



THE TENNESSEE COURT OF THE JUDICIARY

511 Union Street
Suite 600
Nashville, TN 37219

JUDGES OF THE TENNESSEE
COURT OF THE JUDICIARY

December 6, 2011

Michael W. Catalano, Clerk
100 Supreme Court Building
401 Seventh Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37219-1407
615-253-1470

Chris Craft
Presiding Judge
Timothy R. Discenza
Disciplinary Counsel

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Patrick J. McHale
Assistant Disciplinary Counsel

The Honorable David Bales
600 Market Street, Suite 203
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402

Don R. Ash
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Dwight E. Stokes
D. Kelly Thomas, Jr.
Thomas T. Woodall

RE: Complaint of Judge Rebecca Stern
File No. 11- 4440

Complaint of Hiram G. (Hank) Hill
File No. 11-4430

Dear Judge Bales:

This letter shall serve as a public letter of reprimand pursuant to your agreement with an investigative panel of this Court.

This reprimand relates to two complaints, one of which was filed by Judge Rebecca Stern, and one of which was filed by Attorney Hiram (Hank) Hill.

The pertinent portion of both of these complaints relate to two different incidents. In the first incident it is alleged that after the appeal by an attorney of a bond which had been set by you in a matter involving an arrested defendant, you inappropriately summoned the attorney to your Court when no matter had been set involving the case, for the purpose of questioning the attorney regarding the attorney's appeal of the bond. It is further alleged that you made statements, knowing that members of the news media were present, questioning Judge Stern's setting of a lower bond. It is further alleged that you raised the new bond set by Judge Stern after the appeal of your bond setting even though the defendant had waived his appearance in your

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court and the Assistant District Attorney had indicated to you doubts about your jurisdiction to set a new bond.

The second incident alleges that you publicly, in the presence of the news media, voiced criticism of the lowering of a bond originally set by you, which was appealed to Criminal Court Judge Steelman.

Upon receiving notice of these two complaints from Disciplinary Counsel you promptly responded admitting the factual basis for the complaints. During subsequent discussions with Disciplinary Counsel you acknowledged that although your intention during the course of these two incidents was to express your concern concerning certain law enforcement matters, you now realized that your actions were inappropriate in both of these matters. You further expressed your intention to refrain from public comment or criticism concerning pending matters handled by other members of the Judiciary and to carefully ensure that the rulings of Superior Courts on appeals from your Court are given full effect.

Your actions in the above cases were a violation of Canon 2A which requires that "A Judge shall respect and comply with the law and shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Judiciary." Accordingly this letter constitutes a public reprimand for your actions.

Sincerely Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Craft", written over a horizontal line.

Chris Craft
Presiding Judge

CC/bep