

**BEFORE THE INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE  
FLORIDA JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION  
STATE OF FLORIDA**

INQUIRY CONCERNING A  
JUDGE NO. 07-64

SC07-\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTICE OF FORMAL CHARGES**

TO: Honorable Ralph E. Eriksson  
Seminole County Judge  
Criminal Justice Center  
101 Bush Blvd.  
Sanford, Florida 32771

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Investigative Panel of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission, by a vote of the majority of its members, pursuant to Rule 6(f) of the Rules of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission and Article V, Section 12(b) of the Constitution of the State of Florida, finds that probable cause exists for formal proceedings to be instituted against you. Probable cause exists on the following formal charges:

1. In State of Florida v. Bob Lee Walton, Seminole County Case # 06-MM-012701-A, Mr. Walton was charged with Driving Under the Influence and Driving in Violation of the terms and conditions of a Business Purposes License. This case had been previously charged in Circuit Court due to an allegation of Possession of Cocaine that was subsequently dropped.

- a. Since there was a video of the traffic stop and the cocaine was mentioned on the video, counsel for the defendant had filed a motion to redact portions of the video. To accomplish this task, the State and the defense jointly moved to continue the case. The Court declined to do so, suggesting that the case had been pending too long.
- b. Subsequently, the defendant asked his lawyer to file a Motion to Recuse. When told this, you expressed that you were not satisfied that the defendant's bail of \$3,500.00 was sufficient to insure his presence, so you revoked the bond, ordered a new \$10,000 bond, and ordered the defendant taken into custody.
- c. As a result the defendant was taken into custody and spent the next 11 hours in the Seminole County Jail until his family was able to arrange for bail.
- d. When counsel for the defendant stated that his client was withdrawing his suggestion of recusal and was ready for trial, you ignored that statement, stating that you had granted the defendant's motion to continue.
- e. In response to questioning by the Investigative Panel of the Commission, you stated that the sole reason for revoking Mr. Walton's bond and imposing a new bond was in response to his Motion to Recuse.

- f. Your actions were calculated to punish the defendant for exercising a legitimate legal right, and so your actions were punitive and vindictive, undermining the orderly administration of justice.
- g. This charge is governed by Canons 1, 2A, and 3B of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

2. In State of Florida v. Daniel Bradshaw, Seminole County Case # 05-7182-MMA, Mr. Bradshaw was charged with Possession of Cannabis and Possession of Paraphernalia.

- a. On Monday, April 3, 2006 the case was set for jury selection and trial. Counsel for the defendant had indicated that he desired to enter a guilty plea. On April 6, 2006, as the Court began the plea colloquy, the defendant asked why his Motion to Suppress had not been heard.
- b. After the Court indicated that it did not become involved in what motions the parties desired to be heard, the defendant then decided to maintain his plea of not guilty. In response you stated that the defendant had interrupted the administration of justice, revoked his release on recognizance, imposed a monetary bond of \$5,000.00, and remanded Mr. Bradshaw to the custody of the Sheriff.

- c. In response to questioning by the Investigative Panel, you acknowledged familiarity with the defendant's surname and as a result "felt that he was aware of the court system".
- d. In regard to Mr. Bradshaw particularly, in describing him to the Investigative Panel, you characterized him by stating, "He's kind of a pathetic little character. Kind of looked like Sammy Davis, Jr."
- e. Your actions were calculated to punish the defendant for exercising a legitimate legal right, and so your actions were punitive and vindictive, undermining the orderly administration of justice.
- f. This charge is governed by Canons 1, 2A, and 3B of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

These acts, if they occurred as alleged, violated the Code of Judicial Conduct as follows: Canon 1 (impairing the confidence of the citizens of the state in the integrity of the judicial system and in you as a judge); Canon 2A (respect and compliance of the law); 3B (4) (patience, dignity and courtesy in dealing with litigants and lawyers in official capacity); 3B (7) (according all parties the right to be heard).

The foregoing conduct, if proven as alleged, would constitute conduct unbecoming a member of the judiciary; would demonstrate your unfitness to hold the office of judge; and would warrant discipline, including but not limited to reprimand, fine, suspension with or without pay, lawyer discipline or your removal

from your judicial office.

You are hereby notified of your right to file a written answer to these charges within twenty (20) days of service of this notice upon you. The original of your response and all subsequent pleadings must be filed with the Clerk of the Florida Supreme Court, in accordance with the Court's requirements. Copies of your response should be served on the undersigned Associate General Counsel, for the Judicial Qualifications Commission, 1110 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303 and John R. Beranek, Counsel for the Hearing Panel, Post Office Box 391, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Michael L. Schneider  
Associate General Counsel  
(850) 488-1581  
Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Florida Bar No. 525049  
1110 Thomasville Road  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Notice of Investigation has been furnished by certified mail 7001 2510 0007 6248 3800

to the Honorable Ralph E. Eriksson, Seminole County Courthouse, 301 Park Ave., Sanford, Florida 32771, this 5th day of September, 2007.

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Michael L. Schneider  
Associate General Counsel