

>> HEAR YE, HEAR YE, HEAR YE,
THE SUPREME COURT OF
FLORIDA IS NOW
IN SESSION.

ALL WHO HAVE CAUSE TO PLEA,
DRAW NEAR.
GIVE ATTENTION, YOU SHALL BE
HEARD.

GOD SAVE THESE UNITED STATES,
THE GREAT STATE OF FLORIDA AND
THIS HONORABLE COURT.

>> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE
SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA.
PLEASE BE SEATED.

>> JUDGE CONTINI?
GOOD MORNING.

YOUR APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COURT
TODAY MARKS A SAD OCCASION,
SADDEST OF ALL FOR THE PUBLIC WE
SERVE.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HOW
JUDICIARY ULTIMATELY RESTS ON
THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE REPOSED
IN JUDGES BY THE PEOPLE.

YOU ARE HERE TODAY BECAUSE OF
ETHICAL FAILURES THAT HAVE
DAMAGED THE PUBLIC TRUST AND
CONFIDENCE.

BECAUSE NO ONE CAN UNDO WHAT YOU
HAVE DONE, WE HAVE COMMANDED YOU
TO APPEAR BEFORE US IN OPEN
COURT.

YOU ARE HERE TO RECEIVE A
REPRIMAND THAT IS BEING
BROADCAST THROUGHOUT THE STATE.
THIS IS A TASK THAT I DO NOT
ENJOY.

BUT IT'S CERTAINLY ONE THAT WE
AS A COURT REGARD AS VITALLY
NECESSARY.

IT IS ONE WAY WE CAN ASSURE THE
PUBLIC THAT WE TAKE THIS MATTER
VERY SERIOUSLY.

WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO PUNISH
JUDGES SUCH AS YOU IN A VERY
PUBLIC WAY.

YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF
VIOLATING CANON 1, 2A, 3B AND 3E
OF THE FLORIDA CODE OF JUDICIAL
CONDUCT.

THE CHARGES FILED AGAINST YOU
ARISE FROM SEVERAL EVENTS.
FIRST, THEY INVOLVE AN EX PARTE
E-MAIL YOU SEND TO THE BROWARD
COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE.
SECOND, YOUR FAILURE TO SEEK A
RECUSAL OR A TRANSFER THAT WOULD
HAVE PREVENTED DELAYS IN YOUR
DIVISION.

THIRD, THEY INVOLVE IMPERTINENT
REMARKS YOU MADE IN OPEN COURT
ABOUT A PENDING MATTER.

THE E-MAIL YOU SENT IN MARCH
2015 CONTAINED AN ILLEGAL FORM.
IT WAS ONE YOU THOUGHT THE
PUBLIC DEFENDER SHOULD USE TO
REQUEST MORE LENIENT SENTENCES.
BUT YOU FAILED TO GIVE COPIES TO
THE BROWARD STATE ATTORNEY'S
OFFICE UNTIL MANY DAYS LATER.
PARTLY AS A RESULT, THE STATE
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FILED A MOTION
TO DISQUALIFY YOU FROM ALL
PENDING CRIMINAL CASES.

YOU DENIED THE MOTION AS
ILLEGALLY INSUFFICIENT, BUT THE
PROBLEM DID NOT END THERE.
THIS SITUATION LED TO THE SECOND
MATTER OUTLINED IN THE CHARGES
AGAINST YOU.

AFTER YOU DENIED THE MOTION TO
DISQUALIFY, THE STATE ATTORNEY'S
OFFICE SOON FILED A PETITION
WITH THE FOURTH DISTRICT COURT
OF APPEAL.

THAT PETITION SOUGHT TO
DISQUALIFY YOU FROM A LIST OF
962 CASES.

ELECTED THE FOURTH DISTRICT--
IT LED TO THE FOURTH DISTRICT
ISSUING A SHOW CAUSE ORDER AND
YOUR WORK IN THE DISTRICT WAS
FROZEN, UNABLE TO PROCEED FOR A
SIGNIFICANT PERIOD OF TIME.
DESPITE THE SERIOUS IMPACT OF
DELAY, YOU FAILED EITHER TO
RECUSE YOURSELF
OR TO SEEK AN
ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSFER.
INSTEAD, YOU REMAINED IN THE

DIVISION HOPING FOR PERSONAL VINDICATION.
IT WAS DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME THAT THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION FIRST SERVED YOU WITH A NOTICE THAT IT WAS INVESTIGATING YOUR CONDUCT. IN MEETINGS AT THIS TIME WITH THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION INVESTIGATIVE PANEL, YOU ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE E-MAIL YOU SENT WAS A SERIOUS MISTAKE. YOU APOLOGIZED.
YOU OFFERED NO EXCUSES. YET DESPITE THESE INTERACTIONS WITH THE JQC, YOU COMPOUNDED YOUR MISCONDUCT IN WAYS THAT LED TO THE THIRD MATTER IN THE CHARGES AGAINST YOU.
IN AUGUST 2015 IN OPEN COURT, YOU LOST YOUR TEMPER IN A SERIES OF EXCHANGES.
YOU REFERRED TO THE LIST OF CASES PENDING IN THE FOURTH DISTRICT AS, QUOTE, DISINGENUOUS TO, END QUOTE.
YOU CHARACTERIZED THE LEGAL EFFORT TO DISQUALIFY YOU AS, QUOTE, A LIE FROM THE PIT OF HELL, END QUOTE.
YOU SAID IT WAS A FRAUD UPON THE DISTRICT COURT.
YOU CALLED THE PERSON WHO COMPILED THE LIST AN IDIOT AND PUBLICLY WISHED THAT THE FOURTH DISTRICT WOULD PUNISH THAT PERSON.
JUDGE CONTINI, THE ATTORNEY WHO COMPILED THAT LIST WAS NOT PRESENT IN THE COURTROOM DURING YOUR TIRADE, YET YOU CHASTISED HER BY NAME AND ACCUSED HER OF MAKING MISLEADING AND FRAUDULENT ALLEGATIONS.
THOSE ARE SERIOUS CHARGES DELIVERED AGAINST AN ATTORNEY, AS YOU CERTAINLY KNOW.
YET YOU MADE THEM BASED ON LITTLE MORE THAN PERSONAL ANGER. IN ANOTHER INSTANCE, YOU

THREATENED A STATE ATTORNEY WITH CONTEMPT OF COURT AND ACCUSED HIM OF MISBEHAVIOR.

YOU ORDERED THE BAILIFFS TO ESCORT THE STATE ATTORNEY FROM THE COURTROOM AFTER THE EXCHANGE.

ONLY AFTER THESE THINGS OCCURRED DID YOU FINALLY SEEK AN ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSFER.

WHEN THE JQC CONFRONTED YOU WITH THIS ADDITIONAL CONDUCT, YOU AGAIN OFFERED NO EXCUSES.

THIS TIME YOU ADMITTED THAT IT PERSONIFIED INCIVILITY.

IN HIS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, THE JQC SUGGESTED THAT YOU WERE A NEW JUDGE AT THE TIME.

IT FOUND THAT YOU UNDERESTIMATED THE PROCESS OF TRANSITIONING TO THE BENCH.

TO YOUR CREDIT, YOU HAVE ADMITTED THE NATURE OF YOUR MISCONDUCT AND ACCEPTED FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT AT EVERY STAGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

THE JQC CONCLUDED THAT YOU EXPRESSED SINCERE REMORSE. FURTHERMORE, YOU TOOK STEPS TO REMEDY THE ETHICAL BREACH CAUSED BY YOUR INITIAL EX PARTE COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC DEFENDER.

YOU DID SO BY NOTIFYING THE STATE WITHIN A WEEK.

THE RECORD FURTHER REFLECTS THAT YOU HAVE OFFERED APOLOGIES. YOU ALSO HAVE AGREED TO UNDERGO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND SEEK JUDICIAL MONITORING FROM EXPERIENCED JUDGES.

WERE IT NOT FOR THIS MITIGATING CONDUCT, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN INCLINED TO IMPOSE MORE SEVERE SANCTIONS HERE TODAY.

I SAY THAT TO UNDERSCORE HOW SERIOUS WE VIEW YOUR MISCONDUCT. IT IS VERY SERIOUS, INDEED. YOUR ACTIONS DAMAGED PUBLIC

CONFIDENCE IN YOU AS A JUDICIAL OFFICER AND IN THE COURT AS AN INSTRUMENT OF JUSTICE.

IN SUM, YOUR MISCONDUCT STRUCK AT THE VERY ROOTS OF AN EFFECTIVE JUDICIARY.

AND THAT IS THE REASON WHY WE SUMMONED YOU HERE TODAY, TO BE PUBLICLY REPRIMANDED IN OPEN COURT IN A WAY THAT CAN BE WATCHED BY ANYONE IN THE STATE. FINALLY, JUDGE CONTINI, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO REVIEW THE PRIOR DISCIPLINARY DECISIONS THIS COURT FROM TIME TO TIME HAS PUBLISHED.

YOU WILL FIND MANY THAT HAVE BEEN, THAT HAVE INVOLVED A SINGLE BREACH OF ETHICS DURING A JUDGE'S CAREER WITH NONE THAT FOLLOWED AFTERWARDS.

WE HOPE THAT THIS ALSO WILL BE THE CASE WITH YOU.

IF IT IS NOT, WE OFFER YOU A FIRM WARNING NOW.

YOU ALSO WILL FIND A LESSER NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH JUDGES DID NOT LEARN FROM THEIR MISTAKES AND COMMITTED A SECOND VIOLATION.

WE ADVISE YOU TO REMEMBER WHAT OUR PRIOR CASES HAVE CONSISTENTLY HELD.

ANOTHER ETHICAL BREACH BY YOU WILL BE VIEWED FAR MORE HARSHLY. YOUR PUBLIC REPRIMAND IS CONCLUDED, AND YOU MAY LEAVE THE COURT.