

From: Meriwether, Greg [<mailto:gmeriwether@wafb.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 11:18 AM
To: Sarai Stansberry
Subject: Judge White Interview request

Hey there...

We are working on a story looking into bond conditions set by judges. We'd like to request an interview with Judge White in reference to her frequent use of RHI and Cleve Dunn.

Thanks

Greg Meriwether

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From: Sarai Stansberry [<mailto:SStansberry@brgov.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 2:15 PM
To: Meriwether, Greg <gmeriwether@wafb.com>
Subject: RE: Judge White Interview request

Greetings,

Please contact Chief Judge Donald Johnson regarding the interview.

Thank you,
Sarai A. Stansberry
Judicial Assistant to Judge Trudy M. White
Criminal Section VIII/Civil Division "J", Section 28
19th Judicial District Court
300 North Boulevard, Suite 6201
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
225-389-4737 (Office) 225-389-8322 (Fax)
ssstansberry@brgov.com

From: Meriwether, Greg [<mailto:gmeriwether@wafb.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 2:53 PM
To: Cheryl Wyatt
Subject: FW: Judge White Interview request

Hey there – this email is for Chief Judge Donald Johnson... (see below) We requested an interview with Judge Trudy White and they referred us to you.

We are looking into the general bond conditions set by White.

Thanks
Greg

On Jan 13, 2016, at 3:02 PM, Cheryl Wyatt <CWyatt@brgov.com> wrote:

Mr. Meriwether,

Good Afternoon. Judge Johnson is available to meet with you tomorrow morning, January 14, 2016 at 8:10 a.m.

When you arrive, ring the buzzer at side chamber door (9th floor) for assistance.

Thanks,

*Cheryl F. Wyatt, Judicial Assistant
to Chief Judge Donald R. Johnson, Ph.D.
19th Judicial Court
300 North Boulevard
Suite 9301
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
Phone: (225) 389-4787
Fax: (225) 389-4668
cwyatt@brgov.com*

On Jan 13, 2016, at 3:04 PM, Meriwether, Greg <gmeriwether@wafb.com> wrote:

I appreciate your quick response. I am assigned to cover the president tomorrow and due to security concerns we have to be in place earlier than normal.

Will his Honor's schedule allow us to meet Friday?

On Jan 13, 2016, at 3:23 PM, Cheryl Wyatt <CWyatt@brgov.com> wrote:

Judge Johnson's next available time is Friday, 1/15, @ 10:00 a.m.

*Cheryl F. Wyatt, Judicial Assistant
to Chief Judge Donald R. Johnson, Ph.D.
19th Judicial Court
[300 North Boulevard](http://300NorthBoulevard.com)
[Suite 9301](http://Suite9301.com)
[Baton Rouge, LA 70801](http://BatonRougeLA70801.com)
Phone: [\(225\) 389-4787](tel:(225)389-4787)
Fax: [\(225\) 389-4668](tel:(225)389-4668)
cwyatt@brgov.com*

From: Meriwether, Greg
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 3:24 PM
To: Cheryl Wyatt <CWyatt@brgov.com>
Subject: Re: Judge White Interview request

Sounds great - thanks. I will see you then.

From: Meriwether, Greg
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2016 11:07 AM
To: Sarai Stansberry <SStansberry@brgov.com>
Subject: RE: Judge White Interview request

Good morning,

First- congrats to your office and Judge White for the once in a lifetime opportunity to represent Baton Rouge's legal community on such a high profile stage yesterday.

Second, I had a productive meeting with Chief Judge Johnson this morning in his chambers. His Honor said it's up to Judge White as to whether she would like to comment for our piece.

Thanks

Greg Meriwether

From: Meriwether, Greg [gmeriwether@wafb.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2016 11:39 AM
To: Sarai Stansberry; Taryn Branson
Subject: Judge White interview request 03/03/16

Greetings:

I am working on a follow up report to our original story on Judge White and her use of RHI. Previously, we requested an interview and were referred to Chief Judge Johnson. I met with Judge Johnson for about an hour and he cleared Judge White to speak with us concerning this matter.

I am now requesting an interview again- before our follow up report airs.

I appreciate your time-

Greg Meriwether

Can be reached by this email or cell 225- _____

From: Taryn Branson [<mailto:TBranson@brgov.com>]
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2016 10:38 AM
To: Meriwether, Greg <gmeriwether@wafb.com>
Cc: Sarai Stansberry <SStansberry@brgov.com>
Subject: RE: Judge White interview request 03/03/16

Good morning, Greg.

I will check with Judge White regarding your interview request. In the meantime, please forward to me your interview questions so that I may review them. Please note that Canon 3(8) of the Code of Judicial Conduct prohibits judges from commenting on pending or impending matters before the Court. I will need to review the questions to ensure her answering the questions does not violate this rule.

Also, attached is a current photo of Judge White for your follow-up report.

Regards,

Taryn C. Branson, Esq.
Staff Attorney to
Judge Trudy M. White, Div. J, Sect. VIII
19th Judicial District Court
300 North Blvd., Suite 6201
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
225-387-4737 (Office)
225-389-8322 (Fax)

From: Meriwether, Greg
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2016 12:11 PM
To: 'Taryn Branson' <TBranson@brgov.com>
Subject: RE: Judge White interview request 03/03/16

Good afternoon,

Appreciate your response and the photo. Normally- as a practice- we do not provide a list of questions ahead of time. In this case however, I understand your concerns and will be glad to give you them.

We will not be asking the judge about any specific defendant or case – past or present. Our inquiries center around her use of the company, RHI – Rehabilitation Home Incarceration.

We'd like to know why RHI is an approved vendor- and what reasons if any compel the judge to use their services.

Since we are only discussing these matters- the interview would probably take about 5-10 minutes. We can be set up and ready to go – in order to preserve her Honor's time.

I am currently working on our follow up story, so sooner rather than later is preferred. Judge White is free to expound on anything else who may think is appropriate.

In respect of the Canon 3(8) your referenced, I welcome you to sit in on our interview. The interview will not be 'live' so, if there is anything asked or answered that you or others think violate the Code of Judicial Conduct- we can strike it.

Appreciate your attention and time

Greg

From: Meriwether, Greg [gmeriwether@wafb.com]
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2016 3:19 PM
To: Taryn Branson
Subject: Following up. FW: Judge White interview request 03/03/16

On Mar 8, 2016, at 11:48 AM, Taryn Branson <TBranson@brgov.com> wrote:

Good morning, Greg.

I apologize I am just now able to respond. Judge White was on the bench handling matters from 9am until about 2pm yesterday. After court adjourned, she was still working on other things, and I did not get a chance to ask her about your request for an interview.

As I mentioned previously, the Code of Judicial Conduct prohibits judges from making comments on pending or impending matters. As her law clerk, I cannot make comments either. Since your questions relate to matters regarding bond conditions, bond conditions are pending matters and as such, Judge White cannot make comments.

Thank you for your interest in balanced investigatory reporting.

Best,

Taryn C. Branson, Esq.
Staff Attorney to
Judge Trudy M. White, Div. J, Sect. VIII
19th Judicial District Court
300 North Blvd., Suite 6201
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
225-387-4737 (Office)
225-389-8322 (Fax)

From: Meriwether, Greg [gmeriwether@wafb.com]
Sent: Tue 3/8/2016 12:03 PM
To: Taryn Branson; Judge Trudy White <TMWHITE@brgov.com>

Subject: Re: Following up. FW: Judge White interview request 03/03/16

I appreciate your response. We would like to ask her Honor about why RHI is an approved vendor on her site.

That question does not involved any specific cases but rather her general use.

As an elected official, we are bound by our own ethics to question those who represent the public.

This was our attempt at scheduling an interview. Our alternative now is an unscheduled interview which could happen at a public event, in public and comes off as confrontational for both sides. We are compelled to get some answers and will take that alternative if nothing else can be worked out.

I am interested in putting this to rest and giving her Honor the fairest shake possible.

All best
Greg

From: Meriwether, Greg [gmeriwether@wafb.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2016 9:40 AM
To: Taryn Branson
Cc: Judge Trudy White
Subject: Judicial Code of Conduct question.

Greetings:

We are following up to our recent reporting involving Judge Trudy White and her use of approved vendor Cleve Dunn. We have uncovered new information in the overall scope of the story and also new information on the practices of RHI, with several people now willing to go on the record.

In order to perform our due diligence, I request an interview with Judge White and I addition, specially would like to know if she has violated the following parts of the Judicial Code of Conduct :

CANON 2

A Judge Shall Avoid Impropriety and the Appearance of Impropriety in All Activities

A. 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.

As used in this Code, "impartiality" or "impartial" denotes absence of bias or prejudice in favor of, or against, particular parties or classes of parties, as well as maintaining an open mind in considering issues that may come before the judge. **[Amended effective February 1, 2005]**

B. A judge shall not allow family, social, political, or other relationships to influence judicial conduct or judgment. A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interest of the judge or others; nor shall a judge convey or permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence the judge. A judge shall not testify voluntarily as a character witness. Although a judge should be sensitive to possible abuse of the prestige of office, a judge may, based on the judge's personal knowledge, serve as a reference or provide a letter of recommendation. Letters of recommendation may be written only on private stationery which does not contain any official designation of the judge's court, but the judge may use his or her title. A judge shall not initiate the communication of information in any court or disciplinary proceeding, but may provide such information for the record in response to a formal request by a court or disciplinary agency official.

Thanks and all best,

Greg Meriwether

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225-_____ is my cell if you need it.

From: Taryn Branson <TBranson@brgov.com>
Date: April 20, 2016 at 3:12:55 PM CDT
To: "Meriwether, Greg" <gmeriwether@wafb.com>
Subject: RE: Judicial Code of Conduct question.

Greg,

As stated before, the Court (Judge White) cannot comment on any pending matters.

Taryn C. Branson, Esq.
Staff Attorney to
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