation will focus on the firing pin and shell ejector mechanism.

But if the slug was recovered from the body, then, the investigator can compare it with the rifling impression from the gun's barrel.

I hope the Philippine government has an airtight inventory of firearms in its database that should make it easy for homicide investigators to trace the owners of firearms used by hired killers.

As I told my relatives, if they happen to have a gun, like Bilyong, who was in the police service, they have to be doubly careful in leading their way of life as their enemies would not be confronting them face to face but would attack them from behind to even things up. And they should always pray.

Goodbye, Bilyong! May you rest in peace! # # #

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