

After Blood Stains

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Introduction

Bali is not only an Island of the Gods, but home of the Gods and Goddesses of Justice taking into account the murder of Radar Bali journalist, Prabangsa. It is the island with eager law enforcers working relentlessly for the sake of law and justice.

THAT day, the verdict passed by the panel of judges became the karma. Nyoman Susrama, the main actor behind the killing of Anak Agung Narendra Prabangsa, had to deal with it.

“A life sentence [is granted],” said Chief Judge, Djumain, during a trial on 15 February 2010. Susrama was charged with article 340 of Penal Code in conjunction with 55 section 1. The verdict was lower than the death sentence demand brought forth by prosecutors. In addition to Nyoman Susrama, the District Court of Denpasar gave other eight defendants sentences between eight months and 20 years in prison.

The family of Prabangsa, press community, and the residents of Bali appreciated the verdict. Although Prabangsa will not come to life anymore, justice at least has been served.

The murder case of Prabangsa that took place in February 2009 has drawn the attention of the Balinese. The public and different communities monitored the case. This was the first

time that police, prosecutors, and judges, worked on a case of journalist murder based on strong legal principles and sense of public justice. The general public are oftentimes cynical over law enforcement officers. However, in the case of Prabangsa, people thanked Bali Police Department, attorneys, and panel of judges of the District Court of Denpasar.



PRABANGSA started his career as a reporter in Radar Bali since 2003 until he caught his last breath on 11 February 2009. Prior to being found dead, Prabangsa was reported missing by his family. Several days later, Prabangsa's motorbike was spotted unattended in his hometown of Taman Bali, Bangli Regency. The investigation report shows that Prabangsa happened to return home a moment before finally disappeared.

The news of Prabangsa's death spread throughout the island as the officers of Karangasem Police evacuated the journalist's dead body from Padang Bai waters and discovered a journalist ID of Radar Bali and Driver's License belonging to Prabangsa. When lifted up off the waters, the body was ruined. Police concluded that Prabangsa was killed. However, preliminary decision stated that the motive was not any of his published articles.

Nonetheless, the victim's co-workers did not fully accept the reason saying that Prabangsa had at times been threatened by unknown people. Police are also encouraged to seek connection of the motive behind Prabangsa's murder with the stories he wrote earlier. One of the stories was about alleged corruption in the development of education facilities by Bangli Education Agency worth Rp4 billion.

The strong supports from the press community, Balinese

traditional communities, politicians, political parties, and Facebook fanpage, the Prabangsa case was revealed in phases. In May 2009, three months after the dead body was found, police named six suspects of the killing: Komang Gede, Nyoman Rencana, I Komang Gede Wardana, Dewa Sumbawa, Endy, and the mastermind behind the case, Nyoman Susrama, brother of Bangli Regent.

Police finally announced the evidence such as the victim's pants, two vehicles used to transport the victims, car carpet, and whatnots. The most important element of all was the confession of some of the defendants that Prabangsa was murdered in Susrama's house of Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli, on 11 February 2009, at around between 4.30 - 10.30 pm local time.

Police found that Prabangsa was persuaded to come to the house and was executed there by being beaten with wood beams. Dying, Prabangsa's body was then thrown out to the sea. The dead body was spotted by some farmers days later floating on Padang Bai waters, Karangasem.



IN the past 15 years, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) recorded that dozens of Indonesian journalists have been murdered. Eight of them were allegedly killed due to their profession as journalists. One case has been revealed (Prabangsa's), while seven others remain in the vague. Several unsolved cases include the killing of Fuad M Syarifuddin (Udin), journalist of *Harian Bernas Yogya* (1996); the murder of Herliyanto, freelance journalist of *Radar Surabaya* daily (2006); the death of Ardiansyah Matrais, journalist of *Jubi Tabloid* and *Merauke TV* (2010); and the killing of Alfrete Mirulewan, journalist of weekly *Pelangi* in *Kisar Island*,

Southwest Moluccas (2010).

In a year, legal enforcers in Bali Province has solved an important murder case. Amidst piles of unsolved murdered journalist cases, the Prabangsa case is an achievement.

The Alliance of Independent Journalists wants to share the experiences gained by the press and civil communities in revealing the Prabangsa case. We hereby thank the South East Asia Press Alliance (SEAPA) in Bangkok for the support in preparing and publishing the book. We also thank our colleagues in AJI Denpasar, Radar Bali, Nusa Bali, traditional Balinese communities, writers, editors, and all parties involved in the book “After Blood Stains.”

We are hoping that the book is worth the reading.

Eko Maryadi

President of AJI.

CHAPTER I

Dead Body on Bungsil Bay

WHEN Anak Agung Gde Bagus Narendra Prabangsa breathed his last breath in February 2009, he had been a journalist for 14 odd years. The 41-year-old man graduated from the Department of History at Universitas Udayana, Denpasar, Bali. He started his career as journalist in 1995 by working as a reporter for *Harian Nusa* newspaper (then *Harian Nusa Bali*).

Prabangsa left *Harian Nusa* after four years. In 1999, he joined a local tabloid in Bali, *Manggala*. He mainly wrote articles on spiritualism. He worked there for a year before he had another job hop to *Harian Radar Bali* daily.

Radar Bali was only found when he moved. Since the beginning, the subsidiary of Indonesia's news corp, *Jawa Pos*, aimed at seeking new market share in Bali. During the first years of his time in *Radar Bali*, Prabangsa was assigned a reporter who covered issues on local administration and Provincial House of Representatives (DPRD).

Prabangsa was a polite man. He had various circle of friends. Countless nicknames were attributed to him. Reporters called him *Gungde*, *Agung*, or *Asa*. The last one had been his initials in publishing news.

Prabangsa married Anak Agung Sagung Istri Mas Prihantini on 8 January 1995 and had two children. The first child was a daughter named Anak Agung Istri Sri Hartati Dewandari, 14; while the second one was a boy named Anak Agung Gde Candra Dwipa, 12. The small family lived on Jalan Nusa Kambangan, Sanglah, Denpasar, Bali.

The man who was born in Bangli, 20 November 1968, was a zealous journalist. He kept records of his works in archives and data. Piles of documents and research papers were on his desk despite the fact that all stories connected with the said data had been circulated. “I will need any of those someday,” he said. Prabangsa also knew how to cover issues that other journalists were not aware of.

Nine years working for Radar Bali, he was appointed as one of the editors which focused more on local stories. He was responsible of managing sections on local issues in Bali – Dwipa 1 and Dwipa 2 pages. In addition to editing stories, Prabangsa was also in charge of arranging news coverage and reporters for the pages.

At times, he still wrote stories on his own. In fact, Radar Bali did not have reporters covering Bangli, Prabangsa’s hometown. “Therefore, he frequently wrote stories on Bangli issues,” said Justin Maurits Herman, Radar Bali CEO. “He felt that he had this moral obligation to cover important stories in the area.”

No one ever expected that such stories would then lead Prabangsa to his death.



MORNING of 11 February 2009, Prabangsa left home for office without saying good bye to his wife. The distance between the residence in Sanglah and Radar Bali office on Jalan

Cokroaminoto Gang Katalia No.26, Ubung, was quite short. Prihantini, the wife, could not recall if there was anything wrong that day. The woman could only hear Prabangsa's motorbike roared outside, leaving the house. She did not know that it was the last time she saw her husband alive.

As Prabangsa arrived at the office, he did his daily routines in the newsroom. He assigned reporters to certain areas, following up regular stories for the following day's edition. Around lunch time, out of his ordinary schedule, Prabangsa made a phone call to Rai Warsa, one of the managing editors. That day, Rai had a day off.

"He contacted me and asked me for an exchange in day off," said Rai. When the request was made, lunch time was nearing. Rai had already made another plan that day. He declined Prabangsa's request. "When I said no to his request, he only replied with a simple "OK". Just like that. And, he hang up the phone," said Rai.

Minutes after, Justin Herman called Prabangsa. "I asked him about any progress on the Honda Deteksi Basketball League (DBL) that our newspaper sponsored," he said. In the basketball tournament for High School students, Prabangsa was the committee's secretary.

One day earlier, the committee disqualified a participant, SMA Negeri of Denpasar. "I contacted Prabangsa to find out about the response of SMA 2 following the decision," said Justin. They had a discussion for a while before Justin had to cut the talks. Justin was surprised upon realizing that that was the last conversation with Prabangsa.

At around 2 PM, Putu Suyatra, another reporter for Radar Bali, contacted Prabangsa. Suyatra was Chief of DBL Committee in Bali. He wanted to ask Prabangsa about trivial issue: the bolts of meeting desk at Radar Bali office were gone.

“Did you know who had arranged desks in the meeting room?” Suyatra said.

“I did,” Prabangsa replied.

“Did you know where the bolts are?” Suyatra said.

At a sudden, the conversation ended prior to Prabangsa’s answering Suyatra’s question. Suyatra tried to make another call to Prabangsa but failed. Despite the dial tone, Prabangsa did not answer the phone. Suyatra was the last man from Radar Bali who talked with the living Prabangsa.



THAT noon, Prabangsa rode his motorcycle to Bangli. Both his parents and most of his big families live in Taman Bali, Bangli, around 60 kilometers off Denpasar.

Based on the testimonies made by several members of his families, Prabangsa got in his house at 1 PM. He happened to attend a custom ritual. “There was the nelubulanin (local ceremony for three-month old chaptery) of one of the families,” said a family member.

When the ritual was still on, Prabangsa received a phone call at around 3 PM. He had long indistinct conversation with the caller. No one had remembered how Prabangsa sounded or looked during the call.

It was evident that after the conversation ended, Prabangsa hit the road in no time. Prabangsa left his motorbike at his parents’ house and went away. “He said he wanted to meet someone,” said one of his relatives. Prabangsa went on foot hurriedly. His shadow slurred over the alley, squeezed by the homes of Taman Bali residents. That was the last time that the family spotted the man alive.



AT about the same time in Radar Bali newsroom, the editors were busy preparing stories for the following day. Clattering keyboards were anywhere inside the room. Sounds of incoming calls as well as voices of instructions from the editors to the reporters alternated simultaneously.

Amidst the hectic situation, Prabangsa was absent.

At 8 PM, an editor tried to call him. However, Prabangsa did not answer the call.

Regular deadline was nearing. Two pages of Dwipa section in which Prabangsa being held responsible had to be completed. An editor felt the urge to contact Rai Warsa, who was responsible for the pages. He actually had a day off. But the newspaper must be printed. Rai headed toward the office to replace Prabangsa.

That night, no premonition was produced on Prabangsa's absence.



PRIHARTINI phoned Radar Bali the next day on 12 February 2009 telling the staffers that Prabangsa did not return home. Justin Herman and other colleagues of Prabangsa sensed that something bad was happening.

No one knew where Prabangsa had gone. In normal days, Prabangsa would leave a message to a friend had he been covering stories or meeting sources for interviews. This time, it was different. Anxiety ruled the newsroom. They then decided to call the police.

Two days without any news of Prabangsa's whereabouts led

Radar Bali to circulate an announcement on Prabangsa's missing. It was expected that readers would supply them with any valuable information of their colleague.

The announcement read: "Anak Agung Prabangsa left home on Wednesday, 11 February 2009. He wore white shirt and jeans as he left home on Jalan Nusa Kambangan, Denpasar, riding a GL Pro motorbike. In the afternoon, the short-haired Prabangsa dropped by his mother's house in Taman Bali, Bangli at 3 PM. He left his motorcycle there. The family said he received a phone call from someone and soon got away as the conversation ended. Prabangsa had never been anywhere near home ever since. For those who see him, a phone call to the family at 08123817233 or (0361) 417153 is most appreciated. Thank you."

Two days later on 16 February 2009, Prabangsa's body was found floating on Bungsil Bay, Karangasem.



MUHARI, 45, a skipper at Perdana Nusantara, highly contributed to the finding of Prabangsa's dead body. The boat was on its course through the calm waters of Bungsil Bay from Lembar Port in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, to Padang Bali harbor, Bali, when his eyes were nailed to a floating object offshore. It caught his interest instantly. "It's a dead body," he thought.

Noting the coordinates of the spot, Muhari steered the ship toward the shore. In Padang Bai, he reported the finding to the chief of the port, Made Sudiarta, who had the authority to deploy air and water patrols. Made sent three speedboats to the said coordinates: one boat contained port officers, one ANS 024 boat belonging to Padangbai Harbor Administration, and one boat carried air and water police officers as well as Bali Amateur Emergency Service.

At the scene, the team dispersed in efforts to search the body. Less than 30 minutes, Prabangsa's body was on sight. The coordinates were 08.32.882 south latitude and 115.30.672 east longitude. It was still on Bungsil Bay¹.

The team then evacuated the body to Amlapura Hospital, Karangasem, to be examined by the department of coroner. In the left pocket of his pants, there was a black wallet containing ID card, driver's license, vehicle registration certificates of his motorbike, ATM card. They were all of Prabangsa's ownership.

That day in Amlapura Hospital, dr Gusti Putra was on his work schedule at the coroner department. He did the examination on Prabangsa. Gusti carefully checked up the body and made notes on irregularities. Here and there, the body showed signs of torture. Bruises were everywhere on the body. His forehead was smashed. It appeared that rope marks were visible on the neck. Prabangsa's body was eventually transferred to Sanglah Hospital in Denpasar for further check.

The news of Prabangsa's death spread like virus. As all media gathered before the hospital's entrance, Prihantini, the families and Prabangsa's colleagues in Radar Bali had made their way to the morgue.

Everyone was shocked upon hearing the new. Members of Bali House of Representatives, state officials, advocates, and NGO rushed for Sanglah Hospital.

The morgue was guarded by dozens of cops that day. Tension crept up to the minds of the people waiting for Prabangsa's body. Sadness and disquiet filled the room. Questions surged among the crowd: who killed Prabangsa? ●

1 Radar Bali, "Kami Berduka," 17 February 2011.

CHAPTER II

Hints from Prabangsa

IT drizzled in Denpasar on 16 February 2009 in the afternoon. At 4.45, local time, an ambulance with sirens rushed to Sanglah Hospital, carrying Prabangsa's dead body, which had been wrapped in a bright yellow cadaver pouch.

Several hours earlier, the morgue in Sanglah Hospital had been packed with people. Journalists could be seen anywhere, forming small different circles. Detectives questioned anyone thought to have been Prabangsa's acquaintances. Seemingly, early investigation was underway. Police have yet to announce whether or not Prabangsa was victim of murder. Everyone's head constructed stories on why the Radar Bali journalist was killed. Facts intertwined with gossip.

As the ambulance was through the hospital's main entrance, the crowd started to organize themselves. A moment later, the ambulance stopped before the morgue department. Two officers stepped out of the car. Videographers and photographers came close to the ambulance, trying to get the best angles possible. The rear window of the ambulance was opened. Flashlights fired at the cadaver pouch. The smell of a decomposed body filled the air.



ONLY Prabangsa's family was allowed to enter the autopsy room. Head of Forensic Medicine Department of Sanglah Hospital, Dr. Ida Bagus Putu Alit DFM SpF and Head of Forensic Service Dr. Dudut Rustyadi SpF led the examination process.

The autopsy took 90 minutes. More detailed results were found compared to earlier examination conducted at Amlapura Hospital. The doctors concluded that Prabangsa died of serious abuse. He was still alive when his wounded body was thrown out to the sea. The doctors found bruises in his face, which resulted from strong blows. Serious wounds were also found in his head. Prabangsa's right wrist was found fractured.

Prabangsa's wife, Prihantini, was escorted to the room as the autopsy was completed. She looked pale.

"Is this my husband?" she asked a police officer standing next to Prabangsa's body. The face of her beloved spouse was indeed impossible to be identified.

"Yes, it's him," said the officer. He then explained how he picked Prabangsa's wallet kept in his pants' back pocket. He also told Prihantini what were inside the wallet.

Prihantini stood stupefied. "I see," she replied. Words struggled to come out of her mouth. "I believe it's him." Turning her body, she left the room.

That very night, Prabangsa's body was returned home to his hometown in Taman Bali, Bangli.

The next day on 17 February 2009, Radar Bali daily appeared to public with huge headline, "We Are in Grief". The death of Prabangsa was covered in-depth, including reports on how the body was found and the autiopsy was carried out.

A number of colleagues and close friends of Prabangsa wrote their impressions on the late journalist.

In the epilogue, Radar Bali attached a short prayer in Sanskrit, “Om Suargantu, Murcantu, Suniantu, Ya Namah Swadah.” It literally says, “May he be at peace in heaven. May he gain moksha, in the State of Final Release, in God’s Realm.”



No one ever imagined that Prabangsa would depart that fast. The family, colleagues, and close friends were in deep loss. However, as police started the investigation, and a number of people were quizzed, the truth was slowly revealed that Prabangsa would head to his final destiny.

The first hint emerged two weeks prior to Prabangsa’s disappearance. He was suddenly withdrawn, contrary to his talkative and jolly nature. A colleague in Radar Bali said how he turned into a different man as the Committee of Honda Deteksi Basketball League (DBL) surveyed Merpati Sports Hall, the intended venue for the competition. “He did not talk much. It was totally not him,” said the colleague.

Prabangsa seemed to bring the new character to the office. He used to joke much and responded over jokes made by his fellow workers in Radar Bali. Whatever the situation he was in earlier, he was always merry.

A Radar Bali editor said he had the habit to poke Prabangsa in the waist during the deadline night. It often happened that Prabangsa would reply, “No problem!” as he wore the pleasant face. Two days before he was missing, the editor, as usual, did the usual gesture. Oddly enough, Prabangsa did not provide any response, not even looking toward him. He seemed to be contemplating.

Another colleague had another story. Two to three weeks before Prabangsa disappeared, he acknowledged if he felt terrified upon seeing any open window. “Few days before he was missing, he said he was always worried of open windows,” said Soepojo, a pre-press worker in Radar Bali. “He said he feared somebody would shoot him,” he said².

Prabangsa’s wife, Prihantini, also had the similar story. Prior to Prabangsa’s death, the late husband talked about death several times. Once, she was given an unusual question: “If I die, would you re-marry?” Prihantini was surprised. She did not provide any answer.

Another time, Prihantini was curious. She tried to find out what his husband was thinking. However, Prabangsa remained quiet. He said, “I think I would die sooner than you.”

Prabangsa urged his wife of Universitas Udayana graduate to work as a journalist as he did. He reasoned that the family’s condition would be better should both couple work. Nonetheless, Prihantini did not say anything on the issue. She only realized lately that it was the signal made by Prabangsa prior to his death. ●

2 Radar Bali, idem.

CHAPTER III

At Wits End

TWO days after Prabangsa's body was located, police confirmed that the journalist was murdered. The investigation thus began. In efforts to trace the killer, police must in the first place find out the motive behind the killing. Police sought links between Prabangsa's death and the stories that he wrote. In addition, police also sought the chance to connect Prabangsa's death with other issue, which has nothing to do with his journalistic affairs.

With regard to the scene where the body was found, it was Karangasem Police that should deal with Prabangsa's death. Since the family once filed a report of Prabangsa's disappearance to Denpasar Police, then both sectors collaborated in probing into the case.

Less than a week after police announced the cause of Prabangsa's death, Bali Police Chief, Ins. Gen. Teuku Ashikin Husein, assigned a special team of Bali Criminal Investigation Department to handle the case. This means that the investigation was directly under Provincial police. The special team was helmed by Chief of Satuan I of Bali Police Criminal Investigation Department, Adj. Chief. Comm. Akhmad Nur Wahid.

Within the short while, police started to gather early data.

Witnesses quizzes as well as Prabangsa's latest phone records showed that the journalist was told to come to a "spot" in purpose³ before being killed. Police also assured that when Prabangsa's body was discovered, it had shifted very far away from the first point where he was dumped. The decision was a result of a calculation of wind direction and speed from Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency within the period of Prabangsa's disappearance. The data helped police track the initial spot of Prabangsa's riddance⁴.

The hardest part in the early investigation was to determine the motives of the murder. All evidence being discovered were only those found in Prabangsa's body. Unfortunately, the wallet did not give any lead. A ticket with blurred letters was earlier considered as an important evidence as it was alleged as a ferry ticket. However, investigation showed that it was a parking ticket of Prabangsa's motorbike.

Akhmad Nur Wahid instructed the team to find any evidence on the throwing spot. Police boat circled around until a kilometer of radius to find important evidence. However, the effort proved useless.

The information from Prabangsa's colleagues helped police shift their focus of investigation. According to several Prabangsa's friends, the journalist was once incorporated in a love affair with a member of Bali House of Representatives (DPRD).

Bali Police Chief, Ins. Gen. Ashikin Hussein seemed to confirm on the issue. "The victim is not covering case. He is an editor," said Ashikin when asked if the killing was concerned with the articles that Prabangsa wrote.

3 Bali Express, "Pembunuhan Prabangsa Sudah Direncanakan", 21 February 2011.

4 Based on the information from AJI Advocacy Team, record of phone conversation that the police had during the first phase of the case was only list of dialed numbers or received calls. (see an article in Vivanews entitled "Mengapa Polisi Susah Mencari Pembunuhnya", 1 April 2009.

“We are linking the case to other problems. Now, it’s getting focused,” said Ashikin. The statement was taken as an emphasis over police’s confidence on the main cause of the murder.

However, the said evidence was weak. Police said a number of witnesses seen as being related to the case had been questioned. No single clue appeared.

Police concentrated on Prabangsa’s last day in Bangli. The data from Prabangsa’s cellular operator confirmed that he was last seen in Bangli. Investigators also detected a clue that Prabangsa had made a promise with someone in Bangli prior to being missing.

Based on the clue, police sent the special team to Bangli. They found two blood stains suspected as Prabangsa’s. However, the finding was then refused as it was not Prabangsa’s blood.

A month after Prabangsa’s body was found, the investigators had questioned dozens of witnesses. It was nearly March 2009. Police said Prabangsa’s killing was not concerned with the love affair. Police seemed to have lost their minds.

During the critical phase, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) of Denpasar started to play its role. In a press release, Chief of Aji Denpasar, Bambang Wiyono, urged police to settle investigation on Prabangsa. “Police have to workd hard and fast. The murder may have to do personal matters,” he said. ●

CHAPTER IV

AJI Advocacy Team

NEARING the end of February 2009, the first weeks after Prabangsa's body was spotted on Bungsil Bay, Karangasem, a number of journalists in Denpasar grew anxious. They wanted to gain support in efforts to expedite the investigation, seek evidence, and find more witnesses. Everyone however decided to wait and see.

Finally on 21 February 2009, Chief of AJI Denpasar, Bambang Wiyono, and a senior photographer – also member of AJI Denpasar – Joko Sugianto, discussed the matter in a small meeting at an food stall Warung Soto Surabaya on Jalan Hayam Wuruk, Denpasar. They believed the case had to be solved as that was the first killing of a journalist in Bali in the post-reform era.

Bambang and Joko then invited Rofiqi Hassan, Coordinator of AJI Denpasar Advocacy Division, to the discussion. The three of them agreed to set up a Advocacy Team for Prabangsa case. Rofiqi was appointed the team coordinator.

That night, Director of Radar Bali, Justin Herman, contacted Bambang Wiyono. He said he wanted to meet Bambang to talk about Prabangsa case. In the end, Justin joined in the team.

The small meeting continued until wee hours. The discussion is more about Justin story on the condition of Radar Bali office and the daily routine of Prabangsa life at his office and also out of his journalism work. Justin talked a lot on Prabangsa`s love story. Justin nodded to the plan to form an advocacy team. The next day, Rofiqi, Bambang, and Joko started the campaign.

Some prominent figures in Bali were invited to support the team. AJI Indonesia, as the umbrella organization of AJI Denpasar, fully supported the cause. Instantly, the team gained more supports. Advocates, activists of NGOs, politicians, religious figures, even vandals, were in the team.

It was important to have members of various backgrounds as anticipations to possible problems during the investigation had to be brought forth. Team members were requested to gain supports to solve the Prabangsa case. The team also had to solidify civil society network in efforts to urge police speed up the probe. In addition, team members were also expected to enrich information on the background of Prabangsa`s killing.

The advocacy team invited journalists to be pary of the team. The team in particular recruited journalists focusing their coverage on DPRD and Bali Governor`s office as the two institutions had been the focus of Prabangsa`s coverage. The team also called for journalists who covered issues on Karangasem and Bangli to join as Prabangsa was found dead in between the two areas. The team also included journalists covering issues on crime to ease them monitor police investigation.

Names of the team members were never discovered to the public. Not every member knew other team members. The cell system was applied to facilitate advocacy team to gain access to information from important sources. In addition, the safety of the team had been the primary concern.



AS soon as the team was established, almost everyday team members were engaged in discussions and coordination of the investigation. The discussions were mostly concerned on information being obtained, how to process the information to become stories, and what efforts could be possibly done to help police move faster in looking into the case. The processed information was then forwarded to journalists on crime desk in various media. AJI secretariat of Denpasar on Jalan Pandu No.34 was always full with the case discussion.

The first job of the advocacy team was to study all articles that had been written by Prabangsa, at least within six months before he was murdered. The team in particular digged for news thought to provoke one's anger.

The team discovered that at least three stories had the potentials to trigger conflicts with sources. Prabangsa by chance wrote the stories himself. All stories were connected to Bangli, Prabangsa's birthplace. The three stories were produced in December 2008, around two months before Prabangsa vanished and found dead.

The first article appeared on 3 December 2008, entitled "Pengawas Dibentuk setelah Proyek Jalan." It depicted irregularities in the road construction project carried out in Bangli Regency. There was another story entitled "Bagi-bagi Proyek PL Dinas Pendidikan Bangli" which was published a week later on 8 December 2008. The next day, Prabangsa wrote another story on alleged corruption in Bangli Education Agency entitled "SK Kadis Dinilai Cacat."

The three articles emphasized Prabangsa's efforts in tracing a network of manipulators as regards state budget allocation in Bangli administration. He might have known the key figure behind several alleged graft cases that he reported.

The three stories did not last long. They were published in December 2008, and then died down. It was likely that Prabangsa's investigation hit obstacles. Or else, he chose to keep the issue in efforts to find more facts. Radar Bali did not assign reporters in Bangli. Prabangsa's determination to work on Bangli issues was more encouraged by his personal concern as part of Bangli's resident.

The finding of the three articles affirmed the initial allegation of the advocacy team that the motive behind the journalist's killing was the articles he wrote. However, the information did not stop the police to work unhurriedly.



AT the same time, police were busy handling two big cases such as a case in Karangasem Membangun cooperatives and killing of a married couple in Denpasar by the end of February and early March of 2009. Police had to share resources to look into the cases.

The advocacy team viewed that an exceptional strategy was required to ensure police solving Prabangsa case. Therefore, on 28 March 2009, AJI Denpasar held an event "Prayer Commemorating 40 Days of Prabangsa's Death" at the secretariat office.

The event was designed to bring into life news coverage on Prabangsa case. The advocacy team was sure that police monitored the media. Any case that the public put interest in would gain more magnitude.

All elements of civil society and Human Rights defenders were invited. There were activists of Bali Legal Aid Agency (LBH), Indonesia's Association of Legal Aid (PBHI), Bali Corruption Watch (BCW), and boards of advocacy organiza-

tions in the province. Scores of journalists from Denpasar and its surroundings were also present.

The event was kicked off by a prayer by Chief of Bali Corruption Watch, Putu Wirata Dwikora. Afterwards, a discussion on Prabangsa case was set out. The moderator in particular called on the audiences to supply the meeting with opinions on any strategic measure needed to encourage the solving of Prabangsa case.

From the discussion, a crucial fact was unveiled. Most of Bali journalists were reluctant of covering the case of Prabangsa's death.

The first factor had been the motive behind the murder, which was allegedly in line with Prabangsa's love affair. Based on the allegation, many media did not want to absorb further into cases of personal interests. The second factor had been blackmailing issue, which in turn led to killing. Despite the unverified news, the rumor was widespread.

In response to the situation, AJI Denpasar invited all editors in-chief in Bali by the end of March 2009 at Bali Bakery Restaurant on Jalan Hayam Wuruk, Denpasar. There were Emanuel Dewata Oja (Fajar Bali Daily), Dewa Sastra (Patroli Post – then Bali Tribun), Joko Purnomo (Patroli Post's managing editor), I Gusti Made Dwikora Putra (Warta Bali), I Gusti Putu Ardita (Metro Bali – then Bali Expres), Made Suadnyana (Denpasar Post – media corp of Bali Post), Made Rai Warsa (Radar Bali), and Justin Herman (Radar Bali director – then CEO).

AJI also invited two senior advocates joining in the advocacy team: Nyoman Sudiantara SH (Chief of Indonesia Advocate Congress of Bali) and Ari B Sunardi SH. From AJI Denpasar, there were Bambang Wiyono (Head), Rofiqi Hasan (coordinator of advocacy division), and Joko Sugianto (member

of advocacy division).

As expected earlier, the strong arguments were put forward in the meeting on the motive behind Prabangsa's murder. Most editors in-chief were convinced that Prabangsa was killed for blackmailing sources. The idea surfaced as police did not find any lead on Prabangsa's alleged love affair. The audiences were positive that had the love affair assumption failed, then blackmailing would be the cause.

During the discussion, Rai Warsa and Justin of Radar Bali said they had browsed over all articles written by Prabangsa a month prior to his death and did not find any that might threaten his life. They were not aware that the story that led to the murder was produced in December 2008, two months before Prabangsa was dead.

The afternoon discussion almost found no way out. Should the motives be either love affair or blackmailing, the Bali media would stay away. In other words, if the motives were non-journalistic issues, the news coverage on the case would be no different from other criminal cases.

AJI Denpasar offered a solution in the final moment of the meeting. Bambang Wiyono, Rofiqi Hassan, and Joko Sugianto appealed to the editors in-chief to pay attention to police investigation on the case. "The most important issue is that the killing must be solved whatever the trigger is, whoever the perpetrator is," said Bambang.

Everyone in the room was in agreement on the proposal. The audiences also agreed to use AJI Denpasar as the media center for processing information and coverage on Prabangsa case. Ever since, AJI Denpasar released a press statements on the latest issues on Prabangsa case to all Bali media. The Prabangsa case now appeared on the news again.

The works of the Advocacy Team then started to see results. The supports for the sorting out of the case kept coming. A number of organizations such as Indonesia Journalists Association (PWI) of Bali, Indonesia Journalists Association of Reform, Independent Journalists Association of Bali, Multimedia Journalists Association of Bali, and Indonesia Television Journalists Association of Bali agreed to form Solidarity of Bali Journalists to monitor Prabangsa case. ●

CHAPTER V

New Evidence

THE persistence of the journalists in Bali to reveal the Prabangsa case brought light to the case. Bit by bit, information as to who might be the mastermind behind the killing had been gathered. Journalists of various media in Bali never stopped approaching sources considered to have been informed of political map in Bangli.

The discovery of three stories that Prabangsa wrote in December 2008 in corruption in Bangli Education Agency had been the initial clue for journalists. They began to contact sources in state administration as well as Bangli officials who were in the know of the corruption case.

In early April of 2009, a number of journalists started to understand the role Nyoman Susrama, brother of Bangli Regent I Nengah Arnawa, played in a number of development projects in Bangli. Susrama was a contractor, who often won the bidding process on several projects offered by the Bangli administration.

One of the stories on corruption produced by Prabangsa was about a Susrama's project in Bangli Education Agency.

Journalists dugged into Susrama's background and tried to

find out his activities. A number of sources said Susrama had just transported his Kijang Rover car to Yogyakarta.

The red car whose license plate was B 8888 AP was surrendered to his relative working at Yogyakarta Transportation Agency. Susrama's driver, Endi Mashuri, was asked to take the car to Yogyakarta.

Another source told journalists that Prabangsa's step daughter, Anak Agung Ayu Rewati, worked for Susrama in a bottled drinking water company "Sita", run by the Bangli administration. Despite the company's status, daily management was still under Susrama.

Rewati resigned from the company as she felt offended by Susrama. As Prabangsa died, Susrama did not attend the funeral. In fact, neither the employees nor managers of the drinking water company came into view.

That was very uncommon. It was normal for the company to send its representatives if any member of the employees' family passed away. Furious, Rewati decided that she will not work for Susrama for good. Journalists then heard the story.

Other than Rewati, there was another one who no longer with Susrama after February 2009. He was Komang Gede Wardana alias Mangde. Earlier, Mangde was always near Susrama. He was like the private guard of Nyoman Susrama. Later on, he disappeared.

Another investigation found that around late February 2009, Susrama performed Meceru ritual at his house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang Village, Bangli. The ritual was the custom in Bali to purge the house and yard from evil spirit as well as filth. The ritual was odd as Susrama's house in Banjar Petak was empty, said the neighbors.



EVERY information that the advocacy team gathered was supplied to the police. The mass media also covered the issue every single day. Police were demanded to proceed with the evidence.

Police responded the demand made by the journalists in Bali. The province's police department formed Tim Lima to probe further into the case. The team of five was consisted of five small units such as Inquiry, Investigation, Information and Technology, identification forensic laboratory, and medicine forensic laboratory. Total team members reached 77. The team was still commanded by Adj. Chief. Comm. Akhmad Nur Wahid. Everyday, the team had to report any progress to Chief of Bali Police Department, Ins. Gen. Ashikin Husein.

In addition to forming the Tim Lima, Chief of Bali Police Department agreed to involve antiterror squad Special Detachment 88 and Bali Police Intelligence and Security in handling the case.

The inquiry team – consisting of detectives – had to gather all information connected with Prabangsa's killing. The information was then distributed to the Investigation team, which focused on looking for the motives behind the killing. The team also had to question people allegedly involved in the case.

The IT team had to smell out conversation and last messages that Prabangsa and the alleged perpetrator sent. A number of cellular phones owned by people listed as the mistrusted were also checked.

The IT team pioneered the work of revealing the mystery covering the case. The teams found several evidence – SMSes and call history – between Prabangsa and several people which had been named suspects in the case. “They wanted Prabangsa

to stop writing issues on corruption in Bangli. They wanted any news coverage on such cases was terminated,” said Akhmad Nur Wahid, leader of the Tim Lima.

Ever since the call history and SMSes were traced, police investigation aimed at certain people in Bangli.

They included Chief of Bangli Education Agency, Anak Agung Ngurah Samba, and his cousin, Anak Agung Sastrawan. Police also sought to connect the killing with Nyoman Susrama, brother of Bangli Regency, and his close friend cum bodyguard, Nyoman Wiradnyana alias Rencana. Sastrawan was a contractor who worked on school building in Bangli. Meanwhile, Susrama was known as unofficial school project. Susrama was known as unofficial authority. At times, he was in control of deciding which tender went to who. ●



Prabangsa's body arrived in Sanglah Denpasar Hospital after found at Bungsil Bay, Karangsem.



Prabangsa's wife, Anak Agung Sagung Istri Mas Prihantini was escorted to the mortuary room after she notified that his husband was found death.



The team of Forensic Laboratory identified to find the blood trace in the car which is used by the suspect to brought the death body of Prabangsa and throw it to the sea.



Bali Police Chief Irjen Teuku Asikin Husein (on the left side) conduct press conference at ali Police Department and showing the evidence.



The praying of 100 days of Prabangsa's death at AJI Denpasar secretariat, led by spiritualist BR Agus Indra Udayana, attended by Bali Cok Rat legislative member (the third person from the left) and elders Sandi Murti Gusti Ngurah Harta (the second person from the right).



The member of legislative RI Kadek 'Lolak' Arimbawa (in the front left side), Member of advisory board of Democrat Party of Bali Pasek Suardika (left side rear), Nyoman Sudiantara (second person from the right side) also some of Bali's figure were attended the Praying for Prabangsa at AJI Denpasar secretariat.



The mass media leaders also attended the praying for Prabangsa at AJI Denpasar secretariat.



Bangli's people around Susrama's house at Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli were watching the reconstruction process of Prabangsa killing.



The reconstruction process of when the suspect beat up Prabangsa be witnessed by Susrama at his house at Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli.



Reconstruction process of when Susrama beat up Prabangsa by using wood beams until Prabangsa dropped witnessed by the others suspects at Susrama house at Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli.



Reconstruction process of when the suspect hide Prabangsa's death body at one of room at Susrama's house at Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli after Prabangsa killed.



Reconstruction process of when the suspect put the death body of Prabangsa in the car to brought and throw in the sea.



Reconstruction process of when Susrama led the disposal of Prabangsa's death body to the sea.



Reconstruction process of when the suspects throw the death body of Prabangsa to the sea by using the barge.



The main suspect of Prabangsa murder, Susrama submitted to the Chief of Police Regional Bali to the prosecution of Bali to be trial.



The representative of organization of journalists profession which is incorporated in solidarity of Bali Journalists (SJB) saw the Chief of PN Denpasar Djumain (the second person from the left), before the session of the case of Prabangsa murder, asked the judge to work as professional and the session running well.



The journalists conduct the protest action of concern by giving some black ribbon to the visitor of the first session of Prabangsa case at the court.



The suspect Susrama at the detension of PN Denpasar, waiting for the trial.



Susrama gave testimony at the session.



The attorney of Susrama, Suryadharmha SH (wearing batik and glasses) after got sentenced against the code ethics of advocate by assemblies of honor of Peradi, because he directed the witnesses to lie.

CHAPTER VI

Political Battle

FOUR alleged conspirators of the murder were of no ordinary people. They were all state officials whose influence in Bangli was enormous. Susrama was also a politician from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP).

During the investigation of the case, the Elections were held on 5 April 2009. Susrama ran for member of the Bangli Regional House of Representatives (DPRD). His wife, Hening Puspitari-ni was no different. She ran for a DPRD member as well.

Susrama did a political maneuver when police set him as target. He set up a team of legal advisors consisting of advocates, who were also high-ranking officials in PDIP Bali: Wayan Yarmada SH (deputy head of Bali PDIP on Justice and Human Rights), Made Suparta (member of team of Justice and Human Rights of DPD PDIP Bali) and Pande Parwata (secretary of PDIP Gianyar central board). Also in the team were Nyoman Wisnu, Suryadharma, Ngakan Putra Adnyana, Ketut Partha, I Gede Putu Adi Mulyawan, I Gede Astawa, Sukirman, Wayan Wija, and I Made Ngurah Alit⁵.

5 The advocates accompanied Nyoman Susrama when he was questioned for the first time by Bali Police investigators, 19 May 2009.

The supporters of Susrama launched strategies to split the focus of AJI team of advocacy. They pointed out that the Bali Journalists Solidarity who encouraged the probe into Prabangsa's death was sponsored by PDIP's rival. A setup was made that the investigation on Susrama was based on a political motive aiming at weakening supports over PDIP in Bangli.

Susrama's attempt to plot the case to political issue was backed by the maneuver of his elder brother, Bangli Regent, Nengah Arnawa. Rumor has it that Arnawa had requested Chief of PDIP Centra Board, Megawati Soekarnoputri to have a political sanctuary. Arnawa said he and the family were only victims of defamation.

In the mass media, the regent made an oath in Catur Desa and Catur Setra (cemetery) to make sure that his extended family was not related to Prabangsa's murder⁶.

Susrama massive efforts were positive. The inquiry team once met a dead end. Police looked doubtful in dealing with dominant political power. Disturbing PDIP in Bali had big consequences. Six out of nine regencies and cities in Bali were helmed by a provincial head from PDIP. Almost all Provincial House of Representatives (DPRD) were controlled by PDIP.

The advocacy team of Prabangsa case had to think harder to prepare better strategies to oppose Susrama's party. They finally agreed to part Susrama from his party. That way, police could freely question the man.

After the strategy was okayed, a number of AJI Denpasar figures approached PDIP cadres and leaders in Bali and Jakarta. The lobbying was made as an effort that the Susrama case had nothing to do with politics, but pure crime⁷.

6 See article in Metro Bali, "Bupati Arnawa Nantang Diperiksa Tanpa Izin SBY," 29 May 2009.

7 A number of PDIP figures that AJI Denpasar approached included: Head of PDIP Bali Representatives

Following the approach, PDIP cadres voiced concern over the case and called for the party to refrain from sustaining Susrama and Prabangsa case. They said PDIP might lose votes in the Elections. In the meantime, Megawatis' chance of winning the 2009 Elections might be if PDIP was always concerned with journalist killing.

However, the request was declined by Susrama. Wayan Yarmada, Susrama's legal advisor, PDIP Bali Chief of House of Regional Representatives (DPD) on Justice and Human Rights Division denied to step back as Susrama's lawyer. He said a retreat was possible if Megawati Soekarnoputri, PDIP Secretary General Pramono Anung, DPD Chief of PDIP Bali, AA Ngurah Oka Ratmadi, or DPD Secretary of PDIP Bali, Nyoman Parta, asked him personally.

The crucial issue was finally over as the senior advocate who was also Head of Indonesia Advocates Congress (KAI) of Bali, Nyoman Sudiantara, intervened. Sincer the beginning, Sudiantara had been part of the advocacy team. It was a coincidence that Sudiantara was man of high importance in PDIP's structure. He was part of PDIP Denpasar campaign team.

By virtue of Sudiantara's approach, PDIP cadres involving in the Susrama legal team drew back one by one. Susrama's politics failed.

During the legislative and presidential elections in Bangli in April and June of 2009, the prediction of the Prabangsa Case Advocacy Team proved accurate. PDIP's decision to stand back from Susrama helped the party to gain more votes.

In the legislative elections, PDIP gained 62,330 votes in

Council (DPD) PDIP Bali AA Agung Ngurah Oka Ratmadi, also Head of Bali Regional House of Representatives, Chief of PDIP Bali DPD Campaign Team, Nyoman Adi Wiryatama, also Tabanan Regent; and Deputy Head of Campaign Team Nyoman Dhamantra. An approach to the Central Board of PDIP in Jakarta and PDIP Bangli was also carried out.

Bangli Regency; whereas in the Presidential elections, couple Megawati and Prabowo Subianto gained 78,458 votes.



On 25 May 2009, AJI Denpasar held a prayer of 100 days commemoration of Prabangsa's death. Hundreds of Human Rights and NGO activists, politicians, artists, religious figures, environment activists, advocates, packed the front yard of AJI Denpasar. Many brought with them drinks and meals for refreshments.

Among the audiences were DPD Chief of PDIP Bali, AA Ngurah Oka Ratmadi alias Cok Rat, Chief of Advisory Board of Democratic Party Bali, Pasek Suardika, member of DPD, Kadek Arimbawa alias Lolak, Sandi Murti, Gusti Ngurah Harta, and spiritualist BR Agus Indra Udayana.

A figure from PDIP Bali, Cok Rat, repeated his bold support on the handling of Prabangsa case. "Don't be afraid. Don't ever worry. We have the responsibility to monitor the case. There are many people behind you," said Cok Rat.

That day, Bali Police named seven suspects of Prabangsa murder. All suspects had been arrested and detained. After 100 days, the big question on who the murderer of Prabangsa was was beginning to solve. ●

CHAPTER VII

Cornering the Mastermind

NYOMAN Susrama was summoned to be questioned for the first time in early May 2009, around three months after Prabangsa died. In addition to Susrama, Bangli Regent, Nengah Arnawa had also been questioned by the police. Moreover, police also questioned Chief of Bangli Education Agency, Anak Agung Ngurah Samba⁸.

The interrogation of the three figures indicated that police investigation headed toward the motive of killing which linked to Prabangsa's articles. In December 2008, two months before he died, Prabangsa wrote some stories on graft issues surrounding projects of Bangli Education Agency.

In early May, Bali Police Chief Ins. Gen. Ashikin Husein told reporters that police had already set a list of suspects⁹. Police also searched the homes of witnesses that had gone through questioning to find more evidence.

At the time, police's hard work had yet to pay off. However, a search gave them the lead. They found dried blood stains in

8 Metro Bali, "Giliran Pejabat Bangli Dibidik", 9 May 2009.

9 Bali Express, "Kapolda Bilang Sudah Ada Calon Tersangka", 8 May 2009.

the backyard of Susrama's house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang Village, Bangli¹⁰.

Police targeted the house as a report earlier said that Mecaru ritual had been performed in the vacant residence. Police soon set up a forensic test to find out the blood origin.

Another finding which aroused police's suspicion was Susrama's effort to remove his Toyota Kijang Rover, which had supposedly been handed over to his relative in Yogyakarta. Fearing of losing the key evidence, police traced the car.

Following the interrogation of Susrama, police started to pursue two men said to have been of close acquaintances of susrama: Komang Gede Wardana alias Mangde and Nyoman Wiradnyana alias Rencana. The two men were alleged of becoming the executors of Prabangsa's murder¹¹.

In addition, Susrama's home in Banjar Petak, Bebalang, had been searched by the police twice. In the second survey, police found a car carpet full of dried blood stains hidden in one of the house's corner¹².

From there, police moved to Susrama's rented house on Jalan Ngurah Rai, Bangli. Police also deployed a team to search Rencana's house on Tusan Village, Banjarangkan, Klungkung.

As police arrived in Klungkung, Rencana was not anywhere in the house. Holding a warrant, police entered the house. Two jeans and jackets belonging to the house's owner were carefully examined. The Forensic Laboratory of Bali Police took samples of dirt on the clothing. Out of a sudden, Rencana came home.

10 Metro Bali, "Misteri Darah di Rumah Kosong Pengusaha Bangli," 11 May 2009.

11 Metro Bali, "Eksekutor Prabangsa Ada Empat Orang," 18 May 2009.

12 Metro Bali, "Rumah Susrama dan Rencana Digeledah," 19 May 2009.

Upon seeing that the house was full of cops, Rencana looked nervous. To the police, he said he worked as a honorary worker in Bangli Education Agency. Witnessing the search, he made a phone call. When the search was over, a police officer asked about his relation with Prabangsa's killing. "I've no idea about the matter. Let alone killing people, I do not dare killing the animals."

Rencana's plan was similar with the statement of Bangli Regent, Nengah Arnawa several days earlier when reporters asked his involvement in the killing of Prabangsa¹³. The parallel answer gave the impression that Susrama's party had been in tight coordination to deny police investigation.



AFTER the search in Bangli, Susrama was again summoned by the police. This time, despite his status of witness, Susrama was accompanied by 12 advocates¹⁴. It was apparent that he was aware that it was only a matter of time for him to be named suspect.

A day after Susrama was questioned, police managed to find his Toyota Kijang Rover in Yogyakarta. It was evident that the car was concealed from the cops in Bali. When found, the car's paint had been modified from red to green. In addition, the license plate was removed. The old B 8888 AP turned into AB 8888 MK.

In Denpasar, the car was immediately examined by the forensic laboratory team of Bali Police. New evidence were found: six spots of blood stains and strands of hair under the

13 Metro Bali, *idem*.

14 Metro Bali, "Show of Force, Kerahkan 12 Pengacara," 20 May 2009.

passenger seat. It was confirmed that the blood was of the same type with the one found on car's carpet discovered in Susrama's house. It was the same blood type that Prabangsa had.

On 24 May 2009, the investigators of Bali Police held a meeting to present all evidence and witnesses as regards Prabangsa case. Almost all evidence led to the same direction. They had made an unanimous decision. The next day, 100 days after Prabangsa's death, Chief of Bali Police Ins. Gen. Ashikin Husein announced the names of seven suspects who were strongly alleged of being involved in the killing of the Radar Bali journalist.

The announcement was presented in a special press conference. Prabangsa's wife, Prihantini, and her two children, were also in the conference room. The seven suspects are as follows:

Suspects	Occupation	Role
I Nyoman Susrama	Contractor, executor of Bangli Education Agency's projects	Mastermind
Komang Gede	Susrama's man	Picking the victim
Nyoman Rencana	Susrama's man	Executor and body's carrier
Komang Gede Wardana alias Mangde	Driver, living in Susrama's house	Executor and body's carrier
Dewa Sumbawa	Driver, living in Susrama's house	Driver of car which carries Prabangsa's body
Endi Mashuri	Driver in Bottled drinking water company "Sita"	Cleaner of blood stains
Darianto alias Jampes	Worker in bottled drinking water "Sita"	Cleaner of blood stains

Police also named two other men as suspects : Ida Bagus Made Adnyana alias Gus Oblong and Nyoman Suwecita alias Maong. They were proved of witnessing the execution of Prabangsa.



ALL evidence and testimonies that police gathered confirmed that the murder took place on 11 February 2009. At 2 PM local time, Susrama contacted his man, Komang Gede, to pick Prabangsa at his parents' house in Taman Bali, Bangli. The victim was in Bangli to attend Nelubulanin ritual (for three-month old infant) held by his relative.

One hour later at 3 PM, Komang Gede, Nyoman Rencana, and Komang Gede Wardana alias Mangde arrived in Taman Bali. They rode a green Honda Civic LX car. Prabangsa had been in the wait. The four of them headed to the empty Susrama's house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli.

Prabangsa's hands had been tied during their way to the site. Less than half an hour, they got there. Prabangsa was pulled out of the car and escorted to the back yard.

Few minutes later, a black Toyota Kijang Krista car turned up. Susrama and his man, Dewa Sumbawa, got out of the car. Without much ado, Susrama ordered his men to beat Prabangsa. It was 4.10 PM local time.

Prabangsa offered no resistance. Bruises were everywhere in his body. Susrama even hit Prabangsa's head. At once chance, Prabangsa jumped out of the yard and ran away from the house. However, it was a failure. Mangde, Rencana, and Sumbawa caught him and dragged him on to the back yard.

Susrama then instructed his men to kill Prabangsa. Rencana and Mangde then grabbed wood beams and approached Prabangsa.

Prabangse begged mercy, which was left unheard. His face was hit hard. Blood spurted from the wounds. Prabangsa then fell to the ground. Susrama, planning to give the last blow, let off the beam in his hand.

Susrama ordered two of his men, Endi Mashuri and Darian-to, to clean up Prabangsa's blood around the scene. They used water to wash it and covered the taint with sand and soil.

Prabangsa was still breathing. He was carried into the house and kept in a room. The wounds in his head were left open.

Night approached. It was 9 PM local time. As instructed, Mangde and Rencana loaded the red Toyota Kijang Rover with Prabangsa. The car then headed to Goa Lawah Beach.

When questioned by the police, Dewa Sumbawa, the driver, said how Prabangsa's body was thrown out to sea. Approaching Goa Lawah Beach, Blatung Hamlet, Pesinggahan Village, Klungkung Regency, Susrama contacted someone who was said as boat owner.

As soon as the car arrived on the beach, the boat owner was already there. Gus Oblong and Maong carried Prabangsa aboard to the boat. Not long after, the boat sailed away and got back without Prabangsa.



“THIS is a premeditated murder. The mastermind behind the murder was offended upon reading the news produced by Prabangsa on irregularities in Bangli Education Agency's projects,” said Bali Chief of Police Department, Ins. Gen. Ashikin Husein, during the announcement of the suspects on 25 May 2009.

According to Ashikin, police will use Article 338 of the Penal Code against the suspects with maximum sentence of 15 years. Police also used Article 340 of the Penal Code on premeditated murder against them with maximum sentence of death penalty or life sentence.

Several hours before Ashikin named Susrama as suspect, a number of police officers visited his house. In the morning at around 5 AM, police raided the house and caught Susrama.

Six other suspects: Komang Gede, Nyoman Rencana, Mangde, Dewa Sumbawa, Endi Mashuri, and Darianto alias Jampes had been apprehended the day earlier. The remaining suspects: Gus Oblong and Nyiman Suwecita alias Maong, were arrested in the afternoon after police made a release of the suspects' names¹⁵.

Of the nine perpetrators of Prabangsa's killing, only Jampes and Endi were not detained. They played a tiny role in the murder: cleaning up Prabangsa's blood in Susrama's backyard.

Two days after the suspects' names were announced, police started to prepare dossier of a lawsuit to be handed over to Denpasar District Attorney. Police summoned two suspects, Made Sumbawa and Jampes, to reconstruct the murder in Susrama's house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang and on Goa Lawah Beach.

On 3 June 2009, a week after the naming of suspects, police set another reconstruction. This time, eight perpetrators except Susrama were taken to Bangli. On the backyard of Susrama's house, the culprits showed how they played their role and where they were as Prabangsa was beaten and left dying.

From the reconstruction, Susrama's role as the mastermind behind the murder became more apparent. All perpetrators did the action under Susrama's instruction. Susrama was once tempted to join them. He was ready to hit Prabangsa in the head with a beam. However, it was undone as Prabangsa had fallen

15 After the announcement of the nine suspects, police arrested Dewa Swarjana, an officer of Planning Division of Bangli Education Agency. He was apprehended on 1 June 2009 but then released after no evidence of involvement was found.

to his knees following the blows launched by Rencana¹⁶.

A day after the reconstruction on 4 June 2009, Susrama was questioned by the police. Despite the complete evidence and testimonies, he still denied his involvement in Prabangsa's killing. When police asked him about his activities on 11 February 2009 – the day Prabangsa died – here is the answer:

“... I did my normal activities. At around 7 AM I went to the office of “Sita” drinking water company as I brought my kids to their school in SD Negeri 5 Kawan and SMA Negeri 1 Bangli. Before reaching the office, I dropped by the house of Pak Wayan Rupa, PHDI Secretary of Bangli Regency, who was at the time falling ill, until 10.30 AM. Afterwards, I proceeded to my house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang Village, to see the progress of the house development. Then I left for Gianyar and bought traditional clothes at Kadek store. I happened to drop by Bank BCA and Bank Mandiri of Gianyar. Then I got home to Banjar Petak house, Bebalang Village. I got there at around 4.25 PM...”

Susrama's description did not change police's belief. Testimonies and evidence had put emphasis on Susrama's vital role in the killing. “He may not say a word about his involvement. But we have witnesses and evidence,” said Chief of Satuan I Criminal Investigation Division of Bali Police, Adj. Chief. Comm. Akhmad Nur Wahid¹⁷.

A confession came from Ida Bagus Made Adnyana Narbawa alias Gus Oblong. When he was questioned by the police on 8 June 2009, he clearly pictured the role Susrama played. He said he heard Susrama shouted to his men, “kill him, kill him,” a moment before Mangde and Rencana hit Prabangsa's head with wood beams.

16 Metro Bali, “Prabangsa Ngidih Urip, Tapi Dibunuh Juga”, 4 June 2009.

17 Metro Bali, “Komang Gede Mulai Berkicau”, 6 June 2011

To complete the dossiers of a lawsuit, police decided to confront all perpetrators. The process was held on 9 June 2009. As expected, during the reconstruction process that all perpetrators followed, several people refused to disclose their roles.

“You may have well-built body. But you’re such a coward. You didn’t dare to admit your doing. Watch your back, I’ll kill you,” said Gus Oblong toward Mangde as the latter denied his involvement in beating Prabangsa. Mangde finally made a admission. He was the one holding Prabangsa’s head from behind as Rencana swang the beam onto Prabangsa’s head. Mangde also beat Prabangsa¹⁸.

Susrama was the only out of the nine suspects who still said no over his involvement. He denied all testimonies made by his men. However, by early August of 2009, police said the investigation of the case had been finished. The files of a lawsuit were then submitted to the Bali District Attorney. ●

18 Bali Express, “Para Tersangka Cekkok, Gus Oblong Mau Mukul”, 11 June 2009.

CHAPTER VIII

Court Drama

THE District Attorney of Bali held a case conference of the Prabangsa's killing on 18 August 2009. After the presentation, Chief of Bali District Attorney, Warman Suherman, said a slight lack of administrative issues were found before the case was ready to put to court¹⁹.

A source in the Bali District Attorney said the dossiers were returned as the premeditated murder element that police proposed did not have a solid ground. Police should have had concentrated on the verification of three issues that might be the foundations of the case.

First, Susrama had surveyed the spot for discarding the body. Second, Susrama gave days off to the workers who built his house between February 11 and 13 – the days of the murder. Third, Susrama asked his man, Rencana, to tail Prabangsa on the morning of 11 February 2009.

For the attorney, the completion of the three aspects was required to charge the perpetrators with Article 340 on pre-

19 Bali Express, "Berkas Kasus Prabangsa Perlu Sedikit Perbaikan," 19 August 2009.

meditated murder. Of the nine suspects, seven were charged with the article. Two others, Endi Mashuri and Darianto, were only charged with article on participation and concealment of information of a crime.

In addition, police had to revise other administrative elements on the differences in dates attached within the dossiers. For instance, a file mentioned that the murder was planned on 8 February 2009. Meanwhile, other files, with different suspects, mentioned that the incident occurred on 9 February 2009.

Director of Criminal Investigation of Bali Police, Chief. Comm. Wilmar Marpaung, acknowledged about the incompleting dossiers, which had resulted in the return of four files on Susrama, Rencana, Mangde, and Komang Gede.

After one month, during the first week of September 2009, the revision was finished. The dossiers were then officially delivered to Bali District Attorney²⁰.

The District Attorney not long after announced that the dossiers were ready to be brought to Denpasar District Court. The long awaiting was over. The trial over the murderers of Prabangsa was all set.



The first trial was held on Thursday, 8 October 2009, in the Denpasar District Court. The attorneys were scheduled to present charges of the nine defendants involving in the case.

“No special security measure is applied,” said Deputy Head

20 Tempo Interaktif, “Enam Tersangka Pembunuhan Wartawan Bali Diserahkan ke Kejaksaan,” 16 September 2009.

of Denpasar District Court, Djumain, told reporters. Djumain was also the Chief Judge for the same case with Nyoman Susrama as the defendant.

However, a police squad stood in guard during the court session. Bali Police deployed a platoon of riot police and armed mobile brigade. Metal detectors were also installed at the main entrance of the court.

To anticipate security breaches, another court was prepared. In line with the crime scene, the trial was initially intended to be held in Bangli District Court. However, for the sake of neutrality, taking into account Susrama's influence in Bangli, Bali Chief of High Court decided the court was held in Denpasar.

The new location also considered time effective. All suspects were detained in Bali Police Department and Bali Mobile Brigade Headquarters around Denpasar. A Denpasar court would facilitate the sessions well.

AJI Denpasar held a demonstration just outside the court room. Dozens of AJI activists distributed black ribbons to journalists, the general public, and public figures coming into the court.

The small act was designed by the Advocacy Team of Prabangsa Case. Although the case was through to court, the Advocacy Team said the work had yet been over. They in fact entered the most crucial phase of all series of the advocacy job. The team was demanded to monitor every session until panel of judges pass a just verdict.

During the first trial, the prosecutor presented articles aimed at the nine defendants. Seven were charged with Article 340 of the Penal Code subsidiary Article 338 of the Penal Code in conjunction with Article 55 and 56 of the Penal Code on Premeditated Murder with maximum sentence of

death penalty. The seven defendants were Nyoman Susrama, Nyoman Wiradnyana alias Rencana, Komang Gede, Komang Gede Wardana alias Mangde, Dewa Gede Mulya Antara alias Dewa Sumbawa, Ida Bagus Gede Adnyana Narbawa alias Gus Oblong, and I Wayan Suwecita alias Maong.

Two other suspects were Endi Mashuri alias Endi and Darianto alias Nano alias Jampes, charged with Article 221 (1) of the Penal Code or 2 of the Penal Code on the concealment of people committing crime and removing evidence of crime with maximum sentence of nine months in prison.



NYOMAN Susrama, the man behind the murder, denied all charges and claimed himself not guilty. He pleaded the prosecutor to free him of all charges. In the demurrer presented in the second trial on 19 October 2009, Susrama deemed prosecutor's charges not definite.

“We are demanding rehabilitation over the defendant's name,” said member of Susrama's team of advocates, Nyoman Wisnu SH. Despite condolences attached to the demurrer, Susrama insisted he was not involved in the murder. “We called for everyone in this room to find the real murderer of Prabangsa,” said Wisnu.

The grounds used by Susrama's team of advocates were concerned with the main evidence used in the trial: AB blood type found under the car carpet of Susrama's Kijang Rover, blood stains found on Rencana's jacket and pants, and blood spots found on cassava leaves planted in Susrama's backyard. “Is it possible that blood stains still remained after three months?” said another advocate of Susrama, Suryadharma SH.

In short, Susrama's advocates did not believe if all blood

stains found in the three different spots were Prabangsa's. They accused investigators of Bali Police were absent from doing DNA test to prove whether or not it was Prabangsa's blood.

In the next trial on 3 November 2009, there was unexpected progress. Two key witnesses who were also defendants of the case withdrew their confessions from the deposition. The two were Darianto alias Jampes and Endi Mashuri. Both admitted they were beaten by the police to provide information and incriminated Susrama.

Before the panel of judges, as tears rolling down on his face, Jampes admitted of making false deposition. Stuttering, he said he could not stand police torture during the interrogation. "I finally made up stories which were in line with what police wanted," he said. The same confession was produced by Endi Mashuri. "When police beat me, my eyes were blindfolded," he said.

The confession of both defendants surprised court attendees. Different from their previous statements, both defendants said they were not in the know of Prabangsa's murder. "I was forced to confess," said Endi.

Other defendants in return pulled out their statements in the deposition. Being a witness for Darianto's trial, Gus Oblong denied his own testimony. "Everyone accused me [the crime]. I finally signed the deposition," he said. In the deposition, Gus Oblong was said as playing a role in killing Prabangsa.

Coordinator of Susrama's team of advocates, I Nyoman Wisnu, said the removal of defendants' confessions highlighted legal manipulation to sacrifice Susrama. "All evidence that the prosecutor could have been inaccurate," he said.

The removal of confessions might destroy the verification framework that the prosecutor was building. The reason for

this was that all defendants testified in one case or another. Gus Oblong, for instance, testified for Darianto's case while the latter also testified for Susrama's case.

Dealing with the unanticipated moves, Prosecutor Abraham Kholis remained composed. "We still have piles of evidence. We have statements from forensic experts and other witnesses," he said.

Police were also in the calm side of the court. According to Commander of Tim Lima, Adj. Chief. Comm. Akhmad Nur Wahid, police could easily denied allegations that tortures had happened in the interrogation room. "The suspects were treated humanely. We did not even detain Jampes and Endi," he said. He said police helped Jampes and Endi find a place to stay during the interrogation process. In fact, as the father of a suspect was under the weather, police helped him get the proper medication from the hospital.

It was Prabangsa's family who seemed restless of the situation. "The perpetrators may get away from this," said Prabangsa's sister, Sagung Ayu. However, police settled them down. "They could be charged using additional articles for giving false testimonies," said Nur Wahid.

In the first week of November 2009, the situation reversed. The defendants had been cornered back. Everything was started from the testimonies of Nengah Mercadana and Nyoman Rajin, two workers working on the construction of Susrama's house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang, Bangli – the crime scene.

Both men said they were called for Susrama's team of advocates to tell lies. They were asked to produce alibi for Susrama. Mercadana and Rajin were said to say that on the day Prabangsa died on 11 February 2009, they were with Susrama. In fact, it was obvious that the house was empty and was used to as the crime scene.

The plan was set up in May 2009 at Bangli Regent's house. Mercadana and Rajin came there with five other construction workers to ask for payment. At the Regent's house, they met Susrama, who was with six lawyers.

"I was told to say that I worked the whole days, including on 11 February 2009, as the book of workers' presence was torn. Thus, he did not have record of my days off," said Mercadana. He was promised to get full payments including the three days where he was asked to have days off by Susrama.

Nyoman Rajin had the similar statement. He was told to lie by Susrama's nephew, Nyoman Talenan, when Rajin came to ask his payment.

When they got to work on 14 February 2009, both men saw ashes accumulated in the backyard resulting from blood-stained wood beams that had been burnt by the perpetrators.

The confessions of the two workers surprised the attendees. Susrama and the team of advocates were likely trying to win the case by promoting lies.

Chief of the panel of judges asked both witnesses whether or not it was the lawyer who had asked them to deceive the court. Mercadana pointed his finger at Suryadharma, one of Susrama's advocates. "That one, the man who wears glasses," he said.

Susrama's team of advocates attempted to rebuff Mercadana and Rajin's statements. Controlled by anger, Suryadharma asked Mercadana to give oath on the manipulation. "As a Hindunese and former pemangku (religious leader) you must tell the truth to the court," he said.

Susrama's team of advocates then showed a letter that Mercadana signed to the panel of judges. The letter clearly noted that on 11 February 2009, Mercadana was working in Susra-

ma's house.

Member of the panel of judges, Komang Wijayadi, exhibited the letter to Mercadana and asked whether he signed the letter. Mercadana said he was just copying the letter that Susrama's advocate gave him and signed it. The manipulation was revealed the more.

When the judge asked for confirmation, the six lawyers of Susrama's made opposing arguments. They insisted that on 11 February 2009, there were indeed workers present at Susrama's house.

Susrama did not stay in silence. He denied the statements made by Mercadana and Rajin. "That was a lie," he said.



IN the next trial, Gus Oblong was back on his previous testimony. In fact, two weeks earlier, one of Prabangsa's killers admitted that police tortured him to get the information that they wanted. "I happened to withdraw my deposition because another defendant threatened to kill me. It was Rencana," he said.

Gus Oblong said the lies he produced earlier caused him to be insomniac. Finally, in the next session, he returned to the deposition. "As of today, I will only offer truths," he said.

Despite the incriminating testimonies over him Susrama remained on his stance: not saying yes to attorney's prosecution. He in fact accused Mercadana, Rajin, and Gus Oblong of supplying the court with false information. "They're all lying," he said. ●

CHAPTER IX

Uncovering Legal Manipulation

MANIPULATION after manipulation was made public on the court. Everyone felt enraged about it. In addition, intimidation and possible murder targeted witnesses who might incriminate Susrama. Gus Oblong, for instance, withdrew his testimony after a threat of killing was aimed at him by Susrama's leading man, Nyoman Rencana.

When police grilled Rencana, the man had admitted his role in Prabangsa's murder. He said he killed the journalist because Prabangsa tried to blackmail the boss. Rencana's confession was a key information that the motive behind the murder was Radar Bali's coverage on manipulations in Bangli Education Agency's projects.

However, in the court, Rencana withdrew the confessions. The same went as well to other defendants. Out of eight Susrama's men who became witnesses and defendants, only Gus Oblong still referred to his confession in the deposition.

Prosecutors were at loss when the action came into being. To deny confessions of the defendants that they had been under torture during police interrogation, prosecutors had to

present police investigators before the court.

Given the unlikely situation, the advocacy team of prabangsa case and AJI Denpasar initiated the forming of Pers Freedom Advocacy Team which consists of senior advocates who were aksed assistance to monitor the court sessions. A total of 16 advocates were ready to join in the team. On 9 November 2009, the team was officially set up and ready to work.

The team consisted of Nyoman Sudiantara SH (Chief of Indonesia Advocate Congress of Bali), Agus Samijaya SH MH (former Director of Indonesia Legal Aid Association of Bali), Erwin Siregar SH, I Wayan 'Gendo' Suardana SH, Ari B Sunardi SH, Ika Nedy Wahyudi SH, Drs EW Indrawan SH, I Gusti Komang Ngurah Karyadi SH, I Made Suardana SH (Chief of Indonesia Advocate Association of Denpasar), Dewa Alit Sunarya SH, Ni Nyoman Sri Widhiyarti SH (Director of PGHI of Bali), I Ketut Sutrisna SH, I Nengah Jimat SH (Bali Legal Aid Agency), Remigius Jong SH, Raka Swarna SH, Wihartono SH, and Made Mustika SH.

The first meeting agreed to appoint Agus Samijaya team coordinator. Wayan 'Gendo' Suardana was signed up team secretary.

Agus Samijaya told reporters that, "measures will be taken to monitor the court sessions to run normally without manipulations. The case is a threat toward press freedom because the victim was journalist on duty," said Agus.

In each session, members of Press Freedom Advocacy Team would take turns to be the watchers. They also made evaluation on the court processes.

In fact, the team members offered advices to prosecutors, who were at times unable to handle the situation. On the contrary, should any prosecutor be seen less firm in digging facts,

the team would take notes and reported the findings to their superiors.

The advocacy team also held regular press conferences and released the evaluation of the court sessions to the press.

On 1 December 2009, the Press Freedom Advocacy Team personally met Deputy Head of Bali District Attorney, AF Darmawan, to file reports on a number of prosecutors seen as not persevering enough in looking for court facts.

The reports were welcomed. In the next court session, AF Darmawan and an assistant at the District Attorney, Made Parma, made their way to the court for the monitoring.



The team also engaged in a wider campaign in gaining public supports. They were benefited from numerous social media sites as Facebook and Twitter. Secretary of the Press Freedom Advocacy Team, Wayan ‘Gendo’ Suardana SH , for instance, set a fanpage on Facebook “Support Solving of Prabangsa’s Murder.” The public responded to the campaign quite well. Within a short while, 2,932 facebookers liked the fanpage despite the initial target of 2 thousand accounts.

The supports from Facebook were coming from across the nation. A number of NGO activists in Jakarta and press communities of all Indonesia joined the cause. Every detail on the courts session was posted on the group.

“Facebook has its own power, and unlimited networks,” said Gendo. “Today, Facebook can be a good media to boost campaign,” he said.

The group was a way of the advocacy team to express concern over violations against journalists and the importance to

fight against any misconduct against journalists. The use of social media sites was also important to measure people's responses over Prabangsa's case.

Comments posted on the group have average tones. They wanted maximum sentence was passed to Prabangsa's killer. ●

CHAPTER X

The Verdict

ON 10 November 2009, Prabangsa's wife, Prihantini, was presented as witness. When entering the court room, the woman who had gone through married life with Prabangsa for 14 years seemed rock-hard. She answered the questions from panel of judges on Prabangsa's activities prior to his disappearance calmly.

Prihantini said that day Prabangsa went out without saying anything. He did not return home at night as well. She then contacted Prabangsa's colleagues in Radar Bali. She decided to file a missing report to Denpasar Police on his husband.

Prihantini said the husband looked nervous two months prior to his death. Prabangsa had even said he would die ahead of Prihantini. However, Prabangsa never told Prihantini the source of his restlessness. "He kept everything by himself. I was afraid to ask him things," said Prihantini.

Now, Susrama's team of advocates had the turn to ask questions. They tried to have Prihantini's information of the cellular phone number that Prabangsa used to have. Prihantini insisted that Prabangsa only had one cellular phone number. Yet, she said she forgot it.

A Susrama's advocate, Teguh Santoso, kept asking about the cellular phone number. He in fact presented Prabangsa's cellular phone number in the deposition before the court and begged confirmation from Prihantini.

Prihantini inclined her head and started crying. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry," he said. Nonetheless, Teguh did not stop quizzing, causing Prihantini to shout and cry even harder. The court fell into silence. Chief of Panel of Judges, Djumain, called on Prihantini to take a rest.

The weep ended a series of witnesses' testimonies in the Prabangsa case. The general public now were now in await of the verdict.



ON 15 February 2010, a year after Prabangsa's death, Panel of Judges at the Denpasar District Court passed the verdicts for the nine defendants of the case.

Prior to passing the verdicts, chief judge Djumain presented all points of consideration made by the panel of judges. Djumain noted, "it was a brutal killing." The panel of judges finally pronounced Susrama guilty and gave him life sentence.

Susrama became as white as ghost upon hearing the verdict. He exchanged whispers with his lawyers. The 48-year-old man approached the microphone: "I'm filing an appeal. I'm not the murderer."

Susrama's lawyer Teguh Santoso nodded to the appeal attempt. He said the judges made mistakes for reconsidering withdrawn witnesses' testimonies. "This is wrong. The judges have acted like prosecutors," he said. Teguh insisted that the role his client played in the crime was not proven.

Susrama actually had lighter sentence than it was that the prosecutors demanded. Based on court facts, prosecutor Lalu Saifudin demanded death sentence for Susrama in a file he read by late January 2010. Saifudin said Susrama was the mind behind the murder. In addition, the crime scene took place in Susrama's house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang Village, Bangli.

In his defense, Susrama was resolute in denying all allegations. He in fact accused prosecutors fabricated the issue. "I will not say sorry on the the killing, for I have never committed any murder," he said.

The main concern of the panel of judges in passing verdicts had been the testimonies of Susrama's men. Although seven out of eight Susrama's men revoked their confessions in the deposition, the judges viewed that the withdrawal was made with no unclear reason. Therefore, their testimonies were still preserved.

After the panel of judges passed the verdicts, Prihantini cried. She kept crying her eyes out despite reporters' asking her about the verdict. "Are you satisfied with the verdict?" said a reporter.

"It doesn't matter whether or not I'm satisfied," said Prihantini. "If only I am, it won't give life to my husband," she said.



ONE by one, Susrama's men were given severe sentence. Rencana and Mangde, the executors of Prabangsa, were given 20 years in prison while Dewa Sumbawa and Maong got 8 years of imprisonment. Despite the same role that Maong played, Gus Oblong was only given five years. He was the only witness who did not pull out his confession in the deposition. Jampes and Endi were given nine months in jail.

Defendants	Role	Verdict
I Nyoman Susrama	mastermind	Life sentence
Komang Gede	Picking victim	20 years in prison
Nyoman Rencana	Executor and body carrier	20 years in prison
Komang Gede Wardana alias Mangde	Executor and body carrier	20 years in prison
Dewa Sumbawa	Driver of car carrying body	8 years in prison
Endi Mashuri	Washing away blood stains	9 months in prison
Darianto alias Jampes	Washing away blood stains	9 months in prison
Gus Oblong	Beat and throw out body	5 years in prison
Nyoman Suwecita alias Maong	Beat and throw out body	8 years in prison

Susrama's men gave different reactions upon hearing the verdicts. One mulled over the verdict, the other appealed immediately. Rencana was given 20 years in prison and filed for appeal.

Rencana's lawyer said the client was not involved in the killing. He provided several alibis. In the day of the murder, Rencana said he was at home and ready to collect debts from several people. To the panel of judges, he underscored the information by showing three receipts of debt repayments. However, according to the judges, the receipts did not explain anything.

Rencana also provided the court with another witness: Secretary of Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI) of Bangli, Nyoman Sukra. He said he paid a visit to Susrama's house in Banjar Petak, Bebalang, on 11 February 2009 and said he did not see Rencana on the spot. However, panel of judges refused the testimony. Sukra testified that he only reached the porch. In the meantime, Rencana was in the backyard.

Prior to passing the verdicts, panel of judges presented the

court with several points which incriminated and relieved defendants. Rencana was given severe penalty as he troubled the general public, especially the press. Rencana's action was against the teachings of Hinduism and caused losses to other people, especially victims' family. The deed was deemed ruthless and inhumane. However, Rencana was during the court sessions considered cooperative. Based on the considerations, he was given 20 years in prison. "I did not kill him," he said.

Rencana's wife, Ni Wayan Juliantini, cried as the verdict was passed. "Please, sir, please help my husband," said Juliantini. The woman of one child went unconscious when she was escorted out.



THE final court of Prabangsa case was not the end. The solidarity of Bali Journalists and the Advocacy Team of Prabangsa Case believed it was crucial to proceed with the alleged legal manipulations that Susrama's team of advocates committed.

Out of shame, Susrama's advocate tried to persuade two witnesses, Nengah Mercadana and Nyoman Rajin, to tell lies before the panel of judges. Both men were asked to support Susrama's alibis the day the murder occurred. Mercadana said it was Suryadharma who did the persuasion.

Using the ground, Bali Journalists Solidarity which consisted of various journalist associations like AJI, PWI Reform, PWI, Perwani, and PJI sued Suryadharma to Indonesia Advocates Association (Peradi) on alleged manipulations over witnesses.

On 20 February 2010, the Peradi meeting of Honorary Council of Denpasar pronounced Suryadharma guilty of violating advocates' code of conduct. He was then suspended for

six months.

“Suryadharma proves affecting Nengah Mercadana to provide false information,” said Chief of Peradi Honorary Council of Denpasar, Budi Adnyana. It was a violation against Article 7 letter e of Indonesia Advocates Code of Conduct.

In response with the verdict, Suryadharma filed an appeal. “The decision was not right as Article 7 of the Code of Conduct only specifies issues on affecting witnesses. In fact, during the event at the regent’s house, Mercadana was not appointed witness,” he argued.

Suryadharma doubted over the legality and authority of Peradi Honorary Council of Denpasar. “The Council was not legit was the members were not officiated by Peradi board,” he said.

Suryadharma also questioned the mistyping of the appellant. The first document said the appellant was “Bali Journalists Solidarity” while the response said “Bali Journalists Alliance.”

Bali Journalists Solidarity also decided to file an appeal over the verdict of Peradi Honorary Council. “It was too mild a sanction,” said Rofiqi Hasan of AJI Denpasar. “In fact, he committed quite serious legal manipulation. Imagine if Mercadana said yes to the persuasion and kept silent when the testimony was manipulated. The key player in the crime may be free,” said Rofiqi.



THERE months later in late April 2010, Bali District Court refused all appeals filed by the nine defendants. Panel of Judges of the High Court emphasized the life sentence given to Sus-

rama.

Chief Judge of Bali High Court, I Ketut Suamba, and two of panel members, Ni Wayan Maryati and Sunaryo, was of the same opinion with Denpasar District Court Judges who stated that Susrama was guilty of committing premeditated murder. The crime was committed in group against Prabangsa.

Rencana and Mangde were still given 20 years in prison.

The decision was conveyed by spokesperson of Denpasar District Court, Posma Nainggolan. “Bali High Court Judges certify all verdicts passed by the judges of Denpasar District Court judges,” said Posma.

Upon the the decision, all defendants by Gus Oblong, Jampes, and Endi, filed cassation appeal.

Four months later on 24 September 2010, the Supreme Court gave final decision on Prabangsa case. In a special press conference, Chief of Supreme Judges, Artidjo Alkostar, confirmed that the verdict for the six perpetrators of Prabangsa’s murder remained. Susrama was still given life sentence. Rencana, Komang Gede, and Mangde were given 20 years in prison. In addition, Maong and Dewa Sumbawa got eight years in prison.

“All cassation appeals were declined,” said Artidjo Alkostar. “Judex Factie (fact examiners) did not wrongly apply the law as various elements (witnesses and evidence) had been judicially considered,” said Artidjo. ●

**JUSTIN MAURITS HERMAN,
HARIAN RADAR BALI CEO**

I Did Not Expect the Murder was Caused by News Coverage



Justin Maurits Herman

When did you know the news of disappearance of your journalist, AA Gde Bagus Narendra Prabangsa?

Two days after Prabangsa was missing, his wife called. We then tried to locate him. At that time, I had not thought that the incident would have to do with the articles that had written. Earlier, to be honest, we thought that it was all about love affair. Prabangsa was once reprimanded on the issue. He said he will not be involved in any love affair anymore. So, there was not any slightest thought that the murder had to do with news coverage.

TINGGALKAN RUMAH

ANAK AGUNG PRABANGSA telah meninggalkan rumah pada hari Rabu, 11 Februari 2009. Saat meninggalkan tempat tinggalnya di Jalan Nusa Kambangan Denpasar mengenakan kemeja putih dan celana jins dan sepeda motor GL Pro. Sore hari sekitar



jam 15.00, Prabangsa yang berambut cepak itu sempat ke rumah ibunya di Taman Bali, Bangli. Di sana dia menitipkan motor lengkap dengan kunci dan helmnya.

Kata keluarganya, sore itu Prabangsa menerima telepon dari seseorang dan langsung pergi. Sejak itu pula yang bersangkutan tidak datang ke rumah

hingga Jumat malam kemarin. Bagi masyarakat yang menemukan diharapkan mengontak keluarganya ke HP 08123817233 atau ke nomor (0361) 417153. Atas perhatian semua pihak, pihak keluarga menyampaikan terima kasih.(*)

The story that initiate the investigation of Prabangsa murder case

fact asked the help of witchdoctors.

One said he would return after six days. It was Monday of the next week. It was true, indeed. On Monday, our reporters in Karangasem reported finding of a dead body believed as Prabangsa. That Monday, Prabangsa went home, lifeless.

How did you react over the case?

A friend commented that the killer must be in great revenge of Prabangsa following the condition of the body. However, I was in great doubt. Prabangsa was easy to befriended with and had no enemy. Prior to becoming a CEO, he dropped me home at times. I believe he was not a kind of journalist who had serious enemy.

What did Radar Bali do?

After Prabangsa was reported missing, we called for reporters to check all information they got. For instance, our crime reporters were asked to see victims of traffic accidents with vague IDs. Other reporters were asked to check the house of his former female friend. We have in

What Radar Bali did to unveil the case?

After the body was discovered, we assisted police to seek information. We gathered all colleagues of Prabangsa. We also dug his archives of news, either the articles had been published or not. He often wrote on Bangli as we do not have men reporting from there. So, Prabangsa felt the urge to write stories on Bangli because he came from there.

How did you become suspicious if Prabangsa's death was concerned with his stories?

When Chief of Bali Police called for a perusal over stories that Prabangsa wrote, we gave full access to the police to look into any files in Prabangsa's PC. Thence, we then knew that the murder was concerned with several stories that he produced. We also got information in Bangli, which emphasized the allegations. For instance, it turned out that Prabangsa's sister was told to resign from her office, a drinking water company belonging to Susrama.

How did police work on the case?

Earlier, the police thought the case had to do with a love affair. However, after two months, we had no clues. We were actually informed that police directed the investigation to the family of Bangli regent. Yet, we did not blow this case up. We did not want the public to get in the way of the investigation. Journalistically speaking, that was a mistake. But we did that to help the police solve the case as fast as they could. We let people guess the murder had to do with a love affair. Everytime police moved to Bangli, they would tell us. In fact, we were

informed when they found blood stains in the house of Bangli regent. But we did not write it.

How long did Radar Bali did not write about the story?

It was around three months. The point is that readers of Radar Bali were made belief that the investigation was going nowhere. When the police had collected evidence to name suspects, we were informed. Police asked us to stay calm until the key suspect was announced. After that, we gave readers everything.

Had Radar Bali ever been doubtful of police investigation?

No, we weren't. We knew police did their job. In addition to seeking information from formal ways, we also approached police investigators in person. We were always in the know of the progress.

Was the public pressure that AJI and other journalist organizations carried out prove effective?

It was effective. The general public will keep the case in mind. Several protests that other journalists did were effective enough in filling the space on the investigation progress. Police got high-spirited. We thanked the hard work attempted by our fellow journalists as we promised ourselves not to blow up the case.

Susrama has great influence in Bangli. How did you anticipate this?

This is where we should thank AJI and other journalist alliances. They made the move. It was they who ap-

proached PDIP high-ranking officials and told them not to see the case politically. That helps much as we have limited resources. When the official team of PDIP lawyers withdrew and refused to assist the suspect that was awesome. We owed them morally.

Journalists also initiated journalist solidarity movement to monitor the court sessions. Did it help as well?

It benefited us very much. We all knew our judicial system is not yet perfect. It is important to monitor a judicial process to run well. In addition to journalists, many advocates and activists were willing to join the movement.

After the trial, how did Radar Bali cover the case?

Emotionally speaking, we were siding with Prabangsa. He had worked with us for more than 10 years. It's normal that we have strong emotional bonding. But we still maintained to keep the proportion. The news coverage still refers to journalistic principles. We also published defendants' defense. We tried to be more mature.

How did the case affect the newsroom and Radar Bali's way of covering news?

We did the evaluation. It is agreed that in the future any problem that may occur to third party must be brought before the regular meetings. The implementation of journalistic code of conduct will be strictly done. Any story which potentially triggers conflicts must be supplied with direct confirmation.

Does Radar Bali fear stories on corruption?

We did. But later on, after everything is set, we will maintain our courage and critical thinking.

They said Prabangsa's murder was in line with blackmailing?

We heard the rumor. But until now, no official reports were delivered to the newsroom. Our journalists cannot receive gratification from our sources. I did not believe the rumor.

Did Radar Bali grant assistance to Prabangsa's family?

There was compensation from Jamsostek insurance worth Rp100 million and retirement fund worth Rp350 million. All compensations have been handed over to his wife. Jawa Pos President Director, Dahlan Iskan, said, "If Prabangsa's wife has difficulties, please come to Radar Bali." We have offered her to work here. But she said no to the offer. ●

CHAPTER XI

Epilogue

SUSRAMA now has to pay his vice. He gets life sentence and has to be put behind bars. He has to lose all priveleges he ever received as a relative of Bangli regent.

However, the story continues. Law enforcement targets him for a new case. As of 15 September 2011, Susrama has been brought before the court as defendant of alleged graft in the development of Kindergarten and International Elementary School in Kubu Village, Bangli. Susrama was charged causing the state to lose more than Rp2.6 billion. That was the case that Prabangsa once covered in Radar Bali.

In the charges, prosecutors, which was helmed by Gusti Agung Mega Adnyana, accused Susrama deliberately manipulated state funds through the project. In the project that had been started since 2006, Susrama acted as Chief of the Committee. He managed billions of rupiah of funds allocated from the State Budget and Bangli Regional Budget.

Prosecutors believed that the project resulted from a proposal of international-level kindergarten development which was presented by Education, Youth, and Sports Agency of Bangli, whose head was Anak Agung Ngurah Samba, to the National Education Department. The proposal was signed by

Bangli Regent, Nengah Arnawa, who also signed the MoU of a development project with the National Education Department on 9 June 2006.

After the proposal was approved, Arnawa then issued a decree on the committee of development. Defendan Susrama, his brother, was appointed Committee Chief.

Total fund spent for the project reached Rp16.5 billion and was channeled through State Budget and Bangli Regional Budget. “The disbursement was carried out in phases since 2006 to 2009,” said Mega Adnyana.

Adnyana then gave the details of the funds. The 2006 project worth Rp2.5 billion was financed by the 2006 State Budget at Rp1.5 billion and Regional Budget of Rp1 billion, which was used as secondary fund. The money was used to build elementary school building and elementary class rooms.

“The committee has to hand over the report of the project completion to the central government as part of the fund disbursement in 2007,” said Adnyana.

Nearing the 2007 project, Arnawa modified the structure of project committee through a decree. Despite changes in other members, Susrama was still assigned Chief of the Project Committee. This time, Rp3.5 billion of fund was disbursed through the 2007 State Budget and Rp2.5 billion was from Bangli Regional Budget.

“The Rp6 billion of funds were used to build more classrooms, laboratory, and arts and craft centers,” said Raka Arimbawa, another attorney.

The final phase of the project witnessed more disbursement in billions of rupiah of development fund. It reached Rp8 billion. Rp3 billion was from the 2008 State Budget while Rp5 billion was from Bangli Budget. A total of seven projects surfaced.

“The procurement of materials was done publicly while the construction project was carried out alone,” said Raka.

Attorneys believed the 2008 project fund of Rp8 billion had been manipulated. According to the prosecutor, all funds from the 2008 State Budget and Regional Budget were received by Susrama through BRI bank account under his name. The funds were transferred by Bangli Education Agency under the approval of Arnawa. “After the defendant received all funds, the defendant made reports as if all funds have been used properly for the school development,” said Adnyana.

Field inspection done by the Bali Public Works Agency over the project found that the project had only been completed by 47 percent. Only the outer part of the elementary school building had been fully completed. Other parts of the building were only built by around 25-30 percent.

“Based on th calculation on 23 December 2010, state has been injured by more than Rp2.6 billion,” said Adnyana. “In the 2008 fund management, the defendant had manipulated his office as well. He managed the funds by himself,” said Raka.

Provided the crime, attorneys charged Susrama with three articles. Primary charge used Article 2 section (1) in conjunction of Article 18 of Law No.31/1999, subsidiary charge of Article 3 in conjunction of Article 18, and subsidiary charge by using Article 9 in conjunction of article 18 of Law on Corruption Crime.

When asked to respond over the case, Susrama made an objection. To five judges chaired by Wisnu Kristiyanto, Susrama said the project was carried out properly. However, after a discussion with his advisor, Susrama did not file for exception. “Since the defendant is still detained in Bangli, we want verification process to be done fast. We’re not pleading for excep-

tion,” said Ngakan Dirga, the advocate.

After the court session, Susrama was escorted to Bangli penitentiary. Susrama shook hands with all member of the panel of judges and prosecutors.



THE graft case was put to court following the attorneys’ hard work. Since January 2010, Bali High Attorney tried hard to prove Susrama’s involvement in the alleged graft case on the development of international-level kindergarten and elementary school in Bangli.

“We are also coordinating with the National Education Department in Jakarta,” said Chief of Justice and Public Relations Division of Bali High Court, Endrawan. He said the investigation of the case was triggered by Prabangsa’s murder.

During the trial of Prabangsa case, Chief of Bangli Education Agency, Anak Agung Ngurah Samba, said the utilization of project development fund in 2008 should have been reported in the same year. however, until now, there was none.

Panel of judges of Denpasar District Court, which questioned Samba, also said that private execution over a government project violated Presidential Decree No.80/2003 on Goods and Services Procurement. The decree specifies that all projects worth more than Rp50 million have to be put to bidding process.

For now, the team of attorneys has questioned dozens of witnesses in the graft case. Partners distributing the project materials as well as former Bangli regent, Nengah Arnawa, have been questioned as well. Susrama’s appointment as head of the project was a result of his brother’s authority as Bangli Regent.



ON 17 September 2011, two and a half years after his death, Prabangsa's family performed ngaben (cremation) ritual for Prabangsa's body. A week before the ritual was held, the house of Prabangsa's parents in Bangli has been decorated. Activities could be seen in Bale Banjar Pande.

A total of 35 bodies were ready to be cremated. "It is the custom her to join the mass cremation with the exception goes to pemangku (priest) and pedanda (high priest)," said Prihantini.

The ritual offers opportunities for neighbours and relatives to say condolence. The big family of Radar Bali and Jawa Pos Group attended the ritual, saying the last prayer for the untimely departing of their colleague. In addition, a number of journalists and activists were there as well.

The key witness of Prabangsa's murder, Nengah Mercadana, was also present.

"I was trying to tell the truth. Nothing else matters," he told a Radar Bali journalist. He said he was worried for a while of the safety of his children and wife. "I want the truth be revealed," said Mercadana.

For the cremation ritual that day, Prabangsa's sekah (an ivory coconuts with some decorations (flower, etc.) where the ashes from cremation process will be placed) out of 35 others was put to the second row. "Prabangsa was carried with a petulangan in the form of lion," said Prabangsa's relative, Ketut Mardita. Other petulangan were in the forms of ox.

After two to three hours, the series of rituals ended. The ashes from the cremation process were washed away in the Sangsang River, Cempaga Village. During the procession, Prihantini accompanied her children, Anak Agung Istri Sri Hartati Dewandari and Anak Agung Gde Candra Dwipa.

“I and the kids will never forget him. However, as time goes by, we have to carry on with our lives. We must accept this bitter fact,” said Prihantini.

He said the memories of her living husband as well as the recollection of the murder that took his life have been haunting her mind. Prihantini said it is difficult for her to forgive the murderers of her children’s father. “I’m not in vengeance, nor I ever forgive,” said the woman. “We’re trying to accept all this. We believe that this is what it should be,” she said. ●