# State Bar Court of California Hearing Department San Francisco PROGRAM FOR RESPONDENTS WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

(for Court's use) Counsel For The State Bar Case Number (s) 07-O-10366-LMA [07-O-Wonder J. Liang **Deputy Trial Counsel** 10821 & 07-O-13242] **180 Howard Street** San Francisco, California 94105 026 805 296 kwiktag\* (415) 538-2372 MAR 0 2 2009 STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE Bar # 184357 SAN FRANCISCO In Pro Per Respondent William S. Reustle 547 Jefferson Street, Suite C Fairfield, California 94533 (707) 427-1662 Submitted to: Program Judge Bar # 83707 STIPULATION RE FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW In the Matter Of: WILLIAM S. REUSTLE ☐ PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED Bar # 83707 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 November 29, 1978.
- (2) The parties agree to be bound by the factual stipulations contained herein even if conclusions of law or disposition (to be attached separately) are rejected or changed by the Supreme Court. However, if Respondent is not accepted into the Lawyer Assistance Program, this stipulation will be rejected and will not be binding on the Respondent or the State Bar.
- (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, except for Probation Revocation proceedings. Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are listed under "Dismissals." The stipulation consists of 13 pages, excluding 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".

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- (6) No more than 30 days prior to the filing of this stipulation, Respondent has been advised in writing of any pending investigation/proceeding not resolved by this stipulation, except for criminal investigations.
- (7) Payment of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & 6140.7 and will pay timely any disciplinary costs imposed in this proceeding.
- B. Aggravating Circumstances [for definition, see Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standard 1.2(b)]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.

(1)	$\boxtimes$	Prior record of discipline [see standard 1.2(f)]		
	(a)	State Bar Court case # of prior case 93-O-14208		
	(b)			
	(c)			
	(d)	☑ Degree of prior discipline Private Reproval/Public Disclosure		
	(e)	☐ If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below:		
(2)		<b>Dishonesty:</b> Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by or followed by bad faith, dishonesty, concealment, overreaching or other violations of the State Bar Act or Rules of Professional Conduct.		
(3)		<b>Trust Violation:</b> Trust funds or property were involved and Respondent refused or was unable to account to the client or person who was the object of the misconduct for improper conduct toward said funds or property.		
(4)		Harm: Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public or the administration of justice.		
(5)		Indifference: Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.		
(6)		Lack of Cooperation: Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation or proceedings. Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to the victims of his misconduct and to the State Bar during disciplinary investigations.		
(7)	$\boxtimes$	Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct: Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct. Respondent's acts of misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing.		
(8)		No aggravating circumstances are involved.		
Add	itiona	al aggravating circumstances:		

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standard 1.2(e)]. Facts supporting mitigating circumstances are required.	
(1) No Prior Discipline: 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.	
(4) Remorse: 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/h misconduct.	ıer
(5) Restitution: Respondent paid \$ o n i n restitution to without the threat or force of disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.	
(6) Delay: 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 any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and Respondent no longer suffers from such difficulties or disabilities.	t of
(9) Severe Financial Stress: At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered from severe financial strewhich resulted from circumstances not reasonably foreseeable or which were beyond his/her control and which were directly responsible for the misconduct.	
(10) Family Problems: At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered extreme difficulties in his/her personal life which were other than emotional or physical in nature.	
(11) Good Character: Respondent's good character is attested to by a wide range of references in the lega and general communities who are aware of the full extent of his/her misconduct.	I
(12) Rehabilitation: Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred followed by convincing proof of subsequent rehabilitation.	
(13) No mitigating circumstances are involved.	
Additional mitigating airoumataness	

#### **ATTACHMENT TO**

## STIPULATION RE FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

IN THE MATTER OF:

WILLIAM S. REUSTLE, SBN 83707

CASE NUMBER(S):

07-O10366, ET AL.

#### FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

Count One: The Clark Matter: 07-O-10366:

#### Facts: Count One (A):

- 1. On or about October 10, 2006, Michael C. Clark ("Clark") hired respondent to represent him in a dispute with his former wife regarding child support in *Michael Clark v. Kristy Clark*, Superior Court of California, County of Solano, case no. FO42635 ("Clark v. Clark"). On or about October 12, 2006, Clark paid respondent \$500 in advanced attorney's fees for his services in relation to *Clark v. Clark*.
- 2. At the time Clark hired respondent, and all relevant times thereafter, Clark was on active duty military status, stationed outside of the United States, and was not physically present in California.
- 3. At the time Clark hired respondent, respondent specifically agreed to appear on Clark's behalf at an Order to Show Cause hearing in *Clark v. Clark*, scheduled for November 1, 2006.
  - 4. After on or about October 10, 2006:
  - (A) Respondent did not appear at the November 1, 2006, Order to Show Cause hearing in *Clark v. Clark*, of which respondent had notice and the ability to appear, or otherwise arrange to have Clark's interests protected in relation to the Order to Show Cause hearing.
  - (B) Respondent performed no services of value to Clark.

## Conclusions of Law: Count One (A):

By failing to appear at the November 1, 2006, Order to Show Cause hearing as he specifically agreed to do, and by otherwise failing to perform any services of value to Clark,

respondent intentionally, recklessly and repeatedly failed to perform legal services with competence in violation of rule 3-110(A) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

## Facts: Count One (B):

- 5. The allegations contained in Count One (A) are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 6. By at least on or about November 1, 2006, respondent had effectively terminated his attorney-client relationship with Clark.
- 7. On or about November 27, 2006, Clark called respondent at the telephone number provided him by respondent for use in discussing Clark's matter. Clark found the telephone number disconnected, with no referral telephone number or message presented.
  - 8. Respondent did not do any of the following:
  - (A) Inform Clark that he was terminating their attorney-client relationship.
  - (B) Provide Clark with a new contact telephone number for Clark's use in reaching respondent from outside California.
  - (C) Advise Clark that Clark should employ another lawyer of his (Clark's) choice to represent him in Clark v. Clark.
  - (D) Return Clark's file.
- 9. Respondent's termination of his attorney-client relationship with Clark prejudiced Clark in a foreseeable fashion, including because Clark was left without legal representation in *Clark v. Clark* at a time when Clark was on military duty outside of the United States, and without a meaningful opportunity to converse with respondent about the status of his matter.

# Conclusions of Law: Count One (B):

By failing to provide Clark with notice that he was terminating their professional relationship, inform Clark of a new contact telephone number, advise Clark to employ another lawyer, and return Clark's client file, respondent failed, upon termination of employment, to take reasonable steps to avoid reasonably foreseeable prejudice to his client in violation of rule 3-700(A)(2) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

# Facts: Count One (C):

10. The allegations contained in Counts One (A) and One (B) are incorporated by reference as if set forth herein.

- 11. Respondent did not tell Clark of the following developments in relation to *Clark v. Clark*:
  - (A) That respondent was terminating their attorney-client relationship.
  - (B) That Clark should obtain a new lawyer to represent him in Clark v. Clark.
  - (C) How to contact respondent by telephone.
  - (D) That no one had attended the November 1, 2006, Order to Show Cause hearing on Clark's behalf.

## Conclusions of Law: Count One (C):

By failing to inform Clark that he was terminating their professional relationship, that Clark should employ a new lawyer, how to contact him by telephone, and that no one had represented Clark at the November 1, 2006, Order to Show Cause hearing, respondent failed to keep a client reasonably informed of significant developments in a matter in which respondent had agreed to provide legal services in violation of section 6068(m) of the Business and Professional Code.

## Facts: Count One (D):

- 12. The allegations contained in Count One (A) and paragraph 6 are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 13. The entire \$500 in advanced attorney's fees paid respondent by Clark was unearned because respondent performed no services of value to Clark.
- 14. To date, respondent has refunded no portion of the \$500 in advanced attorney's fees paid to him by Clark.

# Conclusions of Law: Count One (D):

By failing to refund in advanced attorney's fees upon termination of his attorney-client relationship with Clark, respondent failed to promptly refund a fee paid in advance that was not earned in violation of rule 3-700(D)(2) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

# Count Two: The Hill Matter: 07-O-10821:

# Facts: Count Two (A):

15. On or about July 8, 2005, respondent substituted in as counsel of record for Dickie L. Hill, D.O. ("Hill") in a pending civil matter, *Susan R. Nurock* v. *Dickie L. Hill*, Solano County

Superior Court case no. FCS-025649 ("Nurock v. Hill").

- 16. Judgment issued against Hill in Nurock v. Hill on or about October 20, 2006.
- 17. On or about October 26, 2006, Hill spoke with respondent and terminated their attorney-client relationship. During this conversation, Hill asked respondent for the return of his client file.
  - 18. To date, respondent has not returned Hill's client file as requested.

#### Conclusions of Law: Count Two (A):

By failing to return Hill's client file as requested on October 26, 2006, following the termination of their professional relationship, respondent failed to promptly release all client papers and property upon termination of employment as requested by the client in violation of rule 3-700(D)(2) of the Rules of Professional Conduct

#### Facts: Count Two (B):

- 19. The allegations contained in Count Two (A) are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 20. For several days prior to on or about November 15, 2006, Hill called respondent at three telephone numbers previously provided to Hill for use in communicating with respondent.
- 21. Hill called respondent to inquire about the status of his file return request and to obtain additional information about the status of his matter.
- 22. No one answered Hill's calls at any of the three telephone numbers. Hill was otherwise unable to leave a message for respondent because none of the numbers had operating message functions.
- 23. On or about October 30, 2006, November 1, 2006, November 3, 2006, and November 4, 2006, Hill went to respondent's home to inquire about the status of his file request and to obtain additional information about the status of his matter.
  - 24. No one responded to Hill's efforts to contact respondent at his home.
- 25. At no time did respondent provide Hill with a reasonable method of speaking with respondent regarding the status of Hill's matter.

## Conclusions of Law: Count Two (B):

By failing to provide Hill with a meaningful method of discussing the status of his matter with him, respondent effectively failed to respond to reasonable status inquiries of his client. By failing to inform Hill of the status of Hill's request for return of his client file and provide Hill with a telephone number at which he could be reached to discuss Hill's matter, respondent failed to inform a client of a significant development in the client's matter in section 6068(m) of the Business and Professions Code.

## Count Three: The Byrd Matter: 07-O-13242:

#### Facts: Count Three (A):

- 26. In or about December, 2006, Jocelin Byrd ("Byrd") hired respondent to represent her in a wrongful termination action against her former employer, *Jocelin Byrd v. Board of Trustees, San Rafael City School District, et al.*, Superior Court of California, County of Marin, case no. CV 065536 ("*Byrd v. SRCSD*"). A complaint prepared by respondent was filed on Byrd's behalf in *Byrd v. SRCSD* on or about December 27, 2006.
  - 27. Thereafter:
  - (A) Respondent did not effect service of the complaint on the defendants in *Byrd v*. *SRCSD*.
  - (B) Respondent took no action to advance Byrd's interests in Byrd v. SRCSD.
- 28. On or about June 28, 2007, Byrd v. SRCSD was dismissed by the court for lack of prosecution.

# Conclusions of Law: Count Three (A):

By failing to effect service of the complaint on the defendants and by otherwise failing to take any action to advance Byrd's interests in *Byrd v. SRCSD*, respondent intentionally, recklessly and repeatedly failed to perform competent legal services in violation of rule 3-110(A) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

#### Facts: Count Three (B):

- 29. The allegations contained in Count Three (A) are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 30. Respondent learned of the dismissal of *Byrd v. SRCSD* shortly after on or about June 28, 2007.

- 31. At no time did respondent tell Byrd that the defendants were not served with a copy of the complaint.
- 32. At no time did respondent tell Byrd that he had not advanced Byrd's interests in *Byrd* v. *SRCSD*.
  - 33. At no time did respondent tell Byrd that Byrd v. SRCSD was dismissed.

## Conclusions of Law: Count Three (B):

By failing to inform Byrd that the complaint was not served, that no action was taken to advance her interests in *Byrd v. SRCSD*, and that *Byrd v. SRCSD* was dismissed, respondent failed to keep a client reasonably informed of significant developments in a matter in which he had agreed to provide legal services in violation of section 6068(m) of the Business and Professions Code.

## Facts: Count Four: 07-O-10366, et al.:

## The Clark Complaint:

- 34. The allegations contained in Count One (A), Count One (B), paragraph 11, and paragraphs 13 through 14 are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 35. On or about December 11, 2006, the State Bar opened an investigation, case no. 07-0-10366, based on a complaint received from Michael C. Clark ("the Clark complaint").
- 36. On or about March 19, 2007, State Bar Investigator Lisa Edwards ("Edwards") wrote to respondent ("the March 19, 2007, letter regarding Clark") and requested a written response to the allegations under investigation in relation to the Clark complaint.
- 37. The March 19, 2007, letter regarding Clark requested respondent's written response on or before April 2, 2007.
- 38. Respondent received the March 19, 2007, letter regarding Clark shortly after on or about March 19, 2007.
- 39. Respondent did not contact Edwards or any other State Bar employee in response to the March 19, 2007, letter regarding Clark.
- 40. On or about June 4, 2007, Edwards sent respondent a second letter ("the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Clark") requesting a written response to the allegations under investigation

in relation to the Clark complaint.

- 41. The June 4, 2007, letter regarding Clark requested respondent's written response on or before June 18, 2007.
- 42. Respondent received the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Clark shortly after on or about June 4, 2007.
- 43. Respondent did not contact Edwards or any other State Bar employee in response to the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Clark.
- 44. To date, respondent has not provided Edwards or any other State Bar employee with a response to the March 19, 2007, letter regarding Clark, or to the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Clark. To date, respondent has not provided Edwards or any other State Bar employee with any information concerning the Clark complaint.

## The Hill Complaint:

- 45. The allegations contained in Count 2 (A) and Count 2 (B) are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 46. On or about February 8, 2007, the State Bar opened an investigation, case no. 07-O-10821, based on a complaint received from Dickie Hill ("the Hill complaint").
- 47. On or about April 30, 2007, Edwards wrote to respondent ("the April 30, 2007, letter regarding Hill") and requested a written response to the allegations under investigation in relation to the Hill complaint.
- 48. The April 30, 2007, letter regarding Hill requested respondent's written response on or before May 14, 2007.
- 49. Respondent received the April 30, 2007, letter regarding Hill shortly after on or about April 30, 2007.
- 50. Respondent did not contact Edwards or any other State Bar employee in response to the April 30, 2007, letter regarding Hill.
- 51. On or about June 4, 2007, Edwards sent respondent a second letter ("the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Hill") requesting a written response to the allegations under investigation in relation to the Hill complaint.

- 52. The June 4, 2007, letter regarding Hill requested respondent's written response on or before June 18, 2007.
- 53. Respondent received the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Hill shortly after on or about June 4, 2007.
- 54. Respondent did not contact Edwards or any other State Bar employee in response to the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Hill.
- 55. To date, respondent has not provided Edwards or any other Sate Bar employee with a response to the April 30, 2007, letter regarding Hill, or the June 4, 2007, letter regarding Hill. To date, respondent has not provided Edwards or any other State Bar employee with any information concerning the Hill complaint

## The Byrd Complaint:

- 56. The allegations contained in Count 3 (A) and Count 3 (B) are incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein.
- 57. On or about August 13, 2007, the State Bar opened an investigation, case no. 07-O-13242, based on a complaint received from Jocelin Byrd ("the Byrd complaint").
- 58. On or about January 14, 2008, Edwards wrote to respondent ("the January 14, 2008, letter regarding Byrd") and requested a written response to the allegations under investigation in relation to the Byrd complaint.
- 59. The January 14, 2008, letter regarding Byrd requested respondent's written response on or before February 4, 2008.
- 60. Respondent received the January 14, 2008, letter regarding Byrd shortly after on or about January 14, 2008.
- 61. On or about January 24, 2008, respondent sent a letter to Edwards in response to the January 14, 2008, letter regarding Byrd. The entire body of respondent's January 24, 2008 letter stated as follows:

I am in receipt of your letter of January 14, 2008. Please allow me a few weeks to provide the information you requested.

I do acknowledge assisting Mrs. Byrd in her matter.

- 62. Respondent provided no further response to the January 14, 2008, letter regarding Byrd.
- 63. On or about February 7, 2008, Edwards sent respondent a second letter ("the February 7, 2008, letter regarding Byrd") requesting a written response to the allegations under investigation in relation to the Byrd complaint.
- 64. The February 7, 2008, letter regarding Byrd requested respondent's written response on or before February 29, 2008.
- 65. Respondent received the February 7, 2008, letter regarding Byrd shortly after on or about February 7, 2008.
- 66. Respondent did not contact Edwards or any other State Bar employee in response to the February 7, 2008, letter regarding Byrd.
- 67. To date, respondent has not provided Edwards or any other State Bar employee with a substantive response to the January 14, 2008, letter regarding Byrd, or any response to the February 7, 2008, letter regarding Byrd. To date respondent has not provided Edwards or any other State Bar employee with any information concerning the Byrd complaint beyond an acknowledgment that he "assist[ed]" Byrd.

#### Conclusions of Law: Count Four:

By failing to provide information regarding the Clark complaint as twice requested by the State Bar, information regarding the Hill matter as twice requested by the State Bar, and substantive information regarding the Byrd matter as twice requested by the State Bar, respondent failed to cooperate and participate in multiple disciplinary investigations pending against him in violation of section 6068(i) of the Business and Professions Code.

#### PENDING PROCEEDINGS.

The disclosure date referred to, on page one, paragraph A.(7), was July 10, 2008.

Respondent admits that the above facts are true and that he is culpable of violations of the specified statutes and/or Rules of Professional Conduct.

(Do not write above this line.)	
In the Matter of	Case number(s):
WILLIAM S. REUSTLE SBN 83707	07-O-10366-LMA, ET AL.

#### 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 Facts and Conclusions of Law.

Respondent enters into this stipulation as a condition of his/her participation in the Program. Respondent understands that he/she must abide by all terms and conditions of Respondent's Program Contract.

If the Respondent is not accepted into the Program or does not sign the Program contract, this Stipulation will be rejected and will not be binding on Respondent or the State Bar.

If the Respondent is accepted into the Program, upon Respondent's successful completion of or termination from the Program, this Stipulation will be filed and the specified level of discipline for successful completion of or termination from the Program as set forth in the State Bar Court's Statement Re: Discipline shall be imposed or recommended to the Supreme Court.

9/2/08	MMM	William S. Reustle	
Date (	Respondent's Signature	Print Name	
9/0/08		n/a	
Date	Respondent's Counsel Signature	Print Name	
9/2/08	- Same	Wonder J. Liang	
Date *	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	Print Name	

(Do not write above this	s line.)			
In the Matter Of		Case Number(s):		
WILLIAM S. REU SBN 83707	JSTLE	07-O-10366-LMA, ET AL.		
	OR	DER		
		d that it adequately protects the public, counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without		
☑ The	e stipulation as to facts and conclu	usions of law is APPROVED.		
	e stipulation as to facts and conclu h below.	usions of law is APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set		
☐ All	court dates in the Hearing Depart	ment are vacated.		
stipulation, filed further modifies in the Program Procedure.)	I within 15 days after service of the sthe approved stipulation; or 3) Report or does not sign the Program Co	oved unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the his order, is granted; or 2) this court modifies or despondent is not accepted for participation intract. (See rule 135(b) and 802(b), Rules of		
March 3 Date	), 2004	Judge of the State Bar Court		
		Lucy Armendariz		

#### **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 San Francisco, on March 2, 2009, I deposited a true copy of the following document(s):

#### STIPULATION RE FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

in a sea	aled envelope for collection and mailing on that date as follows:
	by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States PostalService at , California, addressed as follows:
	by certified mail, No. , with return receipt requested, through the United States Postal Service at , California, addressed as follows:
	by overnight mail at , California, addressed as follows:
	by fax transmission, at fax number . No error was reported by the fax machine that I used.
$\boxtimes$	By personal service:
	WILLIAM S. REUSTLE  180 HOWARD STREET, 6 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105  WONDER J. LIANG 180 HOWARD STREET, 6 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
	by interoffice mail through a facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed as follows:
	by certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in San Francisco, California, on 2, 2009.  Bernadette C. O. Molina
	Case Administrator
	State Bar Court