



# *Justice Is Everyone's Business*

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*Seeking to Restore Integrity and Public Trust in Our Justice System*

August 3, 2020

Judge Thomas Hart  
Marion County Courthouse  
100 High Street, N.E.  
Courtroom 2A  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Judge Hart:

I was present in the courtroom on July 30 when Kenneth Ketchem requested that you recuse yourself as judge in *State v. Kenneth Ketchem*. You stated words to the effect that you would not recuse yourself because you were not prejudiced in favor of one side or the other in the case.

I respectfully draw your attention to remarks you made in open court on November 26, 2019 at a bail reduction hearing:

"This wasn't just a one-off. This was like hours of trauma for the folks on Capital Street. And there was a dog that was injured and a cat was killed—that will have lasting effects for the people that suffered that ....

A short time later, you said:

"The worst thing you can do is violate somebody's home. And you did that over and over for an extended period of time. And in fact, destroyed the house that they finally—as far as I understand—I don't know whether they've rebuilt the inside of that or not?"

Your remarks were captured by the official court recording of that hearing.

Thus you showed you were of the personal opinion that Kenneth Ketchem was guilty as charged -- and you had this conviction BEFORE the trial began.

We believe Mr. Ketchem is entitled to a trial before a judge who presumes Mr. Ketchem's innocence. As demonstrated in the official and publicly available court records, you do not presume Mr. Ketchem's innocence. You believe he is guilty as charged, and therefore you should recuse yourself.

At this troubled time, such a recusal would enhance the public's confidence in our system of justice.

Thank you for your kind time and attention.

Sincerely,

Carol DeCoursey  
Editor/Publisher

cc: Judge Tracy Prall