

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FILED

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF BENTON

OCT - 2 2015

KATHY MARTIN
WALLA WALLA COUNTY CLERK

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In the Matter of the Change of Name of:)

No. 14-2-00196-8

OCT 05 2015

JOHN THOMAS ENTLER,)

) DECISION AND ORDER

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

Petitioner.)

) AFFIRMING DISTRICT COURT'S

SPOKANE

) AMENDED ORDER AND DISMISSING

) APPEAL AS FRIVOLOUS

This Matter is before the Court as an appeal from that certain Amended Order Changing Name dated January 31, 2014, entered by Judge John O. Knowlton in Walla Walla County District Court, Case No. X14-76181.

The Petitioner, an inmate at the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, Washington, filed a petition for a change of name in District Court pursuant to RCW 4.24.130. The Petitioner provided the District Court with a prepared Order Changing Name which was duly signed ex parte by Judge Knowlton on January 8, 2014, the same day the Petition was filed.

In addition to the more standard language:

“... it is hereby ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that the name of JOHN THOMAS ENTLER, be changed to: GALHEN MELCHIZEDEK, and that the latter be in place of the former, FOR ALL INTENT [SIC] AND PURPOSES”

the Petitioner inserted following extra language:

IT IS FURTHER hereby ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED, that the committed name of JOHN THOMAS ENTLER, be changed to: GALHEN MELCHIZEDEK, and that the latter be in place for the former FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES.

When the extra language was specifically drawn to the attention of the judge, the court “on its own motion” prepared and entered the subject Amended Order Changing Name, deleting the extra language and specifically stating its intent to omit any reference to the term “committed name.”

The term “committed name” is not used in any statute regarding change of name. It does not appear to have any particular meaning to a person in the general citizenry. However, the record shows that the term is used by the State of Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) to refer to the name under which an offender is convicted and thereafter “committed” to its facilities and institutions. Reference is made to a DOC Policy 400.280, a copy of which is in the record and of which Judge Knowlton was made aware by DOC, which states that an offender whose name is changed “... may add the legally changed name after the committed name using an “Also Known As” (AKA) designation for the legally changed name.” The Policy further states that: “Staff will refer to offenders by their committed name in all oral and written communications to ensure the correct identification of offenders and to maintain safety and security.”

The Court notes that Policy 400.280 addresses the State’s legitimate penological interest in the correct identification of offenders and addresses legitimate safety and security concerns. The Petitioner’s obvious attempt to subvert the Policy by adding language that is otherwise surplusage and not cognizable under the name change statute was immediately recognized by Judge Knowlton when the improperly inserted language was drawn to his attention, and he immediately fixed the problem with the Amended Order. Entry of the Amended Order should be affirmed, and this appeal should be otherwise summarily dismissed.

