THOMAS C. BRADLEY, ESQ. Bar No. 1621 Sinai, Schroeder, Mooney, Boetsch, Bradley and Pace 448 Hill Street Reno, Nevada 89501 Telephone (775) 323-5178 Tom@TomBradleyLaw.com

Prosecuting Officer for the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline



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# BEFORE THE NEVADA COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE

IN THE MATTER OF THE HONORABLE JENNIFER HENRY, Hearing Master for the Eighth Judicial District Court, Family Division, County of Clark, State of Nevada,

Respondent.

CASE NO. 2016-142-P

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## FORMAL STATEMENT OF CHARGES

COMES NOW Thomas C. Bradley, Prosecuting Officer for the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline ("Commission" or "NCJD"), established under Article 6, Section 21 of the Nevada Constitution, who, in the name of and by the authority of the Commission, as found in NRS 1.425 - 1.4695, files this Formal Statement of Charges and informs the Respondent, the Honorable Jennifer Henry, Hearing Master for the Eighth Judicial District Court, Family Division, County of Clark, State of Nevada ("Respondent"), that the following acts were committed by Respondent and warrant disciplinary action by the Commission under the Revised Nevada Code of Judicial Conduct ("the Code").

#### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

In or about October 10, 2016, Respondent knowingly, and in her capacity as a Hearing Master for the Eighth Judicial District Court, Family Division, County of Clark, State of Nevada, engaged in the following acts or a combination of these acts ("acts or actions"):

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On October 10, 2016, Respondent served as the assigned hearing master in a contested juvenile hearing in which a juvenile was accused of running away from police officers after the police officers had approached a group of teenagers who were on the street smoking marijuana at 3:00 a.m. in the morning. As part of a plea agreement, the juvenile, through her counsel, agreed to plead guilty to obstructing an officer, a misdemeanor offense, with all other charges dismissed in exchange for the prosecutor's sentencing recommendation that the juvenile be given six-months of probation. The juvenile was represented by Aaron Grigsby, a court appointed attorney. Notably, Respondent and Mr. Grigsby had a strained professional relationship going back several years.

After the plea was entered, Respondent began to ask the juvenile questions regarding her use of a cell phone which was unrelated to the underlying criminal matter. Counsel Grigsby advised the Respondent that he did not wish to have his client admit to something that could get her into more trouble. Respondent ignored counsel's objection which was based on the juvenile's Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination and repeatedly asked the juvenile to answer her questions about the juvenile's use of a cell phone.

Respondent lost her temper as Counsel Grigsby continually objected to Respondent's repeated attempts to question the juvenile regarding the cell phone, and shouted, "ENOUGH", numerous times to Counsel Grigsby. Respondent then called a recess, and upon resumption of the hearing, and again began asking the juvenile to answer her questions regarding the juvenile's cell phone. Counsel Grigsby continued to object noting that he did not want his client to admit to anything that could result in additional charges.

The juvenile followed the advice of her counsel and refused to answer Respondent's questions regarding the cell phone. Respondent then stated that she was sentencing the juvenile to nine (9) months of probation instead of six (6) months because the juvenile declined to answer her questions regarding the use of a cell phone. During the hearing, Respondent also advised Counsel Grigsby he was obstructing the hearing, making prejudicial comments, and that his misconduct was not an isolated incident.

The Respondent's actions described above violated the Code, including Judicial Canon 1, Rule 1.1, failing to comply with the law, including the Code; Rule 1.2, failing to promote confidence in the judiciary; Canon 2, Rule 2.2, failing to uphold and apply the law and failing to perform all duties of her judicial office fairly and impartially; Rule 2.3 failing to be free from bias; Rule 2.5(A) failing to perform judicial and administrative duties competently and diligently; Rule 2.6(A), failing to accord a party's right to be heard; and Rule 2.8 (B), failing to be patient, dignified, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, court staff, court officials, and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity. The Respondent abused her judicial authority by engaging in any or all, or any combination of, the acts listed above.

#### **COUNT ONE**

By engaging in the acts, or combination of the acts, listed above, by sentencing the juvenile to a harsher sentence because the juvenile elected to exercise her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination, Respondent violated the Code, including Judicial Canon 1, Rule 1.1, failing to comply with the law, including the Code; Rule 1.2, failing to promote confidence in the judiciary; Canon 2, Rule 2.2, failing to uphold and apply the law and failing to perform all duties of her judicial office fairly and impartially; Rule 2.3, failing to be free from bias; and Rule 2.5(A) failing to perform judicial and administrative duties competently and diligently. The Respondent abused her judicial authority by engaging in any or all, or any combination of, the acts listed above.

#### **COUNT TWO**

By engaging in the acts, or combination of the acts, listed above, in failing to be patient, dignified and courteous to the juvenile and Counsel Grigsby, Respondent violated the Code, including Judicial Canon 1, Rule 1.1, failing to comply with the law, including the Code; Rule 1.2, failing to promote confidence in the judiciary; Canon 2, Rule 2.2, failing to uphold and apply the law and failing to perform all duties of her judicial office fairly and impartially; Rule 2.5(A) failing to perform judicial and administrative duties competently and diligently; Rule 2.6(A), failing to accord a lawyer's right to be heard; and Rule 2.8 (B), failing to be patient, dignified, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, court staff, court officials, and others with whom the judge

deals in an official capacity. The Respondent abused her judicial authority by engaging in any or all, or any combination of, the acts listed above.

Based on the information above, the Commission shall hold a public hearing on the merits of these facts and Counts pursuant to NRS 1.4673 and, if violations as alleged are found to be true, the Commission shall impose whatever sanctions and/or discipline it deems appropriate pursuant to NRS 1.4677 and other Nevada Revised Statutes governing the Commission.

Dated this <u>4</u> day of October, 2017.

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| STATE OF NEVADA  | )    |
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|                  | ) ss |
| COUNTY OF WASHOE | )    |

THOMAS C. BRADLEY, ESQ. being first duly sworn under oath, according to Nevada law, and under penalty of perjury, hereby states:

- 1. I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Nevada. I have been retained by the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline to serve in the capacity of Prosecuting Officer in the matter of the Honorable Jennifer Henry, Case No. 2016-142-P.
- 2. I have prepared and reviewed this Formal Statement of Charges against the Honorable Jennifer Henry, pursuant to the investigation conducted in this matter, and based on the contents of that investigation and following reasonable inquiry, I am informed and believe that the contents of this Formal Statement of Charges are true and accurate.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of October, 2017.

THOMAS C. BRADLEY, ESQ.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of October, 2017.

NOTARY PUBLIC

KIMBERLY E. WOOD

Notary Public - State of Nevada
Appointment Recorded in Washoe County
No: 16-1429-2 - Expires February 1, 2020

### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of this Formal Statement of Charges was placed in the U.S. mail, postage pre-paid, on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of October, 2017.

William B. Terry, Esq. Law Offices William B. Terry, Chartered 530 South Seventh Street Las Vegas, NV 89101

By: David MeIntosh, Legal Assistant to

Thomas C. Bradley, Esq., Prosecuting Officer for NCJD

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