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April 2016

Amy Hill vs. Safety

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State of Tennessee
Department of State
Administrative Procedures Division
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
8th Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1102
Phone: (615) 741-7008/Fax: (615) 741-4472

April 27, 2016

Commissioner Bill Gibbons
Tennessee Department of Safety
23rd Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1102

Title Cash of TN
ATTN: Legal Advisor
1240 US Highway #51, Bypass South
Dyersburg, TN 38024

Amy Hill
6862 Lanesferry Highway
Newberg, TN 38059

André J. Thomas, Esq.
Staff Attorney III
Tennessee Department of Safety &
Homeland Security
Legal Division
6174 Macon Avenue
Memphis, TN 38134-7502

RE: In the Matter of: Amy Hill (R1836)

Docket No. 19.05-136693J

Enclosed is an Initial Order rendered in connection with the above-styled case.

Administrative Procedures Division
Tennessee Department of State

/aem
Enclosure

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER OF THE TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY**

IN THE MATTER OF:

AMY HILL

DOCKET NO. 19.05-136693J

NOTICE

ATTACHED IS AN INITIAL ORDER RENDERED BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION.

THE INITIAL ORDER IS NOT A FINAL ORDER BUT SHALL BECOME A FINAL ORDER UNLESS:

1. THE ENROLLEE FILES A WRITTEN APPEAL, OR EITHER PARTY FILES A PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION NO LATER THAN **May 12, 2016**.

YOU MUST FILE THE APPEAL, PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION. THE ADDRESS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION IS:

SECRETARY OF STATE
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION
WILLIAM R. SNODGRASS TOWER
312 ROSA PARKS AVENUE, 8th FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-1102

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION, **615/741-7008 OR 741-5042, FAX 615/741-4472**. PLEASE CONSULT APPENDIX A AFFIXED TO THE INITIAL ORDER FOR NOTICE OF APPEAL PROCEDURES.

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER OF THE
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY**

IN THE MATTER OF:)
)
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF)
SAFETY,)
)
v.) **DOCKET NO: 19.05-136693J**
) **Safety Case No. R 1836**
ONE 2002 FORD TAURUS,)
VIN: 1FAPP53U12A211213)
Seized From: Amy Hill)
Date of Seizure: 9/4/15)
Claimant: Amy Hill)
Seizing Agency: Tennessee Highway Patrol)
Lienholder: Title Cash of Tennessee)

INITIAL ORDER OF DEFAULT AND DISMISSAL

This matter was set to be heard on March 21, 2016, before Elizabeth D. Cambron, Administrative Judge, assigned by the Secretary of State to sit for the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (the Department) in Dyersburg, Tennessee. Mr. Andre Thomas, Staff Attorney, represented the Department. The Claimant, Amy Hill, was not present nor was an attorney present on their behalf.

The subject of this hearing was the proposed forfeiture of the subject vehicle. The matter was heard upon the Department's motion to be granted an Initial Order of Default and Dismissal due to the Claimant's failure to appear at the hearing after receiving proper notice thereof. After consideration of the record it is determined that the Department's motion is proper and should be **GRANTED**. It is further **ORDERED** that the subject property should be **FORFEITED** to the

seizing agency, subject to any valid interest of the lienholder, Title Cash of Tennessee. This decision is based upon the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The subject of this hearing was the seizure of a 2002 Ford Taurus from Amy Hill by the Tennessee Highway Patrol on September 4, 2015. The Claimant, Amy Hill, filed a petition for the return of the subject vehicle and requested that a hearing be scheduled to consider that claim.

2. The Claimant was sent notice of the hearing by certified mail to her address of record. Postal records indicate that the notice was delivered and signed for on February 28, 2016.

3. The Claimant did not appear on the day of the hearing, no attorney appeared on her behalf, and no continuance had been requested.

4. The Department had its witnesses available and was ready to proceed with the case.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW and ANALYSIS

1. TENN. COMP. R. & REG. 1340-02-02-.11(2) (2015), RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR ASSET FORFEITURE HEARINGS, provides:

In serving a "Notice of Hearing," the Legal Division shall rely upon the addresses of record as given by a claimant or by claimant's counsel. Proof of service per Rule 1340-2-2-.03(4) to the addresses of record shall establish a rebuttable presumption that claimant or claimant's counsel received notice of the hearing date.

2. An order holding an absent party in default at the second setting of a forfeiture hearing is also authorized by TENN. COMP. R. & REG. 1340-02-02-.17(1) (2015):

- (a) The failure of a party to attend or to participate in a prehearing conference, a party's non-attendance at a second setting of a hearing on the merits in a case or a party's non-attendance at another stage of contested case proceedings after notice thereof are each causes for holding such party in default pursuant to T.C.A. §4-5-309.
- (b) The failure of a party to comply with any lawful order of the administrative judge that is necessary to maintain the orderly conduct of a hearing may be deemed a failure to participate in a stage of a contested case and be cause for a holding of default.
- (c) In any situation set out in subparagraphs (a) and (b) of this Rule, a motion may be made to hold the absent party in default and to enter an initial default order or to continue on an uncontested basis.
- (d) No default shall be entered against a claimant for failure to attend except upon proof, that the Legal Division has given notice of the hearing per Rule 1340-02-02-.06(2)(e).
- (e) Upon default by a party, an administrative judge may enter either an initial default order or an order for an uncontested proceeding. An order under this part must be in writing, with reasons given and appeal rights stated. Uncontested proceedings may go forward at the time of default. These orders must subsequently be filed with the Legal Division.
- (f) The defaulting party, no later than ten (10) days after service of an order may file a motion for reconsideration under T.C.A. § 4-5-317, requesting that the default be set aside for good cause shown, and stating the grounds relied upon. The administrative judge may enter an order pursuant to T.C.A. § 4-5-317. These orders by an administrative judge are reviewable by the commissioner.
- (g) No party shall be required by the administrative judge to call or inquire as to the whereabouts of a missing party.
- (h) A default shall be deemed effective as of the date and time that the party failed to appear after having been properly noticed to the hearing.

3. TENN. COMP. R. & REG. 1340-02-02-.17(2)(b) states, in relevant part:

Upon a default by a claimant, a claimant's claim shall be stricken by initial default order or, if the agency requests, the agency may proceed uncontested.

4. The State's motion for default having been granted, it is therefore **ORDERED** that Claimant's **CLAIM BE STRICKEN**. The claim having been stricken, it is as if no claim had ever been filed, evoking TENN. CODE ANN. § 40-33-206(c), which specifies that "If a claim . . . is not filed with the applicable agency within the time specified by this part, the seized property shall be forfeited and disposed of as provided by law."

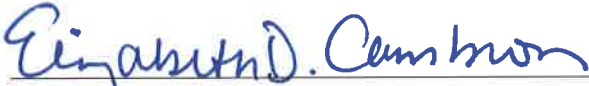
5. Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby **ORDERED** that the Claimant's claim be **STRICKEN**, the matter **DISMISSED**, and the Claimant's interest in the subject property **FORFEITED** to the seizing agency, subject to any valid claim by the lienholder, Title Cash of Tennessee.

6. For good cause, the Claimant may move to have the default set aside no later than ten (10) days after service of the order.


The policy reasons for this decision are to uphold the laws of the State of Tennessee while providing appropriate protections for the property rights of individuals.

It is so ORDERED.

Entered and effective this the 27TH day of APRIL 2016.


ELIZABETH D. CAMBRON
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Filed in the Administrative Procedures Division, Office of the Secretary of State, this the 27TH day of APRIL 2016.


J. RICHARD COLLIER, DIRECTOR
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

APPENDIX A TO INITIAL ORDER
NOTICE OF APPEAL PROCEDURES

Review of Initial Order

This Initial Order shall become a Final Order (reviewable as set forth below) fifteen (15) days after the entry date of this Initial Order, unless either or both of the following actions are taken:

(1) A party files a petition for appeal to the agency, stating the basis of the appeal, or the agency on its own motion gives written notice of its intention to review the Initial Order, within fifteen (15) days after the entry date of the Initial Order. If either of these actions occurs, there is no Final Order until review by the agency and entry of a new Final Order or adoption and entry of the Initial Order, in whole or in part, as the Final Order. A petition for appeal to the agency must be filed within the proper time period with the Administrative Procedures Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, 8th Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower, 312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243. (Telephone No. (615) 741-7008). See Tennessee Code Annotated, Section (T.C.A. §) 4-5-315, on review of initial orders by the agency.

(2) A party files a petition for reconsideration of this Initial Order, stating the specific reasons why the Initial Order was in error within fifteen (15) days after the entry date of the Initial Order. This petition must be filed with the Administrative Procedures Division at the above address. A petition for reconsideration is deemed denied if no action is taken within twenty (20) days of filing. A new fifteen (15) day period for the filing of an appeal to the agency (as set forth in paragraph (1) above) starts to run from the entry date of an order disposing of a petition for reconsideration, or from the twentieth day after filing of the petition, if no order is issued. See T.C.A. §4-5-317 on petitions for reconsideration.

A party may petition the agency for a stay of the Initial Order within seven (7) days after the entry date of the order. See T.C.A. §4-5-316.

Review of Final Order

Within fifteen (15) days after the Initial Order becomes a Final Order, a party may file a petition for reconsideration of the Final Order, in which petitioner shall state the specific reasons why the Initial Order was in error. If no action is taken within twenty (20) days of filing of the petition, it is deemed denied. See T.C.A. §4-5-317 on petitions for reconsideration.

A party may petition the agency for a stay of the Final Order within seven (7) days after the entry date of the order. See T.C.A. §4-5-316.

YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE FURTHER NOTICE OF THE INITIAL ORDER BECOMING A FINAL ORDER

A person who is aggrieved by a final decision in a contested case may seek judicial review of the Final Order by filing a petition for review in a Chancery Court having jurisdiction (generally, Davidson County Chancery Court) within sixty (60) days after the entry date of a Final Order or, if a petition for reconsideration is granted, within sixty (60) days of the entry date of the Final Order disposing of the petition. (However, the filing of a petition for reconsideration does not itself act to extend the sixty day period, if the petition is not granted.) A reviewing court also may order a stay of the Final Order upon appropriate terms. See T.C.A. §4-5-322 and §4-5-317.