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**State Bar Court of California  
Hearing Department  
Los Angeles**

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<p>Counsel For The State Bar</p> <p>Mia R. Ellis Deputy Trial Counsel 1149 South Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90015 213-765-1380</p> <p>Bar # 228235</p>	<p>Case Number (s) 08-O-10643; 08-O-13888; 08-O-14209</p>	<p>(for Court's use)</p> <p><b>PUBLIC MATTER</b></p> <p><b>FILED</b></p> <p>JUL 09 2010</p> <p>STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES</p> 
<p>In Pro Per Respondent</p> <p>Christopher Weston Western Law Connection Corp. 4311 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 615 Los Angeles, CA 90010 323-936-0815</p> <p>Bar # 174808</p>	<p>Submitted to: <b>Settlement Judge</b></p> <p>STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING</p> <p><b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED</p>	
<p>In the Matter Of: Christopher Weston</p> <p>Bar # 174808</p> <p>A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)</p>		

**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 December 12, 1994.
- (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 18 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."

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- (5) Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts are also included under "Conclusions of Law".
- (6) The parties must include supporting authority for the recommended level of discipline under the heading "Supporting Authority."
- (7) 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.
- (8) Payment of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & 6140.7. (Check one option only):
- until costs are paid in full, Respondent will remain actually suspended from the practice of law unless relief is obtained per rule 284, Rules of Procedure.
  - costs to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: (hardship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 284, Rules of Procedure)
  - costs waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs"
  - costs entirely waived

**B. Aggravating Circumstances [for definition, see Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standard 1.2(b)]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.**

- (1)  **Prior record of discipline** [see standard 1.2(f)]
- (a)  State Bar Court case # of prior case 99-O-10894
  - (b)  Date prior discipline effective July 20, 2002
  - (c)  Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations: 3-110(A)
  - (d)  Degree of prior discipline six (6) months suspension, stayed, and three years probation.
  - (e)  If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below.
- (2)  **Dishonesty:** 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)  **Trust Violation:** 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. Please see stipulated attachment page 17
- (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.

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- (7)  **Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct:** Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.
- (8)  **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

**Additional 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. Please see stipulated attachment page 17
- (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/her misconduct.
- (5)  **Restitution:** Respondent paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ in 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 of any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and Respondent no longer suffers from such difficulties or disabilities.
- (9)  **Severe Financial Stress:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered from severe financial stress which 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 legal and general communities who are aware of the full extent of his/her misconduct.
- (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 circumstances**

**D. Discipline:**

(1)  **Stayed Suspension:**

- (a)  Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of two years.
  - i.  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)  The above-referenced suspension is stayed.

(2)  **Probation:**

Respondent must be placed on probation for a period of three years, which will commence upon the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter. (See rule 9.18, California Rules of Court)

(3)  **Actual Suspension:**

- (a)  Respondent must be actually suspended from the practice of law in the State of California for a period of 90 days.
  - i.  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:

**E. Additional Conditions of Probation:**

- (1)  If Respondent is actually suspended for two years or more, he/she must remain actually suspended until he/she proves to the State Bar Court his/her rehabilitation, fitness to practice, and learning and ability in general law, pursuant to standard 1.4(c)(ii), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.
- (2)  During the probation period, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (3)  Within ten (10) days of any change, Respondent must report to the Membership Records Office of the State Bar and to the Office of Probation of the State Bar of California ("Office of Probation"), all changes of information, including current office address and telephone number, or other address for State Bar purposes, as prescribed by section 6002.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

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- (4)  Within thirty (30) days from the effective date of discipline, Respondent must contact the Office of Probation and schedule a meeting with Respondent's assigned probation deputy to discuss these terms and conditions of probation. Upon the direction of the Office of Probation, Respondent must meet with the probation deputy either in-person or by telephone. During the period of probation, Respondent must promptly meet with the probation deputy as directed and upon request.
- (5)  Respondent must submit written quarterly reports to the Office of Probation on each January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10 of the period of probation. Under penalty of perjury, Respondent must state whether Respondent has complied with the State Bar Act, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and all conditions of probation during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent must also state whether there are any proceedings pending against him or her in the State Bar Court and if so, the case number and current status of that proceeding. If the first report would cover less than 30 days, that report must be submitted on the next quarter date, and cover the extended period.

In addition to all quarterly reports, a final report, containing the same information, is due no earlier than twenty (20) days before the last day of the period of probation and no later than the last day of probation.

- (6)  Respondent must be assigned a probation monitor. Respondent must promptly review the terms and conditions of probation with the probation monitor to establish a manner and schedule of compliance. During the period of probation, Respondent must furnish to the monitor such reports as may be requested, 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)  The following conditions are attached hereto and incorporated:
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Office Management Conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Conditions         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Conditions  |

#### F. Other 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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- (2)  **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)  **Credit for Interim Suspension [conviction referral cases only]:** 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:**

In the Matter of  
**Christopher Weston**

Case number(s):  
**08-O-10643; 08-O-13888; 08-O-14209**

A Member of the State Bar

### Financial Conditions

#### a. Restitution

- Respondent must pay restitution (including the principal amount, plus interest of 10% per annum) to the payee(s) listed below. If the Client Security Fund ("CSF") has reimbursed one or more of the payee(s) for all or any portion of the principal amount(s) listed below, Respondent must also pay restitution to CSF in the amount(s) paid, plus applicable interest and costs.

Payee	Principal Amount	Interest Accrues From
MediCredit (collection agency for Sherman Oaks Hospital, who provided services for Nayereh Vahedi)	\$5541 (Respondent understands that the amount owed as of the date of signing of this stipulation is approximately \$7163.21 which includes the interest as calculated by MediCredit. Respondent understands that he must make one lump sum payment including interest by the deadline so MediCredit will remove this agency and balance from Nayereh Vahedi's credit report.)	June 2, 2007

- Respondent must pay above-referenced restitution and provide satisfactory proof of payment to the Office of Probation not later than **within 60 days of the effective date of the Supreme Court order.**

#### b. Installment Restitution Payments

- Respondent must pay the above-referenced restitution on the payment schedule set forth 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 reprobation), 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

(Financial Conditions form approved by SBC Executive Committee 10/16/2000. Revised 12/16/2004; 12/13/2006.)

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**c. Client Funds Certificate**

1. 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:
- i. A written ledger for each client on whose behalf funds are held that sets forth:
    - 1. the name of such client;
    - 2. 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:
- i. 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.
2. 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.

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

IN THE MATTER OF: Christopher Weston

CASE NUMBER(S): ET AL. 08-O-10643; 08-O-13888; and 08-O-14209

**FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.**

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

**08-O-10643 (Gasparyan)**

1. Beginning in 2005, Respondent formed a business relationship with non-attorney Jamshid (aka Jim) Goudarzi ("Goudarzi"). As part of that relationship, Goudarzi was to market Respondent's law corporation known as Western Law Connection ("WLC") and the legal services WLC offered.
2. As of July 16, 2008 and May 28, 2009, Respondent maintained an advertisement for WLC at <http://uslawyersdb.com> and <http://www.amercianlawyerreferral.com>, Goudarzi's name and "lawyer's business card" for WLC appeared in this website's database for lawyers and attorneys.
3. Respondent permitted his non-attorney employee, Goudarzi to accept, handle, and settle a personal injury claim under the name of Respondent's law corporation, Western Law Connection ("WLC"), as follows:
4. In May or June 2005, Tigran Gasparyan ("Gasparyan") met with Goudarzi at Gasparyan's home regarding his injury claim arising out of an April 26, 2005 automobile accident. After discussing the claim with Gasparyan, Goudarzi agreed to represent him.
5. At the time of employment, Goudarzi led Gasparyan to believe that Goudarzi was an attorney as Goudarzi discussed the merits of his claim. Goudarzi told Gasparyan that his fee would be approximately 33% of any recovery obtained on his behalf. Goudarzi provided a pamphlet to Gasparyan for WLC, identifying the entity as a law corporation and Goudarzi as WLC's "executive administrator."
6. On June 24, 2005, Goudarzi sent a letter of representation to Farmers Insurance ("Farmers") on his letterhead for "Universal Management Professionals".
7. On June 30, 2005, Farmers sent a letter regarding Gasparyan's property damage claim addressed to Respondent at his office for WLC located at 16027 Ventura Blvd., Suite 605, Encino, CA 91436 (the "Encino office"). WLC received the letter.
8. On July 14 and 19, 2005, Goudarzi faxed documents to Farmers regarding Gasparyan's claim on behalf of WLC from the Encino office.
9. On July 20, 2005, Farmers sent a letter to Goudarzi, but addressed to Respondent's Encino office. In the letter, Farmers offered the policy limit of \$100,000 to settle Gasparyan's claim. Goudarzi accepted the settlement offer on Gasparyan's behalf. On July 21, 2005, Goudarzi or another representative of WLC executed a release of claims on Gasparyan's behalf.
10. In August 2005, WLC settled Gasparyan's claims with Farmers. On August 3, 2005, Farmers issued a \$100,000 settlement draft payable to Gasparyan and Universal Management as previously instructed by Goudarzi. Goudarzi or another representative of WLC endorsed the draft for Gasparyan.
11. In August 2005, Gasparyan received a letter from Farmers, dated August 4, 2005, notifying him that a \$100,000 settlement draft had been issued on his claim. Goudarzi thereafter convinced

- Gasparyan to accept the settlement and promised Gasparyan, he would not have to reimburse Medi-cal and that Goudarzi would make monthly payments from the settlement funds to Gasparyan.
12. On January 26, 2006, WLC filed a personal injury lawsuit regarding Gasparyan's injury claim in the Los Angeles County Superior Court entitled, *Tigran Gasparyan v. Alfredo J. Cruz, et al.*, case number PC038181. Respondent executed the complaint in the lawsuit as Gasparyan's attorney of record. Respondent filed the lawsuit without Gasparyan's knowledge or authorization.
  13. On February 21, 2006, Farmers sent a letter addressed to Goudarzi at the Encino office. With the letter, Farmers provided proof that Gasparyan had settled his claim with Farmers in August 2005. In the letter, Farmers requested that the lawsuit be dismissed. Respondent received the letter.
  14. On June 14, 2006, Respondent filed a request for dismissal of the lawsuit with prejudice.
  15. In May or June 2007, Gasparyan contacted Medi-cal to determine if Medi-cal had been reimbursed for payments it made related to his injury. At that time, Gasparyan learned for the first time from the Medi-cal representative that Goudarzi was not an attorney.
  16. In May or June 2007, Gasparyan contacted Goudarzi and demanded the balance of the settlement due to him, an accounting, and proof of payments from the settlement funds. Goudarzi agreed to provide the requested items, but failed to produce them to Gasparyan.
  17. In Respondent's December 2008 response to the State Bar, Respondent claimed that he never represented Gasparyan, that Goudarzi accepted Gasparyan's matter, and that he did not provide any assistance or advice to Goudarzi in his handling of Gasparyan's claim.
  18. Gasparyan filed suit against Goudarzi and Respondent.

#### Conclusions of Law

By maintaining the advertisements for WLC at <http://uslawyersdb.com>, and <http://www.amercianlawyerreferral.com>, Respondent wilfully disseminated a communication or solicitation which contained, presented, or arranged a matter in a manner or format which was false, deceptive, or which tended to confuse, deceive, or mislead the public; which omitted to state any fact necessary to make the statement made, in light of circumstances under which they are made, not misleading to the public, and which did not comply with Standard 1-400(E)(12), in violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, Rules 1-400(D)(2), 1-400(D)(3), and 1-400(E).

By maintaining the advertisements for WLC at <http://uslawyersdb.com>, and <http://www.amercianlawyerreferral.com>, which contained, presented, or arranged a matter in a manner or format which was false, deceptive, or which tended to confuse, deceive, or mislead the public; and which omitted to state any fact necessary to make the statement made, in light of circumstances under which they are made, not misleading to the public, Respondent wilfully committed acts involving moral turpitude, dishonesty or corruption in violation of Business and Professions Code Section 6106.

By permitting Goudarzi to accept, handle, and settle Gasparyan's personal injury claim under the name of Respondent and WLC, Respondent wilfully aided a person or entity in the unauthorized practice of law, in violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 1-300(A).

#### **08-O-13888 (Vahedi)**

1. On June 6, 2007, Nayereh Vahedi ("Vahedi") employed Respondent's law office, Western Law Connection ("WLC") through Respondent's associate attorney, Nima Farahani ("Farahani"), to represent her in a personal injury claim arising out of her fall at a Trader Joe's market on June 1, 2007. Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc. ("Gallagher") acted as the claims administrator for the claim on behalf of Trader Joe's insurer, ACE American Insurance Co.

2. On June 7, 2007, WLC's legal assistant sent a letter of representation to Gallagher regarding Vahedi's claim. In the letter, the legal assistant stated regarding medical payments, "NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE OR FORWARDED TO ANY TREATING FACILITY."
3. On June 7, 2007, Gallagher informed the legal assistant that the maximum medical payments coverage for the claim was \$2,500.
4. On July 30, 2007, WLC sent a settlement demand for \$24,564 to Gallagher on behalf of Vahedi. In the demand, Vahedi's medical expenses related to the claim totaled \$8,188.
5. On July 30, 2007, and on Farahani's instruction, Vahedi spoke with WLC's employee, Jim Goudarzi ("Goudarzi"), about the status of her claim. Goudarzi informed Vahedi about the settlement demand sent. Vahedi informed Goudarzi that the total for the medical bills was higher than the amount stated in the demand letter. Goudarzi assured Vahedi that the medical bills would be negotiated. The settlement demand omitted an \$842 bill of Sherman Oaks E.R. Med Associates and a \$636.50 ambulance bill of the Los Angeles City Fire Department.
6. On August 16, 2007, Gallagher agreed to pay \$2,500 to Vahedi under the medical payments coverage for her claim, and issued a \$2,500 draft payable to Vahedi. Gallagher sent the draft to WLC. WLC did not notify Vahedi of the receipt of the draft.
7. In August 2007, Vahedi received a \$636.50 ambulance bill from the Los Angeles City Fire Department and contacted WLC about the bill. Goudarzi told Vahedi to pay the bill, but she would ultimately be reimbursed for her payment. On or about September 10, 2007, Vahedi's daughter paid the bill.
8. On September 20, 2007, WLC settled Vahedi's claim for \$9,500. WLC returned a release of claims, purportedly signed by Vahedi on September 20, 2007, to Gallagher. Vahedi had not executed the release.
9. On September 21, 2007, Gallagher issued a \$9,500 settlement draft payable to Respondent, WLC, and Vahedi.
10. On October 3, 2007, the \$9,500 draft was cashed by WLC. WLC did not inform Vahedi of the receipt of the draft and Vahedi did not endorse the draft.
11. In November 2007, Vahedi received a check from WLC for \$4,000. At that time, Vahedi was informed by Goudarzi that all of her medical bills had been paid in full, and she would be receiving \$600 for her ambulance bill. Vahedi also was asked to execute a release of claims for Gallagher, which she signed on November 9, 2007. However, the release actually signed by Vahedi was never sent to Gallagher by WLC. Vahedi subsequently received a \$600 check in payment of Vahedi's ambulance bill from WLC.
12. In April 2008, Vahedi began receiving letters from bill collectors about medical bills from her accident that remained unpaid, including the hospital bill, which with accrued interest, totaled \$6,415.82; and the bill of Sherman Oaks Diagnostic Imaging, which with accrued interest, totaled \$1247.
13. After receiving the collection notices, Vahedi began calling WLC and left several messages requesting an explanation for the unpaid bills. Respondent did not respond to Vahedi's messages or otherwise provide an explanation for the unpaid bills. Therefore, on or about May 19, 2008, Vahedi sent a letter to Respondent and Farahani in which she requested that WLC resolve the unpaid bills. Respondent did not respond to Vahedi's letter and did not account for or disburse the remaining \$2,800 (\$2,500 draft + \$300 (\$900 balance - \$600 ambulance bill) remaining from the \$9,500 draft to Farahani (retainer indicated that Farahani would share in fees) or to anyone on her behalf.
14. On January 5, 2010, Respondent paid the negotiated balance of \$900.00 to Sherman Oaks Diagnostic Image.

### Conclusions of Law

By not notifying Vahedi of the receipt of the \$2,500 and \$9,500 drafts, Respondent wilfully failed to notify a client promptly of the receipt of the client's funds, in violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(1).

By not disbursing the remaining \$2,800, Respondent wilfully failed to pay promptly, as requested by a client, any funds in Respondent's possession which the client was entitled to receive, in violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(4).

By not responding to Vahedi's messages and letter, Respondent wilfully failed to respond promptly to reasonable status inquiries of a client, in violation of Business and Professions Code Section 6068(m).

### **08-O-14209 (Blumenthal)**

1. In January 2006, Laurie Blumenthal ("Blumenthal") employed Respondent to represent her in a medical malpractice action against Robert Lawrence, M.D. ("Lawrence").
2. On February 8, 2006, Respondent filed a medical malpractice lawsuit on behalf of Blumenthal in the Los Angeles County Superior Court entitled, *Laurie Blumenthal v. Robert R. Lawrence, M.D.*, case number MC017081 (the "action").
3. On February 23, 2006, Respondent caused the summons and complaint in the action to be served on Lawrence. Lawrence employed counsel to represent him in the action.
4. On April 11, 2006, Lawrence received a request for dismissal and a request for entry of default from Respondent, but Respondent did not serve the documents on Lawrence's counsel and did not warn Lawrence's counsel that he intended to request the entry of Lawrence's default.
5. On April 14, 2006, Respondent's request for entry of Lawrence's default and request for dismissal were filed by the court in the action. On April 14, 2006, the court entered Lawrence's default as requested by Respondent and dismissed the action without prejudice.
6. On May 24, 2006, Lawrence's counsel filed a motion to set aside the default on the ground that Respondent failed to notify Lawrence's counsel of his intention to request the entry of Lawrence's default. Respondent received the notice.
7. On June 22, 2006, the court held a hearing on the motion to set aside the default in the action. Respondent did not file a written opposition to the motion, but appeared at the hearing on behalf of Blumenthal. The court granted the motion.

#### Motion to Compel Blumenthal's Deposition

8. On September 7, 2006, Lawrence's counsel conducted the first session of Blumenthal's deposition. Respondent represented Blumenthal during the deposition.
9. On September 18, 2006, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail with notice that the second session of Blumenthal's deposition would be conducted on October 27, 2006. Respondent received the notice, but did not inform Blumenthal that the second session.
10. Between October 18, 2006 through January 15, 2007, Lawrence's counsel noticed and then continued the second session of Blumenthal's deposition four times at Respondent's request. Respondent received the notices, but did not inform Blumenthal of the second session depositions.
11. Between January 15, 2007 through February 5, 2007, Lawrence's counsel faxed and mailed two letters to Respondent requesting that Respondent provide a date certain for the second session of Blumenthal's deposition. Respondent received the letters, but did not respond to the request.
12. On February 5, 2007, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail with notice that the second session of Blumenthal's deposition would be conducted on February 20, 2007. Respondent received the notice, but did not inform Blumenthal that the second session of her deposition was set for February 20, 2007. Respondent and Blumenthal did not appear for the second session of

Blumenthal's deposition. Thereafter, Respondent requested that the second session of Blumenthal's deposition be held on February 28, 2007.

13. On February 21, 2007, Lawrence's counsel faxed and mailed a letter to Respondent and served Respondent by mail with a motion to compel Blumenthal's deposition and a request for sanctions against Respondent and Blumenthal. In the letter, Lawrence's counsel informed Respondent that she would be filing the motion and request, and that the motion and request would be heard on March 20, 2007.
14. On February 23, 2007, Lawrence's counsel filed the motion to compel Blumenthal's deposition in the action, and the court set a hearing on the motion to compel for March 20, 2007.
15. Blumenthal complied with the deposition request.

Motion to Compel Blumenthal's Medical Examination

16. On February 9, 2007, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail with a demand for an independent medical examination of Blumenthal on March 19, 2007. Respondent received the demand, but did not notify Blumenthal that her medical examination had been set for March 19, 2007. As such, Blumenthal did not appear for the medical examination on March 19, 2007.
17. On March 21, 2007, Lawrence's counsel filed an ex parte application for an order compelling Blumenthal to appear for a medical examination and for sanctions against Blumenthal and/or Respondent in the action. The court set a hearing on the application for March 22, 2007.
18. On March 22, 2007, the court held a hearing on the ex parte application for an order compelling Blumenthal to appear for a medical examination and a request for sanctions. Respondent did not appear or oppose the request for sanctions against Blumenthal. The court granted the application, but reserved ruling on the request for sanctions until April 11, 2007.
19. On April 11, 2007, the court set a hearing for May 3, 2007, regarding whether sanctions should be imposed for Blumenthal's failure to appear for the medical examination.
20. On April 16, 2007, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail with notice of the April 11, 2007 hearing. Respondent did not notify Blumenthal of the application or that it was granted.

Motion for Summary Judgment

21. On December 22, 2006, Lawrence's counsel filed a motion for summary judgment. The court set a hearing on the motion for March 20, 2007. Lawrence's counsel served Respondent with the motion for summary judgment. Respondent received the motion, but did not inform Blumenthal of the motion.
22. On February 5, 2007, the court held a post-mediation conference. Respondent did not appear on behalf of Blumenthal. At the request of Lawrence's counsel, the court continued the post-mediation conference to March 20, 2007, or to the same time as the hearing on the summary judgment motion.
23. On March 12, 2007, Respondent filed a motion to continue the hearing on the motion for summary judgment until after he deposed Lawrence. On March 12, 2007, Respondent appeared at the hearing on his motion to continue. The court granted the motion, ordered that the opposition to the motion for summary judgment be served and filed by March 28, 2007, and continued the hearing on the motion for summary judgment to April 11, 2007. Respondent received notice of the court's rulings and order, but did not file a written response or opposition to the motion for summary judgment and did not inform Blumenthal that he was not opposing the motion.
24. Lawrence's counsel agreed to produce Lawrence for a deposition on March 26, 2007, but Respondent took Lawrence's deposition off calendar.
25. On April 11, 2007, the court held a hearing on the motion for summary judgment, the post-mediation status conference and final status conference. Respondent did not appear for the hearing. At the request of Lawrence's counsel, the court continued hearing to May 3, 2007. The court also set a hearing for May 3, 2007, on an order to show cause as to why the action should not be dismissed and why the motion for summary judgment should not be granted.

26. On May 23, 2007, Respondent sent a letter to Blumenthal. In the letter, Respondent stated that he wanted to cease representing Blumenthal, claiming that he was unable to find a medical expert to support the action and that Lawrence was "judgment proof." Respondent did not state in the letter that Lawrence's counsel had filed a motion for summary judgment and that he had not filed a written response or opposition to the motion.
27. In or about June 2007, Blumenthal consulted with attorney Robert Shiri ("Shiri") about the action. It was not until after Blumenthal met with Shiri did Blumenthal learn of the pending summary judgment motion from Shiri.
28. On June 13, 2007, Shiri specially appeared for the hearing on the motion for summary judgment with Blumenthal by telephone. Shiri represented to the court that he intended to represent Blumenthal in the action, although a substitution of attorney had not been filed. The court tentatively granted the unopposed motion for summary judgment, and continued the hearing to July 12, 2007. On June 13, 2007, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail.
29. On July 12, 2007, the court held a hearing on the motion for summary judgment. Shiri specially appeared on behalf of Blumenthal. Respondent did not appear on Blumenthal's behalf. The court granted the motion for summary.
30. On July 18, 2007, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail with notice of the granting of the motion for summary judgment. Respondent received the notice.
31. On July 24, 2007, the court entered judgment in favor of Lawrence and against Blumenthal in the action.
32. On August 3, 2007, Lawrence's counsel served Respondent by mail with notice of the entry of judgment against Blumenthal. Respondent received the notice.
33. On July 16, 2007, Respondent sent a letter to Blumenthal with a substitution of attorney form. In the letter, Respondent stated that he was unable to continue to represent Blumenthal and asked Blumenthal where to mail her file.
34. In July 2007, Blumenthal executed a substitution of attorney form at Respondent's request and provided the original form to Respondent for filing with the court in the action. Respondent did not file the substitution of attorney with the court in the action, and remained as Blumenthal's attorney of record.
35. After executing the substitution of attorney form, Blumenthal requested on numerous occasions that Respondent release her file to her or Shiri. Respondent did not release the file to Blumenthal or Shiri, and ultimately claimed that he had lost the file.

#### Conclusions of Law

By not informing Blumenthal, as follows: that the second session of Blumenthal's deposition was set for October 27, 2006, November 13, 2006, November 22, 2006, December 18, 2006, and February 20, 2007; that Lawrence's counsel filed a motion to compel Blumenthal's deposition and a request for sanctions against her; that her medical examination was set for March 19, 2007; that Lawrence's counsel filed the ex parte application for an order compelling Blumenthal to appear for a medical examination and for sanctions against Blumenthal, and that the application was granted; that Lawrence's counsel filed the motion for summary judgment; and, that Respondent was not opposing the motion for summary judgment, Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code section 6068 (m).

By not notifying Lawrence's counsel that he intended to request the entry of Lawrence's default before filing his request with the court; appearing for the second session of Blumenthal's deposition or not notifying Lawrence's counsel that Blumenthal would not be appearing for the second session of her deposition on February 20, 2007; appearing at the hearing on the ex parte application for an order compelling Blumenthal to appear for a medical examination and by not opposing the request for

sanctions against Blumenthal; and, not appearing for the hearing on, or opposing, the motion for summary judgment, Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A).

By not informing Blumenthal in his letter of May 23, 2007 that there was a pending motion for summary judgment and that he did not respond to the motion; by not filing the substitution of attorney with the court in the action; and by not releasing the file to Blumenthal or Shiri, Respondent wilfully withdrew from employment without taking reasonable steps to avoid reasonably foreseeable prejudice to the rights of the client, including giving due notice to the client, allowing time for the employment of other counsel, complying with rule 3-700(D), and complying with applicable laws and rules, Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(A)(2).

By not releasing the file to Blumenthal or to Shiri, Respondent wilfully failed to release promptly, upon termination of employment, to the client, at the request of the client, all the client papers and property, in violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(1).

### **PENDING PROCEEDINGS.**

The disclosure date referred to, on page 2, paragraph A(6), was May 24, 2010.

### **COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.**

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed respondent that as of May 24, 2010, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$3,330.48. 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.

### **AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.**

Standard 1.7(a) provides if a member is found culpable of professional misconduct in any proceeding in which discipline may be imposed and the member has a record of one prior imposition of discipline as defined by standard 1.2(f), the degree of discipline imposed in the current proceeding shall be greater than that imposed in the prior proceeding unless the prior discipline imposed was so remote in time to the current proceeding and the offense for which it was imposed was so minimal in severity that imposing greater discipline in the current proceeding would be manifestly unjust.

Standard 2.2(b) culpability of a member commingling of entrusted funds or property with personal property or the commission of another violation of rule 4-100, Rules of Professional Conduct, none of which offenses result in the wilful misappropriation of entrusted funds or property shall result in at least a three month actual suspension from the practice of law, irrespective of mitigating circumstances.

Standard 2.3 culpability of a member of an act of moral turpitude, fraud, or intentional dishonesty toward a court, client, or another person or of concealment of a material fact to a court, client or another person shall result in actual suspension or disbarment depending upon the extent to which the victim of the misconduct is harmed or misled and depending upon the magnitude of the act of misconduct and degree to which it relates to the members; acts within the practice of law.

Standard 2.4(b) culpability of a member of willfully failing to perform services in an individual matter or matters not demonstrating a pattern of misconduct or culpability of a member of willfully failing to

community with a client shall result in reproof or suspension depending upon the extent of the misconduct and the degree of harm to the client.

Standard 2.6 culpability of a member of a violation of any of the following provisions of the Business and Professions Code shall result in disbarment or suspension depending on the gravity of the offense or the harm, if any, to the victim, with due regard to the purposes of imposing discipline set forth in standard 1.3: section 6068

Standard 2.10 culpability of a member of a violation of any provision of the Business and Professions Code not specified in these standards or of a wilful violation of any Rule of Professional Conduct not specified in these standards shall result in reproof or suspension according to the gravity of the offense or the harm, if any, to the victim, with due regard to the purposes of imposing discipline set forth in standard 1.3.

#### **AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

##### **FACTS SUPPORTING ADDITIONAL AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Respondent's misconduct harmed his client in the Blumenthal matter as the case was dismissed and the client had to hire another attorney. In the Vahedi matter, Respondent's misconduct harmed his client as a medical lien was not paid or resolved.

#### **MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

##### **FACTS SUPPORTING MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Respondent cooperated to the extent that he stipulated to facts, conclusions of law and level of discipline.

#### **STATE BAR ETHICS SCHOOL.**

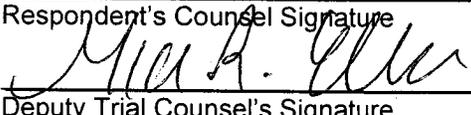
Because respondent has agreed to attend State Bar Ethics School as part of this stipulation, respondent may receive Minimum Continuing Legal Education credit upon the satisfactory completion of State Bar Ethics School.

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of Christopher Weston	Case number(s): 08-O-10643; 08-O-13888; 08-O-14209
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**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.

<u>6/9/10</u> Date	 Respondent's Signature	<u>Christopher A Weston</u> Print Name
<u>6/22/10</u> Date	 Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	<u>Mia Ellis</u> Print Name

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter Of <b>Christopher Weston</b>	Case Number(s): <b>08-O-10643; 08-O-13888; 08-O-14209</b>
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**ORDER**

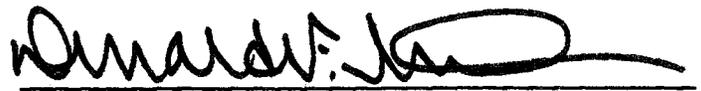
Finding the stipulation to be fair to the parties and that it adequately protects the public, IT IS ORDERED that the requested dismissal of counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without prejudice, and:

- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED and the DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the DISCIPLINE IS RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- All Hearing dates are vacated.

*DM*  
Respondent must also reimburse the Client Security Fund to the extent that the misconduct in this matter results in the payment of funds and such payment is enforceable as provided under Business and Professions Code section 6140.5. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 291.)

The parties are bound by the stipulation as approved unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the stipulation, filed within 15 days after service of this order, is granted; or 2) this court modifies or further modifies the approved stipulation. (See rule 135(b), Rules of Procedure.) **The effective date of this disposition is the effective date of the Supreme Court order herein, normally 30 days after file date. (See rule 9.18(a), California Rules of Court.)**

7/7/10  
Date

  
Judge of the State Bar Court

**DONALD F. MILES**

## 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 July 9, 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:

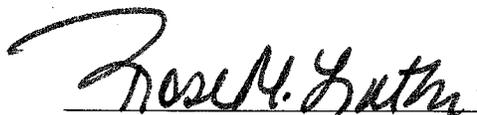
- by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

CHRISTOPHER G. WESTON  
4311 WILSHIRE BLVD STE 615  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90010

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

MIA ELLIS, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on July 9, 2010.



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Rose Luthi  
Case Administrator  
State Bar Court