

# State Bar Court of California Hearing Department Los Angeles

## PUBLIC MATTER

Counsel For The State Bar	Case Number (s)	(for Court's use)
	06-O-11780-RAH	
Jean Cha		
Deputy Trial Counsel		
1149 S. Hill Street		FILED
Los Angeles, CA 90015	·	ALIO OF DOOR
(213) 765-1000		AUG 25 2010
		STATE BAR COUR
Bar # 228137		CLERK'S OFFICE
Counsel For Respondent	_	LOS ANGELES
- Councer of Respondent		·
Richard Alan Moss		
255 S Marengo Ave		·
Pasadena, CA 91101 2719		
(626)796-7400		
	Submitted to: Settlement	Judge
Bar # 42329	STIPULATION RE FACTS	CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND
In the Matter Of:	DISPOSITION AND ORDE	
Ira Seltzer		
	ACTUAL SUSPENSION	
- " 16005	AG TO A E GOOT ENGION	
Bar # 46225	☐ PREVIOUS STIPULAT	ION REJECTED
A Member of the State Bar of California		
(Respondent)		

Note: All information required by this form and any additional information which cannot be provided in the space provided, must be set forth in an attachment to this stipulation under specific headings, e.g., "Facts," "Dismissals," "Conclusions of Law," "Supporting Authority," etc.

### A. Parties' Acknowledgments:

- (1) Respondent is a member of the State Bar of California, admitted January 16, 1970.
- (2) The parties agree to be bound by the factual stipulations contained herein even if conclusions of law or disposition are rejected or changed by the Supreme Court.
- (3) All investigations or proceedings listed by case number in the caption of this stipulation are entirely resolved by this stipulation and are deemed consolidated. Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are listed under "Dismissals." The stipulation consists of 12 pages, not including the order.
- (4) A statement of acts or omissions acknowledged by Respondent as cause or causes for discipline is included under "Facts."
- (5) Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts are also included under "Conclusions of Law".

kwiktag <sup>©</sup> 018 039 901

(Do 1	not writ	e abov	e this line.)
(6)	The "Su	e part ipport	ies must include supporting authority for the recommended level of discipline under the heading ing Authority."
(7)			than 30 days prior to the filing of this stipulation, Respondent has been advised in writing of any investigation/proceeding not resolved by this stipulation, except for criminal investigations.
(8)			t of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & (Check one option only):
		rel co cyc (ha	til costs are paid in full, Respondent will remain actually suspended from the practice of law unless ief is obtained per rule 284, Rules of Procedure. sts to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: Three billing cles following the effective date of the Supreme Court order. rdship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 284, Rules of Procedure) sts waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs" sts entirely waived
. [	Prof		ting Circumstances [for definition, see Standards for Attorney Sanctions for onal Misconduct, standard 1.2(b)]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances red.
(1)	$\boxtimes$	Prio	r record of discipline [see standard 1.2(f)]
	(a)		State Bar Court case # of prior case 91-O-06884 & 91-O-80324 (S030933)
	(b)	$\boxtimes$	Date prior discipline effective May 7, 1993
	(c)	$\boxtimes$	Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations: Rule 4-100(A) & Business and Professions Code section 6106.
	(d)	$\boxtimes$	Degree of prior discipline One year stayed suspension, two years probation, quarterly CPA reports, Ethics School & MRPE.
	(e)	$\boxtimes$	If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below.
			State Bar Court case # of prior case 96-O-02228 (S070612), Date prior discipline effective September 10, 1998, Rules of Professional Conduct/State Bar Act violations of Rule 4-100(A) & Rule 4-100(B)(4), Degree of prior discipline Ninety days stayed suspension, one year probation, restitution, Ethics School & MPRE.
			State Bar Court case # of prior case 98-O-02667 & 99-O-10177 (S106617), Date prior discipline effective August 17, 2002, Rules of Professional Conduct/State Bar Act violations of Rule 4-100(A) & Business and Professions Code section 6106, Degree of prior discipline Eighteen months stayed suspension, two years probation, thirty days actual suspension, quarterly reports & MCLE.
(2)		Dish	<b>conesty:</b> Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by or followed by bad faith, dishonesty, sealment, overreaching or other violations of the State Bar Act or Rules of Professional Conduct.
(3)		Trus	<b>Exercise Violation:</b> Trust funds or property were involved and Respondent refused or was unable to account e client or person who was the object of the misconduct for improper conduct toward said funds or

property.

(Do r	ot writ	e above this line.)
(4)		Harm: Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public or the administration of justice.
(5)		<b>Indifference:</b> Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.
(6)		<b>Lack of Cooperation:</b> Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation or proceedings.
(7)		<b>Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct:</b> Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.
(8)		No aggravating circumstances are involved.
Add	ition	al aggravating circumstances:
		ating Circumstances [see standard 1.2(e)]. Facts supporting mitigating imstances are required.
(1)		<b>No Prior Discipline:</b> Respondent has no prior record of discipline over many years of practice coupled with present misconduct which is not deemed serious.
(2)		No Harm: Respondent did not harm the client or person who was the object of the misconduct.
(3)		Candor/Cooperation: Respondent displayed spontaneous candor and cooperation with the victims of his/her misconduct and to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation and proceedings. Respondent has been candid and cooperative. (Std. 1.2(e)(v); Silva-Vidor v. State Bar (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079; Pineda v. State Bar (1989) 49 Cal.3d 753, 760.)
(4)		<b>Remorse:</b> Respondent promptly took objective steps spontaneously demonstrating remorse and recognition of the wrongdoing, which steps were designed to timely atone for any consequences of his/her misconduct.
(5)		<b>Restitution:</b> Respondent paid \$ on in restitution to without the threat or force of disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.
(6)		<b>Delay:</b> These disciplinary proceedings were excessively delayed. The delay is not attributable to Respondent and the delay prejudiced him/her.
(7)		Good Faith: Respondent acted in good faith.
(8)		Emotional/Physical Difficulties: At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical disabilities which expert testimony would establish was directly responsible for the misconduct. The difficulties or disabilities were not the product of any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and Respondent no longer suffers from such difficulties or disabilities. In 2005, Respondent went through a bitter dissolution of marriage while recovering from a heart attack. Throughout 2005 and 2006, Respondent did not maintain complete records of all client funds coming into Respondent's possession or regularly reconcile his CTA bank statements and ledgers, due to serious life-threatening health issues that peaked in May 2005. Respondent underwent a complex and necessary string of medical procedures constituting numerous hospital visits and stays throughout all of 2005 and most of 2006

regarding adenocarcinoma of the prostate, urinary bypass surgery, coronary heart disease, and

		exp was in c coll	diomegaly resulting in complications from other health procedures. Respondent was not sected to live beyond the end of 2005. During the time period of the misconduct, Respondent is not keeping adequate CTA records but guessing what was in his account based on ledgers lient files. Respondent continued to work sporadically and with the assistance of attorney eagues, kept his law office operational and was reduced to working on a part-time basis. pondent continues to be under his physician's care and his health is regularly monitored.
(9)		whic	<b>ere Financial Stress:</b> At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered from severe financial stress ch resulted from circumstances not reasonably foreseeable or which were beyond his/her control and ch were directly responsible for the misconduct.
10)			nily Problems: At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered extreme difficulties in his/her sonal life which were other than emotional or physical in nature.
11)		and provinte inte was Resp proviserv Resp	general communities who are aware of the full extent of his/her misconduct. Respondent has vided character reference declarations from a strong cross-section of members in the legal general community, including two retired judges. These letters attested to his character, grity and honesty even with the knowledge of the misconduct and believe that the conduct due to his extenuating circumstance and error and will not recur. Since the misconduct, condent serves as a reserve officer for the El Monte Police Department. Respondent has vided legal counsel and/or served as a reserve officer for the past 20 years. Respondent also es as a reserve officer for the San Fernando Police Department. Since the misconduct, condent has served as a volunteer at the Fred Jordan Mission, a nonprofit organization that dis and cares for the needs of the homeless, as he has for the past 15 years. (Std. 1.2(e)(vi).)
12)		follo fam	<b>abilitation:</b> Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred wed by convincing proof of subsequent rehabilitation. Respondent has a seasoned CPA who is iliar with his past disciplinary matters and accounting shortfalls from 2005 and since 2008, condent performs monthly reconciliations under the guidance of his CPA.
13)		n oN	mitigating circumstances are involved.
Addi	tiona	al mit	igating circumstances
). [	Disc	iplir	ie:
1)	$\boxtimes$	Stay	red Suspension:
	(a)	$\boxtimes$	Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of Two Years.
		l.	and until Respondent shows proof satisfactory to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation and present fitness to practice and present learning and ability in the law pursuant to standard 1.4(c)(ii) Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.
		ii.	and until Respondent pays restitution as set forth in the Financial Conditions form attached to this stipulation.
		iii.	and until Respondent does the following:
	(b)	$\boxtimes$	The above-referenced suspension is stayed.

(Do no	ot write	above this line.)		
		in addition to the quarterly reports required to be submitted to the Office of Probation. Respondent must cooperate fully with the probation monitor.		
(7)		Subject to assertion of applicable privileges, Respondent must answer fully, promptly and truthfully any inquiries of the Office of Probation and any probation monitor assigned under these conditions which are directed to Respondent personally or in writing relating to whether Respondent is complying or has complied with the probation conditions.		
(8)		Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the Ethics School, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.		
		□ No Ethics School recommended. Reason: .		
(9)		Respondent must comply with all conditions of probation imposed in the underlying criminal matter and must so declare under penalty of perjury in conjunction with any quarterly report to be filed with the Office of Probation.		
(10)	$\boxtimes$	The following conditions are attached hereto and incorporated:		
		☐ Substance Abuse Conditions ☐ Law Office Management Conditions		
		☐ Medical Conditions ☒ Financial Conditions		
F. O	ther	Conditions Negotiated by the Parties:		
(1)		Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination: Respondent must provide proof of passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination ("MPRE"), administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, to the Office of Probation during the period of actual suspension or within one year, whichever period is longer. Failure to pass the MPRE results in actual suspension without further hearing until passage. But see rule 9.10(b), California Rules of Court, and rule 321(a)(1) & (c), Rules of Procedure.		
		☐ No MPRE recommended. Reason:		
(2)	$\boxtimes$	Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court: Respondent must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 30 and 40 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.		
(3)		Conditional Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court: If Respondent remains actually suspended for 90 days or more, he/she must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 120 and 130 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.		
(4)		<b>Credit for Interim Suspension [conviction referral cases only]:</b> Respondent will be credited for the period of his/her interim suspension toward the stipulated period of actual suspension. Date of commencement of interim suspension:		
(5)		Other Conditions: Respondent agrees to make a good will payment of \$1,406.52 to the Gomezes and provide proof of payment to the Office of Probation within 90 days from the effective date of the Supreme Court order in connection to this matter.		

Attachment language begins here (if any):

# ATTACHMENT TO STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF:

**IRA SELTZER, 46225** 

**CASE NUMBER:** 

06-O-11780

Respondent admits the facts set forth in the stipulation are true and that he is culpable of violations of the specified statutes and Rules of Professional Conduct.

#### **FACTS**

- 1. In January 2005, Jesus Gomez ("Jesus"), Micaela Gomez ("Micaela") and Marialena Gomez ("Maria"), employed Respondent to represent them in their personal injury claims arising from a November 2004 automobile accident. Each signed a contingency fee retainer agreement with Respondent's law firm in January 2005. The Gomezes did not sign conflict waivers.
- 2. The Gomezes' claims for medical expenses related to the accident were covered under an insurance policy with Farmers Insurance ("Farmers"). Respondent submitted various medical bills to Farmers. Farmers disbursed \$5,711.52 in medical payment coverage to Respondent for the purpose of paying for medical services for the Gomezes. The insurance policy medical payment terms provided that Farmers be reimbursed for medical payments if the Gomezes recovered from a third party here, State Farm Insurance. Respondent was aware of this provision and signed an acknowledgement for each client.
- 3. Between August 26, 2005 and September 9, 2005, Respondent deposited a collective \$5,711.52 in drafts from Farmers for the Gomezes' medical expenses into Respondent's client trust account at Citibank West, account number xxxxxx3956 (the "CTA")1, as follows:

Date of deposit	Amount of draft	<u>Payee</u>
08-26-05	\$ 2,342.71	Micaela and Respondent
09-07-05	\$ 470.27	Jesus and Respondent

<sup>1</sup> The full account number is omitted for privacy purposes.

09-07-05	\$ 1,520.55	Re Amb Billing Jesus and Respondent
09-09-05	\$ 1,377.99	Micaela and Respondent

- 4. On October 17, 2005, and without disbursing any of the \$5,711.52 on behalf of the Gomezes, the balance in the CTA fell to negative \$1,291.26.
- 5. On October 21, 2005, Respondent replenished the account in the amount of \$7,500.00 without determining the actual amount of the dip in client funds but estimating a general amount.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

- 1. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(A), by depositing or commingling funds belonging to Respondent when Respondent replenished his personal funds into the CTA with one lump sum in the amount of \$7,500.00, thus commingling personal funds in a bank account labeled "Trust Account," "Client's Funds Account" or words of similar import by \$7,002.78 and by permitting his CTA to reach a balance of negative \$1,291.26 when he was required to maintain \$5,711.52 on behalf of the Gomezes, Respondent failed to maintain the balance of funds received for the benefit of a client and deposited into a CTA.
- 2. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3), by failing to maintain, and to preserve for five years from final appropriate disposition, complete records of all client funds coming into Respondent's possession.

#### **AUTHORITIES.**

The purpose of State Bar disciplinary proceedings is not to punish the attorney, but to protect the public, to preserve public confidence in the profession, and to maintain the highest possible professional standards for attorneys. (*Chadwick v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 103, 111; *Cooper v. State Bar* (1987) 43 Cal.3d 1016, 1025; Std. 1.3.)

Standard 1.6(a) provides for the most severe discipline out of the applicable standards. (All further references to the "standard(s)" are to the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar, title IV, Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, unless expressly noted.)

Standard 1.7(b) provides for disbarment where an attorney has a record of two prior impositions of discipline unless the most compelling mitigating circumstances clearly predominate.

Standard 2.2(b) provides that a violation of rule 4-100 shall result in at least a three-month suspension, irrespective of mitigation circumstances. The standards are guidelines (*Drociak v. State Bar* (1991) 52 Cal.3d 1085, 1090; *In the Matter of Koehler* (Review Dept. 1991) 1 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 615, 628) and afforded great weight (*In re Silverton* (2005) 36 Cal.4th 81, 91-92), but they are not applied in a talismanic fashion (*In the Matter of Van Sickle* (Review Dept. 2006) 4 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 980, 994).

The nature of Respondent's failure to adequately manage his client trust account in light of Respondent's health problems at the time is such that applying the disbarment recommendation in standard 1.7(b) would be unduly harsh. Here, one year actual suspension is sufficient.

#### PENDING PROCEEDINGS.

The disclosure date referred to, on page one, paragraph A.(7), was August 6, 2010.

#### COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed Respondent that as of August 6, 2010, the estimated prosecution costs in this matter are approximately \$4,231.00. Respondent acknowledges that this figure is an estimate only and that it might not include State Bar Court costs that will be included in any final cost assessment (see Bus. & Prof. Code section 6068.10(c)) or taxable costs (see C.C.P. section 1033.5(a)), which will be included in any final cost assessment. Respondent further acknowledges that should this stipulation be rejected or should relief from the stipulation be granted, the costs in this matter may increase due to the cost of further proceedings. It is also noted that if Respondent fails to pay any installment of disciplinary costs within the time provided herein or as may be modified by the State Bar Court pursuant to section 6086.10, subdivision(c), the remaining balance of the costs is due and payable immediately unless relief has been granted under the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar of California (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 286). The payment of costs is enforceable both as provided in Business and Professions Code section 6140.7 and as a money judgment.

#### STATE BAR ETHICS SCHOOL.

Because Respondent has agreed to attend State Bar Ethics School as part of this stipulation, Respondent will receive Minimum Continuing Legal Education credit upon the satisfactory completion of State Bar Ethics School.

	n the Matter of ra Seltzer	Case number(s): 06-O-11780-RAH		
Α	Member of the State Bar			
Fi	nancial Conditions			
a.	Restitution			
	annum) to the payee(s) listed one or more of the payee(s) for	on (including the principal amour below. If the Client Security Fun- or all or any portion of the principa stitution to CSF in the amount(s)	d ("CSF") has reimbursed at amount(s) listed below,	
	Payee	Principal Amount	Interest Accrues From	
ο.	Respondent must pay above-r payment to the Office of Proba		e satisfactory proof of	
	Respondent must pay the above-referenced restitution on the payment schedule set fort below. Respondent must provide satisfactory proof of payment to the Office of Probation with each quarterly probation report, or as otherwise directed by the Office of Probation. No later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the period of probation (or period of reproval), Respondent must make any necessary final payment(s) in order to complete the payment of restitution, including interest, in full.			
	Payee/CSF (as applicable)	Minimum Payment Amount	Payment Frequency	
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			

#### **Client Funds Certificate** c.

- If Respondent possesses client funds at any time during the period covered by a required quarterly report, Respondent must file with each required report a certificate from Respondent and/or a certified public accountant or other financial professional approved by the Office of Probation, certifying that:
  - a. Respondent has maintained a bank account in a bank authorized to do business in the State of California, at a branch located within the State of California, and that such account is designated as a "Trust Account" or "Clients' Funds Account";

- b. Respondent has kept and maintained the following:
  - A written ledger for each client on whose behalf funds are held that sets forth:
    - 1. the name of such client;
    - the date, amount and source of all funds received on behalf of such client;
    - 3. the date, amount, payee and purpose of each disbursement made on behalf of such client; and,
    - 4. the current balance for such client.
  - ii. a written journal for each client trust fund account that sets forth:
    - 1. the name of such account;
    - 2. the date, amount and client affected by each debit and credit; and,
    - 3. the current balance in such account.
- iii. all bank statements and cancelled checks for each client trust account; and.
- iv. each monthly reconciliation (balancing) of (i), (ii), and (iii), above, and if there are any differences between the monthly total balances reflected in (i), (ii), and (iii), above, the reasons for the differences.
- c. Respondent has maintained a written journal of securities or other properties held for clients that specifies:
- each item of security and property held;
- ii. the person on whose behalf the security or property is held;
- iii. the date of receipt of the security or property;
- iv. the date of distribution of the security or property; and,
- v. the person to whom the security or property was distributed.
- If Respondent does not possess any client funds, property or securities during
  the entire period covered by a report, Respondent must so state under penalty of
  perjury in the report filed with the Office of Probation for that reporting period. In
  this circumstance, Respondent need not file the accountant's certificate
  described above.
- 3. The requirements of this condition are in addition to those set forth in rule 4-100, Rules of Professional Conduct.

#### d. Client Trust Accounting School

Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must supply to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the Ethics School Client Trust Accounting School, within the same period of time, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.

(Do not write above this line.)	
In the Matter of Ira Seltzer	Case number(s):
ira Seitzer	06-O-11780-RAH

### SIGNATURE OF THE PARTIES

By their signatures below, the parties and their counsel, as applicable, signify their agreement with each of the recitations and each of the terms and conditions of this Stipulation Re Fact, Conclusions of Law and Disposition.

8/11/10	Jan ett	Ira Seltzer	
Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name	
8/11/10	Smal Allen	Richard A. Moss	
Date ,	Respondent's Counsel Signature	Print Name	
8/11/2010	An Cla	Jean Cha	
Date <b>/</b>	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	Print Name	

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In the Matt			Case Number(s): 06-O-11780-RAH		
ira Jeitzei		00-0	-11700-KAD		
		ORDER			
				· .	
_	e stipulation to be fair to the p ERED that the requested dismand:		• •		
	The stipulated facts and dis RECOMMENDED to the Su		PROVED and the DI	SCIPLINE	
	The stipulated facts and dis below, and the DISCIPLINE	•			
	All Hearing dates are vacate	ed.			
	•				
		•			
		•			
		÷			
the stipula or further <b>effective</b>	s are bound by the stipulation ition, filed within 15 days after modifies the approved stipulated date of this disposition is the 30 days after file date. (See	service of this tion. (See rule 1	order, is granted; or 1 135(b), Rules of Proc te of the Supreme C	2) this court modifies edure.) <b>The</b> court order herein,	
	08-24-6		MA		
Date		Judae	of the State Bar Cou	ırt	

RICHARD A. PLATEL

#### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

[Rule 62(b), Rules Proc.; Code Civ. Proc., § 1013a(4)]

I am a Case Administrator of the State Bar Court of California. I am over the age of eighteen and not a party to the within proceeding. Pursuant to standard court practice, in the City and County of Los Angeles, on August 25, 2010, I deposited a true copy of the following document(s):

STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING

in a sealed envelope for collection and mailing on that date as follows:

by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

RICHARD ALAN MOSS ESQ 255 S MARENGO AVE PASADENA, CA 91101 - 2719

by interoffice mail through a facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed as follows:

Jean H. Cha, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on August 25, 2010.

Julieta E. Gonzales

State Bar Court