

Judicial Conduct Board
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Richard W. Long, Chief Counsel
717-234-7911

Press Release

February 8, 2021

FROM: Richard W. Long
Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight
Magisterial District Court 12-2-04
Twelfth Judicial District
Dauphin County
1 JD 2021

Harrisburg. Today the Judicial Conduct Board filed formal charges in the Court of Judicial Discipline against Dauphin County Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight. The Board Complaint alleges violations of the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Accompanying the Board Complaint, the Board filed a Petition for Interim Suspension Without Pay pending the disposition of the Board Complaint.

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Constitution, Judge McKnight, as the subject of the charges, is presumed innocent in all proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline. The Board has the burden of proving the charges filed in the Court of Judicial Discipline by clear and convincing evidence.

In accordance with the rules which govern proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline, Judge McKnight has the right to respond to the charges, to obtain and inspect the evidence which forms the basis of the allegations, and to a public trial before the Court of Judicial Discipline.

Upon completion of the trial, if the Court determines that any of the charges have been proven by clear and convincing evidence, it will schedule a hearing to determine what sanction, if any, should be imposed. Possible sanction includes censure, suspension, fine and/or removal from office.

Today's court filings accompany this press release. The documents are also available on the Board's website, www.jcbpa.org (select the Resource Tab then select Press Releases in the drop down menu).

Court filings for all cases prosecuted by the Board are available on the Court of Judicial Discipline website at <http://www.pacourts.us/courts/court-of-judicial-discipline>.

Counsel:

Representing the Judicial Conduct Board: Melissa L. Norton, Deputy Counsel

Representing Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight: Heidi Eakin, Esquire

Contact: Richard W. Long, Chief Counsel

RECEIVED AND FILED

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

FEB - 8 2021

**COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight :
Magisterial District Judge :
Magisterial District 12-2-04 : 1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District :
Dauphin County :

PETITION FOR RELIEF FOR INTERIM SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY

AND NOW, this 8th day of February, 2021, comes the Judicial Conduct Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Board), by and through undersigned counsel, and files this Petition For Relief for Interim Suspension Without Pay pursuant to Article V, § 18(d)(2) of the Pennsylvania Constitution, Rule 701 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, and Rule 13(A) of the Board Rules of Procedure and in support thereof, avers the following:

1. From January 4, 2016, to the present, Judge McKnight has served continuously as a Magisterial District Judge in Magisterial District 12-2-04, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.
2. On December 16, 2020, the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG) charged Judge McKnight with Tampering with Evidence, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4910, Obstructing Administration of Law, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5101 and Official Oppression, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5301, all second degree misdemeanor offenses. A copy of the Criminal Complaint is attached hereto as "Exhibit A," made a part hereof, and incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full.
3. The offenses are alleged to have occurred on February 22, 2020, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

4. The Criminal Complaint alleges, in relevant part, that Judge McKnight took advantage of her position as a judge while at the scene of her son's traffic stop on February 22, 2020, thereby allowing her to "move freely about the scene of the traffic stop because of her position as a Magisterial District Judge."
5. On December 17, 2020, Dauphin County President Judge John F. Cherry issued an Administrative Order placing Judge McKnight on administrative leave with pay effective that date. A copy of the Administrative Order is attached hereto as "Exhibit B," made a part hereof, and incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full.
6. On February 8, 2021, the Board filed a Complaint in the Court of Judicial Discipline charging Judge McKnight with violating the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges (RGSCMDJ) and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in relation to her alleged criminal conduct as charged by the OAG. A copy of the Board Complaint is attached hereto as "Exhibit C," made a part hereof, and incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full.
7. The Pennsylvania Constitution provides this Court with the authority to impose interim suspension as follows:

Prior to a hearing, the court may issue an interim order directing suspension, with or without pay, of any justice, judge or justice of the peace against whom formal charges have been filed with the court by the board . . . [.]

Pa. Const, Art. V, § 18(d)(2).

8. Judge McKnight has allegedly engaged in criminal conduct so egregious as to constitute an affront to the RGSCMDJ.
9. Public confidence in the judiciary has been and will continue to be undermined

if Judge McKnight is permitted to continue presiding over a court after being charged with violations of the Crimes Code of Pennsylvania.

10. The reputation of the judiciary would be irreparably damaged if Judge McKnight is permitted to continue to presiding over a court after being charged with violations of the Crimes Code of Pennsylvania.
11. Based upon the serious nature of the offenses charged; the relation of the charges to the duties of a judge; the potential harm to the reputation of the judicial branch, and the potential harm to the public's confidence in the judiciary, the Board seeks interim suspension of Judge McKnight pending final disposition of the Complaint filed against her in this Court.

WHEREFORE, it is respectfully requested that this Honorable Court enter an interim order suspending Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight without pay pending disposition of the Board Complaint filed against her and to grant such other relief as may be deemed appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD W. LONG
Chief Counsel

DATE: February 8, 2021

By:



MELISSA L. NORTON
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684

Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight :
Magisterial District Judge :
Magisterial District 12-2-04 : 1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District :
Dauphin County :

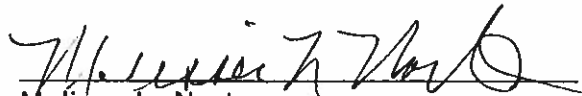
VERIFICATION

I, Melisa L. Norton, verify that the statements in this Petition for Interim Suspension Without Pay are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: February 8, 2021

BY:


Melissa L. Norton
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684
Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

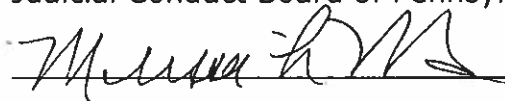
Judge Sonya M. McKnight :
Magisterial District Judge :
Magisterial District 12-2-04 : 1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District :
Dauphin County :

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by: Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania

Signature:



Name:

Melissa L. Norton
Deputy Counsel

Attorney No.:

46684

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight	:	
Magisterial District Judge	:	
Magisterial District 12-2-04	:	1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District	:	
Dauphin County	:	

PROOF OF SERVICE

In compliance with Rule 122 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, on the date below a copy of the Board's Petition for Interim Suspension Without Pay was sent by UPS Overnight Mail to Heidi Eakin, Esquire, counsel for Magisterial District Judge Sonya McKnight at the following address, and by email:

Heidi Eakin, Esquire
2807 Market Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011
Email: heidieakin@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: February 8, 2021

BY:

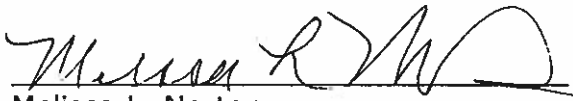

Melissa L. Norton
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684
Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
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(717) 234-7911

EXHIBIT A

EXHIBIT A

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COUNTY OF: DAUPHIN

Magisterial District Number: 12-2-04
MDJ: Hon. SONYA M MCKNIGHT
Address: 1805 N CAMERON STREET
Harrisburg, PA 17103

Telephone:



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
VS.

DEFENDANT:

(NAME and ADDRESS):

SONYA M MCKNIGHT
First Name Middle Name Last Name Gen

2744 Lexington Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

<input type="checkbox"/> 1-Felony Full	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-Felony Pending Extradition	<input type="checkbox"/> C-Misdemeanor Surrounding States	<input type="checkbox"/> Distance: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-Felony Limited	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-Felony Pending Extradition Determ.	<input type="checkbox"/> D-Misdemeanor No Extradition	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-Felony Surrounding States	<input type="checkbox"/> A-Misdemeanor Full	<input type="checkbox"/> E-Misdemeanor Pending Extradition	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-Felony No Extradition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B-Misdemeanor Limited	<input type="checkbox"/> F-Misdemeanor Pending Extradition	

DEFENDANT IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

Docket Number CR-355-20	Date Filed 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number U942174-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160	Request Lab Services? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female	DOB 12/11/1966	POB	Add'l DOB / /	Co-Defendant(s) <input type="checkbox"/>
RACE <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ETHNICITY <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	First Name AKA	Middle Name	Last Name Gen.
HAIR COLOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BLK (Black) <input type="checkbox"/> BLN (Blonde / Strawberry) <input type="checkbox"/> GRY (Gray) <input type="checkbox"/> RED (Red/Aubn.) <input type="checkbox"/> SOY (Sandy) <input type="checkbox"/> WHI (White)	<input type="checkbox"/> BRU (Brown) <input type="checkbox"/> PLE (Purple) <input type="checkbox"/> BRO (Brown) <input type="checkbox"/> PNK (Pink)	<input type="checkbox"/> BLU (Blue) <input type="checkbox"/> XXX (Unk/Bald)	<input type="checkbox"/> GRN (Green) <input type="checkbox"/> GRN (Green)	<input type="checkbox"/> MUL (Multicolored) <input type="checkbox"/> XXX (Unknown)
DNA <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	DNA Location	WEIGHT (lbs.) 125	FL HEIGHT In. 5 4	
FBI Number	MNU Number	Fingerprint Classification:		

DEFENDANT VEHICLE INFORMATION

Plate #	State	Haz mat <input type="checkbox"/>	Registration Sticker (MM/YY) /	Comm'l Veh. Ind. <input type="checkbox"/>	School Veh. <input type="checkbox"/>	Oth. NCIC Veh. Code	Reg. same as Def. <input type="checkbox"/>
VIN	Year	Make	Model	Style	Color		

Office of the attorney for the Commonwealth Approved Disapproved because: _____

(The attorney for the Commonwealth may require that the complaint, arrest warrant affidavit, or both be approved by the attorney for the Commonwealth prior to filing. See Pa.R.Crim.P. 507).

CDAG KIRSTEN E. HEINE

(Name of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

Kirsten E. Heine

(Signature of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

12/18/2020

(Date)

I, JARRETT J. FERRARI, S.A.	569
(Name of the Affiant)	(PSP/MP/OTC -Assigned Affiant ID Number & Badge #)
of Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General	PA0222400
(Identify Department or Agency Represented and Political Subdivision)	(Police Agency ORI Number)
do hereby state: (check appropriate box)	
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I accuse the above named defendant who lives at the address set forth above	
<input type="checkbox"/> I accuse the defendant whose name is unknown to me but who is described as _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> I accuse the defendant whose name and popular designation or nickname are unknown to me and whom I have therefore designated as John Doe or Jane Doe with violating the penal laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at [301] Harrisburg City (Subdivision Code) (Place-Postal Subdivision)	
in DAUPHIN County	[22] on or about FEBRUARY 22, 2020
(County Code)	

POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number u942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

The acts committed by the accused are described below with each Act of Assembly or statute allegedly violated, if appropriate. When there is more than one offense, each offense should be numbered chronologically. (Set forth a brief summary of the facts sufficient to advise the defendant of the nature of the offense(s) charged. A citation to the statute(s) allegedly violated, without more, is not sufficient. In a summary case, you must cite the specific section(s) and subsection(s) of the statute(s) or ordinance(s) allegedly violated. The age of the victim at the time of the offense may be included if known. In addition, social security numbers and financial information (e.g. PINs) should not be listed. If the identity of an account must be established, list only the last four digits. 204 PA.Code §§ 213.1 - 213.7.)

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903	Number of Victims Age 60 or Older _____			
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	§4910	1	TITLE 18	1	M-2	
Lead?	Offense #	Section	Subsection	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NCIC Offense Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number			<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone	
Statute Description (include the name of statute or ordinance): TAMPERING WITH OR FABRICATING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE							
Acts of the accused associated with this Offense: A person commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if, believing that an official proceeding or investigation is pending or about to be instituted, he (1) alters, destroys, conceals or removes any record, document or thing with the intent to impair its verity or availability in such a proceeding or investigation. On February 22, 2020 Sonya McKnight who is a Magisterial District Judge in the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania did drive herself to a traffic stop the Harrisburg Bureau of Police had conducted on her son. During that traffic stop, Sonya McKnight did remove a pill bottle containing unknown materials from her son's vehicle without permission to do so, thus inhibiting the officers on scene to verify its contents.							

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903	Number of Victims Age 60 or Older _____			
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	§5101		TITLE 18	1	M-2	
Lead?	Offense #	Section	Subsection	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NCIC Offense Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number			<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone	
Statute Description (include the name of statute or ordinance): OBSTRUCTING ADMINISTRATION OF LAW OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION							
Acts of the accused associated with this Offense: A person commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if he intentionally obstructs, impairs or perverts the administration of law or other governmental function by force, violence, physical interference or obstacle, breach of official duty, or any other unlawful act, except that this section does not apply to flight by a person charged with crime, refusal to submit to arrest, failure to perform a legal duty other than an official duty, or any other means of avoiding compliance with law without affirmative interference with governmental functions. On February 22, 2020 Sonya McKnight who is a Magisterial District Judge in the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania did drive herself to a traffic stop the Harrisburg City Police Department had conducted on her son. Because of her position as a Magisterial District Judge, McKnight obstructed the Officers from properly executing their duties when she challenged them verbally and without permission removed potential evidence from the traffic stop.							

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903	Number of Victims Age 60 or Older _____			
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	§5301	2	TITLE 18	1	M-2	
Lead?	Offense #	Section	Subsection	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NCIC Offense Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number			<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone	
Statute Description (include the name of statute or ordinance): OFFICIAL OPPRESSION							
Acts of the accused associated with this Offense: A person acting or purporting to act in an official capacity or taking advantage of such an actual or purported capacity commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if, knowing that his conduct is illegal he: (2) denies or impedes another in the exercise of enjoyment of any right, privilege power or immunity. When McKnight arrived to the scene of the traffic stop on February 22, 2020, the Uniformed Police Officers on scene immediately recognized her as Magisterial District Judge McKnight. The Officers on scene considered her position as a Magisterial District Judge and said that she was able to move freely about the scene of the traffic stop because of her position as an Magisterial District Judge. The Officers on scene said they would not have been as lenient with other citizens.							



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/iveScan Number U942179.0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

- I ask that a warrant of arrest or a summons be issued and that the defendant be required to answer the charges I have made.
- I verify that the facts set forth in this complaint are true and correct to the best of my knowledge or information and belief. This verification is made subject to the penalties of Section 4904 of the Crimes Code (18 Pa.C.S. § 4904) relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.
- This complaint consists of the preceding page(s) numbered 1 through .
- I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

The acts committed by the accused, as listed and hereafter, were against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and were contrary to the Act(s) of the Assembly, or in violation of the statutes cited.
(Before a warrant of arrest can be issued, an affidavit of probable cause must be completed, sworn to before the issuing authority, and attached.)

_____ (Date)


 _____ (Signature of Affiant)

AND NOW, on this date December 16 2020 I certify that the complaint has been properly completed and verified.

An affidavit of probable cause must be completed before a warrant can be issued.

_____ (Magisterial District Court Number)

_____ (Issuing Authority)





POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number U942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

AFFIDAVIT of PROBABLE CAUSE

AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

The undersigned, a Special Agent with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation of the Office of Attorney General of Pennsylvania, being duly sworn according to law, deposes and says:

Your affiant is Jarrett Ferrari, a Special Agent in the Bureau of Criminal Investigations with the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General where I have been employed since March of 2018. Prior to my current assignment, your affiant was a Detective, who retired from the Harrisburg Bureau of Police with over 20 years of service which began in 1997. I have conducted thousands of interviews during my law enforcement tenure. I have written, obtained and executed numerous search warrants and arrest warrants for a variety of crimes. Those crimes include, but are not limited to identity theft, burglary, robbery, sexual assaults, aggravated assault, attempted homicide and homicides. I have investigated several instances of each of the listed crimes.

On Saturday, February 22, 2020 Harrisburg Bureau of Police uniformed Patrol Officer Farida Kingsboro (Officer Kingsboro) was on duty in full uniform and operating a marked police unit. At about 0220 hours, Officer Kingsboro conducted a traffic stop on a Volvo being operated by Kevin Baltimore at North 6th and Peffer Streets in the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. The stop was made due to a traffic violation as well as suspected narcotics activity.

While Officer Kingsboro was performing computer checks, Baltimore informed Officer Chad Showers that his mother was Magisterial District Judge Sonya McKnight. Baltimore also called his mother in spite of being told not to use his phone.

Officer Kingsboro detained Baltimore as a result of an outstanding warrant. Baltimore told Officer Kingsboro he had a knife in his car and that she could go look for it. While searching for the knife in Baltimore's Volvo, Officer Kingsboro found a pill bottle, briefly picked it up and put it back. She had intended to inspect the pill bottle further after completing an initial search of Baltimore and his vehicle.

Shortly after the stop, Magisterial District Judge McKnight arrived on scene. Officer Kingsboro escorted her away from Baltimore and the other Officers. Officer Kingsboro reported that McKnight began to question her as to why her son was being arrested. Officer Kingsboro explained he had an active warrant. McKnight told Officer Kingsboro that he had been paying on it. McKnight began to become agitated that the Officers were searching her son and she questioned Officer Kingsboro again about why they were doing that. As Officer Kingsboro was explaining why he was being searched, she interrupted Officer Kingsboro and continued to question her about her reason for stopping her son. Officer Kingsboro explained to her that his registration had expired. McKnight argued that she had paid for his registration. While at the scene of the car stop, McKnight asked Officer Kingsboro if Commissioner Carter was working. Officer Kingsboro explained that she was unsure of his work schedule.

Commissioner Carter is Harrisburg Bureau of Police Commissioner Carter and is in charge of the Harrisburg Bureau of Police. A search warrant was obtained for McKnight's phone records and the records revealed that McKnight called Commissioner Carter at 2:33 am, prior to her arrival on scene. Your Affiant interviewed Commissioner Carter who indicated that he did receive a call from



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: MR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number 0942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

McKnight at about 2:30 am on the date of the car stop and told him that Baltimore was in the process of being stopped by Harrisburg Police. Carter asked McKnight whether she was going to the traffic stop as a "Judge or a mother." Therefore McKnight knew Commissioner Carter was not working at the time of the stop and her asking for him was intended to intimidate or influence the Officers.

While Baltimore was being searched, Officer Chad Showers questioned Baltimore about the pill bottle inside of his Volvo. Baltimore stated it was his blood pressure medication. Officer Kingsboro said "don't worry, I'll check." McKnight replied "yeah, that's just his blood pressure medication." Thereafter, McKnight entered the Volvo without the permission of any of the Officers and took the pill bottle. She left the scene with the pill bottle.

Officer Kingsboro noted that McKnight had taken the pill bottle from the Volvo. Because McKnight took the pill bottle, no Patrol Officer was ever able to open it and look inside of it to inspect its contents. Officer Kingsboro did tell your Affiant that there were unknown pills inside the pill bottle, but again, she was never able to inspect them to see what they were.

Your Affiant interviewed the Officers involved in the traffic stop in regards to all of this. They advised me that McKnight was able to freely move about the scene of the traffic stop because she is a Magisterial District Judge. They said had it been a normal citizen, they would not have allowed her to do the things she did such as entering her son's Volvo. They said they would have had her stand back from the scene and they would have addressed any concerns she had after they had collected any and all necessary evidence.

Based on the aforementioned, Sonya McKnight is being charged with:

1. TAMPERING WITH OR FABRICATING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE
2. OBSTRUCTING ADMINISTRATION OF LAW OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION
3. OFFICIAL OPPRESSION

I, JARRETT J. FERRARI, S.A., BEING DULY SWORN ACCORDING TO THE LAW, DEPOSE AND SAY THAT THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE FOREGOING AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF.

I CERTIFY THAT THIS FILING COMPLIES WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CASE RECORDS PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY OF THE UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF PENNSYLVANIA THAT REQUIRE FILING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS DIFFERENTLY THAN NON-CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS.


 (Signature of Affiant)



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: <i>CR-375-20</i>	Date Filed: <i>12/16/2020</i>	OTN/LiveScan Number <i>U 942179-0</i>	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

Sworn to me and subscribed before me this 16th day of December 2020

_____, Date _____, Magisterial District Judge

My commission expires first Monday of January,



EXHIBIT B

EXHIBIT B

IN RE: MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE
SONYA M. MCKNIGHT AND
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT 12-2-
04

: IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
: DAUPHIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
:
: 0010-39-MD-2020
:
: AO # 53
:

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

AND NOW, THIS 17th day of December 2020, upon consideration of the criminal complaint filed by the Office of Attorney General of Pennsylvania against Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) Sonya M. McKnight, it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DECREED** that Sonya M. McKnight is placed on administrative leave with pay effective immediately.

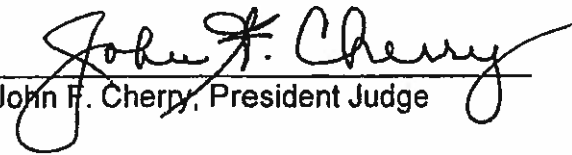
It is further ordered that Sonya M. McKnight shall not reenter Magisterial District Court 12-2-04 located at 1805 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, nor shall she remove or cause to be removed any documents, materials, or equipment from said office other than personal effects. Further she shall not access, enter or modify any official court records via the MDJS or otherwise, nor shall she perform any duties related to being a MDJ.

Sonya M. McKnight shall deliver or have delivered her office keys, access cards, badges and any other documents, materials or equipment issued to her as a MDJ, to the Dauphin County Deputy Court Administrator for Magisterial District Judges, Troy Petery, at his office by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 18, 2020.

Court assignments in Magisterial District Court 12-2-04 shall be heard by Magisterial District Judges assigned by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.

This Administrative Order shall be served on Sonya M. McKnight by the Sheriff of Dauphin County or his Deputy.

BY THE COURT:


John F. Cherry, President Judge

DISTRIBUTION:

President Judge John F. Cherry
Judge Richard A. Lewis
Judge Scott Arthur Evans
Judge Deborah E. Curcillo
Judge Andrew H. Dowling
Judge William T. Tully
Judge Edward M. Marsico
Judge John Joseph McNally
Judge Royce Morris
Magisterial District Judges
Deborah Freeman, Esquire, District Court Administrator
Troy Petery, Deputy Court Administrator-Magisterial District Judges
Robert Sisock, Deputy Court Administrator-Criminal
District Attorney Fran Chardo
Mary Klatt, Esquire, Chief Public Defender
Chad Libby, Probation Services
Matthew Miller, Work Release Center
Joseph Mittleman, Esquire, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Brian Perry, Esq.
Dauphin County Sheriff's Office

2024 SEP 17 PM 2:17

EXHIBIT C

EXHIBIT C

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

RECEIVED AND FILED

IN RE:

FEB - 8 2021

Judge Sonya M. McKnight :
Magisterial District Judge :
Magisterial District 12-2-04 : 1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District :
Dauphin County :

**COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

TO: SONYA M. MCKNIGHT

You are hereby notified that the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania has determined that there is probable cause to file formal charges against you for conduct proscribed by Article V, § 17(b) and § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges. The Board's counsel will present the case in support of the charges before the Pennsylvania Court of Judicial Discipline.

You have an absolute right to be represented by a lawyer in all proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline. Your attorney should file an entry of appearance with the Court of Judicial Discipline within fifteen (15) days of service of this Board Complaint in accordance with C.J.D.R.P. No. 110.

You are hereby notified, pursuant to C.J.D.R.P. No. 302(B), that should you elect to file an omnibus motion, that motion should be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the service of this Complaint in accordance with C.J.D.R.P. No. 411.

You are further hereby notified that within thirty (30) days after the service of this Complaint, if no omnibus motion is filed, or within twenty (20) days after the dismissal of all or part of the omnibus motion, you may file an Answer admitting or denying the allegations contained in this Complaint in accordance with C.J.D.R.P. No. 413. Failure to file an Answer shall be deemed a denial of all factual allegations in the Complaint.

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight	:	
Magisterial District Judge	:	
Magisterial District 12-2-04	:	1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District	:	
Dauphin County	:	

COMPLAINT

AND NOW, this 8th day of February, 2021, comes the Judicial Conduct Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Board) and files this Board Complaint against the Honorable Judge Sonya M. McKnight, Magisterial District Judge for Magisterial District 12-2-04, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, alleging that Judge McKnight has violated the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges (RGSCMDJ) and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as more specifically delineated herein.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

1. Article V, § 18 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grants the Board authority to determine whether there is probable cause to file formal charges, and, when it concludes probable cause exists, to file formal charges against a justice, judge, or justice of the peace for proscribed conduct and to present the case in support of such charges before the Court of Judicial Discipline.
2. From January 4, 2016, to the present, Judge McKnight has served continuously as a Magisterial District Judge for Magisterial District Court No. 12-2-04 in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.

3. During the early morning hours of February 22, 2020, a Harrisburg Bureau of Police Officer observed a suspected violation of the Vehicle Code and suspected drug activity.
4. The location where the suspected violation of the Vehicle Code and suspected drug activity took place was within the jurisdiction of Judge McKnight's magisterial district.
5. Immediately thereafter, the police officer conducted a traffic stop of the vehicle which was driven by Kevin Baltimore, age 31.
6. Baltimore is the son of Judge Sonya M. McKnight.
7. Three other police officers arrived to assist with the vehicle stop.
8. While one police officer was checking Baltimore's identity on her car computer, the other police officers observed Baltimore make a telephone call.
9. Baltimore told the police officers that he had called his mother, that she was a magisterial district judge and that she was on her way to the scene.
10. Prior to Judge McKnight's arrival at the scene, she placed a telephone call to Thomas Carter, Harrisburg Bureau Police Commissioner.
11. During the aforementioned telephone call with Commissioner Carter, Judge McKnight informed him that her son had been stopped by police.
12. While the police officers were processing the vehicle stop, Judge McKnight arrived at the scene.
13. While at the scene, Judge McKnight questioned the officers as to why the traffic stop had been initiated.
14. While at the scene, Judge McKnight questioned the police officers as to why her son was being arrested.

15. When one of the police officers searched Baltimore, he found plastic baggies containing crack cocaine, a scale and a razor on Baltimore.
16. Judge McKnight was present when the officer who conducted the search of Baltimore's person reported the results of the search to the officer in charge of the scene.
17. Judge McKnight told the police officers that they should not be searching her son.
18. In spite of the fact that Judge McKnight had already spoken to Commissioner Carter, she asked one of the officers if Commissioner Carter was on duty.
19. While at the scene, Judge McKnight entered her son's vehicle and took possession of a pill bottle that contained an unknown quantity of unidentified pills without the permission of any of the police officers.
20. Judge McKnight did not return the pill bottle to any of the police officers.
21. While at the scene, Judge McKnight took possession of Baltimore's car keys and an unknown sum of cash that police had taken from Baltimore.
22. On February 22, 2020, Kevin Baltimore was charged with two violations of the Controlled Substance Device and Cosmetic Act and one violation of the Vehicle Code.
23. All of the police officers at the scene were aware that Judge McKnight was a magisterial district judge.
24. Judge McKnight's conduct and presence at the scene intimidated the officers.
25. The Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG) conducted a criminal investigation into Judge McKnight's February 22, 2020 conduct.

26. In furtherance of its investigation, on November 12, 2020, the OAG interviewed Judge McKnight regarding her February 22, 2020 conduct.
27. On December 16, 2020, the OAG charged Judge McKnight with Tampering with Evidence, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4910, Obstructing Administration of Law, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5101 and Official Oppression, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5301 for her conduct on February 22, 2020. A copy of the Criminal Complaint is attached hereto as "Exhibit A," made a part hereof, and incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full.
28. Each of the offenses filed on December 16, 2020 are second degree misdemeanors and carry a possible sentence of up to two years of incarceration and a possible fine of up to \$5,000.
29. The Criminal Complaint alleges in part that Judge McKnight took advantage of her position as a judge while at the scene of her son's traffic stop on February 22, 2020, thereby allowing her to "move freely about the scene of the traffic stop because of her position as a Magisterial District Judge."
30. By Administrative Order dated December 17, 2020, in consideration of the Criminal Complaint filed against Judge McKnight, Dauphin County President Judge John F. Cherry placed Judge McKnight on administrative leave with pay. A copy of the Administrative Order is attached hereto as "Exhibit B," made a part hereof, and incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full.
31. Rule 1921 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Judicial Administration (Rule 1921) mandates:

[w]henver a judge receives notice that he or she is the subject of any federal or state criminal investigation or prosecution

through a target letter, a subject letter, a presentment, an indictment, an arrest, a summons, a complaint, or by any other legal process, the judge must report the receipt of such notice in writing to the Chief Justice and to the Judicial Conduct Board within five (5) days.

32. Judge McKnight failed to comply with Rule 1921 and report to the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court that she was the subject of a state criminal investigation.
33. Judge McKnight failed to comply with Rule 1921 and report to the Judicial Conduct Board that she was the subject of a state criminal investigation.

CHARGES

Count 1- Violation of Canon 1, Rule 1.1

34. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight violated Canon 1, Rule 1.1 of the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges (RGSCMDJ).
35. Canon 1, Rule 1.1 states the following:

Canon 1, Rule 1.1 Compliance with the Law.

A magisterial district judge shall comply with the law, including the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges.

36. By failing to comply with Rule 1921 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Judicial Administration as set forth above, Judge McKnight failed to comply with the law within the meaning of Canon 1, Rule 1.1 of the RGSCMDJ.

Count 2 - Violation of Canon 1, Rule 1.2

37. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight violated Canon 1, Rule 1.2 of the RGSCMDJ.

38. Canon 1, Rule 1.2 states the following:

Canon 1, Rule 1.2 Promoting Confidence in the Judiciary.

A magisterial district judge shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety.

39. By engaging in the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight failed to promote confidence in the judiciary and avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety within the meaning of Canon 1, Rule 1.2 of the RGSCMDJ.

Count 3 - Violation of Canon 1, Rule 1.3

40. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight violated Canon 1, Rule 1.3 of the RGSCMDJ.

41. Canon 1, Rule 1.3 states the following:

Canon 1, Rule 1.3 Avoiding Abuse of the Prestige of Judicial Office.

A magisterial district judge shall not abuse the prestige of judicial office to advance the personal or economic interests of the magisterial district judge or others, or allow others to do so.

42. By engaging in the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight abused the prestige of her judicial office within the meaning of Canon 1, Rule 1.3 of the RGSCMDJ.

Counts 4 through 6 – Violation of Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

43. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight violated Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

44. Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania states the following:

Justices and judges shall not engage in any activity prohibited by law and shall not violate any canon of legal or judicial ethics prescribed by the Supreme Court. Justices of the peace shall be governed by rules or canons which shall be prescribed by the Supreme Court.

45. A violation of the RGSCMDJ constitutes an automatic, derivative violation of Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
46. Judge McKnight violated Canon 1, Rule 1.1.
47. Judge McKnight violated Canon 1, Rule 1.2.
48. Judge McKnight violated Canon 1, Rule 1.3.
49. By violation of all, or some, of the Rules set forth above, Judge McKnight violated Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Count 7 - Violation of Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

50. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight violated Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
51. Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania states the following:

A justice, judge or justice of the peace may be suspended, removed from office or otherwise disciplined for . . . conduct which brings the judicial office into disrepute, whether or not the conduct occurred while acting in a judicial capacity[.]

52. By engaging in the conduct set forth above, Judge McKnight engaged in conduct that was so extreme that it brought the judicial office itself into

disrepute and thereby constitutes a violation of the Disrepute Clause of Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

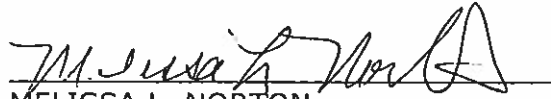
WHEREFORE, Sonya M. McKnight, a Magisterial District Judge of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, is subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Article V, § 18(d)(1).

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD W. LONG
Chief Counsel

DATE: February 8, 2021

By:



MELISSA L. NORTON
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684

Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

VERIFICATION

I, Melissa L. Norton, Deputy Counsel to the Judicial Conduct Board, verify that the Judicial Conduct Board found probable cause to file the formal charges contained in the *BOARD COMPLAINT*. I understand that the statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD W. LONG
Chief Counsel

Date: February 8, 2021

By:



MELISSA L. NORTON
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684
Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

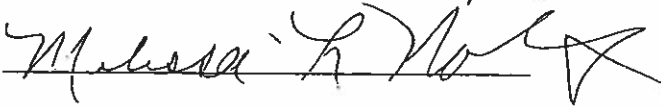
**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight	:	
Magisterial District Judge	:	
Magisterial District 12-2-04	:	1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District	:	
Dauphin County	:	

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by:	Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania
Signature:	
Name:	MELISSA L. NORTON Deputy Counsel
Attorney No.:	46684

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight :
Magisterial District Judge :
Magisterial District 12-2-04 : 1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District :
Dauphin County :

PROOF OF SERVICE

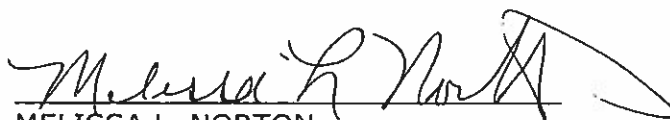
In compliance with Rule 122 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, a copy of the Board Complaint was sent UPS Overnight Mail to Heidi Eakin, Esquire, counsel for Judge McKnight, at the following address and via email:

Heidi Eakin, Esquire
2807 Market Street, FL 1
Camp Hill, PA 17011.
Email: heidieakin@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: February 8, 2021

By:



MELISSA L. NORTON

Deputy Counsel

Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684

Judicial Conduct Board

Pennsylvania Judicial Center

601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500

P.O. Box 62525

Harrisburg, PA 17106

(717) 234-7911

EXHIBIT A

EXHIBIT A

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COUNTY OF: DAUPHIN**

Magisterial District Number: 12-2-04
 MDJ: Hon. SONYA M MCKNIGHT
 Address: 1805 N CAMERON STREET
Harrisburg, PA 17103

Telephone:



**POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
VS.**

DEFENDANT:

(NAME and ADDRESS):

SONYA M MCKNIGHT
 First Name Middle Name Last Name Gen

2744 Lexington Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

NCIC Extradition Code type

<input type="checkbox"/> 1-Felony Full	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-Felony Pending Extradition	<input type="checkbox"/> C-Misdemeanor Surrounding States	<input type="checkbox"/> Distance: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-Felony Limited	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-Felony Pending Extradition Determ.	<input type="checkbox"/> D-Misdemeanor No Extradition	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-Felony Surrounding States	<input type="checkbox"/> A-Misdemeanor Full	<input type="checkbox"/> E-Misdemeanor Pending Extradition	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-Felony No Extradition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B-Misdemeanor Limited	<input type="checkbox"/> F-Misdemeanor Pending Extradition	

DEFENDANT IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

Docket Number <u>CR-355-20</u>	Date Filed <u>12/16/2020</u>	OTN/LiveScan Number <u>U942174-D</u>	Complaint/Incident Number <u>BCC200160</u>	Request Lab Services? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female	DOB <u>12/11/1966</u>	POB	Add'l DOB / /	Co-Defendant(s) <input type="checkbox"/>
First Name <u>AKA</u>		Middle Name	Last Name	Gen.
RACE <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ETHNICITY <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown			
Hair Color <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BLK (Black) <input type="checkbox"/> BLN (Blonde / Strawberry) <input type="checkbox"/> GRY (Gray) <input type="checkbox"/> RED (Red/Aubn.) <input type="checkbox"/> ONG (Orange) <input type="checkbox"/> SOY (Sandy) <input type="checkbox"/> WHI (White)	<input type="checkbox"/> BLU (Blue)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRO (Brown)	<input type="checkbox"/> PLE (Purple)	<input type="checkbox"/> GRN (Green)
Eye Color <input type="checkbox"/> BLK (Black) <input type="checkbox"/> HAZ (Hazel)	<input type="checkbox"/> BLU (Blue)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRO (Brown)	<input type="checkbox"/> GRN (Green)	<input type="checkbox"/> GRY (Gray)
DNA <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	DNA Location	WEIGHT (lbs.) <u>125</u>		
FBI Number	MNU Number	FL HEIGHT In. <u>5</u> <u>4</u>		
Defendant Fingerprinted <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Fingerprint Classification:			

DEFENDANT VEHICLE INFORMATION

Plate #	State	Haz mat <input type="checkbox"/>	Registration Sticker (MM/YY) /	Comm'l Veh. Ind. <input type="checkbox"/>	School Veh. <input type="checkbox"/>	Oth. NCIC Veh. Code	Reg. same as Def. <input type="checkbox"/>
VIN	Year	Make	Model	Style	Color		

Office of the attorney for the Commonwealth Approved Disapproved because: _____

(The attorney for the Commonwealth may require that the complaint, arrest warrant affidavit, or both be approved by the attorney for the Commonwealth prior to filing. See Pa.R.Crim.P. 507).

CDAG KIRSTEN E. HEINE

(Name of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

Kirsten E. Heine

(Signature of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

12/15/2020

(Date)

I, JARRETT J. FERRARI, S.A.

(Name of the Affiant)

569

(PSP/MPOETC -Assigned Affiant ID Number & Badge #)

of Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General

(Identify Department or Agency Represented and Political Subdivision)

PA0222400

(Police Agency ORI Number)

do hereby state: (check appropriate box)

1. I accuse the above named defendant who lives at the address set forth above

I accuse the defendant whose name is unknown to me but who is described as _____

I accuse the defendant whose name and popular designation or nickname are unknown to me and whom I have therefore designated as John Doe or Jane Doe

with violating the penal laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at [301] Harrisburg City
 (Subdivision Code) (Place-Political Subdivision)

in DAUPHIN County [22] on or about FEBRUARY 22, 2020

(County Code)



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2024	OTN/LiveScan Number U942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

The acts committed by the accused are described below with each Act of Assembly or statute allegedly violated, if appropriate. When there is more than one offense, each offense should be numbered chronologically. (Set forth a brief summary of the facts sufficient to advise the defendant of the nature of the offense(s) charged. A citation to the statute(s) allegedly violated, without more, is not sufficient. In a summary case, you must cite the specific section(s) and subsection(s) of the statute(s) or ordinance(s) allegedly violated. The age of the victim at the time of the offense may be included if known. In addition, social security numbers and financial information (e.g. PINs) should not be listed. If the identity of an account must be established, list only the last four digits. 204 PA.Code §5 213.1 - 213.7.)

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903	Number of Victims Age 60 or Older _____			
Lead?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	§4910	1	TITLE 18	1	M-2	
Offense #	Section	Subsection	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NCIC Offense Code	UCR/NIBRS Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number		<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone		
Statute Description (include the name of statute or ordinance): TAMPERING WITH OR FABRICATING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE							
Acts of the accused associated with this Offense: A person commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if, believing that an official proceeding or investigation is pending or about to be instituted, he (1) alters, destroys, conceals or removes any record, document or thing with the intent to impair its verity or availability in such a proceeding or investigation. On February 22, 2020 Sonya McKnight who is a Magisterial District Judge in the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania did drive herself to a traffic stop the Harrisburg Bureau of Police had conducted on her son. During that traffic stop, Sonya McKnight did remove a pill bottle containing unknown materials from her son's vehicle without permission to do so, thus inhibiting the officers on scene to verify its contents.							

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903	Number of Victims Age 60 or Older _____			
Lead?	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	§5101		TITLE 18	1	M-2	
Offense #	Section	Subsection	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NCIC Offense Code	UCR/NIBRS Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number		<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone		
Statute Description (include the name of statute or ordinance): OBSTRUCTING ADMINISTRATION OF LAW OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION							
Acts of the accused associated with this Offense: A person commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if he intentionally obstructs, impairs or perverts the administration of law or other governmental function by force, violence, physical interference or obstacle, breach of official duty, or any other unlawful act, except that this section does not apply to flight by a person charged with crime, refusal to submit to arrest, failure to perform a legal duty other than an official duty, or any other means of avoiding compliance with law without affirmative interference with governmental functions. On February 22, 2020 Sonya McKnight who is a Magisterial District Judge in the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania did drive herself to a traffic stop the Harrisburg City Police Department had conducted on her son. Because of her position as a Magisterial District Judge, McKnight obstructed the Officers from properly executing their duties when she challenged them verbally and without permission removed potential evidence from the traffic stop.							

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903	Number of Victims Age 60 or Older _____			
Lead?	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	§5301	2	TITLE 18	1	M-2	
Offense #	Section	Subsection	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NCIC Offense Code	UCR/NIBRS Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number		<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone		
Statute Description (include the name of statute or ordinance): OFFICIAL OPPRESSION							
Acts of the accused associated with this Offense: A person acting or purporting to act in an official capacity or taking advantage of such an actual or purported capacity commits a misdemeanor of the second degree if, knowing that his conduct is illegal he: (2) denies or impedes another in the exercise of enjoyment of any right, privilege power or immunity. When McKnight arrived to the scene of the traffic stop on February 22, 2020, the Uniformed Police Officers on scene immediately recognized her as Magisterial District Judge McKnight. The Officers on scene considered her position as a Magisterial District Judge and said that she was able to move freely about the scene of the traffic stop because of her position as an Magisterial District Judge. The Officers on scene said they would not have been as lenient with other citizens.							




POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number U942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

- I ask that a warrant of arrest or a summons be issued and that the defendant be required to answer the charges I have made.
- I verify that the facts set forth in this complaint are true and correct to the best of my knowledge or information and belief. This verification is made subject to the penalties of Section 4904 of the Crimes Code (18 Pa.C.S. § 4904) relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.
- This complaint consists of the preceding page(s) numbered 1 through .
- I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

The acts committed by the accused, as listed and hereafter, were against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and were contrary to the Act(s) of the Assembly, or in violation of the statutes cited.
(Before a warrant of arrest can be issued, an affidavit of probable cause must be completed, sworn to before the issuing authority, and attached.)

_____ (Date)


 _____ (Signature of Affiant)

AND NOW, on this date December 16 2020 I certify that the complaint has been properly completed and verified.
 An affidavit of probable cause must be completed before a warrant can be issued.

_____ (Magisterial District Court Number)
 _____ (Issuing Authority)





POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number U942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

AFFIDAVIT of PROBABLE CAUSE

AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

The undersigned, a Special Agent with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation of the Office of Attorney General of Pennsylvania, being duly sworn according to law, deposes and says:

Your affiant is Jarrett Ferrari, a Special Agent in the Bureau of Criminal Investigations with the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General where I have been employed since March of 2018. Prior to my current assignment, your affiant was a Detective, who retired from the Harrisburg Bureau of Police with over 20 years of service which began in 1997. I have conducted thousands of interviews during my law enforcement tenure. I have written, obtained and executed numerous search warrants and arrest warrants for a variety of crimes. Those crimes include, but are not limited to identity theft, burglary, robbery, sexual assaults, aggravated assault, attempted homicide and homicides. I have investigated several instances of each of the listed crimes.

On Saturday, February 22, 2020 Harrisburg Bureau of Police uniformed Patrol Officer Farida Kingsboro (Officer Kingsboro) was on duty in full uniform and operating a marked police unit. At about 0220 hours, Officer Kingsboro conducted a traffic stop on a Volvo being operated by Kevin Baltimore at North 6th and Peffer Streets in the City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. The stop was made due to a traffic violation as well as suspected narcotics activity.

While Officer Kingsboro was performing computer checks, Baltimore informed Officer Chad Showers that his mother was Magisterial District Judge Sonya McKnight. Baltimore also called his mother in spite of being told not to use his phone.

Officer Kingsboro detained Baltimore as a result of an outstanding warrant. Baltimore told Officer Kingsboro he had a knife in his car and that she could go look for it. While searching for the knife in Baltimore's Volvo, Officer Kingsboro found a pill bottle, briefly picked it up and put it back. She had intended to inspect the pill bottle further after completing an initial search of Baltimore and his vehicle.

Shortly after the stop, Magisterial District Judge McKnight arrived on scene. Officer Kingsboro escorted her away from Baltimore and the other Officers. Officer Kingsboro reported that McKnight began to question her as to why her son was being arrested. Officer Kingsboro explained he had an active warrant. McKnight told Officer Kingsboro that he had been paying on it. McKnight began to become agitated that the Officers were searching her son and she questioned Officer Kingsboro again about why they were doing that. As Officer Kingsboro was explaining why he was being searched, she interrupted Officer Kingsboro and continued to question her about her reason for stopping her son. Officer Kingsboro explained to her that his registration had expired. McKnight argued that she had paid for his registration. While at the scene of the car stop, McKnight asked Officer Kingsboro if Commissioner Carter was working. Officer Kingsboro explained that she was unsure of his work schedule.

Commissioner Carter is Harrisburg Bureau of Police Commissioner Carter and is in charge of the Harrisburg Bureau of Police. A search warrant was obtained for McKnight's phone records and the records revealed that McKnight called Commissioner Carter at 2:33 am, prior to her arrival on scene. Your Affiant interviewed Commissioner Carter who indicated that he did receive a call from



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: NR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number 4942179-0	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

McKnight at about 2:30 am on the date of the car stop and told him that Baltimore was in the process of being stopped by Harrisburg Police. Carter asked McKnight whether she was going to the traffic stop as a "Judge or a mother." Therefore McKnight knew Commissioner Carter was not working at the time of the stop and her asking for him was intended to intimidate or influence the Officers.

While Baltimore was being searched, Officer Chad Showers questioned Baltimore about the pill bottle inside of his Volvo. Baltimore stated it was his blood pressure medication. Officer Kingsboro said "don't worry, I'll check." McKnight replied "yeah, that's just his blood pressure medication." Thereafter, McKnight entered the Volvo without the permission of any of the Officers and took the pill bottle. She left the scene with the pill bottle.

Officer Kingsboro noted that McKnight had taken the pill bottle from the Volvo. Because McKnight took the pill bottle, no Patrol Officer was ever able to open it and look inside of it to inspect its contents. Officer Kingsboro did tell your Affiant that there were unknown pills inside the pill bottle, but again, she was never able to inspect them to see what they were.

Your Affiant interviewed the Officers involved in the traffic stop in regards to all of this. They advised me that McKnight was able to freely move about the scene of the traffic stop because she is a Magisterial District Judge. They said had it been a normal citizen, they would not have allowed her to do the things she did such as entering her son's Volvo. They said they would have had her stand back from the scene and they would have addressed any concerns she had after they had collected any and all necessary evidence.

Based on the aforementioned, Sonya Mcknight is being charged with:

1. TAMPERING WITH OR FABRICATING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE
2. OBSTRUCTING ADMINISTRATION OF LAW OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION
3. OFFICIAL OPPRESSION

I, JARRETT J. FERRARI, S.A., BEING DULY SWORN ACCORDING TO THE LAW, DEPOSE AND SAY THAT THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE FOREGOING AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF.

I CERTIFY THAT THIS FILING COMPLIES WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CASE RECORDS PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY OF THE UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF PENNSYLVANIA THAT REQUIRE FILING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS DIFFERENTLY THAN NON-CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS.



 (Signature of Affiant)



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: <i>CR-375-20</i>	Date Filed: <i>12/16/2020</i>	OTN/LiveScan Number <i>U 942179-0</i>	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

Sworn to me and subscribed before me this *16th* day of *December* *2020*

_____, Date _____, Magisterial District Judge

My commission expires first Monday of January,

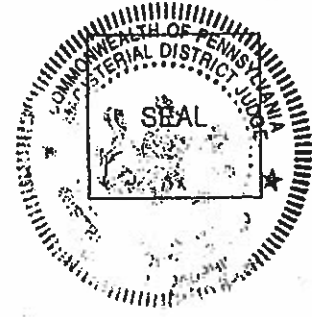


EXHIBIT B

EXHIBIT B

IN RE: MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
SONYA M. MCKNIGHT AND : DAUPHIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT 12-2- :
04 : 0010-39-MD-2020
: AO # 53
:

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

AND NOW, THIS 17th day of December 2020, upon consideration of the criminal complaint filed by the Office of Attorney General of Pennsylvania against Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) Sonya M. McKnight, it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DECREED** that Sonya M. McKnight is placed on administrative leave with pay effective immediately.

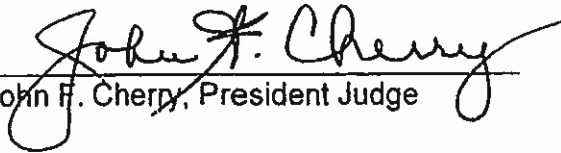
It is further ordered that Sonya M. McKnight shall not reenter Magisterial District Court 12-2-04 located at 1805 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, nor shall she remove or cause to be removed any documents, materials, or equipment from said office other than personal effects. Further she shall not access, enter or modify any official court records via the MDJS or otherwise, nor shall she perform any duties related to being a MDJ.

Sonya M. McKnight shall deliver or have delivered her office keys, access cards, badges and any other documents, materials or equipment issued to her as a MDJ, to the Dauphin County Deputy Court Administrator for Magisterial District Judges, Troy Petery, at his office by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 18, 2020.

Court assignments in Magisterial District Court 12-2-04 shall be heard by Magisterial District Judges assigned by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.

This Administrative Order shall be served on Sonya M. McKnight by the Sheriff of Dauphin County or his Deputy.

BY THE COURT:


John F. Cherry, President Judge

DISTRIBUTION:

President Judge John F. Cherry
Judge Richard A. Lewis
Judge Scott Arthur Evans
Judge Deborah E. Curcillo
Judge Andrew H. Dowling
Judge William T. Tully
Judge Edward M. Marsico
Judge John Joseph McNally
Judge Royce Morris
Magisterial District Judges
Deborah Freeman, Esquire, District Court Administrator
Troy Petery, Deputy Court Administrator-Magisterial District Judges
Robert Sisock, Deputy Court Administrator-Criminal
District Attorney Fran Chardo
Mary Klatt, Esquire, Chief Public Defender
Chad Libby, Probation Services
Matthew Miller, Work Release Center
Joseph Mittleman, Esquire, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

Brian Perry, Esq.
Dauphin County Sheriff's Office

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