



complaint alleged that you repeatedly attacked the credibility and character

of certain Georgia Bureau of Investigation Agents and demeaned those

agents who were appearing before you in their official capacities without

justification and in a manner unbecoming your office. These improper

attacks on the credibility and character of the GBI agents occurred both on

and off the bench. During certain in-chamber confrontations, which

occurred at your request, you used both profanity and loud accusatory

language to question the law enforcement agents about an ongoing

investigation into alleged drug activities that were not the subject of any

case or matter pending before you, but were instead the subject of a joint

federal and state investigation. These attacks were motivated by your own

personal interest because your name had been mentioned in the context of

this investigation and were made in a manner that was designed to

intimidate the agents rather than to further any legitimate role of your office.

## COUNT TWO

That on or about September 5, 2008, you summoned to your office

Mr. Joseph F. Burford and Mr. Gary Bergman, Special Prosecutors

appointed in an investigation of alleged election fraud in Chattooga County,

Georgia that would eventually result in an indictment styled *The State of*

*Georgia v. Carlton Vines*. You summoned the prosecutors for a hearing

despite the fact that you had already recused yourself from any proceedings involving that case because your father represented Judge Carlton Vines. When the prosecutors arrived at your chambers for the hearing, they found your father, Bobby Lee Cook, was already present on behalf of Judge Vines, who was the subject of the Grand Jury investigation. Without giving the prosecutors any notice or a chance to defend themselves, you then reprimanded the prosecutors for what you perceived to be their actions in the handling of this criminal matter. Even though you had no authority to handle any such hearing, or to administer such a reprimand, you verbally and repeatedly demeaned and belittled the prosecutors in a manner that was overbearing, rude and intolerant. As with your actions in Count One, these actions were taken in a manner that was designed to intimidate the prosecutors rather than to further any legitimate role of your office.

These improper actions, which have been acknowledged by you, are violations of the Canon 1 of the Code of Judicial Conduct which provides:

“Judges should participate in establishing, maintaining, and enforcing high standards of conduct, and shall personally observe such

standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary may be preserved."

Your actions are also a violation of Canon 2A of the Code of Judicial

Conduct, which states:

"Judges 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."

Further, your actions are a violation of Canon 3 of the

Code of Judicial Conduct, which states:

"Judges shall be patient, dignified, and courteous to

litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers and others with

whom they deal in their official capacity..."

The public expects and the Code of Judicial Conduct demands that

judges be held to a high standard of ethical conduct in discharging the

responsibilities and duties of a judge.

For your conduct, you are hereby publicly reprimanded. You are

furthermore cautioned that any repetition of such conduct can, and likely

will, result in punishment of the severest possible nature.

You are instructed and directed to carefully review and fully comply

with each and every provision of the Code of Judicial Conduct and to hereafter conduct yourself in accordance with such provisions of the Code

of Judicial Conduct.

The Judicial Qualifications Commission has taken this action in a

continuing effort to protect public confidence in the judicial system and to assist the state's judiciary in its efforts to embody the principles and values set forth in the Georgia Constitution and the Georgia Code of Judicial

Conduct.

This concludes your public reprimand.