

FEB - 8 2021

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**  
**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 :

**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.

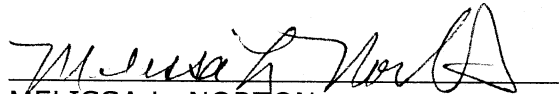
WHEREFORE, Sonya M. McKnight, a Magisterial District Judge of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, is subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Article V, § 18(d)(1).

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**

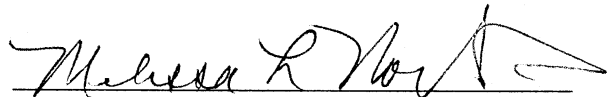
I, Melissa L. Norton, Deputy Counsel to the Judicial Conduct Board, verify that the Judicial Conduct Board found probable cause to file the formal charges contained in the *BOARD COMPLAINT*. I understand that the statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 4904, relating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

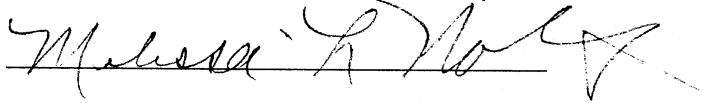
Judge Sonya M. McKnight	:	
Magisterial District Judge	:	
Magisterial District 12-2-04	:	1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District	:	
Dauphin County	:	

**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**

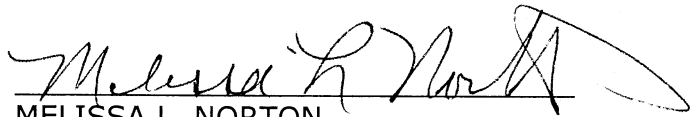
In compliance with Rule 122 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, a copy of the Board Complaint was sent UPS Overnight Mail to Heidi Eakin, Esquire, counsel for Judge McKnight, at the following address and via email:

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



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
VS.

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

DEFENDANT:

(NAME and ADDRESS):

SONYA M MCKNIGHT  
First Name Middle Name Last Name Gen

2744 Lexington Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Telephone:

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 CR-355-20	Date Filed 12/16/2020	OTN/LiveScan Number U942174-D	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"/>
First Name AKA		Middle Name	Last Name	Gen.
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			
Hair Color <input type="checkbox"/> GRY (Gray) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BLK (Black) <input type="checkbox"/> BLN (Blonde / Strawberry)	<input type="checkbox"/> RED (Red/Aubn.)	<input type="checkbox"/> SDY (Sandy)	<input type="checkbox"/> BLU (Blue)	<input type="checkbox"/> PLE (Purple) <input type="checkbox"/> BRO (Brown) <input type="checkbox"/> ONG (Orange) <input type="checkbox"/> WHI (White) <input type="checkbox"/> XXX (Unk./Bald) <input type="checkbox"/> GRN (Green) <input type="checkbox"/> PNK (Pink)
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) <input type="checkbox"/> MAR (Maroon) <input type="checkbox"/> PNK (Pink) <input type="checkbox"/> MUL (Multicolored) <input type="checkbox"/> XXX (Unknown)
DNA <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	DNA Location			WEIGHT (lbs.)
FBI Number	MNU Number			125
Defendant Fingerprinted <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Fingerprint Classification:			FL HEIGHT In. 5 4

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

*Kirsten E. Heine*

12/15/2020

(Name of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

(Signature of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

(Date)

I, JARRETT J. FERRARI, S.A.

569

(Name of the Affiant)

(PSP/MPPOETC -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.  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]

(County Code)

on or about FEBRUARY 22, 2020



# POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: CR-355-20	Date Filed: 12/19/2024	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 §§ 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): <b>TAMPERING WITH OR FABRICATING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE</b>							
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): <b>OBSTRUCTING ADMINISTRATION OF LAW OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION</b>							
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): <b>OFFICIAL OPPRESSION</b>							
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-355-25	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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 in 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 U942179-0	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)

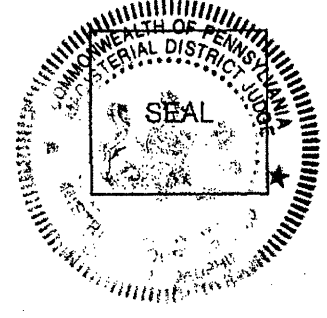


# POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number: <i>CR-375-20</i>	Date Filed: <i>12/16/2020</i>	OTN/LiveScan Number <i>U942179-0</i>	Complaint/Incident Number BCC200160
Defendant Name:	First: SONYA	Middle: M	Last: MCKNIGHT

Sworn to me and subscribed before me this 16<sup>th</sup> 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

: 0010-34-MD-2020

: AO # 53

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

AND NOW, THIS 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

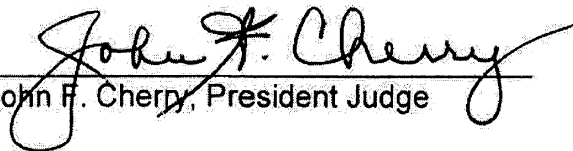
It is further ordered that Sonya M. McKnight shall not reenter Magisterial District Court 12-2-04 located at 1805 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, nor shall she remove or cause to be removed any documents, materials, or equipment from said office other than personal effects. Further she shall 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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