

>> ALL RISE.
HEAR YE, HEAR YE, HEAR YE,
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.
>> GOOD MORNING.
WELCOME TO THE FLORIDA SUPREME
COURT.
THE FIRST CASE THIS MORNING IS
THE REPRIMAND OF JUDGE JERRI
COLLINS.
JUDGE COLLINS, IF YOU WOULD
PLEASE STAND.
JUDGING COLLINS, WE HAVE
SUMMONED YOU HERE TODAY BECAUSE
OF CONDUCT WHICH THIS COURT HAS
DETERMINED TO BE IN VIOLATION OF
THE CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT.
AND WHICH NOW REQUIRES US TO
IMPOSE APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE.
AS A PREAMBLE TO THE CODE OF
JUDICIAL CONDUCT RECOGNIZES,
JUDGES INDIVIDUALLY AND
COLLECTIVELY MUST RESPECT AND
HONOR THE JUDICIAL OFFICE AS A
PUBLIC TRUST AND STRIVE TO
ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN COMPETENCE
IN OUR LEGAL SYSTEM.
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR
JUDICIARY RESTS, ULTIMATELY, ON
THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THAT
THE PEOPLE CONFER UPON JUDGES.
AS A RESULT, ONE OF THIS COURT'S
MOST IMPORTANT DUTIES IS TO
CARRY OUT THE RESPONSIBILITY
GIVEN TO US IN THE FLORIDA
CONSTITUTION TO DISCIPLINE
JUDGES WHO ARE IN MISCONDUCT.
JUDGE COLLINS, YOU VIOLATED
CANONS 1, 2, A, 3B, SUB-4 OF THE
CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT IN
THE COURSE OF PRESIDING OVER THE
CASE OF STATE V. MILES BRENNAN
IN SEMINOLE COUNTY.
IT OCCURRED WHEN YOU BERATED AND
BELITTLED A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC

VIOLENCE FOR FAILING TO RESPOND TO A SWEEP THAT ISSUED-- SUBPOENA ISSUED BY THE STATE ATTORNEY TO TESTIFY IN THE TRIAL AGAINST HER ABUSER WHO WAS THE FATHER OF HER CHILD. AS A RESULT OF THE VICTIM'S FAILURE TO APPEAR, THE STATE WAS UNABLE TO PROCEED WITH THE TRIAL.

CONSEQUENTLY, THE STATE DISMISSED THE CHARGE AGAINST THE DEFENDANT FOR DANGEROUS EXHIBITION OF A WEAPON, AND THE DEFENDANT ACCEPTED A PLEA TO A REDUCED CHARGE OF SIMPLE BATTERY.

JUDGE COLLINS, YOU ISSUED AN ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE, WHY THE VICTIM SHOULD NOT BE HELD IN CONTEMPT OF COURT FOR VIOLATING THE TRIAL SUBPOENA BY FAILING TO APPEAR FOR TRIAL.

WHEN THE VICTIM APPEARED BEFORE YOU, YOU INSTITUTED THE CRIMINAL INTENT PROCEED BEINGS IN WHICH THE VICTIM WAS NOT REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, NOR ADVISED OF HER RIGHT TO PRESENT EVIDENCE OR TESTIMONY ON HER OWN BEHALF. DURING THE CONTEMPT PROCEEDINGS, YOU WERE DISCOURTEOUS AND IMPATIENT TOWARD THE DISTRAUGHT VICTIM.

THE VICTIM APOLOGIZED FOR FAILING TO APPEAR, CITING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND A DESIRE TO MOVE ON FROM CONTACT WITH HER ABUSER AS REASONS WHY SHE DID NOT APPEAR FOR TRIAL.

MEANWHILE, JUDGE COLLINS, YOU RAISED YOUR VOICE, USED SARCASM, SPOKE HARSHLY AND INTERRUPTED THE VICTIM.

YOU FOUND THE VICTIM IN CONTEMPT OF COURT AND SENTENCED HER TO SPEND THREE DAYS IN JAIL EVEN THOUGH THE VICTIM PLEADED WITH YOU THAT SHE NEEDED TO TAKE CARE OF HER ONE-YEAR-OLD CHILD. FURTHERMORE, YOUR BEHAVIOR CREATED THE APPEARANCE OF PARTIALITY TOWARD THE STATE. WHILE IN THIS INCIDENT YOU

ENTERED INTO A STIPULATION WITH THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION ADMITTING YOUR MISCONDUCT AND STIPULATING TO A PUBLIC REPRIMAND.

YOU EXPLAINED YOUR GOOD FAITH BELIEF THAT YOU WERE EXERCISING APPROPRIATE LEGAL AUTHORITY IN HOLDING THE VICTIM IN DIRECT CRIMINAL CONTEMPT FOR FAILING TO APPEAR IN RESPONSE TO THE A SUBPOENA.

YOU ACKNOWLEDGED THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE PATIENT, USED LESS INFLAMMATORY AND SARCASTIC LANGUAGE AND USED A LESS AGGRESSIVE TONE DURING THE PROCEEDINGS.

YOU ACCEPTED FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CONDUCT AND EXPRESSED REMORSE THAT YOUR CONDUCT BROUGHT UNNECESSARY CRITICISM UPON YOUR COURT AND THE ENTIRE JUDICIARY AND COULD IMPAIR THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF THE FAIRNESS AND IMPARTIALITY OF FLORIDA'S JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

WE ORDERED YOU TO COMPLETE AN ANGER MANAGEMENT COURSE AND ATTEND A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURSE PROVIDED BY THE FLORIDA JUDICIAL COLLEGE.

WE FURTHER ORDERED YOU APPEAR HERE TODAY TO BE PUBLICLY REPRIMANDED ON LIVE TELEVISION THAT THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THAT CONDUCT SUCH A AS YOURS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

JUDGE COLLINS, THIS IS, INDEED, A SAD DAY FOR YOU, A SAD DAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA AND A SAD DAY FOR THE JUDICIARY UPON WHICH OUR PEOPLE DEPEND FOR JUSTICE.

I CANNOT EMPHASIZE ENOUGH HOW INTOLERABLE YOUR BEHAVIOR WAS IN THIS CASE.

FINALLY, I ALSO ADVISE YOU TO CONSULT THE LENGTHY BODY OF CASE LAW ISSUED BY THIS COURT IN DEALING WITH REPEATED CASES OF JUDICIAL MISCONDUCT BY A SINGLE JUDGE.

YOU WILL FIND THAT THIS COURT

HAS VIEWED ANY LATER VIOLATIONS
BY THE SAME JUDGE VERY HARSHLY,
INDEED.
YOU'RE FREE TO LEAVE.