

In the United States Court of Federal Claims



In re:

COMPLAINT OF JUDICIAL MISCONDUCT

No. CL-11-900043

OPINION AND MEMORANDUM

The court received a complaint alleging that a judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims and a judge on a federal district court engaged in judicial misconduct.¹

The Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, codified as 28 U.S.C. §§ 351-64, and the Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings (Rules or RJCP), allow for any individual to complain about a federal judge the individual believes “has engaged in conduct prejudicial to the effective and expeditious administration of the business of the courts.” RJCP 1. “Prejudicial” conduct includes such things as use of the judge’s office to obtain special treatment for friends and relatives, acceptance of bribes, improperly engaging in discussions with lawyers or parties in cases in the absence of representatives of opposing parties, and other abuses of judicial office. See RJCP 3(h).

Under the Rules, the chief judge reviews complaints of judicial misconduct that are filed with the court and determines whether they should be dismissed or referred for further proceedings. RJCP 11(a). The Rules provide that a complaint must be dismissed by the chief judge, without further review, if the chief judge concludes that the complaint:

- (A) alleges conduct that, even if true, is not prejudicial to the effective and expeditious administration of the business of the courts and does not indicate a mental or physical disability resulting in inability to discharge the duties of judicial office;
- (B) is directly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling;
- (C) is frivolous;
- (D) is based on allegations lacking sufficient evidence to raise an inference that misconduct has occurred or that a disability exists;
- (E) is based on allegations which are incapable of being established through investigation;
- (F) has been filed in the wrong circuit under Rule 7; or
- (G) is otherwise not appropriate for consideration under the Act.

¹ The Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings (RJCP) require the court to issue a public opinion which describes the misconduct alleged and the basis of its decision. RJCP 24(a). However, the identity of the judge is protected if the complaint is finally dismissed under RJCP 11(c). RJCP 24(a)(1). The identity of the complainant is also protected. RJCP 24(a)(5). Accordingly, the court will not identify the parties in this matter, nor describe the context in which the complainant’s grievances arose with any degree of specificity.

RJCP 11(c)(1).

Because a portion of the complaint is lodged against a federal judge sitting in another court, the Chief Judge concludes that this portion of the complaint has been erroneously filed, which is grounds for dismissal under RJCP 11(c)(1)(F).

With respect to the complaint made against the judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, complainant contends that the judge's decision was incorrect, but pursuant to RJCP 11(c)(1)(B), complaints "directly related to the merits of a decision" are not covered by these Rules. Thus, these allegations must be dismissed pursuant to RJCP 11(c)(1)(D).

IT IS ORDERED that the portion of the complaint pertaining to a judge of a federal district court is DISMISSED because the allegations are against a judge outside the jurisdiction of the United States Court of Federal Claims, RJCP 7(a)(1), 11(c)(1)(F); and,

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the complaint made against the judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims is DISMISSED because the judge did not engage in conduct prejudicial to the administration of the business of the court, RJCP 3(h)(1); and the allegations made are directly related to the merits of the judge's decision, RJCP 11(c)(1)(B).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the complainant has the right to file a petition for review of this decision by the entire court. The deadline for filing such a petition is within thirty-five (35) days of the date on the clerk of court's letter transmitting this Order. RJCP 11(g)(3), 18(b).



EMILY C. HEWITT
Chief Judge