



# FRANK REED HORTON MEMORIAL LODGE NO. 379, F. & A. M.

UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE PHILIPPINES

Capitol Masonic Temple, Matalino St., Central Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

## Lecture No. 3 **Committee on Investigation**

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By: VW Antonio C. Zeta

Excerpts from Albert Mackey's "*Principles of Masonic Law*" and "*Jurisprudence of Freemasonry*" and PGM William Councill's "*Votaries of Honor*"

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### **A. The petitioner must be referred to a committee for an investigation into the character and qualification of the petitioner.**

1. The law, derived from the ancient Regulations of 1722, is...
  - a) explicit; that there should be an inquiry into the character of the petitioner.
  - b) silent as to the mode in which the inquiry will be made.
2. It might be made by the whole Lodge; every member considering himself as a member of the Committee on Investigation.

A cumbersome method and would hardly be unsuccessful because

- a) Of the number of inquisitors
  - b) Each would depend on his associates for the performance of an unpleasant duty
3. It has been the custom to refer to a committee, generally of three, always chosen by a skillful Master from among the members to make the inquiry with promptness, certainty and impartiality.
  4. The petition, thus submitted to the committee, cannot be acted on until the next regular meeting, at which time the committee make their report.
    - a) One month must elapse between the reception of the petition and action of the Lodge.
    - b) The Regulation of 1721 is explicit on this subject—that notice must be given “one month before.”
    - c) The object of the probationary period is that there may be “due inquiry into the reputation and character of the petitioner.”
  5. Our Constitution provides for this in Art. VI, Secs. 10 and 11.

The guidelines for this investigation is detailed in Edict 60 – Damaso C. Tria, as amended; Item 1); and, on the Reference for Petition of Degrees Form where the report of the committee is included.

## B. Masonic Investigation

1. Masonic investigation covers a broad field, but for this presentation, we shall limit its scope to that particular phase of investigation obtainable about a petitioner for the degrees of Freemasonry: his moral, mental and physical qualifications to become a Freemason, a member of our ancient Brotherhood.
  - a) It is incumbent for the committee, upon receipt of his petition for the degrees, to examine his personal background, habits, general philosophy of life, reputation in the community and among fellow-workers and associates.
  - b) They are to diligently inquire among those who know him best and who can be relied upon to furnish us unbiased information as much as possible.
  - c) From this information they are to collate and evaluate the petitioner's qualifications to become one of us.
2. The members of the committee are the first line of defense against external enemies of the Craft as well as those who, through indifferent character, might be prone to being a discredit to the Craft.
  - a) Our fraternal security depends in great part on the ability of the committee and their findings.
  - b) Each member should ever bear in mind that he may be investigating a petitioner who may one day become the Master of the Lodge, one who may sometime wear the "purple of the Fraternity" and rule and govern this Grand Jurisdiction.
  - c) He may be investigating one who may never become renowned in the Fraternity or ever attend Lodge meetings often but one who would accept the tenets and precepts of Freemasonry and live his future life in accord with the spirit of the Fraternity.
3. The investigator has much to consider during his inquiry.
  - a) How far does he go?
  - b) How deeply does he delve?
  - c) What questions are proper to ask?
  - d) Where is a satisfactory stopping place to his task?
4. There are no easier answers to these questions.
  - a) He should go far enough and deep enough to satisfy himself beyond doubt that the petitioner is indeed worthy of consideration for membership.
  - b) It should always be stressed that the investigator should not limit his inquiry to the Recommender. Nor, pressed for time, ask the other members of the committee for the results of their discoveries; and "go along" with their reports.
  - c) Each should make an independent inquiry and file his own report regardless of what the others may do. If he needs more time, the Master will grant him the time needed. *Freemasonry is in no hurry and works by no timetable.*
5. No investigation can be "fool-proof" and leaves no margin for errors or miscalculations.
  - a) Men change. A man may be one thing today, another tomorrow.
  - b) There are calculated risks. No amount of investigation can fully prevent these results.
6. The Master, in appointing the committee should not concern himself with the convenience of the investigator.
  - a) To appoint him because of his proximity to the petitioner.
  - b) Not all Brethren are adept or skilled at investigative work; but those selected must have the experience or talent for such.

- c) It is best for the Master to create a pool with such investigative talents and establish a mentoring system to develop such skills.
7. The Master should explain to the committee members their duties and what the Lodge requires of them.
  - a) There should be a broad outline of what normally constitutes a thorough investigation.
  - b) He should emphasize that no phase of the investigation should be left to chance or assumptions.
8. Members should be cautioned on the limitations to the scope of investigation.
  - a) Political inclinations and religious denominations have no bearing on the evaluation of the qualifications.
  - b) So long as the petitioner expressly believes in the existence of a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul, the investigator has no right to probe further or quiz the petitioner about his church affiliation or perhaps his lack of it.
  - c) Brother Mackey said it well – “no other religious test is necessary or proper for a candidate, except to declare himself a firm believer in the existence of a Supreme being.”
  - d) To probe further is to turn the investigation into an inquisition; which would be highly unMasonic on his part.
  - e) Politics is of no consequence and should never be discussed.
9. The investigator should be advised that
  - a) After a thorough and painstaking investigation
  - b) If there is still doubt in the petitioner’s qualifications, he should, without hesitation or variation, resolve the doubt in favor of the Lodge and not in favor of the petitioner.
  - c) No man has a right to become a Freemason; it is a privilege controlled at the ballot box.
10. Generally, all sources should be explored to lead to a complete picture of the petitioner.
  - a) He should be a man who first has Freemasonry in his heart.
  - b) A man of unimpeachable character who enjoys a good reputation
  - c) He should have no criminal record.
  - d) He should be a man who has a record of paying his just debts and living up to his word.
  - e) No record of living a dissolute life or having immoderate habits.
  - f) He should have sufficient education to be able to grasp and retain the precepts of Freemasonry as taught him in the Lodge.
  - g) He must be sufficiently fit physically to participate in the degrees.
  - h) He must have filed his petition of his own free will and accord.
  - i) He must be unbiased by any mercenary motives.
  - j) He should not view the Lodge as a stepping stone for what he thinks is something more desirable or where he can have fun; but where admission is dependent upon his being a member of the Lodge and in good standing.
11. Such inquiries must be conducted with utmost tact, discretion and as diplomatically as possible.

12. Derogatory information developed from the investigation does not become a subject for later gossip and rumors to the detriment of the petitioner whether accepted or rejected.
- A negative investigation is utterly worthless.
  - A favorable report is not acceptable because the investigator talked to a number of persons who say "I never heard anything against him."
  - What the investigator is looking for are positive statements attesting to the petitioner's good name, or his bad name, as the case may be.
13. What are the advantages of Masonic investigation?
- To preserve the reputation of the Craft
  - To preserve harmony
  - Promote our advancement and our progress in our service to God and man
  - Maintain our reputation before the world
  - Confound our enemies by accepting none but good men and making better men of them
    - Men we are proud to address as "Brothers"
    - Men who can be counted on to practice fidelity even unto death, if need be
    - To keep the faith of our Masonic ancestors and to pass it on *unsullied* to our Masonic descendants
    - Worthy men and worthy men only, are the ones we want. We cannot afford less.
14. The Lodge is dependent upon the investigator.
- So are the neighboring Lodges, our Grand Lodge and Freemasonry the world over.
  - When a man is admitted to the degrees and to the status as Master Mason, thousands upon thousands of doors are opened to him all over the Masonic world.
  - He is given the right to wear the Square and Compasses and to have a claim upon the kindness of millions of Freemasons.
  - Let us not forget one of the great maxims of Freemasonry:  
*"Careful inquiry into the physical, intellectual and moral fitness of every candidate to the mysteries of Freemasonry is indispensable."*
15. All the components of the Craft look to the investigator.
- For the security and well-being of our Fraternity.
  - When he has accomplished this duty with efficiency, zeal and impartiality, he will have rendered his Brethren, whithersoever dispersed, an invaluable service.
  - He will have complied with the dictates of his own conscience and the Masonic law which specifies his duty in this field.
16. His compensation will be...
- The satisfaction of a job well-done.
  - The knowledge that he has been the eyes and ears of the Craft during this period.
  - Whether spoken or not, he will have earned the gratitude of his Brethren

**The investigator has a solemn responsibility. He should look well to it!!!**

### **C. Unfavorable Report of the Committee**

1. If the report of the committee is unfavorable, the petitioner is at once rejected without ballot.
  - a) This usage is founded on the principle of common sense.
  - b) By our ancient Constitutions, one black cube is sufficient to reject a petition, the report of the committee must necessarily and by consequence include two unfavorable votes at least.
2. It is unnecessary to go into a ballot after such a report.
  - a) It is to be taken for granted that the brethren who reported unfavorably would, on a resort to a ballot, cast their negative votes.
  - b) Their report is virtually considered as casting of such votes, and the petitioner is, therefore, at once rejected without a further and unnecessary ballot.
3. Our Constitution provides for this in Art. VI, Sec.13.

### **D. Favorable Report of the Committee**

1. If the report of the committee be favorable, the next step in the process is to proceed to a ballot.
2. Our Constitution, however, provides an additional requisite in Art. VI, Sec. 16 – *“No balloting shall be had on the petition of a candidate unless his name shall have been regularly published in the Grand Lodge Circular (Circular Form No. 12)...”*
  - a) The Lodge Secretary, therefore, submits a duplicate of the petition to the Grand Lodge together with the other documentary requisites and necessary petition fee.
  - b) Balloting is done only after the name is circularized in the jurisdiction; proof thereon is presented as evidence with the name appearing in Circular Form No. 12.