



8-19-2008

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY vs. One 1992
Cadillac, VIN: 1G6CD53B3N4256180, Seized
From: Kendrick Bowen, Seizure Date: May 10,
2006, Claimant: Kendrick Bowen, Seizing Agency:
Shelby County Sheriff, Lienholder: None filed

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

IN THE MATTER OF:]	
]	
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY]	
]	
v.]	DOCKET # 19.01-098321J
]	D.O.S. Case # F-2321
One 1992 Cadillac]	
VIN: 1G6CD53B3N4256180]	
Seized From: Kendrick Bowen]	
Seizure Date: May 10, 2006]	
Claimant: Kendrick Bowen]	
Seizing Agency: Shelby County Sheriff]	
Lienholder: None filed]	

INITIAL ORDER OF DEFAULT & DISMISSAL

This matter was heard on August 19, 2008, before J. Randall LaFavor, Administrative Judge assigned by the Secretary of State, Administrative Procedures Division, sitting for the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety in Memphis, Tennessee. Mr. Joe Bartlett, Staff Attorney for the Tennessee Department of Safety, represented the State. The Claimant was not present, either in person or through legal counsel.

The subject of this hearing was the proposed forfeiture of the subject vehicle¹ based on allegations that its possession and/or receipt by the Claimant was in violation of the Tennessee Drug Control Act. (TCA §§ 53-11-201 & 40-33-201 *et seq.*) Upon the Claimant's failure to appear at the hearing, counsel for the State made an oral motion for an order finding the Claimant to be in default, pursuant to TCA § 4-5-309. Upon full consideration of the evidence received at the hearing and the entire record in this case, the State's motion was granted. The Claimant was found to be in default, and the claim filed

¹ Other property was also seized, and was forfeited by Order dated August 28, 2007, when no claim was filed for its return.

in this matter was stricken, as supported by the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Claimant's vehicle was seized pursuant to law, resulting in the issuance of a Property Forfeiture Warrant. The Claimant filed a claim seeking the return of the vehicle, and requesting that a hearing be scheduled to consider that claim.
2. The parties negotiated an agreement to return the vehicle to the Claimant upon payment of an agreed-upon sum by a specified date. The Claimant failed to comply with the terms of that agreement. In the event of such a failure, the agreement provides for forfeiture of the vehicle to the seizing agency.
3. A show-cause hearing was scheduled for the Claimant to demonstrate why the forfeiture provision of the agreement should not be put into effect. The State sent notice of the hearing time and location to the Claimant's attorney by certified mail.²
4. Neither the Claimant nor his attorney appeared at the hearing. Based on the Claimant's failure to appear, the State made an oral motion for the entry of an Order of Default.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW and ANALYSIS

1. Tennessee Code Annotated § 4-5-309(a) provides that "if a party fails to attend or participate in a pre-hearing conference, hearing or other stage of a contested case, the administrative judge . . . may hold the party in default . . ." An order holding an absent party in default at the *second* setting of a forfeiture hearing is authorized by Rule 1340-2-2-.17(1)(a), TENN. COMP. R. & REGS., *Rules of Procedure for Asset Forfeiture Hearings*.
2. Department of Safety Regulations governing asset forfeiture hearings also provide:

² See, Hearing Exhibit # 1.

(d) No default shall be entered against a claimant for failure to attend [the hearing] except upon proof by the filing of the return receipt card, that the legal division has given notice of the hearing per Rule 1340-2-2-.11(3).

(e) Upon default by a party, an administrative judge may enter either an initial default order or an order for an uncontested proceeding . . .

Rule 1340-2-2-.17(1), TENN. COMP. R. & REGS., *Rules of Procedure for Asset Forfeiture Hearings*.

And, that

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.

See, Rule 1340-2-2-.17(2)(b), TENN. COMP. R. & REGS., *Rules of Procedure for Asset Forfeiture Hearings*. (Bold emphasis added.)

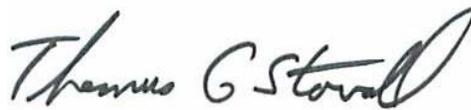
3. In accordance with the law, as set forth above, it is determined that the State's motion is well-taken. The Claimant was notified of the hearing, as shown by Hearing Exhibit #1, and failed to appear at the hearing to pursue his claim. Pursuant to the cited authority, the Claimant is hereby found to be in default for failing to appear at the hearing scheduled to consider his claim, as authorized by the cited legal authority.

Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED that the Claimant's claim is stricken from the record, and dismissed. The Claimant's interest in the subject property is Ordered forfeited to the Seizing Agency, the Shelby County Sheriff's Department, for disposition as provided by law.

Entered and effective this 27th day of August, 2008.

J. Randall LaFevor, Administrative Judge

Filed in the Administrative Procedures Division, Office of the Secretary of State,
this 27th day of August, 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas G. Stovall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Thomas G. Stovall, Director
Administrative Procedures Division