

**Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission**  
***Application for Nomination to Judicial Office***

9/8/20

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**INTRODUCTION**

Tennessee Code Annotated section 17-4-301 et seq. charges the Trial Court Vacancy Commission with assisting the Governor and the People of Tennessee in finding and appointing the best qualified candidates for judicial offices in this State. Please consider the Commission's responsibility in answering the questions in this application questionnaire. For example, when a question asks you to "describe" certain things, please provide a description that contains relevant information about the subject of the question and, especially, that contains detailed information that demonstrates that you are qualified for the judicial office you seek. In order to properly evaluate your application, the Commission needs information about the range of your experience, the depth and breadth of your legal knowledge, and your personal traits such as integrity, fairness, and work habits.

This document is available in Microsoft Word format from the Administrative Office of the Courts (telephone 800.448.7970 or 615.741.2687; website [www.tncourts.gov](http://www.tncourts.gov)). The Commission requests that applicants obtain the Microsoft Word form and respond directly on the form. Respond in the box provided below each question. (The box will expand as you type in the document.) **Review the separate instruction sheet prior to completing this document. Submit by the noon deadline date an original (unbound) completed application (with ink signature) to the Administrative Office of the Courts.** In addition, submit a digital copy with electronic or scanned signature via email to [ceesha.lofton@tncourts.gov](mailto:ceesha.lofton@tncourts.gov), or via another digital storage device such as a flash drive. See section 1(g) of the application instructions for additional information related to hand-delivery of application packages.

THIS APPLICATION IS OPEN TO PUBLIC INSPECTION AFTER YOU SUBMIT IT.

**PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

1. State your present employment.

I serve as an Assistant District Attorney General for the Sixth Judicial District of Tennessee located in Knoxville, Knox County, Tennessee.

2. State the year you were licensed to practice law in Tennessee and give your Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility number.

2014 – Board of Professional Responsibility number: 33519

3. List all states in which you have been licensed to practice law and include your bar number or identifying number for each state of admission. Indicate the date of licensure and whether the license is currently active. If not active, explain.

Tennessee is the only state in which I have been licensed to practice law.

4. Have you ever been denied admission to, suspended or placed on inactive status by the Bar of any State? If so, explain. (This applies even if the denial was temporary).

No.

5. List your professional or business employment/experience since the completion of your legal education. Also include here a description of any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law in which you have ever been engaged (excluding military service, which is covered by a separate question).

In August of 2014, I accepted a position as an Assistant District Attorney in the Knox County District Attorney General's Office. I have remained consistently employed in that capacity to the present time.

During my studies at the University of Tennessee College of Law, I worked as an intern at the Office of the District Attorney General for the Sixth Judicial District for two and a half years.



In my second and third year of law school, I worked as an intern in the now defunct Repeat Offender Prosecution Unit (ROP). The primary responsibilities of that unit were to target and prosecute gang members and drug dealers who had lengthy criminal records. These responsibilities are now prosecuted by the Career Criminal/Gang Unit within the Knox County District Attorney General's Office. During my time in the ROP unit, I conducted upwards of seventy-five (75) preliminary hearings as an Acting Assistant District Attorney, three (3) jury trials involving drug free school zone violations, drafted and argued numerous responses to motions to suppress evidence, and worked with sworn prosecutors on search warrants.

Between my first and second years of law school, I worked as an intern in the White-Collar Crime Unit. I worked primarily on a case involving an elected official who was being prosecuted for felony theft for having "ghost employees" on his payroll. This particular investigation took several years to come to a charging decision and required special attention to voluminous spreadsheets, bank records, and cellular telephone data.

Before deciding to apply for law school, I worked as a full-time clerk in the Knox County District Attorney General's Office from 2010-2011. For the first half of the year, I worked in the Felony Sessions Unit where I constructed physical files, prepared dockets, filed cases that returned from court, and assisted in other administrative duties. For the second half of the year, I worked in the A&B Felony Unit, which is now identified as the Major Crimes Unit. I was brought on board to assist prosecutors in preparing for the retrials of several defendants involved in a capital case in Knox County from 2007. My main duties were copying files and assisting in preparing physical exhibits for trial.

Before moving back to Knoxville to work as a full-time clerk in the District Attorney General's Office I served in the United States Marine Corps from 2005 – 2009 (a detailed description of my military service is provided in question 16).

Prior to enlisting in the United States Marine Corps, I resided in Knoxville, TN and was employed at Bill Cox Furniture. My primary duties involved loading delivery trucks and assembling furniture.

Before moving to Knoxville in 2003, I grew up in Beverly, Massachusetts, which is located on the North Shore and neighbors Salem, Massachusetts where the witch trials occurred in the late 1600's. My family and I moved to Knoxville after completion of my senior year of high school because my father was transferred through his employer. During high school, I worked at Maria's Pizza for three (3) years as a cook, also in Beverly, Massachusetts.

6. Describe the nature of your present law practice, listing the major areas of law in which you practice and the percentage each constitutes of your total practice.

I currently serve as an Assistant District Attorney General in District Attorney General Charme Allen's Major Crimes Unit. We are comprised of four attorneys and three support staff including one secretary and two victim/witness coordinators. Our mission consists of prosecuting violent crimes against persons including murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, arson, and carjacking. Prosecuting these specific offenses constitutes one hundred percent (100%) of my total practice.

7. Describe generally your experience (over your entire time as a licensed attorney) in trial courts, appellate courts, administrative bodies, legislative or regulatory bodies, other forums, and/or transactional matters.

Since accepting employment as an Assistant District Attorney in the Sixth Judicial District in 2014, I have gained a great deal of experience in Criminal Courts/Courts of Record and Sessions Courts in Knox County Tennessee.

By law, Assistant District Attorneys can only engage in criminal prosecution. In my nearly eight years as a prosecutor, I have conducted approximately thirty (30) jury trials including offenses of: first-degree murder (life without parole), first-degree premeditated murder, felony first-degree murder, second-degree murder (knowing killing), second-degree murder (Schedule I or II drug related death where intoxication is the proximate cause of death) criminally negligent homicide, aggravated rape, rape, especially aggravated kidnapping, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault, especially aggravated robbery, aggravated robbery, aggravated burglary in concert with two or more persons, aggravated burglary, conspiracy to possess with intent to sell/deliver schedule I Heroin, drug-free school zone violations, possession with intent to sell/deliver schedule II Fentanyl, possession with intent to sell/deliver schedule II Methamphetamine, possession with intent to sell/deliver schedule II analgesics (pain pills), possession with intent to sell/deliver schedule IV Alprazolam (Xanax), possession with intent to sell/deliver schedule VI Marijuana, employing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony, possessing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony, felon in possession of a firearm, and domestic assault.

I have also resolved countless cases short of jury trials in circumstances that warranted that approach. One of the toughest jobs as a prosecutor is weighing a victim's or officer's proposed resolution of a case against evidentiary or other concerns that demand a resolution short of trial.

When cases are sworn out by warrant rather than by presentment or information's, I am called upon to conduct preliminary hearings where a Sessions Court Judge decides if probable cause exists for the case to proceed to the Grand Jury for further review. During my nearly eight years as a prosecutor, I have conducted hundreds of preliminary hearings on many of the same offenses listed above.

I also have a great deal of experience charging cases directly through the Grand Jury where if the Grand Jury returns a true bill, the case will be handled entirely in Criminal Court. This type



of charging is generally a product of lengthy investigations that involve considerable law enforcement work on the front end of the case.

Last, I have applied for and secured permanent injunctions against several businesses and residences in Knoxville that have been havens for prostitution, shootings, drug dealing, and overdoses. These cases are unique as they are civil in nature but are initiated by the Office of the District Attorney General.

8. Describe any matters of special note involving your practice in trial courts, appellate courts, and administrative bodies.

Below are brief descriptions of the cases I have tried in Criminal Courts in Knoxville, Tennessee. I believe the Trial Court Vacancy Commission should be aware of the relevant experience I have obtained in my career, particularly as it relates to experience in trial courts. I have not practiced in appellate courts or administrative bodies in the State of Tennessee due to my continuous employment at the Knox County District Attorney General's Office.

*State v. Roger Earl England* – This prosecution was the result of a killing based on the victim breaking up with the Defendant and in the process of packing her vehicle when she was shot in the back of the head resulting in her death. I served as co-counsel in this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant met the victim in Indiana as he was a long-haul trucker. He left his wife and children in Harrogate, Tennessee and set up a home with the victim in West Knoxville. The couple had been in their new home for three nights when an altercation occurred after a night of drinking at Bullfeathers bar in Knoxville. The Defendant offered several explanations to investigators on the front end of the investigation that pointed the blame at an unknown intruder. As trial approached, the Defendant changed his account to admit he shot the victim, but claimed he was acting under sufficient provocation to lead an otherwise reasonable person to act in an irrational manner. The Defendant was convicted of...

*State v. Hayden Jennings Berkebile* – This prosecution revolved around a coerced suicide of a nineteen-year-old woman in Knoxville by a man in Bloomington, Indiana and is a case of first impression in the State of Tennessee. I served as lead counsel in this trial. The Defendant was charged with criminally negligent homicide based on years of grooming the victim from the tender age of thirteen. The proof established that the Defendant would demand that the victim engage in suicide edge play and Russian roulette for his sexual gratification while he watched in real time via FaceTime. This trial was covered by CourtTV. The Defendant was convicted as charged and the sentencing in this matter is pending.

*State v. Johnathan Lee Davis* – This homicide and attempted homicide case was centered around a failed robbery. I served as lead counsel in this trial. The proof established at trial that the Defendant and two other unknown co-defendants were made aware that the victim in this case had thirty thousand dollars in cash and was planning to travel to California the following day to purchase a large amount of marijuana. The Defendant and two other masked suspects waited for



the victim to return to his motel room before forcing entry into the room. The victim was shot seven times and killed. The proof at trial established that the victim did not actually have the money that the Defendant and co-conspirators sought. While running from the scene, the Defendant encountered the motel's front desk employee and shot him point blank in the center of the chest. Fortunately, the second victim survived. The defendant was convicted of first-degree murder, first-degree felony murder, attempted second-degree murder, attempted especially aggravated robbery, employing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony, and aggravated burglary in concert with two or more persons. The Defendant was sentenced to life plus twelve years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Robert Atkins* – This case was a domestic related homicide between boyfriend and girlfriend. I served as lead counsel in this trial. The proof established at trial that the Defendant shot and killed his girlfriend after the two had been arguing over narcotics. Three other people were present in the home when the victim was shot through the hand and eye into the head. The Defendant then forced two other males in the home to assist in carrying the victim through the backyard and into an alleyway where she was ultimately abandoned and left for dead. The victim was found by a neighbor the following morning. The proof at trial established that the victim was still breathing when she was left in the alleyway, but ultimately died from her injuries. The Defendant was convicted of second-degree murder and tampering with evidence. After a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to thirty-one years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Philip Jerome Locke* – This homicide case was the result of a revenge killing. I served as co-counsel in this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant's brother was the victim of a murder roughly six months before the offense date of this case. The Defendant lured the victim to come sell him some narcotics. Once the Defendant got in the victim's vehicle, the Defendant directed him to a sparsely populated area in South Knoxville. Once there, the Defendant shot the victim twice in the head and once in the neck before pulling him from the driver's seat, running over his body, and carjacking his vehicle with a female witness remaining in the front seat. The proof further established that the only reason the female witness was not murdered was because she and the Defendant were distant cousins. The defendant was convicted of first-degree murder, first-degree felony murder, carjacking, especially aggravated robbery, employing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Life without the possibility of parole was sought in this case, but the jury did not find that the aggravating factors were sufficient for this enhanced sentence. After a hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to life plus thirty years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Jeremy Jerome Hardison* – This homicide case was the result of a shooting with an AR-15 assault rifle over the Defendant suspecting the victim of stealing lumber from his construction site. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The Defendant had just finished a sixteen-year sentence for a previous homicide and was attempting to flip houses in East Knoxville. The proof at trial established that the Defendant had drug-addicted workers and would compensate his workers with crack-cocaine. The proof further established that the Defendant suspected the victim of stealing a two-by-four piece of lumber. When he spotted the victim walking down the street the following day, the Defendant retrieved an assault rifle, and waited for the victim to pass by from the wood line. The victim was shot and killed, and was found left in the roadway before law



enforcement arrived on the scene. Prior to the shooting, the Defendant had made the statement to his workers that he had killed before and was not afraid to kill again. In a subsequent search of the Defendant's residence, an AR-15 was recovered that was consistent with the murder weapon as confirmed by witness testimony. The workers testified as witnesses at trial and identified the Defendant as being responsible for the senseless murder. Three additional workers have gone missing since the murder, and are presumed deceased. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to life in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Jamar Laquinn Frazier* – This prosecution arose from a shooting based on the suspected theft of Marijuana. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant and three other suspects believed the victim had stolen a small amount of Marijuana and ascertained his location in a South Knoxville neighborhood. The Defendant proceeded to chase the victim into a wood line where the victim was shot twice in the back of the head. The Defendant then fled with his girlfriend and another female before going back to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he lived. He was apprehended by the U.S. Marshals task force and returned to Knoxville. The Defendant claimed the victim was the one with the gun, that the victim had dropped the gun during the fight in the woods, and he then gained control of the weapon and shot the victim. The defendant was charged with first-degree premeditated murder, but the jury found the Defendant guilty of second-degree murder. At a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve twenty-five years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Joel Michael Guy, Jr.* – This prosecution arose from a brutal double murder of a couple who were planning to retire. I served as co-counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant, who was the son of the victims, killed his parents after they announced their intention to cut him off financially. The proof further showed that the Defendant was a twenty-eight-year-old student at Louisiana State University, who had been working on completing a bachelor's degree for upwards of ten years at his parents' expense. The Defendant arranged to come to Knoxville for Thanksgiving to visit with his parents, siblings, and their children. Two days after the Thanksgiving holiday, the Defendant attacked his father in an upstairs exercise room, stabbing him forty-two times and disarticulating his body at the hips and shoulders, while his mother was at Walmart buying the Defendant's favorite foods. Once the Defendant's mother returned home, he lured her upstairs and attacked her, stabbing her thirty-one times and disarticulating her body at the head, knees, and shoulders. The Defendant then placed his parents' remains in plastic tubs and attempted to dissolve their bodies in various chemicals that he brought with him from Louisiana. The Defendant was ultimately convicted of two counts of first-degree premeditated murder, three counts of first-degree felony murder, and two counts of abuse of a corpse. He was sentenced to two consecutive life terms plus four years for a total effective sentence of one hundred and twenty-four years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections. This trial was covered by CourtTV.

*State v. Michael Simpson* – This prosecution was the result of a drug-fueled stabbing and beating of a roommate. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof established at trial that the Defendant was renting a room from the victim in a South Knoxville home. The Defendant had been clean from drug use for upwards of two years before he began using Methamphetamine again. The Defendant was on a Methamphetamine binge, and had prior knowledge that the victim would receive his Social Security check on Thursdays and promptly cash the check. The



proof established that the victim cashed his check on a Thursday and the Defendant, armed with knowledge that the victim had cash, stabbed him twenty-one times and beat him about the head with a jack handle before cleaning up the scene, disposing of evidence, and purchasing narcotics with the cash he robbed the victim of. The Defendant was convicted of first-degree felony murder, especially aggravated robbery, and tampering with evidence. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve life in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Jaleen Genard Allen* – This homicide prosecution was the result of a kidnapping, and subsequent execution, over the Defendant believing that the victim stole Heroin from a car that the Defendant had been using during his Heroin distribution in Knoxville. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the victim was asleep in the basement of a friend’s house in the Bearden area of Knoxville. The victim’s friend asked the Defendant to bring Heroin to them, not being aware that the Defendant had suspected the victim of stealing his Heroin. Once the Defendant was made aware that the victim was inside sleeping, he proceeded to bind the victim’s hands with duct tape, cover his mouth with duct tape, and place a blindfold on the victim. The victim was led outside, where he was shot thirteen times and dumped in the woods close to the residence, still bound by restraints. The Defendant was convicted of first-degree premeditated murder, first-degree felony murder, and especially aggravated kidnapping, employing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony, and felon in possession of a firearm. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to life plus thirty-one years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Elijah Bowman and Amir Spears* – This prosecution arose from a deadly home invasion seeking Marijuana and United States currency. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the three victims resided at a house in the Karns area of Knoxville and were engaged in the sale of Marijuana. The Defendants contacted the victims under the guise of intending to purchase several ounces of Marijuana. Once the Defendants arrived at the residence and were invited in, they produced firearms and shot the two male victims, who ultimately survived. The third victim, a female who was in the bedroom of the residence, came out after gunfire erupted before retreating and closing the bedroom door. The Defendants proceeded to shoot and kill the female victim through this thin interior door before escaping with Marijuana and upwards of twenty-thousand dollars in United States currency. Two of the female victim’s small children were present during the homicide and robbery. The Defendants were convicted of first-degree felony murder, attempted first-degree murder, especially aggravated robbery, and employing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendants were sentenced to serve life plus twelve years and life, respectively, in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Kenyon Demario Reynolds* – This prosecution arose from an overdose death where Schedule II Fentanyl was the proximate cause of the death of the victim. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant was engaged in selling Heroin and Fentanyl in Knoxville. The Defendant had a system in place where he would deliver the narcotics to mailboxes to avoid detection by law enforcement and the public. The victim in this case purchased what she believed to be Heroin and ingested it while in the bathtub. She subsequently overdosed and drowned in the bathtub, where her body was discovered by her mother. Video surveillance footage and a confidential informant were relied upon in this case to



corroborate the Defendant's operation. The Defendant was convicted of second-degree murder, drug free school zone violation for Heroin, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony. Because of the Defendant's very extensive felony conviction history, he was sentenced to thirty-seven years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Rico Cook* – This prosecution arose from a double homicide and attempted homicide in the Montgomery Village housing development in South Knoxville. I served as co-counsel on this trial. The proof established that two of the victims were residents of Michigan and traveled to Knoxville to visit the surviving victim, a brother of one of the decedents. The victims agreed to sell sixty dollars' worth of marijuana to the Defendant and co-conspirators not knowing the Defendant intended to rob the victims. Once in parking lot "L" of the housing development, the Defendant got into the victims' vehicle, fatally shot the driver twice in the head, fatally shot the front seat passenger six times in the face and body, and shot the rear passenger in the face and neck, before making off with the Marijuana. The victim in the back seat survived and testified at trial. The Defendant was ultimately convicted of first-degree premeditated murder, first-degree felony murder, attempted second-degree murder, especially aggravated robbery, and employing a firearm during the commission of a dangerous felony. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to life plus twelve years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Christopher Leon Clark* – This prosecution arose from an insult that occurred roughly twelve hours before the Defendant shot and killed the victim. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the victim was in a vehicle with the Defendant's sister while the Defendant and his sister were engaged in a phone call. The Defendant overheard through the phone the victim commenting on the fact that he was "broke." The proof further established that the Defendant ascertained where the victim was and travelled to an address in East Knoxville. Once at the residence, the Defendant confronted the victim, who was seated on a couch, and shot him multiple times, causing his death. The Defendant was convicted of first-degree premeditated murder. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to life in the Tennessee Department of Corrections. The jury was not aware, but the Defendant in this case had a prior homicide conviction from roughly seventeen years earlier based on similar circumstances.

*State v. Ricky Allan Davis* – This prosecution arose from a homicide captured on a home surveillance system over an outstanding drug debt. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the victim and Defendant were in the same street gang and had a history of being friendly. The proof further established that the Defendant had provided the victim with pills to sell, but the victim did not pay the Defendant for the narcotics. A series of text messages corroborated that the Defendant was actively looking for the victim and threatening to harm him when he found him. The Defendant encountered the victim on Wilson Avenue in East Knoxville and confronted him. The Defendant produced a firearm and shot the victim multiple times, which resulted in his death. The Defendant made admissions to friends and a cell mate, all of whom ultimately testified at trial. The Defendant was convicted of first-degree premeditated murder and unlawful possession of a weapon. In a sentencing hearing the Defendant was sentenced to life in the Tennessee Department of Corrections, whereupon he



flashed known gang signs as he exited the court room.

*State v. Michael Lewis Freeman* – This prosecution arose from a fatal stabbing fueled by a night of drinking and watching sports. I served as co-counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant and victim were friendly. On the night of the murder, the victim and Defendant had been at the victim's house drinking alcohol and watching basketball. The proof further established that the victim and Defendant had a disagreement over a gambling debt, and the Defendant demanded the money he alleged the victim owed to him. During the confrontation, the victim, who was considerably older than the Defendant, was stabbed in the neck and rendered paralyzed from the neck down. The Defendant then stabbed the victim three additional times in the throat, causing his death. The Defendant was convicted of second-degree murder. In a subsequent sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve twenty-two years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Nicholas Wyatt Barish* -This prosecution arose from a fatal drowning that was the result of the victim being hit over the head with a large rock and dumped into a shallow body of water in West Knoxville. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the victim had been at Bullfeathers bar drinking with friends when the Defendant asked him to leave and meet him for the purpose of obtaining Opana pain pills. Once at the agreed upon location, the Defendant lured the victim close to the water before hitting him over the head with a large rock and dumping his body into the water. The Defendant then proceeded to enter the victim's vehicle and take property before leaving the scene. Video surveillance from a telephone company surveillance camera corroborated the events. The Defendant was convicted of first-degree felony murder and sentenced to serve life in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. James Greenlee Davis, Jr.* – This prosecution arose after Knoxville Police Officers were on a walking patrol in Walter P. Taylor homes in East Knoxville and encountered the Defendant while he was engaged in a hand-to-hand drug transaction in plain view. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof further established that the Defendant led officers on a brief foot chase before he was taken into custody. In a search incident to arrest, officers located crack-cocaine on the Defendant's person in an amount that was consistent with intent to sell. The area where the Defendant was apprehended was designated as a drug-free zone based on the Boys & Girls Club being across the street. The Defendant was convicted of possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine in a drug-free zone, as well as criminal trespass for a previous order to stay off the property. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve twenty years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections based on his lengthy felony conviction history.

*State v. Frank Deford Kincaid* – This prosecution arose after a man was brutally stabbed over a fight about who was going to light a grill at a family cookout. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant and the victim were the boyfriends of two sisters. The sisters and their mother had organized a birthday party and barbeque at a public park in North Knoxville. Once at the park, the Defendant attempted to light the grill without success. The victim was able to get the charcoal lit and the Defendant began insulting him over being a boy scout while growing up. A physical confrontation ensued, and the victim was stabbed eleven times in the chest, neck, stomach, and back and had to be resuscitated, but ultimately lived. The Defendant was convicted of attempted second-degree murder. In a sentencing hearing, the



Defendant was sentenced to serve twelve years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Travis Joe Braunm* – This prosecution arose from the discovery of a large-scale Marijuana growing operation in West Knoxville. I served as co-counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that officers were looking for the Defendant in relation to a domestic assault investigation, as the Defendant was alleged to have assaulted his girlfriend. Officers were able to locate the Defendant at a motel off Lovell Road in West Knoxville. Based on their investigation, they traveled to the Defendant’s residence and saw in plain view a large-scale Marijuana grow with over five hundred plants. Investigators applied for and secured search warrants for the property. In addition to the Marijuana, officers found proof that the Defendant was readying himself for a confrontation based on his possession of body armor and powerful rifles. The Defendant was convicted of manufacturing Marijuana based on the number of plants. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve nineteen years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections based on numerous prior felony convictions in both Tennessee and North Carolina.

*State v. Jonathan Darell Hardin* – This prosecution arose after the victim was kidnapped and beaten for ending a relationship with the Defendant. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the victim had ended her relationship with the Defendant via text message a day prior to her being kidnapped and assaulted. At roughly 3:00 a.m. following this, the Defendant forced his way into the victim’s apartment, punched her in the face several times, and threatened her with a box cutter. Once outside of the apartment, the Defendant forced the victim into his car while continuing to assault her. The Defendant eventually stopped at a gas station and the victim was able to send a text message to a friend describing her location and what had occurred. Knoxville Police Officers were able to find the Defendant and victim at a Weigel’s gas station in East Knoxville, and the victim was taken by ambulance to the hospital for bruises and abrasions. The Defendant was convicted of aggravated kidnapping and assault and subsequently sentenced to serve twelve years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. David Paul Beets* – This prosecution was the result of Knoxville Police Department officers finding the Defendant passed out in his running vehicle at a Pilot gas station in West Knoxville. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant was in the process of delivering narcotics when he became incapacitated while at the gas station. Based on a positive K-9 alert to the presence of narcotics in his vehicle, the vehicle was searched. Officers located a lock box in the vehicle that had several different narcotics packaged as though for resale. Pursuant to a search warrant, the Defendant’s phone was analyzed, and its contents corroborated that the Defendant was involved in heavy drug dealing. The Defendant was convicted of possession with intent to sell or deliver Methamphetamine in a drug-free school zone. The jury was not aware, but six months prior to his arrest on the drug charges, the Defendant shot and killed a female customer who attempted to kick in his door after not receiving from him the amount of Methamphetamine she believed she had paid for. The Defendant was sentenced to serve fifteen years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Sparkle Treenetta Jones* – This prosecution arose from deploying a confidential informant to make controlled purchases of Heroin from the Defendant. This was based upon a lengthy investigation involving Michigan residents who were in Knoxville for the sole purpose of selling



illegal narcotics. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant was a resident of Detroit, Michigan but was staying in Knoxville to sell Heroin after her husband was convicted of a fatal shooting on the University of Tennessee campus. On several occasions, officers with the organized crime unit utilizing a confidential informant were able to make purchases of Heroin that were audio and video recorded. The substances were ultimately confirmed to be Heroin through the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation crime laboratory. The Defendant was setting the location of the sales at a convenience store directly across the street from an elementary school. She was ultimately convicted of sale and delivery of Heroin in a drug-free school zone. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve seventeen years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. David Lydel Cochran* – This prosecution arose from an aggravated rape that occurred when the victim became inebriated and physically helpless at a work party. I served as lead counsel in this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant noticed that the victim was becoming extremely intoxicated and sought out a vehicle to borrow, claiming to others he was going to take the victim home. The Defendant and his son loaded the victim into the back of the borrowed vehicle, but the Defendant then rented a room at the Motel 8 in the Powell area of Knoxville. The Defendant made admissions about having to carry the victim into the motel room. The victim awoke in the motel room the following morning with abrasions and blunt force injuries to her genitals. DNA evidence further corroborated that the Defendant had unlawful penetration with the victim, and she sustained bodily injury. The Defendant was convicted of aggravated rape and aggravated kidnapping. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to twenty-five years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections based on his lengthy felony conviction history.

*State v. Tony Darrell Manning* – This prosecution arose from the rape of a young woman who had met the Defendant on an internet-based dating site and moved to Knoxville to be with him. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant travelled to Cleveland, Tennessee, where the victim was residing with her sister, to pick her up and bring her back to Knoxville after only knowing her for several weeks. Once in Knoxville at the Defendant's apartment, the Defendant forced the victim to remain in the apartment while he went to work. The victim was further expected to submit to sexual intercourse when the Defendant returned from work. On the evening of July 25, 2016, the Defendant vaginally and orally raped the victim, despite her demands for him to stop. The victim waited until the Defendant went to work the following day before alerting law enforcement. Proof from the Sexual Assault Center corroborated that the victim had sustained injury. The Defendant was convicted of rape and ordered into custody. The Defendant is facing sentencing in July.

*State v. Waynard Quartez Winbush* – this prosecution was the result of a multi-year investigation aimed at targeting Heroin dealers from Detroit, Michigan, who were in Knoxville for the sole purpose of selling Heroin and Fentanyl. I served as lead counsel on this trial. This prosecution was led by the Repeat Offender Squad of the Knoxville Police Department. This was a complex prosecution as it involved conspiracy counts and multiple co-defendants. The proof at trial established that the Defendant was the leader in the illegal narcotics enterprise and was bringing Heroin into the Knoxville community, employing several transport tactics including Greyhound Bus Lines and rental cars. The proof further established that the Defendant and co-conspirators



were employing drug addicted individuals to get cellular telephones in their own names, and even apartments or rental houses, to distribute their illegal narcotics. The Defendant was convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to sell or deliver Heroin in a drug-free school zone, conspiracy to possess with intent to sell or deliver Oxymorphone in a drug free school zone, and possession with intent to sell Oxycodone in a drug-free park zone. In a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to serve twenty-three years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

*State v. Frazier Lee Savage* – This prosecution was the result of a lengthy investigation targeting Heroin dealers from Detroit, Michigan. I served as lead counsel on this trial. The proof at trial established that the Defendant was residing at the Motel 8 in the Powell area of Knoxville and selling illegal narcotics from his room. Officers made contact with the Defendant at his motel room to serve a warrant out of Michigan for assault with intent to murder. A search warrant for his room was applied for and executed. Officers found eleven grams of Heroin, Alprazolam pills, and other indicia of resale including a large sum of U.S. currency, money transfers, and paraphernalia used to package narcotics for resale. The Defendant was convicted of possession with intent to sell or deliver Heroin and possession with intent to sell or deliver Alprazolam in a drug-free school zone. At a sentencing hearing, the Defendant was sentenced to twelve years to serve in the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

9. Describe any other legal experience, not stated above, that you would like to bring to the attention of the Commission.

I have been fortunate to be selected by General Charme Allen to serve in two additional capacities outside of my typical duties as an Assistant District Attorney General.

First, I served as a liaison from the District Attorney's Office to the Knox County Recovery Court and Veterans' Treatment Court from 2016 to 2017. These programs are led by the Honorable Chuck Cerny, who serves as a Sessions Court Judge in Knox County, Tennessee. Both of these programs are eye opening when it comes to positive outcomes and success stories within our community. As prosecutors, we are generally put on notice of drug addiction and mental health concerns, but being involved in these programs made me aware of just how much we do not always understand about individuals involved in the criminal justice system and the circumstances that led them there. Taking part in these extremely important programs was proof to me that with the proper channels, help, and personal accountability, the cycle of recidivism can be broken, and people can and do restore themselves to once again become law-abiding citizens able to make contributions to society.

Second, from 2014 to 2017 I was one of two Assistant District Attorneys that represented our office with the Homeless Legal Initiative. This program is aimed at securing housing for homeless individuals in Knox County while they have pending cases in Sessions and/or Criminal Courts. Most of the work I did in this program was petitioning the courts to forgive certain debts, such as court costs and fines, from years past that prevented the clients of this program from securing housing. Each of the clients in these cases had been assigned a case worker who

monitored their efforts and provided resources for various treatments, such as mental health and addiction counseling.

Both experiences have made me a better prosecutor. It is easy to not dive too deeply into a case. It is easy to make assumptions about why individuals commit crimes. The challenging part is understanding what circumstances led to or contributed to individuals committing crimes, and what could have prevented crimes from taking place. Identifying deterrent factors and giving individuals the tools they need to succeed, while still holding them accountable for their actions, is paramount to breaking the cycle of crime in our community.

10. List and describe all prior occasions on which you have submitted an application for any state or federal judicial position.

Not applicable.

### EDUCATION

11. List each college, law school, and other graduate school which you have attended, including dates of attendance, degree awarded, major, any form of recognition or other aspects of your education you believe are relevant, and your reason for leaving each school if no degree was awarded.

#### **The University of Tennessee College of Law, Knoxville, Tennessee 2011-2014**

Doctor of Jurisprudence

Recipient of the Chancellor George Lewis Moot Court Board Award

American Law Institute CLE Scholarship and Leadership Award

Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) Excellence for the Future Award

Member of the Order of Barristers, National Advocacy Honor Society

Concentration in Advocacy and Dispute Resolution

Chair, Moot Court Executive Board (2014)

#### **Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia 2009-2010**

Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice



Member of Honor Council (Associate Justice)  
**Saint Leo University, Norfolk, Virginia 2007-2008**  
Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

12. State your date of birth.

██████████ 1984 (38 years old)

13. How long have you lived continuously in the State of Tennessee?

I have lived continuously in the State of Tennessee since December of 2010.

14. How long have you lived continuously in the county where you are now living?

I have lived continuously in Knox County since December of 2010.

15. State the county in which you are registered to vote.

I am registered to vote in Knox County.

16. Describe your military service, if applicable, including branch of service, dates of active duty, rank at separation, and decorations, honors, or achievements. Please also state whether you received an honorable discharge and, if not, describe why not.

Branch of Service: United States Marine Corps  
Dates of Active Duty: June 20, 2005 – June 20, 2009  
Rank at Separation: Sergeant (Enlisted, E-5)  
Decorations: Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Joint Service Commendation

Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Afghanistan Campaign Medal (1 star), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, NATO Medal ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) Afghanistan

Honors: Certificate of Commendation, Commanding Officer (Lieutenant Colonel P.S. Patterson), Headquarters and Service Battalion U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command: Superior performance of duty as an administrative clerk in the office of Deputy Chief of Staff, Headquarters and Service Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command for 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2007. During this period, Lance Corporal Sanchez consistently performed his duties in an exemplary manner, while appearing before a board of senior Marines, he confidently displayed a thorough knowledge of Marine Corps common skills, Marine Corps history and knowledge, outstanding physical appearance, and bearing. As a result, he was selected, through keen competition, as Headquarters and Service Battalion's Marine of the quarter for first quarter FY07. Lance Corporal Sanchez's professionalism, initiative, and loyal dedication to duty reflected great credit upon himself, the Marine Corps, and the United States Naval Service.

Certificate of Commendation, Commanding Officer (Lieutenant Colonel M. H. Reinwald), Personnel Administration School Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools: For superior achievement while assigned as a student in administrative clerk course 6-06 from 9 November 2005 to 16 December 2005. During this demanding course of instruction, you achieved third place in your class with an academic average of 98.6979%. As a student, you clearly displayed the attitude, ability, and determination to achieve and maintain academic excellence. This truly remarkable academic achievement is indicative of your self-discipline and superior initiative, and epitomizes the highest standards of professionalism as a Marine. You provided a superb example for your peers to emulate and have laid a firm foundation for future success in our Corps. Your efforts reflected great credit upon yourself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.

Certificate of Achievement, President, and CEO (Jim Palm), Marine Corps Association: The Board of Governors of the Marine Corps Association takes pleasure in presenting this award in recognition of high endeavor and superior accomplishments while enrolled in a course of study in professional education prescribed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Meritorious Mast, Commanding Officer (Captain J.P. Bentz), Headquarters and Service Company Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools Training Command: For professional excellence and superior performance of duty while assigned to the Director of Camp Affairs. During this period, you performed duties ranging from the execution of keeping the camp clean to providing support for event ceremonies. Additionally, you controlled access into the Gymnasium on a daily basis. Your perseverance and diligence enabled the schools aboard Camp Johnson to focus on their primary mission of training Marines. Your superior performance as typified above reflected great credit upon yourself and was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Letter of Appreciation, Commander (Lieutenant General R.R. Blackman), U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command: I am grateful for the administrative and transportation support you provided



during my tenure in command. Working in close proximity to senior officers and civilians engenders a set of stresses not like those encountered in other work environments in the Marine Corps. You handled yourself and performed your duties with poise and professionalism, whether the task was organizing dozens of slideshows for an executive brief, processing correspondence to other high-level staffs, or driving senior officers to and from meetings and conferences affecting vital Marine Corps and joint equities, your excellent performance of duty has been well noted. For your extraordinary devotion to duty and your keen abilities, I commend you on a job well done, and I thank you for your service. Semper Fidelis.

Certificate of Appreciation, Commanding Officer (W. H. Morris), Combined Joint Operations Center, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan: Corporal Hector I. Sanchez, USMC for exceptional support to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and civilians of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan and Camp Eggers. We appreciate your hard work as a watch Non-Commissioned Officer and your ability to improve the morale of the troops with your work ethic and attitude. Your service does great credit to the JOC, the CJ-3, CSTC-A, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Armed Services.

Achievements: U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command Marine of the Quarter (two-day evaluation of physical, mental, and leadership strength amongst several qualified Marines chosen by Command to compete for title)

Hampton Roads (Virginia) Chamber of Commerce Marine of the Year (recommended by Command to represent U.S. Marine Corps in Hampton Roads region and selected by Chamber of Commerce)

Sharpshooter Rifle Qualification Badge (2<sup>nd</sup> Award)

Rank Attained: E5 Sergeant within a four-year enlistment

Type of Discharge: I received an Honorable Discharge

17. Have you ever pled guilty or been convicted or are now on diversion for violation of any law, regulation or ordinance other than minor traffic offenses? If so, state the approximate date, charge and disposition of the case.

Not applicable.

18. To your knowledge, are you now under federal, state or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute or disciplinary rule? If so, give details.

Not applicable.

19. Please identify the number of formal complaints you have responded to that were filed against you with any supervisory authority, including but not limited to a court, a board of professional responsibility, or a board of judicial conduct, alleging any breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by you. Please provide any relevant details on any such complaint if the complaint was not dismissed by the court or board receiving the complaint. You may wish to request a report from the appropriate supervisory authority (or authorities) for a complete history.

Not applicable.

20. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities or creditors within the last five (5) years? If so, give details.

Not applicable.

21. Have you ever filed bankruptcy (including personally or as part of any partnership, LLC, corporation, or other business organization)?

Not applicable.

22. Have you ever been a party in any legal proceedings (including divorces, domestic proceedings, and other types of proceedings)? If so, give details including the date, court and docket number and disposition. Provide a brief description of the case. This question does not seek, and you may exclude from your response, any matter where you were involved only as a nominal party, such as if you were the trustee under a deed of trust in a foreclosure proceeding.

Yes, In Docket Number E-27654, in the Circuit Court for Blount County, Tennessee, I entered into an agreed Marital Dissolution Agreement with my former wife, Melanie Alexander after being married for five years. The Marital Dissolution Agreement became entered and final on September 26, 2017.

No children were involved in the divorce and the basis of the divorce was categorized as irreconcilable differences.

I have since remarried to my wonderful wife, Kimberley Sanchez of four years. I was also blessed with a now sixteen-year-old stepson Ethan.

23. List all organizations other than professional associations to which you have belonged



within the last five (5) years, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such organizations.

Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity (2011 - 2017)

24. Have you ever belonged to any organization, association, club or society which limits its membership to those of any particular race, religion, or gender? Do not include in your answer those organizations specifically formed for a religious purpose, such as churches or synagogues.
- If so, list such organizations and describe the basis of the membership limitation.
  - If it is not your intention to resign from such organization(s) and withdraw from any participation in their activities should you be nominated and selected for the position for which you are applying, state your reasons.

Not applicable.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

25. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you have been a member within the last ten years, including dates. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. List memberships and responsibilities on any committee of professional associations which you consider significant.

Knoxville Bar Association, 2014 - present

26. List honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received since your graduation from law school which are directly related to professional accomplishments.

Cityview Magazine Top Attorneys – 2015 - present

27. List any public office you have held or for which you have been candidate or applicant. Include the date, the position, and whether the position was elective or appointive.

Assistant District Attorney, Sixth Judicial District of Tennessee, appointive, 2014 – present.



**ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

28. What are your reasons for seeking this position? *(150 words or less)*

I seek the position of Criminal Court Judge to continue to serve my community. My entire adult life has been rooted in public service. I joined the Marine Corps at the age of twenty to serve my country. Despite being stationed in a non-deployable headquarters command, I sought an individual augmentation deployment to Afghanistan to relieve a Marine, Sailor, Airman, or Soldier who had been in a combat theatre for considerable time. I have continued to serve my community as an Assistant District Attorney General for the last eight years. While I have an unwavering passion for my job as an Assistant District Attorney General, I have grown as both an attorney and a community leader. To honor this responsibility, I feel called upon to serve my community in a more wide-ranging capacity as a Criminal Court Judge.

If selected as judge, I will continue to serve the citizens of Knox County as a leader in the legal community.

29. Describe the judgeship you seek (i.e. geographic area, types of cases, number of judges, etc. and explain how your selection would impact the court. *(150 words or less)*

I am seeking to be appointed to the judgeship in Knox County Criminal Court, Division II, Sixth Judicial District, which is one of three Criminal Courts in Knox County Tennessee. The three Criminal Courts in this district handle only criminal cases, with the exception of nuisance injunctions filed by the District Attorney General's Office, which are civil in nature.

If selected as judge, I would continue the great example put in place by my predecessor, the Honorable Judge Kyle A. Hixson. I intend to bring cases to trial in an expeditious manner while ensuring that due process, the rules of evidence, and criminal procedure are followed. I possess the appropriate temperament to be fair, just, and treat all involved parties with respect. Additionally, I will adhere to strict scheduling orders and plea deadlines to ensure that cases in my court are resolved promptly and efficiently without undue delay.

30. Will you uphold the law even if you disagree with the substance of the law (e.g., statute or rule) at issue? Give an example from your experience as a licensed attorney that supports your response to this question. *(250 words or less)*

Yes. The function of a trial judge is to apply the law as written, not to interpret them in a manner other than the legislative intent.

Before my current assignment in the Major Crimes Unit, I spent three years prosecuting drug offenses in the Felony Drug Unit. During my time in the drug unit, I handled everything from large scale multi-defendant Heroin conspiracy cases to lower-level Marijuana cases. At times, I struggled internally with Marijuana related offenses, primarily because a large portion of states have decriminalized this substance. I had difficulty rationalizing seeking a felony conviction on

an individual who possessed with intent to sell just over the felony amount of Marijuana, but there was never a time that I felt this was a law I could not uphold. I always reminded myself that I took an oath as a prosecutor to uphold the rule of law in all my cases regardless of my personal opinions or perhaps internal disagreements. I have done so in every case I have handled.

Much like a prosecutor, a Judge's obligation to uphold the law as written is vital to the success of our criminal justice system. Without respect for the law, the legislature, and the citizens who are held accountable by it, this system cannot function. Personal opinion is immaterial.

**REFERENCES**

31. List five (5) persons, and their current positions and contact information, who would recommend you for the judicial position for which you are applying. Please list at least two persons who are not lawyers. Please note that the Commission or someone on its behalf may contact these persons regarding your application.

A. Randy McNally, Lieutenant Governor, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Nashville, TN 37243 [REDACTED]
B. Tim Burchett, United States Representative, [REDACTED] Knoxville, TN 37902 [REDACTED]
C. Charme Allen, District Attorney General, Sixth Judicial District, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Knoxville, TN 37902 [REDACTED]
D. Tom Spangler, Sheriff, Knox County Sheriff's Office, City/County Building, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Knoxville, TN 37902 [REDACTED]
E. Sam Lee, Chief Deputy District Attorney General, Sixth Judicial District, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Knoxville, TN 37902 [REDACTED]



**AFFIRMATION CONCERNING APPLICATION**

Read, and if you agree to the provisions, sign the following:

I have read the foregoing questions and have answered them in good faith and as completely as my records and recollections permit. I hereby agree to be considered for nomination to the Governor for the office of Judge of the Knox County Criminal Court Division II of Tennessee, and if appointed by the Governor, agree to serve that office. In the event any changes occur between the time this application is filed and the public hearing, I hereby agree to file an amended questionnaire with the Administrative Office of the Courts for distribution to the Commission members.

I understand that the information provided in this questionnaire shall be open to public inspection upon filing with the Administrative Office of the Courts and that the Commission may publicize the names of persons who apply for nomination and the names of those persons the Commission nominates to the Governor for the judicial vacancy in question.

Dated: July 1, 2022.



Signature

When completed, return this questionnaire to Ceesha Lofton, Administrative Office of the Courts, 511 Union Street, Suite 600, Nashville, TN 37219.



**TENNESSEE TRIAL COURT VACANCY COMMISSION  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

511 UNION STREET, SUITE 600  
NASHVILLE CITY CENTER  
NASHVILLE, TN 37219

**TENNESSEE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
TENNESSEE BOARD OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT  
AND OTHER LICENSING BOARDS**

**WAIVER OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

I hereby waive the privilege of confidentiality with respect to any information that concerns me, including public discipline, private discipline, deferred discipline agreements, diversions, dismissed complaints and any complaints erased by law, and is known to, recorded with, on file with the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, the Tennessee Board of Judicial Conduct (previously known as the Court of the Judiciary) and any other licensing board, whether within or outside the State of Tennessee, from which I have been issued a license that is currently active, inactive or other status. I hereby authorize a representative of the Trial Court Vacancy Commission to request and receive any such information and distribute it to the membership of the Commission and to the Office of the Governor.

Hector Ian Sanchez  
Type or Print Name

  
Signature

July 1, 2022  
Date

33519  
BPR #

Please identify other licensing boards that have issued you a license, including the state issuing the license and the license number.

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