

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL DISABILITIES AND TENURE**

515 FIFTH STREET, N.W., BUILDING A, ROOM 246  
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**DETERMINATION AND UNDERTAKING**

Re: The Honorable Yvonne Williams  
Associate Judge  
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

The case of U.S. vs. Christopher Lucas and Christina Lucas, Criminal Action Nos. 2013-CF3-2098 and 2014-CF3#-6253 came to the Commission's attention on July 22, 2015. The Commission initiated an investigation which included a review of relevant Court documents that focused on the colloquy and actions of Judge Yvonne Williams during a sentencing hearing on June 29, 2015, and a post sentencing hearing on July 15, 2015.

The Commission met with Judge Williams, discussed the facts, and listened to her reasons and explanations for her conduct.

The Commission's investigation revealed that during the hearing on June 29, 2015, Judge Williams sentenced two defendants, Christopher Lucas and Christina Lucas. Subsequent to the hearing's adjournment the Judge, reduced the sentence for Christina Lucas without notifying counsel for the defendant or the government. The Judge then summoned the parties to appear for a hearing on July 15, 2015, some two weeks later, to explain her reasons for changing Ms. Lucas's sentence. During the hearing Judge Williams advised the parties of her decision concerning Ms. Lucas, and then provided her rationale for the reduction in sentence. Counsel noted that the change in sentence was done outside the presence of the defendant and the government and without giving the parties any opportunity to brief the issue or for the victim to address the change. The Judge, in response, stated that the change in sentence was on the record. However, Judge Williams' sentencing modification took place after the original sentencing hearing concluded. The Judge directed the courtroom clerk to change the judgment and commitment Order to reduce the original sentence for Ms. Lucas. While this modification may have been captured on the automatic recording system in the courtroom, it was not "on the record" because it was not done in the presence of the parties in the Lucas case.

At the conclusion of the July 15, 2015, hearing the parties sought to brief the issues related to Ms. Lucas's sentencing modification. Judge Williams granted their request. On July 29, 2015, the government filed a Motion To Reconsider Sentence and on August 3, 2015, Ms. Lucas filed her Opposition. On August 3, 2015, Judge Williams granted the government's Motion, reversed the sentencing reduction and recused herself from further proceedings in the case. The former action is reflected in the docket entry of the following day with the notation of the filing of an amended judgment and commitment Order. Thus, granting the government's motion, Judge Williams reversed the reduction of the sentence originally imposed on Ms. Lucas.

The Commission therefore concludes that Judge Williams' conduct violated Canon 1, Rule 1.2 in that her modification of the sentence outside the presence of the parties erodes public confidence in the judiciary, and Canon 2, Rule 2.6 (A) of the 2012 Code of Judicial Conduct as adopted by the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration of the District of Columbia Courts which read as follows:

Canon 1, Rule 1.2:

"A 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."

Canon 2, Rule 2.6(A):

"A judge shall accord to every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding, or that person's lawyer, the right to be heard according to law."

Judge Williams accepts the Commission's determinations and conclusions expressed above and recognizes that her conduct was inappropriate and a violation of the applicable Canons and Rules of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Judge Williams assures the Commission that her conduct henceforth will strictly follow and adhere to the standards prescribed by the Code.


The Commission makes this document public with the agreement of Judge Williams.



Yvonne Williams  
Associate Judge  
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Date: 1/20/16

For The Commission:

  
Gladys Kessler  
Chairperson

Date: Jan. 27, 2016