Steven D. Grierson CLERK OF THE COUR 1 MOT STEVEN B. WOLFSON 2 Clark County District Attorney Nevada Bar #001565 3 200 Lewis Avenue Las Vegas, Nevada 89155-2212 CASE NO: A-24-894239-C 4 (702) 671-2500 Department 3 Attorney for Plaintiff 5 6 DISTRICT COURT CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA 7 8 In the Matter of: 9 CASE NO: 10 THE RECUSAL OF THE HONORABLE ERIKA BALLOU FROM ALL CASES DEPT NO: XXX 11 PROSECUTED BY THE CLARK **COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY** 12 13 14 STATE'S NOTICE OF MOTION FOR THE RECUSAL OF THE HONORABLE ERIKA BALLOU FROM ALL CASES PROSECUTED BY THE CLARK COUNTY 15 DISTRICT ATTORNEY 16 **DATE OF HEARING:** 17 TIME OF HEARING: 18 COMES NOW, the State of Nevada, by STEVEN B. WOLFSON, Clark County 19 District Attorney, and files this Notice Of Motion And Motion for the Recusal of the 20 Honorable Erika Ballou from All Cases Prosecuted by the Clark County District Attorney. 21 This Motion is made and based upon all the papers and pleadings on file herein, the 22 attached points and authorities in support hereof, and oral argument at the time of hearing, if 23 24 deemed necessary by this Honorable Court. 25 /// 26 /// 27 /// 28 ///

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NOTICE OF HEARING

YOU, AND EACH OF YOU, WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned will bring the foregoing motion on for setting before the above entitled Court, in Department XXX thereof, on the _____ day of June, 2024, at the hour of _____ o'clock AM/PM, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

In August of 2022, the Nevada Supreme Court overturned Judge Ballou's erroneous granting of a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in State v. Christman, No. 83572 (Order of Reversal and Remand, Aug. 11, 2022). That order required Judge Ballou to deny the writ of habeas corpus and remand Mia Christman into custody. She then ordered an evidentiary hearing to attempt to "reconvince" the Nevada Supreme Court that it was incorrect the first time. See Generally State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou. Fourteen months later, the Nevada Supreme Court then granted the State of Nevada's petition for an extraordinary measure, a writ of mandamus. The Nevada Supreme Court made clear that Judge Ballou had no authority to pursue more evidence of a matter that the Supreme Court had already resolved. State v. Eighth Judicial District Court in and for County of Clark, 537 P.3d 134 (2023).

Judge Ballou continued to defy the Nevada Supreme Courts' orders for an additional seven months. On April 30th, 2024, the State of Nevada filed a Judicial Ethics complaint with the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline concerning her handling of the Christman Case. On May 1, 2024, the State also filed a Motion to Recuse Judge Ballou from the Christman case. NRS 1.235 clearly requires that once a Motion to Recuse has been filed, the contested judge may take <u>no further action</u> on the case. However, in a stunning decision, Judge Ballou not only continued to rule on the case, <u>she granted a Motion to Strike the State's motion against her</u>.

Shortly *after* the filing of the Recusal Motion on May 1, 2024, Defendant filed a Motion to Strike State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou on the same day, alleging that the motion should be stricken because the motion should be filed in Defendant's civil case number A-19-797445-W, which relates to post-conviction petitions for habeas relief. The State, in an

abundance of caution, filed the same Recusal Motion under that A number as well on May 1, 2024. The State did not concede the arguments raised by Defendant's Motion to Strike and filed an opposition on May 3, 2024.

A day after the Recusal Motion was filed, on May 2, 2024, without a hearing or the 10 days allotted to file an opposition by Nevada Rules of Criminal Procedure Rule 8(4), Judge Ballou issued a Minute Order granting Defendant's Motion to Strike the Recusal Motion in Defendant's criminal case. In the minute order, Judge Ballou expressly admitted that she was aware that a Recusal Motion had been filed against her and still made the determination to strike the Recusal Motion. Judge Ballou's minute order stated:

It having come to the attention of the Court that the State filed a Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou on April 24, 2024. This Motion is scheduled to be heard on May 6, 2024. However, Ms. Christman filed a Motion to Strike State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou on May 1, 2024, based on the fact that the Motion was incorrectly filed into the C case number rather than the A case number based on the arguments. The State then refiled The Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou into case A-19-797445-W on May 2, 2024. Therefore, Ms. Christman s Motion to Strike is GRANTED. The State's Motion to Recuse is hereby ORDERED STRICKEN from case C-13-287140-2. The matter will proceed in the correctly captioned case, A-19-797445-W. The hearing on the Motion scheduled for May 6, 2024, in case C-13-287140-2, is hereby VACATED.

(Ex. 1 – Ballou's 1st 050224 Minute Order) (emphasis added). As a result of that improper Minute Order, the State immediately filed a Motion to Compel Judge Ballou's Compliance with NRS 1.235 ("Compliance Motion") on the same day, May 2, 2024. (Ex. 2 – Criminal Docket for Defendant's Case). The Compliance Motion essentially begged the District Court to stop Judge Ballou from continuing to take judicial action on a case that she was subject to a Recusal Motion.

In response to the Compliance Motion filed May 2, 2024, that same day, Judge Ballou elected to take further action in direct defiance of Nevada law and the Nevada Code of Judicial

Conduct by entered another Minute Order granting a Motion to Modify Sentence, which sought to vacate Defendant's remaining prison sentence that the Nevada Supreme Court ordered her to serve. (See Ex. 2, Ex. 3 - Ballou's 2nd 050224 Minute Order). Judge Ballou entered the Minute Order *despite two* Nevada Supreme Court Orders directing her to deny Defendant's post-conviction relief, remand Defendant back into custody, and re-institute the original Judgment of Conviction. Judge Ballou also issued this Minute Order without holding an evidentiary hearing, despite previously stating that an evidentiary hearing was needed to resolve the matter.¹

The very next morning, May 3, 2024, the Nevada Supreme Court issued an Order directing the Eighth Judicial District Court to remove Judge Ballou from Mia Christman's cases immediately and directing the Eighth Judicial District Court to assign a new judge that would comply with its Writ of Mandamus requiring the remand of Mia Christman. The Nevada Supreme stated:

We nonetheless are concerned by the district court's refusal to act. This court twice has directed the district court to enter judgment in the State's favor on Christman's postconviction habeas petition—first in the State's appeal from the district court's order granting the postconviction habeas petition and again in the writ issued in this matter. Although this court did not address Christman's custody status in either instance, we think it clear that a judgment in the State's favor on the postconviction habeas petition necessarily entails recommitting Christman to serve the sentence imposed in the judgment of conviction. See NRS 178.4873 (allowing the district court to admit a petitioner to bail pending appeal when the court grants a postconviction habeas petition, the court does not stay the order granting relief, and the State files a notice of appeal); NRS 178.4875 (addressing

¹ Judge Ballou's 2nd Minute Order falsely claimed, "the parties have informed the Court that the Evidentiary Hearing should be vacated." Judge Ballou's executive assistant reached out to the parties and explained the May 8, 2024, evidentiary hearing was mistakenly set on a civil calendar and asked if there was any objection to moving the hearing. The State said while it objected to there being a hearing at all based on the lack of merit in the motion, it did not oppose rescheduling the evidentiary hearing due to the clerical error. Specifically, the State said "[w]hile the State is opposed to there being a hearing as a preliminary matter based on the merits, *if logistically there was an error in setting the matter, the State understands the need for pushing it to May 8th...*" Similarly, defense counsel for Defendant also did not oppose rescheduling the hearing, which Judge Ballou cancelled instead. (Ex. 4 – 041924 Email Exchange from Judge Ballou's Chambers Email to Parties)

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recommitment of a petitioner admitted to bail pending appeal). Neither our appellate mandate nor our writ of mandamus contemplated any delay, let alone the more than fifteen months that have passed since we entered judgment in the State's favor on its appeal. And although the writ of mandamus issued in this matter did not state a specific time for the district court to enter a judgment in the State's favor on the postconviction habeas petition, that writ was peremptory in nature and thus NRS 34.190(2) and (3) contemplate that the district court would do the act required by the writ "immediately after the receipt of the writ." Given these circumstances, we are not convinced that the respondent district court judge will comply. Accordingly, we direct the chief judge of the respondent Eighth Judicial District Court to reassign the postconviction habeas proceeding involving Christman (district court case A-19-797445-W) and the related criminal case involving Christman (district court case C-13-287140-2). Upon reassignment of those cases, the district court shall promptly comply with this court's mandate in Warden v. Christman, No. 83572, 2022 WL 3336142 (Nev. Aug. 11, 2022) (Order of Reversal and Remand), and the writ issued by this court in this matter on October 13, 2023.

(Ex. 5 at 2-3)(emphasis added). The Nevada Supreme Court also issued a parallel order on the same day, reiterating that it had ordered the removal of Judge Ballou from this case. (Ex. 6).

As a result, on May 6, 2024, Department 20 was assigned to take over this case from Judge Ballou. Department 20 immediately issued an order that finally complied with the two Nevada Supreme Court orders that had been pending for nearly two years and ordered Defendant to surrender to the Nevada Department Corrections. Department 20 entered an order that:

- 1) RESCINDS the prior court's judgment in A-19-797445-W granting Petitioner/Defendant Christman's Post-Conviction Writ for Petition of Habeas Corpus and ENTERS A JUDGMENT in favor of the State of Nevada denying Petitioner's Petition;
- 2) RESCINDS the prior court's November 16, 2021 Order in C-13-287140-2 releasing Petitioner/Defendant Christman pending sentencing on own recognizance release with low level electronic monitoring;

3) REMANDS Petitioner/Defendant into the custody of the Nevada Department of Corrections to server her sentence pursuant to her Judgement of Conviction of July 27, 2017 in C-13-287140-2; and

4) VACATES any pending Court hearings, the Court will reset any necessary hearing on Petitioner/Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence in C-13-287140-2.

(Ex. 7).

However, after Department 20 issued that Order, later that day, May 6, 2024, as a result of Judge Ballou's improper Minute Order that she issued while subject to a recusal motion, Defendant filed a Motion for Sentencing, erroneously claiming Defendant was not under a sentence of imprisonment due to Judge Ballou's improper Minute Order.

As a result, Department 20 had to issue *another* order that denied Defendant's Motion for Sentencing and explained that Judge Ballou's Minute Order was improper under Nevada Law and a violation under NRS 1.235. Moreover, the Order also explained that Judge Ballou's Minute Order had no legal effect under Nevada law, as Judge Ballou was required by law to issue a *written* order, rather than a minute order. (Ex. 8).

Judge Ballou's actions from May 1, 2024, through May 6, 2024, caused the State to subsequently file an addendum to its Ethics complaint covering the events occurring in the week after its filing of the original Ethics complaint.

The State of Nevada is not filing this motion to relitigate the issues surrounding the Mia Christman case. However, the status quo in which Judge Ballou is permitted to preside over all criminal matters involving the District Attorney's office, while a judicial ethics complaint filed by the District Attorney's office is pending, is an untenable situation that should be addressed by the Eighth Judicial District Court. Accordingly, the State has filed the instant motion to request that the Eighth Judicial District Court recuse Judge Ballou from any criminal proceeding involving the Clark County District Attorney's office until the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline completes its investigations and issues their judgement.

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POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

The Preamble to the Nevada Code of Judicial Conduct (NCJC) states that "An independent, fair and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice..." because "the judiciary plays a central role in preserving the principles of justice and the rule of law." The Preamble urges judges to "maintain the dignity of judicial office at all times and avoid both impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in their professional and personal lives." Judges must uphold and apply the law impartially and fairly, complete their duties competently and diligently, and impartially resolve issues without unnecessary cost or delay. NCJC Rule 2.2; NCJC Rule 2.5, NCJC Rule 2.5, Comment 4. While Comment 3 of NCJC Rule 2.2 protects "good faith errors of fact or law." Rule 2.11(A)(1) states that "A judge shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned, including but not limited to the following circumstances: (1) The judge has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party...." NCJC Rule 2.5

Pursuant to NRS 1.230(1), a judge cannot preside over an action or proceeding if he or she is biased or prejudiced against one of the parties to the action. An implied bias of a judge exists when a judge appears "interested in the action or proceeding." NRS 1.230(2)(a). This rule is intended to promote public confidence in the independence, efficiency, and finality of the judiciary. Hogan v. Warden, 112 Nev. 553, 560, 916 P.2d 805, 809 (1996). When a judge is unable to fulfill those duties, a judge must be recused. A recusal is required when the risk of bias is too high to be constitutionally tolerable. Morgan v. State, 1479 P.3d 1006 (Nev. Ct. App. 2021) (quoting Rippo v. Baker, 580 U.S. 285, 286-287, 137 S. Ct. 905, 907 (2017)). A judge is presumed to be impartial and therefore the party moving to recuse the judge bears the burden to establish sufficient factual grounds to warrant recusal or disqualification. Ybarra v. State, 127 Nev. 47, 51, 247 P.3d 269, 272 (2011)

While opinions formed by the judge on the basis the proceedings do not generally constitute a basis for a recusal motion, those opinions certainly can form the basis of a recusal motion where "they display a deep-seated favoritism or antagonism that would make fair judgement impossible." Canarelli v. Eighth Jud. Dist. Ct. in & for Cnty. of Clark, 138 Nev.

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104, 108, 506 P.3d 334, 338 (2022). In cases where such deep-seated favoritism or antagonism is displayed, recusal is appropriate, unlike in cases with mere unfavorable judicial opinions which simply lay the grounds for an appeal. <u>Liteky v. United States</u>, 510 U.S. 540, 555, 114 S. Ct. 1147, 1157, 127 L. Ed. 2d 474 (1994)

Ultimately, a court analyzing a motion to recuse is required to decide "whether a reasonable person, knowing all the facts, would harbor reasonable doubts about [the judge's] impartiality." <u>PETA</u>, 111 Nev. 438, 894 P.2d 341 (1995).

ARGUMENT

THE RECUSAL OF JUDGE BALLOU FROM ALL CRIMINAL MATTERS INVOLVING THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WHILE THE ETHICS COMPLAINT IS PENDING, IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE IMPARTIALITY FOR THESE CRIMINAL CASES

I. The Merits of the Motion Should Not Be In Dispute as the Nevada Supreme Court

Has Already Intervened to Remove Judge Ballou from One Criminal Matter

Involving the State

The question of Judge Ballou's bias has already been settled. The Nevada Supreme Court, in its order removing Judge Ballou from the Christman case, made clear that it was "not convinced that the respondent district court judge will comply" with the law which favored the State of Nevada. (Ex. 5). This is not in dispute. What the State of Nevada now raises with the Eighth Judicial District Court is the following question: Does allowing Judge Ballou to sit on criminal cases with the District Attorney's Office as a litigant when the office's judicial ethics complaint is pending against her create a situation where Judge Ballou's "impartiality might reasonably be questioned?" NCJC Rule 2.11. The clear and dispassionate answer is yes. Accordingly, during the pendency of this latest judicial ethics complaint, the Eighth Judicial District Court should remove her from any criminal case involving the District Attorney's Office under the matter is resolved.

II. Removing Judge Ballou From Handling These Criminal Cases while a Judicial Ethics Complaint is Pending, Protects Judge Ballou, the State as well as Criminal Defendants

Normally, when a motion to recuse is filed the party seeking the recusal is most often limited to the individual case before that judge. However, this is a rare circumstance in which the moving party, the District Attorney's Office, is responsible for handling virtually all criminal matters before the Eighth Judicial District Court and, more specifically, before Judge Ballou. Moreover, given that the behavior of Judge Ballou was so egregious, it prompted the State to file a judicial ethics complaint.² Now, the current situation before the Eighth Judicial District Court is there is a current judge, subject to a judicial ethics complaint, presiding over hundreds of felony criminal matters in which the party that filed the ethics complaint is a party to those criminal matters. The stakes are extraordinarily high for Judge Ballou since one potential outcome of the ethics complaint could be her removal from judicial office.

Thus, Judge Ballou is faced with making rulings on cases on hundreds of cases, where one party to all of these criminal matters has sought to have her disciplined by the Judicial Ethics Commission. This puts all parties, the State, the defendants, and Judge Ballou, in a precarious situation. In short, allowing Judge Ballou to remain handling criminal matters involving the State while this judicial ethics complaint is pending, would subject the Eighth Judicial District Court to future claims of bias involving Judge Ballou and entirely unnecessary scrutiny concerning the Eighth Judicial Court's ability to be part of a fair legal system.

The situation that Judge Ballou, the State, and every defendant in front of Ballou is this: while the State is actively pursuing an ethics complaint against Judge Ballou, Judge Ballou

² Not only has the State of Nevada filed an ethics complaint, Judge Ballou currently has a variety of ethics complaints pending against her, including two brought against her by the Police Protective Association. These complaints relate to several comments made during sentencing hearings where she stated, among other things, "You're the one making the decisions not to walk away from cops. You're a Black man in America. You know you don't want to be nowhere where cops are," Judge Ballou said. "You know you don't want to be nowhere where cops are 'cause I know I don't, and I'm a middle-aged, middle-class Black woman. I don't want to be around where the cops are because I don't know if I'm going to walk away alive or not." See https://www.8newsnow.com/investigators/las-vegas-judge-facing-ethics-violations-over-hot-tub-photo-charged-for-saying-black-man-could-run-from-police/ These comments demonstrate that Judge Ballou is not only biased against the State of Nevada in the form of the Clark County District Attorney's office, but also law enforcement officers who form an integral part of every single criminal case before her.

will continue to sit on criminal cases where the State is one of the litigating parties. Every time that Judge Ballou makes a ruling in favor of a Defendant, the State could argue that it was made in retribution for the ethics complaint. Every time that Judge Ballou makes a ruling in favor of the State, a defendant could argue that their due process rights were violated because Judge Ballou's decision was merely her bowing to the pressure of an ethics complaint to curry favor with the State. This situation also puts the Eighth Judicial District Court into a position where the public can question both the impartiality and the competence of the District Court if a judge is permitted to openly defy the law and continue to sit on these types of cases. This is a rare set of circumstances that is disadvantageous for all parties involved and it would be improper for the Eighth Judicial District to place each party in this situation, while the judicial ethics complaint is pending.

The Nevada Code of Judicial Conduct is clear that a judge should remove herself from a case where there is an appearance of impropriety or impartiality. NCJC Rule 2.11. No matter what decision Judge Ballou may make on a criminal case, she would be subjecting herself to a claim of bias from either party. Permitting her to continue presiding over criminal matters, while this judicial ethics complaint is pending, only subjects the Eighth Judicial Court to future litigation. The appropriate and prudential remedy at this juncture is to remove her from handling these criminal cases until the Judicial Ethics Commission has reviewed and resolved the ethics complaint filed by the District Attorney's Office. Removing her from handling these criminal matters, in the interim, promotes confidence in the judiciary and ensures that future claims of bias or retaliatory actions are eliminated.

The State of Nevada did not come to the decision to file this motion lightly. However, the State and, apparently, the Nevada Supreme Court have learned over the course of the last several years that Judge Ballou will not comply with the law if it does not suit the outcome

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that she seeks. Taking the reasoned and prudential step of removing her from handling these matters, while the judicial ethics complaint is pending, ensures the preservation of "justice and the rule of law" and the appearance of an impartial and fair judiciary. See NCJC Preamble. In the words of Lord Hewart, "Justice should not only be done, but should manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be done." Rv. Sussex Justices, Ex parte McCarthy, [1924] 1 K.B. 256 (Eng.). However, allowing Judge Ballou to continue to handle criminal matters, while this ethics complaint is pending, is an untenable situation that will erode the public trust in the judiciary and subject the Eighth Judicial Court to future litigation over the impropriety of Judge Ballou handling these matters. Here, the Eighth Judicial District Court can serve justice and manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to serve justice by removing Judge Ballou from all criminal cases involving the District Attorney's Office until the judicial ethics complaint against her is resolved.

DATED this 29th day of May, 2024.

STEVEN B. WOLFSON Clark County District Attorney

Nevada Bar #001365

BY

WOLFSON

Clark County District Attorney Nevada Bar #1565

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15/02/2024 Minute Order (3:00 AM) Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika)

Minutes 05/02/2024 3:00 AM

102/2024 3:00 AM

1 It having come to the alterition of the Court that the State filed a Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou on April 24, 2024. This Motion is scheduled to be heard on May 6, 2024. However, Ms. Christman filed a Motion to Shirks State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou on May 1, 2024, based on the fact that the Motion was incorrectly filed into the C case number rather than the A case number based on the arguments. The State then reflect The Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou into case A-19-79745-W on May 2, 2024. Therefore, Ms. Christman's Motion to Strike is GRANTED. The State is Motion to Recuse is hereby ORDERED STRICKEN from case C-13-287140-2 and The Tenatier will proceed in the correctly captioned case. A-19-79745-W. The hearing on the Motion scheduled for May 6, 2024, in case C-13-287140-2 is hereby VACATED. CLERK'S NOTE: Minute order electronically served to parties via email and/or Odyssey File & Serve. #5-2-24/dy CLERK'S NOTE: A copy of this minute order sent to the Sealing! Striking / Redacting team. #5-2-24/dy

Return to Register of Actions

group received on electring 04/24/2024 Motion Doc ID# 101 [101] State's Notice of Motion and Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou Doc ID# 102 04/24/2024 Notice [102] State's Notice of Exhibits for State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou 04/25/2024 Clerk's Notice of Hearing Doc ID# 103 [103] Notice of Hearing Doc ID# 104 05/01/2024 Addendum [104] ADDENDUM TO STATES NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION TO RECUSE JUDGE ERIKA BALLOU Doc ID# 105 05/01/2024 Motion to Strike [105] Motion to Strike State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou Doc ID# 106 05/02/2024 Clerk's Notice of Hearing [106] Notice of Hearing 05/02/2024 Minute Order (3:00 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou Erika) Minutes Result: Minute Order - No Hearing Held Doc ID# 107 05/02/2024 Motion to Compel [107] State's Notice of Motion and Motion to Compel Judge Ballou's Compliance with Nevada Revised Statute 1.235 Minute Order (3:00 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) 05/02/2024 Re: Motion to Modify Sentence / Sentencing Date Set Minutes Result: Minute Order - No Hearing Held Doc ID# 108 05/03/2024 Clerk's Notice of Hearing [108] Notice of Hearing 05/03/2024 Opposition Doc ID# 109 [109] State's Opposition to Defendant's Motion to Strike State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou 05/03/2024 Minute Order (12:20 PM) (Judicial Officer Jones, Tierra) Minutes Result: Minute Order - No Hearing Held. 05/06/2024 CANCELED Motion to Compel (9:30 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) Vacated - per Attorney or Pro Per Defendant's Ex Parte Motion for Order to Compel Justice Court File 05/06/2024 | CANCELED | Motion (9:30 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) Vacated - per Judge State's Notice of Motion and Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou 05/06/2024 CANCELED Motion to Strike (9:30 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) Vacated - Previously Decided Defendant's Motion to Strike State's Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou Doc 1D# 110 05/06/2024 Order [110] Order 05/06/2024 Notice of Department Reassignment Doc ID# 111 [111] Notice of Department Reassignment 05/06/2024 Doc 1D# 112 Motion [112] Motion to Place on Calendar for Sentencing (Denied 05/06/24) Doc 1D# 113 05/06/2024 Motion [113] Motion to Disqualify the District Attorney's Office Doc ID# 114 05/06/2024 Order Denying [114] Order Denying Defendant Christman' Motion for Sentencing 05/07/2024 Clerk's Notice of Hearing Doc ID# 115 [115] Clerk's Notice of Hearing CANCELED Evidentiary Hearing (1:30 PM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) 05/08/2024 Vacated - per Attorney or Pro Per CANCELED Surrender (1:30 PM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) 05/08/2024 Vacated 05/08/2024 CANCELED Sentencing (9:30 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika) Vacated - per Order

35/02/2024 Minute Order (3:00 AM) (Judicial Officer Ballou, Erika)
Re. Motion to Modify Sentence / Sentencing Date Set

Minutes

05/02/2024 3.00 AM

If having come to the attention of the Court that Ms. Christman filed a Motion to Modify Sentence which was heard on April 15, 2024. All that time, the Court ordered an Evidentiary Hearing on the issue brought before the Court of whether the original Presentence Investigation Report (PS) was misleading. The hearing was scheduled for May 8, 2024, all 1:30 pm. However, the parties have informed the Court that the Evidentiary Hearing should be vacated. Therefore based on the papers and pleadings, and argument heard at the time of the original hearing. Motion to Modify Sentence is GRaNTED. In general, a clistrict court lacks jurisdiction to modify a sentence once a defendant has begun serving it. Passanisiv. State. 108 Nev. 318, 321, 831, P.2d 1371, 1373 (1992). However, a district court has inherent authority to correct, vacate, or modify a sentence detiment of the defendant can demonstrate the sentence is based on a materially untrue assumption or mistake of fact about the defendants cominal record that has worked to the extreme detriment of the defendant Edwards v. State, 112 Nev. 704, 707, 918 P.2d 321, 324 (1996) (emphasis added); see also Passanisi, 108 Nev. at 322, 831 P.2d at 1373. Not every mistake or error during sentencing gives rise to a due process violation. State v. Eighth Judicial Dist. Court, 100 Nev. 90, 97, 677 P.2d 1044, 1048 (1984). A district court has jurisdiction to modify a defendant's sentence "only if (1) the district court actually sentence appellant based on a materially false assumption of fact that worked to appellant based on a materially and the seasumption of fact that worked to appellant sextreme defirment, and (2) the particular mistake at issue was of the type that would rise to the level of a violation of due process." Passanisi, 108 Nev. at 322-23, 831 P.2d at 1373-74 Ms. Christman was convicted, after a plea, of one count of Robbery With Use of a Deadly Weapon (2) Edicinent and the process. "Passanisi, 108 Nev. at 322-23, 831 P.2d at 1373-74 Ms. Christman was convicted define

From: <u>Christopher Hamner</u>
To: <u>Wright, Chapri</u>

Cc: Zarcone, Sandra, "Betsy Allen"

Subject: RE: C-13-287140-2

Date: Friday, April 19, 2024 1:59:00 PM

While the State is opposed to there being a hearing as a preliminary matter based on the merits, if logistically there was an error in setting the matter, the State understands the need for pushing it to May 8^{th} ..

From: Wright, Chapri

Sent: Friday, April 19, 2024 1:26 PM

To: Christopher Hamner

Cc: Zarcone, Sandra; 'Betsy Allen' Subject: RE: C-13-287140-2

CAUTION: This email originated from an **External Source**. Please **use caution** before opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to this email. **Do not sign-in with your DA account credentials.**

State are you in agreeance?

Thanks! Chapri Wright

JUDICIAL EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT to the Honorable Judge Erika Ballou District Court, Department 24

http://www.clarkcountycourts.us/departments/judicial/civil-criminal-divison/department-xxiv/

From: Betsy Allen

Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 11:32 AM

To: Wright, Chapri

Cc: Christopher Hamner; Zarcone, Sandra

Subject: Re: C-13-287140-2

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of Eighth Judicial District Court -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content

is safe.]

I would appreciate setting this the same date as the hearing. May 8. Sent From Betsy's iPhone $\,$

On Apr 18, 2024, at 11:16 AM, Wright, Chapri wrote:

Hello! Counsel,

The temp clerk in our department inadvertently set a couple of criminal cases on a civil day, including this case. The Court has vacated the date of 4/23/24 and is asking when parties would like this matter on calendar for the surrender as this may be impacted by the evidentiary hearing we set, the court did not want to set it without input from the parties. Thanks.

Thanks! Chapri Wright
JUDICIAL EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
to the Honorable Judge Erika Ballou
District Court, Department 24

http://www.clarkcountycourts.us/departments/judicial/civil-criminal-divison/department-xxiv/

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

THE STATE OF NEVADA, Petitioner,

vs.

THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF CLARK; AND THE HONORABLE ERIKA D. BALLOU, DISTRICT JUDGE, Respondents,

and, MIA CHRISTMAN, Real Party in Interest. No. 86007

FILED MAY 03 2024

CLERK OF SUPREME POURT
BY
DEPUTY CLERK

ORDER DENYING MOTION, DIRECTING REASSIGNMENT OF CASES, AND DIRECTING COMPLIANCE WITH WRIT OF MANDAMUS

Petitioner State of Nevada filed an original petition for a writ of mandamus and/or prohibition challenging the district court's failure to comply with this court's order of reversal and remand in Warden v. Christman, No. 83572, 2022 WL 3336142 (Nev. Aug. 11, 2022) (Order of Reversal and Remand). This court granted the petition and issued a writ of mandamus. The writ directed the district court to enter judgment in favor of the State on real party in interest Mia Christman's postconviction habeas petition. The State now moves for enforcement of the writ pursuant to NRS 34.290, arguing that the respondent district court has failed to comply with the writ by failing to remand Christman back into custody to continue serving the sentence imposed in the judgment of conviction.

Having reviewed the motion and Christman's reply, we deny the motion because the initial means of enforcing a writ under NRS 34.290 is through a contempt proceeding. See NRS 34.290(1) (providing that a

SUPREME COURT OF NEVADA

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compelled party may be adjudicated guilty of contempt for "refus[ing] or neglect[ing] to obey" the mandate "after notice and hearing"). Although NRS 34.290(2) provides that the court that issued a writ of mandamus may make "any orders necessary and proper for the complete enforcement of the writ" where the compelled party persists in refusing to obey the mandate, that authority is "held in abeyance until and unless the \$1,000 fine [following a contempt adjudication] does not induce the fined party comply with the writ." Barrows v. Seventh Jud. Dist. Ct., 112 Nev. 339, 343, 913 P.2d 1296, 1298 (1996), disapproved of on other grounds by Glover v. Concerned Citizens for Fuji Park & Fairgrounds, 118 Nev. 488, 50 P.3d 546 (2002). The district court here has not been found guilty of contempt, and the State has specifically declined to ask this court to impose any penalty and has not requested that we schedule a contempt hearing. Accordingly, we deny the motion for enforcement.

We nonetheless are concerned by the district court's refusal to act. This court has twice directed the district court to enter judgment in the State's favor on Christman's postconviction habeas petition—first in the State's appeal from the district court's order granting the postconviction habeas petition and again in the writ issued in this matter. Although this court did not address Christman's custody status in either instance, we think it clear that a judgment in the State's favor on the postconviction habeas petition necessarily entails recommitting Christman to serve the sentence imposed in the judgment of conviction. See NRS 178.4873 (allowing the district court to admit a petitioner to bail pending appeal when the court grants a postconviction habeas petition, the court does not stay the order granting relief, and the State files a notice of appeal); NRS 178.4875 (addressing recommitment of a petitioner admitted to bail

pending appeal). Neither our appellate mandate nor our writ of mandamus contemplated any delay, let alone the more than fifteen months that have passed since we entered judgment in the State's favor on its appeal. And although the writ of mandamus issued in this matter did not state a specific time for the district court to enter a judgment in the State's favor on the postconviction habeas petition, that writ was peremptory in nature and thus NRS 34.190(2) and (3) contemplate that the district court would do the act required by the writ "immediately after the receipt of the writ." Given these circumstances, we are not convinced that the respondent district court judge will comply. Accordingly, we direct the chief judge of the respondent Eighth Judicial District Court to reassign the postconviction habeas proceeding involving Christman (district court case A-19-797445-W) and the related criminal case involving Christman (district court case C-13-Upon reassignment of those cases, the district court shall promptly comply with this court's mandate in Warden v. Christman, No. 83572, 2022 WL 3336142 (Nev. Aug. 11, 2022) (Order of Reversal and Remand), and the writ issued by this court in this matter on October 13, 2023.

It is so ORDERED.

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SUPREME COURT OF NEVADA cc: Hon. Jerry A. Wiese, Chief Judge Hon. Erika D. Ballou, District Judge Attorney General/Carson City Clark County District Attorney Law Office of Betsy Allen Eighth District Court Clerk

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

THE STATE OF NEVADA, Petitioner,

vs.

THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF CLARK; AND THE HONORABLE ERIKA D. BALLOU, DISTRICT JUDGE, Respondents,

and MIA CHRISTMAN, Real Party in Interest. No. 88574

FILED
MAY 03 2024



ORDER DENYING PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS AND PROHIBITION

This emergency original petition for a writ of mandamus and prohibition seeks to compel the district court's compliance with a writ of mandamus issued on October 13, 2023, in State v. Eighth Jud. Dist. Ct. (Christman), No. 86007, 2023 WL 6781265 (Nev. Oct. 12, 2023) (Order Granting Petition), and to prohibit the district court from holding an evidentiary hearing on real party in interest's motion to modify sentence. Real party in interest has filed motions for leave to file an answer and to disqualify the Clark County District Attorney's Office.

Earlier today, we entered an order in Docket No. 86007 addressing petitioner's motion to enforce the October 13 writ. In the order, the chief judge was directed to reassign the underlying cases (including the motion to modify sentence pending below) to a different district court judge, after which this court's orders are to be complied with promptly. Given our order in Docket No. 86007, the relief requested in this petition is moot, Personhood Nev. v. Bristol, 126 Nev. 599, 602, 245 P.3d 572, 574 (2010), and

Supreme Court of Nevada

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we therefore decline to further consider it, NRAP 21(b). Consequently, and as real party in interest may pursue disqualification of the Clark County District Attorney's Office in the district court, we deny real party in interest's motions for leave to file an answer and to disqualify. In light of this order, we

ORDER the petition DENIED.

Stiglich

Stiglich

J.

Lee

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cc: Hon. Jerry A. Wiese, Chief Judge Hon. Erika D. Ballou, District Judge Attorney General/Carson City Clark County District Attorney Law Office of Betsy Allen Eighth District Court Clerk

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DISTRICT COURT CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA

THE STATE OF NEVADA. Plaintiff.

VS.

ORDR

MIA CHRISTMAN, #2862925

Defendant.

MIA CHRISTMAN,

Petitioner,

VS.

DWITE NEVIN, Warden,

Respondent.

Case No. C-13-287140-2

Dept. No. XX

Case No. A-19-797445-W

Dept. No. XX

ORDER

Pursuant to the Supreme Court of the State of Nevada's:

- 1) August 11, 2022 Order of Reversal and Remand, reversing the judgment of District Judge Erika Ballou's Granting of Petitioner/Defendant Christman's Post-Conviction Writ of Habeas Corpus;
- 2) October 12, 2023 Order Granting State of Nevada's Petition for Writ of Mandamus directing District Judge Erika Ballou to enter judgment for the State of Nevada on Petitioner/Defendant Christman's Post-Conviction Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus; and
- 3) May 3, 2024 Order Directing Reassignment of Cases, and Directing Compliance with Writ of Mandamus,

this Court:

- RESCINDS the prior court's judgment in A-19-797445-W granting Petitioner/Defendant Christman's Post-Conviction Writ for Petition of Habeas Corpus and ENTERS A JUDGMENT in favor of the State of Nevada denying Petitioner's Petition;
- 2) RESCINDS the prior court's November 16, 2021 Order in C-13-287140-2 releasing Petitioner/Defendant Christman pending sentencing on own recognizance release with low level electronic monitoring;
- 3) REMANDS Petitioner/Defendant into the custody of the Nevada Department of Corrections to server her sentence pursuant to her Judgement of Conviction of July 27, 2017 in C-13-287140-2; and
- 4) VACATES any pending Court hearings, the Court will reset any necessary hearing on Petitioner/Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence in C-13-287140-2.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED Petitioner/Defendant Christman SHALL SURRENDER to the Nevada Department of Corrections at Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center, 4370 Smiley Road, Las Vegas, Nevada, by 12:00 p.m. (noon) Pacific Daylight Savings Time ON TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024.

Dated this 6th day of May, 2024

ERIC JOHNSON

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

F16 FC4 F4BC E54B Eric Johnson District Court Judge

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DISTRICT COURT CLARK COUNTY. NEVADA

State of Nevada CA

CASE NO: C-13-287140-2

VS

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Mia Christman

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AUTOMATED CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This automated certificate of service was generated by the Eighth Judicial District Court. The foregoing Order was served via the court's electronic eFile system to all recipients registered for e-Service on the above entitled case as listed below:

| | Service Date: 5/6/2024

Department Law Clerk dept30lc@clarkcountycourts.us

Betsy Allen betsyallenesq@yahoo.com

dept 24 LC dept24lc@clarkcountycourts.us

Master Calendar Clerk AAA clerkmastercalendar@clarkcountycourts.us

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ORDR

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DISTRICT COURT CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA

THE STATE OF NEVADA, Plaintiff.

vs.

MIA CHRISTMAN, #2862925

Defendant.

Case No. C-13-287140-2

Dept. No. XX

MIA CHRISTMAN,

Petitioner.

VS.

DWITE NEVIN, Warden,

Respondent.

Case No. A-19-797445-W

Dept. No. XX

ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT CHRISTMAN' MOTION FOR SENTENCING

On May 6, 2024, Defendant Christman filed a Motion for Sentencing. In the motion, Defendant asserts Judge Erika Ballou, the prior judge on this matter, entered a Minute Order on May 2, 2024 granting Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence. Defendant contends she is not currently under any sentence and asks the Court to reset sentencing in this matter.

However, on April 24, 2024, the State of Nevada filed a Motion to Recuse Judge Erika Ballou in this matter. On May 1, 2024, Defendant filed a Motion to Strike the State's Motion to Recuse asserting the State's arguments in support of its

motion was focused on Judge Ballou's decisions and conduct in Christman v. Neven. A-19-797445. Defendant argued the State should have filed its Motion to Recuse in that case rather than in the criminal case. On May 2, 2024, the State also filed its Motion to Recuse in A-19-797445. In filing its motion in A-19-797445, the State did not withdraw its motion in the instant criminal matter or make any suggestion its filing in A-19-797445 somehow superseded or replaced its filing in the instant matter. Subsequently, Judge Ballou, presumably before she granted Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence, granted Defendant's Motion to Strike the State's Motion to Recuse in the instant matter. Judge Ballou then entered a minute order granting Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence.

However, "once a motion to disqualify is filed by a party, the subject judge can take no further action in the case until the motion to disqualify is resolved." Debiparshad v. Eighth Jud. Dist. Ct. in & for Cnty. of Clark. 137 Nev. 691, 695, 499 P.3d 597, 601 (2021); see also NRS 1.235(5)(a)("the judge against whom an affidavit alleging bias or prejudice is filed shall proceed no further with the matter" except to transfer the case to another judge...."); NCJC Rule 2.11; Towbin Dodge, LLC v. Eighth Judicial Dist. Court. 121 Nev. 251, 260, 112 P.3d 1063, 1069 (2005)("When, however, the grounds for disqualification are discovered only after the time for filing an affidavit under NRS 1.235(1) has passed, a party may timely file a motion to disqualify pursuant to NCJC Rule 2.11 'as soon as possible after becoming aware of the new information,' and the motion must be adjudicated before the trial may continue."). Consequently, at the time she struck the State's Motion to Recuse in this matter, Judge Ballou could not take such action as the State had not withdrawn the motion in the matter and it had not been resolved.

Consequently, this Court finds Judge Ballou improperly stuck the State's Motion to Recuse and the motion had not been resolved at the time Judge Ballou entered her minute order granting the Motion to Modify Sentence. The Nevada Supreme Court has held "any order entered by the judge while a timely motion to disqualify is pending becomes void should the judge later be disqualified. Voiding the orders of a judge whose impartiality has reasonably been questioned promotes confidence in the judiciary." Debiparshad v. Eighth Jud. Dist. Ct. in & for Cnty. of Clark, 137 Nev. 691, 695, 499 P.3d 597, 601 (2021). In the instant matter, while Judge Ballou was removed from the case before the State's Motion to Recuse was resolved, this Court finds Judge Ballou's minute order issued while the State's Motion to Recuse was pending is void. The Nevada Supreme Court ordered the instant matter to be reassigned in view of its concern Judge Ballou would not comply with its prior orders. Consequently, this Court finds voiding Judge Ballou's minute order issued after she ethically could not act in the case and while the State's Motion to Recuse was pending is consistent with the high Court's holding in Debiparshad and promotes confidence in the judiciary.

Additionally, Judge Ballou's May 2, 2024 minute order upon which Defendant relies for her motion is a minute order. "Dispositional court orders that are not administrative in nature, but deal with the procedural posture or merits of the underlying controversy, must be written, signed, and filed before they become effective." Div. of Child & Fam. Servs.. Dep't of Hum. Res.. State of Nevada v. Eighth Jud. Dist. Ct. ex rel. Cnty. of Clark, 120 Nev. 445, 455, 92 P.3d 1239, 1246 (2004). "Entry' involves the filing of a signed written order with the court clerk. Before the court reduces its decision to writing, signs it, and files it with the clerk, the

nature of the judicial decision is impermanent. The court remains free to reconsider the decision and issue a different written judgment. Consequently, a '[c]ourt's oral pronouncement from the bench, the clerk's minute order, and even an unfiled written order are ineffective for *any purpose*." Div. of Child & Fam. Servs., Dep't of Hum. Res.. State of Nevada v. Eighth Jud. Dist. Ct. ex rel. Cnty. of Clark, 120 Nev. 445, 451, 92 P.3d 1239, 1243 (2004)(emphasis added)(quoting Rust v. Clark Cty. School District. 103 Nev. 686, 688, 747 P.2d 1380, 1382 (1987)). This Court has reconsidered the minute order of May 2, 2024 granting Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence and rescinds it. Defendant's Judgement of Conviction of July 27. 2017 in C-13-287140-2 remains in effect and Defendant is subject to it.

Defendant's Motion for Sentencing is DENIED. The Court finds the prior Court's Minute Order of May 2, 2024 void or voided and/or reconsidered and rescinded. The Court will consider Defendant's Motion to Modify Sentence and related briefings and filings, and either set a hearing, if necessary, or issue a ruling based on the motion and briefings.

Defendant Christman SHALL SURRENDER to the Nevada Department of Corrections at Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center, 4370 Smiley Road, Las Vegas, Nevada. by 12:00 p.m. (noon) Pacific Daylight Savings Time ON TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024 to serve her Judgement of Conviction of July 27, 2017 in C-13-287140-2.

Dated this 6th day of May, 2024

ERIC JOHNSON

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

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Eric Johnson
District Court Judge

1 **CSERV** 2 DISTRICT COURT 3 CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA 4 5 State of Nevada CASE NO: C-13-287140-2 6 DEPT. NO. Department 20 7 VS Mia Christman 8 9 10 **AUTOMATED CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE** 11 This automated certificate of service was generated by the Eighth Judicial District Court. The foregoing Order was served via the court's electronic eFile system to all 12 recipients registered for e-Service on the above entitled case as listed below: 13 Service Date: 5/6/2024 14 dept30lc@clarkcountycourts.us Department Law Clerk 15 betsyallenesq@yahoo.com Betsy Allen 16 dept 24 LC 17 dept24lc@clarkcountycourts.us 18 clerkmastercalendar@clarkcountycourts.us Master Calendar Clerk AAA 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28