

ARKANSAS COURT OF APPEALS

No. CR-22-746

ROLONDO CUEVAS-FLORES		Opinion Delivered July 26, 2023
APPELLANT		APPEAL FROM THE BENTON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT [NO. 04CR-21-1484]
V.		
STATE OF ARKANSAS		HONORABLE BRAD L. KARREN, JUDGE
APPELLEE		CONTEMPT CITATION AND SANCTION ISSUED

PER CURIAM

When Rolondo Cuevas-Flores moved this court for the fourth time to enforce a writ of certiorari to complete the record on appeal that we first issued to court reporter Sharon Fields some seven months ago, this court granted the fourth motion, set a deadline of 12 June 2023 for Ms. Fields to file the transcript with this court’s clerk, and ordered her to appear before this court on 17 July 2023, at 10:00 a.m., in the courtroom of the Arkansas Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, and show cause why she should not be held in contempt for failing to comply with the original writ of certiorari or any one of the extensions. *See Cuevas-Flores v. State*, 2023 Ark. App. 347 (show-cause order).

Before issuing the show-cause order, we warned Ms. Fields—in the third extension she received in April—that the failure to meet the new May deadline “may result in a show-cause order being issued.” When Ms. Fields did not produce the transcript in May, this court simultaneously issued a show-cause order when it granted the fourth extension (to June 12), and scheduled a hearing.

Ms. Fields appeared before this court on July 17. She had by then prepared the transcript, met the June 12 deadline, and therefore finally complied with the original writ we issued mid-December 2022. When the court asked whether Ms. Fields pleaded guilty or not guilty to violating this court's orders, she pleaded guilty, and was given the opportunity to speak to the court for the purpose of mitigating the severity of any potential sanction. She did so.

Having considered the docketed filings in this case and the show-cause proceedings held on July 17, this court finds Ms. Sharon Fields in willful contempt of the Arkansas Court of Appeals. She repeatedly failed to comply with this court's orders to complete the transcripts Mr. Cuevas-Flores designated as necessary to pursue his appeal of a criminal conviction. Ms. Fields's repeated delays in preparing the designated material prejudiced the efficient administration of justice. The court acknowledges the many responsibilities that circuit courts, and their staff, handle daily. But a busy court schedule alone cannot excuse the protracted delay that this criminal case has experienced during the transcript-preparation phase.

THEREFORE, the court hereby orders Sharon Fields to pay a \$1,500 sanction. The sanction must be paid to "The Arkansas Court of Appeals" in the form of a cashier's check or money order. The entire sanction must be received by the clerk's office by close of business on 30 August 2023. The clerk of this court will provide a receipt to Ms. Fields when she tenders full payment.

Contempt citation and sanction issued.