

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT**

**Public Participation Form**

Instructions: Fill out all appropriate blanks. Please print or write legibly.

NAME: Mark V. Reeder

HOME ADDRESS: P O Box 402 Ft. Worth TX

HOME TELEPHONE: 26101

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: unemployed since May 10<sup>th</sup>

EMPLOYMENT PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent any particular group or organization? no

\_\_\_\_\_  
If you do represent a group or organization, please state the name, address and telephone number of such group or organization.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which agenda item (or items) do you wish to address? none

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other concerns or items to be addressed to the Commissioners Court an experience I had in a courtroom in  
Cleburne TX on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> last year

Signature: M. V. Reeder

NOTE: This Public Participation Form must be presented to the Court Assistant 15 minutes prior to the Court being in session.

## Bad Experience in Cleburne, Texas, in 2012

About five weeks after being hired as a contract labor driver for S A Trucking of Dallas, I was assigned a regular local tomato run from a produce shipper near downtown Dallas, to the Wal-Mart D C near Cleburne, TX. Sometime in July (?) 2012, I was issued a no-seat belt-ticket near that distribution center.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, I called the District One JP Court from that D C and told the clerk that I would be late for the 9 AM pre-trial hearing due to unloading. I got there at about 9:30 AM and this did not cause any problem. The first thing I encountered there was the clerk at the window telling me I would have to sign a "plea and in-court agreement" form before I could go to the hearing which would be in the small courtroom.

Being forced on the spot to make a choice, I chose "not guilty – jury trial" for court case no. 92680. After a short wait I was summoned into the courtroom. I noticed at least four people: a man who was the bailiff, a young woman attorney, the court clerk, a man wearing a badge who also wore a large ring (who it was later told to me was a friend of the judge).

I was not expecting so many people there and got a rather cold feeling from the group, relative to a prior experience with a minor traffic citation which got dismissed in Gonzalez County on June 27<sup>th</sup>. On that matter, I had good rapport with the prosecuting attorney who did his job (adversarial) at the pre-trial event on June 13<sup>th</sup> when I met with him one-on-one in a small room.

I explained to the young woman attorney, who only identified herself as "Angie" – and the others – that I did not want to dispute the facts of the case but wanted to ask the court to take my circumstances under consideration. This may have eased the tensions somewhat but the atty. seemed uncomfortable with my choice for a jury trial – which I have never done before. I told her, "Well, I had to pick something (on that form)", which I had never seen before. I then asked if she would give me her mailing address and work telephone number and the request was ignored.

On Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, I was given a courtesy call to remind me about the trial in Cleburne the next morning. I remember asking the clerk about the time, wanting to know if it could be changed to 10 AM and she said no. Sometime shortly after that, I heard nothing - but the cellphone's call timer was still elapsing seconds, meaning the caller on the other end had not hung up. I kept saying, "Hello ... Hello ... Hello", but heard nothing over a period of about eight seconds. I hung up and backed out of my parking space at a parking garage in Ft. Worth. My cellphone service was through Assurance Wireless, sponsored by Virgin Mobile. Earlier that day I successfully cut my liability in half in a stop-light camera issue hearing in a Fort Worth municipal courtroom.

For a short while, I had been staying at the Tropicana Inn which is on the Northwest Hwy near the Dallas and Irving city limits. That place is on the Northwest Highway near the Dallas-Irving city line and discriminates about who can stay there, compared to other economy hotels in that area. On those tomato runs from near downtown Dallas to Cleburne, it took about an hour and a half or less, using I-45 to get to I-20 and US 67. On Wednesday, the 19<sup>th</sup>, I left the hotel late – about 7:30 AM – and soon got stuck in traffic on Loop 12. I went west on Irving Blvd and then south on Beltline to Hwy 1382. When I got to Venus, TX, on US 67, I called the court and told the clerk who answered that I would be about 15 minutes late and to pass this along to the judge. She said she would.

I walked into the JP court building at 9:15 AM, wearing my shorts. When I proceeded to the public restroom, the clerk at the window curtly said, "Sit over there!" gesturing to the seats in the lobby. I sat there for a short while and then went and changed my clothes.

In the lobby, it seemed like a long time went by although no other cases were on the docket. I went to my car to take stomach medication and while at my car, a man steps out the public entrance door and calls my name, looking north. I was the only person in that parking lot.

I was summoned to enter that courtroom and soon noticed that there was no jury. The bailiff, standing near the judge, told me to "come up here". When I attempted to go to where I thought I should stand, the judge snapped, "Get over there!", nodding to the table to my right.

I may have tried to speak first. I remember being very nervous and trying to explain my reason for being fifteen minutes late.

Without looking at me that judge launched into a diatribe, claiming that I "hung up" on the clerk who had called me the day prior. He then said in a malicious tone that I was guilty of the no-seat-belt issue – originally a \$155 issue but now a \$ item, and failure to appear @ \$ (Total \$529.00) He then stated in his malicious way that he was signing a capias warrant for my arrest and that my jail time would count for "\$100 per day for time served". A deputy then handcuffed me and I was taken to the local jail, located near US 67.

At that jail, I gave the deputy a hand-written note telling the judge that I was concerned about my car and that I had no criminal history. I remember him saying that I might be released in one or two days. While incarcerated, my only contact was a cousin in Arkansas who accepted my collect calls. Later, she said those calls increased her telephone bill by about \$50. She reported that she had contacted the JP court office in Cleburne about my car and that a clerk had told her that I would probably be released in one or two days.

On Thursday or Friday, a nurse recorded my blood pressure at 170 / 100 which was dangerously high and a record for me. In my opinion, that is why I was released early Sunday morning. When that release happened, the nurse who recorded that very high reading walked me and two others to the checkout area of the jail.

The first week of December, I again took interest in being hired by an Iowa carrier that I had first applied with in September. Someone in their recruiting department told me that I was listed as "hanging up on" the recruiter I was dealing with in September. To my knowledge, I have not hung up on anyone in my life where legitimate business is involved. I do remember that in September I received a call from a recruiter with that Iowa carrier and that I was driving on TX 183 westbound in Irving when that happened. I remember that the call was "lost".

On January 10, 2013, my records indicate I was called by a young man named James with Graves, Humphries and Stahl of Sulphur Springs, Texas. He said I owed \$39.00 because of the issue in Johnson County. He asked if I still lived at an address in Dallas (which in September was on my driver's license but not on court records). I gave him my post office box address in Fort Worth and he said he would mail me a statement – which I never received. Later, I did receive an invoice from this agency and I have sent them correspondence.

On March 5<sup>th</sup> I was informed by a prospective employer that I had a "bail jumping – failure to appear" in September 2012 on my record.

Mark V. Reeder

March 10, 2013, revised later