

= Murder of Udin =

Fuad Muhammad Syafruddin (18 February 1963 ? 16 August 1996) , best known by his pen name Udin , was an Indonesian journalist who was murdered in 1996 . A reporter at the Yogyakarta , Java , daily newspaper Bernas , he published a series of articles on corruption in the Bantul Regency in the months before his death . On 13 August , he was attacked at his house by two unidentified assailants using a metal rod and taken to the hospital . He died three days later without regaining consciousness .

His murder became a national cause célèbre . Several independent inquiries concluded that local government officials had been involved . However , the Bantul police early on discounted a political motive . Instead , they arrested a local driver named Dwi Sumaji for the murder , alleging a motive of jealousy . Sumaji was later acquitted after the prosecution withdrew its case owing to a lack of evidence . The police in turn were successfully sued for their mishandling of the case and deliberate destruction of evidence . The murder has never been solved , and is expected to be unprosecutable after 2014 due to Indonesia 's 18 @-@ year statute of limitations on murder .

= = Life and journalism = =

Udin was born on 18 February 1963 , a date considered unlucky in the Javanese calendar as it fell on a kliwon Monday . His father was Wagiman Dzuchoti , a mosque watchman , and his mother was Mujiah ; Udin had five siblings . As a young man , Udin had wanted to join the Indonesian military , but was unable due to his family 's lack of political connections . Instead , he worked various manual labour jobs , including stonemason .

In the ten years prior to his death , Udin was a freelance reporter for Bernas , a daily newspaper of Yogyakarta , Java , owned by the Kompas Gramedia Group . He was known for writing about crime and local politics , and would also take pictures to illustrate his articles . Aside from his reporting , Udin and his wife Marsiyem owned a small store which developed pictures and sold stationary ; Marsiyem would usually manage the store .

In 1996 , Udin began a series of articles reporting on corruption in the regency of Bantul , a suburb of Yogyakarta , focusing particularly on the activities of Bantul 's regent Colonel Sri Roso Sudarmo . In one report , Udin stated that Sudarmo had paid a bribe of Rp . 1 billion (US \$ 111 @,@ 000) to President Suharto 's Dharmais Foundation to secure his reappointment that year . Udin also reported that Sudarmo had demanded that village heads guarantee a " 200 per cent " victory for Golkar (President Suharto 's party) in the upcoming legislative elections .

Following the publication of these articles , Udin began to complain of what he considered a campaign of official harassment . Some district officials had reportedly spoken to him about his writings , and others had threatened him with a libel action . As a result of this perceived harassment , Udin had filed multiple complaints with the Legal Aid Institute (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum) in Yogyakarta . Udin had also been offered bribes to cease his reporting and received threats of violence . When his wife asked him about the threats , he responded , " What I write is the facts . If I have to die , I will accept it . " The night of his murder , two men came to the Bernas office looking for him , but a secretary sent them away .

= = Murder = =

On 13 August 1996 at around 10 : 30 pm local time (UTC + 7) , Udin received two visitors outside his home in Bantul , off Parangtritis Road . The visitors claimed to want to leave a motorcycle with him for safekeeping , and reportedly had come the day before as well . While his wife Marsiyem was preparing tea , the men attacked him with a metal rod , striking him in the head and stomach . The assailants then escaped on a motorcycle they had parked in front of his home . Marsiyem found Udin unconscious on the ground , bleeding from his ears .

With the help of six youths passing in a jeep and a neighbour , Marsiyem took Udin to a small hospital nearby . The hospital was not equipped to treat Udin 's wounds , so he was transferred to

Bethesda Hospital , a Protestant institution in Yogyakarta . In a coma , he was diagnosed with a fractured skull ; a shard of bone had also punctured his skull .

Initially , coverage of the assault in Bernas was slow . The murder had occurred too late in the evening to be covered in the 14 August edition , and head editor Kufandhi ? due to press censorship ? was uncomfortable with covering a politically charged case . However , other staff members convinced him to give greater coverage , and the front page of the 15 August edition showed Udin covered in bandages and gave detailed information about the case . On 16 August , Udin died without having regained consciousness ; on the morning of his death , a breathing tube had been inserted .

After his death , Udin 's body was autopsied then brought to the Bernas office for a quick memorial service , in which the staff sang " Gugur Bunga " (" Fallen Flowers ") . The following day , Udin was buried in a small cemetery in Trirenggo , Bantul ; his burial attracted 2 @, @ 000 people . Udin was survived by his wife Marsiyem and two children , Krisna and Wikan .

= = Investigation and cause célèbre = =

Investigation into the assault began even before Udin 's death . The police began their investigation on 13 August , but were hampered as the crime scene had been contaminated during the commotion after the assault . Under the command of Sergeant Major Edy Wuryanto , the police began by collecting Udin 's notes and blood from his family ; the family had received several bags of blood from Bethesda and were planning to bury it with the body .

Meanwhile , five members of the Indonesian Journalists ' Association (Perhimpunan Wartawan Indonesia , or PWI) formed a fact @-@ finding team on 14 August under the leadership of Putut Wiryawan and Asril Sutan . The team read the articles written by Udin in the previous six months , looking for any coverage which could have led to the attack ; they concluded that most of his articles could have been a trigger . The committee eventually focused on the bribery allegations against Sudarmo , as those were the only ones exclusively covered in Bernas , as well as a case of election rigging . Another team , from Bernas , known as the " White Kijang " team for the type of car they drove , investigated the case independently when the PWI team failed to share the information they had gathered .

Udin 's death swiftly became a national cause célèbre , with the circumstances of his death and the resulting investigation covered extensively in national media . Muslim prayer services held by Bernas seven days after Udin 's death attracted hundreds of mourners and saw several community leaders give speeches on politics and Udin 's death . Others , such as Goenawan Mohamad , wrote poems and flowery obituaries .

Though police ruled out Udin 's political reporting as a motive in the early stages of the investigation , many reports focused on the theory that his killing had been related to his reporting on Sudarmo . One journalist quoted the regent as having said shortly before the murder that he would like to teach Udin " a lesson " . The police focused instead on allegations of infidelity ; in late August the police stated that Udin had been murdered by a jealous husband as a result of an extramarital affair with a woman named Tri Sumaryani , a Citizens Band radio enthusiast who had once dated Udin 's younger brother . However , Sumaryani soon admitted to the press that she had been paid to fabricate this testimony by a nephew of Sri Roso .

Meanwhile , the PWI and Bernas teams concluded that Udin had been murdered by a government official intent on saving face . By late September , Bernas was under political pressure to cease coverage of the case . One of the PWI team members , Putut , reported that his daughter had been nearly kidnapped and his home broken into . Several journalistic and human rights organisations stated their belief that the murder was likely connected with Udin 's reporting , including Amnesty International , which expressed its concern that allegations about the involvement of government officials had " not been properly investigated " . The Committee to Protect Journalists sent a letter to President Suharto that demanded a full investigation into Udin 's death , with the results made public . An independent report by the Indonesian Alliance of Independent Journalists praised the courage and neutrality of Udin 's reporting , stating , " he was not an NGO activist , nor was he involved in the

student movement . He was just an ordinary journalist who did an average job for a regional newspaper . " However , the regent denied these reports and rumours ; in a press conference on 23 August 1996 , he said that he was " at the receiving end of over @-@ dramatization " .

= = Arrest of Dwi Sumaji = =

On 21 October , the police arrested Dwi Sumaji , an advertising company driver , for the murder ; they alleged that Sumaji had killed Udin for having an affair with his wife , Sunarti . After Sumaji confessed to the crime , police announced that an iron bar and a T @-@ shirt , both stained with Udin 's blood , had been found in Sumaji 's home . Though Sumaji 's police @-@ appointed lawyer agreed that Sumaji had confessed to the crime , within a week Sumaji obtained independent counsel through whom he attempted to withdraw the confession . Marsiyem , who had seen her husband 's attackers , insisted that Sumaji was innocent . On 23 October , Bernas published a sketch of Udin 's attacker , drawn soon after the murder based on Marsiyem 's description , with a picture of Sumaji ; under Sumaji 's photograph , they wrote " Ditolak " (" rejected ") , drawing attention to the dissimilarities between the two .

Sumaji withdrew his confession , then alleged that police had encouraged him to confess after plying him with alcohol and bribing him with money , a prostitute , and a better job if he confessed to the crime . Sunarti , incredulous that her husband could be a murderer , wrote letters to several high @-@ ranking officials and bodies , including President Suharto . Only one , to the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) , received a reply : on 28 October , the commission announced that it would investigate irregularities in Sumaji 's arrest and internment . Meanwhile , Sumaji 's counsel and the White Kijang team located several witnesses to corroborate Sumaji 's account , including the prostitute .

The police continued the investigation , under pressure to finish quickly . Two reconstructions of the murder were conducted , drawing hundreds of spectators . One was done with Sumaji playing the role of the murderer , without his lawyers ' knowledge ; when the counsel found out , they removed him from the reconstruction . Eventually , police agreed to a deal with the counsel , in which Sumaji 's pre @-@ trial release was guaranteed in exchange for a promise from his lawyers to not sue for wrongful arrest . Sumaji was released on 17 December , awaiting trial . In early 1997 , Sumaji 's case was refused by the prosecutor 's office several times due to weak evidence .

= = Mishandling charges = =

On 7 November , Udin 's family announced their intention to sue the city for improper use of evidence . This announcement followed a report from police chief Mulyono that Udin 's blood had been disposed of in the southern sea off Parangtritis Beach as an offering to Nyai Roro Kidul , the area 's deity , to ensure quick resolution of the investigation . Marsiyem 's lawyers from the Legal Aid Institute (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum) filed a case in January 1997 against the police (national , provincial , and local) , and Edy Wuryanto . The lawsuit demanded Rp . 1 million (US \$ 36 @,@ 400) in damages . The police countered that the blood had been given voluntarily , and that Marsiyem hoped to exploit the situation .

The hearing began on 21 January 1997 , under the supervision of a three @-@ judge panel led by Mikaela Warsito . After both sides were unable to come to an amicable settlement , a several @-@ month @-@ long trial began , in which Udin 's family , Bernas reporters , and the police testified . On 7 April 1997 , Wuryanto was convicted of destroying evidence for taking the blood , which Marsiyem 's lawyers speculated was used to frame Sumaji . Only a small percentage of the damages were awarded , after the court ruled that testimony from Udin 's family ? whom they saw as having a conflict of interest in the outcome of the case ? was ineligible .

= = Trial of Sumaji = =

Shortly before Marsiyem 's case concluded , the members of the White Kijang team were assigned

to other , distant cities . After a final , unsuccessful , plea by Sumaji 's council on 5 May 1997 to drop the case , the prosecutor 's office appointed Amrin Naim to lead the case against Sumaji . On 15 July , after the legislative elections , the office filed charges ; the trial began on 29 July , with two members of the three @-@ judge panel that served in the Marsiyem case .

After a failed attempt by the defence to question the court 's jurisdiction , several witnesses were questioned over a period of several weeks , including Udin 's neighbours and wife , as well as Sudarmo 's nephew . The hearings , which were held on Mondays and Thursdays , were filled with spectators . At the trial , the defence suggested that a government conspiracy may have been responsible , but were told by the tribunal to focus on the case at hand . Further witnesses , including a key witness for the prosecution , came across as unconvincing ; they also changed their stories , reneging statements which they had made before the trial . Other witnesses for the prosecution , including several of Sumaji 's neighbours , testified that the driver could not have committed the murder because he was at home on the night of 13 August . Another said that the steel pipe said to be the murder weapon in court was different from that found with Udin 's blood on it .

On 2 October 1997 , the prosecution began to call more witnesses . Although attendance did not abate , most observers were police officers or paid spectators . One witness , who claimed to have participated in a sting operation to arrest Sumaji , was arrested for perjury . An officer who investigated Sumaji reported that he had pursued the driver based on instinct , not evidence . Wuryanto , while presenting his account , was contemptuous towards the defence and ordered by the judge several times to answer truthfully . On 3 November , the prosecution withdrew its case . Under Indonesian law , the judges had the right to find the subject guilty despite the prosecution 's withdrawal ; after further consideration , on 27 November , the tribunal acquitted Sumaji . Following the acquittal , Bantul police refused to investigate Udin 's murder further ; several of Yogyakarta 's police chiefs stated that the department had fulfilled its duty by arresting a suspect and sending him to trial .

= = Aftermath = =

On 6 June , several weeks after President Suharto resigned , Sudarmo was ousted from his office after students conducted a sit @-@ in at the Bantul Assembly House . He was soon convicted of corruption for his payment to the Dharmais Foundation , but the conviction was overturned by a higher court , after which Sudarmo retired . Wuryanto never served time for his disposal of Udin 's blood .

Sumaji 's defence initially prepared a legal case for wrongful imprisonment , but the driver chose not to pursue it . He was unable to work for three years due to the infamy he had acquired from the case , but by 2000 was driving a public bus near Mount Merapi . By 2000 , Marsiyem had married a neighbour , with whom she had a child .

The Alliance of Independent Journalists created the " Udin Award " in Udin 's honour , " given for exceptional contribution to press freedom " . In 2010 , the organisation also petitioned the National Police to take over the case , noting that under Indonesian law , the case could be declared " expired " in 2014 .