

Judicial Inquiry Commission

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March 25, 1980

The Judicial Inquiry Commission has considered your request for an opinion regarding an interview which you gave to the press. The interview concerned the application and effect of laws relating to the trial and punishment of criminal and juvenile offenders.

The content and circumstances of the interview in question fall within the purview of Canon 4 of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. That Canon provides that:

A judge, subject to the proper performance of his judicial duties, may engage in the following quasi-judicial activities, if in doing so he does not cast doubt on his capacity to decide impartially any issue that may come before him:

A. He may speak ... and participate in other activities concerning the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice.

An interview given by a judge to explain the purpose, intent and effect of the criminal and juvenile justice systems does not violate this Canon so long as such interviews do not cast doubt upon the interviewed judge's ability to decide cases impartially.