

JUDGE FACING CHAMBER MUSIC?

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An irascible and eccentric Maryland judge twice allegedly had sex in his chambers with a hooker who caught his eye during an arraignment.

Judge Henry Monahan, 62, was charged with two counts of judicial misconduct after a nine-month probe into the prostitute's allegations, the Washington Times reported yesterday.

The judge's lawyers called the allegations "preposterous" and the accuser a drug addict who cannot be believed.

"Specifically, Judge Monahan denies that he ever engaged in sexual intercourse in the court building," the lawyers wrote.

The woman who did not appear before Monahan but in a different court has a lengthy record.

She's been busted for prostitution, drug possession, drug dealing, theft, escape and violating probation. She's spent at least 60 days in jail and is on probation.

The judge, too, has had a checkered career.

He was arrested in 1985 for breaking into a house and assaulting two police officers after drinking too much at an annual state judge's convention.

At the convention, witnesses said, he kissed the hand of one judge, demanded another judge account for his Catholicism, and began speaking Latin and crossing himself repeatedly while sipping from other people's drinks.

Though his blood alcohol level was double the legal limit for intoxication, Monahan was acquitted after doctors testified his erratic behavior was due to a mild stroke he suffered during the incident.

The Washington Times said Monahan has a reputation for screaming at attorneys, cops, defendants and witnesses. More than once, he has demanded that everyone involved in a particular case remain standing for an entire trial.

Monahan was also criticized for refusing to clear his courtroom on Sept. 24, 1992, despite the fact that the courthouse was on fire and tendrils of smoke were snaking into the room.

The judge said he didn't know the rest of the four-story courthouse had been evacuated. He said he ordered the proceedings to continue because he was anxious to wrap up the trial before him.

At the time, newspaper reports quoted the bailiff who tried to urge the judge to evacuate the courtroom as saying that calling the judge's response "rude" would be an understatement.

Monahan is due to appear before a public hearing Nov. 28.

In the meantime, he has been taken off criminal cases and relegated to bond hearings and civil lawsuits.