

PUBLIC MATTER

(Do not write above this line.)

ORIGINAL

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

Counsel For The State Bar Adriana M. Burger Deputy Trial Counsel 1149 S. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90015 (213) 765-1229 Bar # 92534	Case Number(s): 13-N-13292-RAP	For Court use only FILED DEC 04 2013 STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES
Counsel For Respondent Paul J. Virgo 5200 W. Century Blvd. Suite 345 Los Angeles, Ca 90045 (310) 642-6900 Bar # 67900	Submitted to: Assigned Judge STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING ACTUAL SUSPENSION <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
In the Matter of: TANYA CORA ZEROUNIAN Bar # 235207 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 3, 2005.
- (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 10 pages, not including the order.

(Effective January 1, 2011)



LR DP

- (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".
- (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 5.130, Rules of Procedure.
 - ☐ Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: (Hardship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 5.132, Rules of Procedure.) If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified by the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.
 - ☐ Costs are waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs".
 - ☐ Costs are 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 11-O-11437; 11-O-15689, 12-O-10217 (\$207565). Please see page 8 of the Attachment for more information about the prior discipline.
 - (b) ☒ Date prior discipline effective April 6, 2013
 - (c) ☒ Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations: Two counts of Business and Professions Code section 6068(i)(failing to cooperate); three counts of Business and Professions Code section 6068(m)(failing to communicate); three counts of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A)(failing to perform with competence); and three counts of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2) (failing to return unearned fees).
 - (d) ☒ Degree of prior discipline : Two-year suspension, stayed; 18-month probation with conditions including six-month actual suspension.
 - (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.

- (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.
- (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.
- (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:

Pre-trial Stipulation: Please see page 8 of the Attachment for a factual basis for this mitigating circumstance.

D. Discipline:

(1) ☒ **Stayed Suspension:**

- (a) ☒ Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of two (2) 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 (3) 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 one year.
- 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 the 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.
- (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: Respondent is already required to provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the State Bar Ethics School and passage of the test given at the end of that session within one year of the effective date of the discipline imposed on March 7, 2013, in case numbers 11-O-11437, 11-O-15689 and 12-O-10217 (Supreme Court Order S207565).
- (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 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 5.162(A) & (E), Rules of Procedure.**

☒ No MPRE recommended. Reason: Respondent is already required to provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination, administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, during the period of actual suspension or within one year, whichever period is longer, as a result of the discipline imposed on March 7, 2013, in case numbers 11-O-11437, 11-O-15689 and 12-O-10217 (Supreme Court Order S207565).

- (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:**

ATTACHMENT TO
STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF: TANYA CORA ZEROUNIAN

CASE NUMBER: 13-N-13292

FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

Respondent admits that the following facts are true and that she is culpable of violations of the specified Rule of Court.

Case No. 13-N-13292 (State Bar Investigation)

FACTS:

1. On March 7, 2013, the California Supreme Court filed Order No. S207565 (hereinafter "9.20 Order"). The 9.20 Order included a requirement that Respondent comply with rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, by performing the acts specified in subdivision (a) within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the 9.20 Order and by filing an affidavit with the Clerk of the State Bar Court as required under subdivision (c) within forty (40) days of the effective date of the 9.20 Order.
2. On March 7, 2013, the Clerk of the Supreme Court of the State of California properly served upon Respondent a copy of the 9.20 Order. Respondent received the 9.20 Order.
3. The 9.20 Order became effective on April 6, 2013, thirty days after the 9.20 Order was filed. Pursuant to the 9.20 Order, Respondent was to comply with subdivision (a) of rule 9.20 no later than May 6, 2013, and was to comply with subdivision (c) of rule 9.20 no later than May 16, 2013.
4. Respondent tardily filed her declaration of compliance required by subdivision (c) of rule 9.20 on June 24, 2013, 39 days late.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

5. By failing to file the declaration of compliance with rule 9.20 in conformity with the requirements of rule 9.20 subdivision (c) within forty (40) days of the effective date of the 9.20 Order, Respondent willfully failed to timely comply with the provisions of the 9.20 Order and therefore willfully violated rule 9.20, California Rules of Court.

AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Prior Record of Discipline (Std. 1.2(b)(i)): Respondent has one prior imposition of discipline in State Bar cases 11-O-11437, 11-O-15680, and 12-O-10217 (Supreme Court Order S207565). The prior discipline became effective April 6, 2013 and includes a two-year suspension, stayed, and an 18-month probation with conditions including a six-month actual suspension and restitution to three clients totaling \$5,600.00 plus interest.

In her prior discipline, Respondent stipulated to two violations of Business and Professions Code section 6068(i) (failing to cooperate), three violations of Business and Professions Code section 6068(m) (failing to communicate), three violations of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A) (failing to perform legal services with competence), and three violations of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2) (failing to return unearned fees). Respondent's misconduct involved three client matters and occurred from November 2009 to December 2010. In each instance, Respondent failed to prepare and file clients' bankruptcy petitions, respond to inquiries about the clients' cases, and return unearned fees. Respondent also failed to cooperate in two of the State Bar investigations based on the clients' complaints. Respondent received limited mitigation due to the fact that she was experiencing marital problems during the period that the misconduct occurred.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Pre-trial stipulation: Respondent admitted her misconduct and entered into this stipulation fully resolving this matter prior to the trial in this matter, thus saving State Bar resources and time. Respondent's stipulation is a mitigating circumstance. (*Silva-Vidor v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079 [where mitigating credit was given for entering into a stipulation as to facts and culpability]; In the *Matter of Spaith* (Review Dept. 1996) 3 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 511, 521.)

AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.

The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct provide a "process of fixing discipline" pursuant to a set of written principles to "better discharge the purposes of attorney discipline as announced by the Supreme Court." (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, Introduction (all further references to standards are to this source).) The primary purposes of disciplinary proceedings and of the sanctions imposed are "the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession; the maintenance of high professional standards by attorneys and the preservation of public confidence in the legal profession." (*In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal.4th 184, 205; std. 1.3.)

Although not binding, the standards are entitled to "great weight" and should be followed "whenever possible" in determining level of discipline. (*In re Silvertown* (2005) 36 Cal.4th 81, 92, quoting *In re Brown* (1995) 12 Cal.4th 205, 220 and *In re Young* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 257, 267, fn. 11.) Adherence to the standards in the great majority of cases serves the valuable purpose of eliminating disparity and assuring consistency, that is, the imposition of similar attorney discipline for instances of similar attorney misconduct. (*In re Naney* (1990) 51 Cal.3d 186, 190.) Any discipline recommendation different from that set forth in the applicable standards should clearly explain the reasons for the deviation. (*Blair v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 762, 776, fn.5.)

The standard for assessing discipline for a violation of rule 9.20 is set out in the rule itself. Rule 9.20(d) states, in pertinent part: "A suspended member's willful failure to comply

with the provisions of this rule is a cause for disbarment or suspension and for revocation of any pending probation."

Standard 1.7(a) requires that Respondent's discipline in the current proceeding shall be greater than that imposed in the prior proceeding unless the prior was so remote in time and the misconduct involved was so minimal in severity that imposing greater discipline would be unjust. Respondent's prior discipline, effective April 6, 2013, included a two-year stayed suspension with an 18-month probation with conditions including a six-month actual suspension. The prior discipline was not remote in time and the misconduct it addressed was serious. Accordingly, pursuant to standard 1.7(a), the current discipline must be greater than Respondent's prior discipline.

Respondent has agreed to enter into a pretrial stipulation which demonstrates Respondent's acceptance of responsibility for the misconduct and prevents unnecessary expenditure of resources. Applying the standards in the this case, a two-year suspension, stayed, coupled with a three-year period of probation with conditions including a one-year actual suspension is appropriate and will serve the purposes of discipline pursuant to standard 1.3 which are the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession, the maintenance of high professional standards by attorneys, and the preservation of public confidence in the legal profession.

COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed respondent that as of October 29, 2013, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$2,432.00. 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.

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of:
TANYA CORA ZEROUNIAN

Case number(s):
13-N-13292

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, Conclusions of Law, and Disposition.

11-1-2013
Date


Respondent's Signature

TANYA CORA ZEROUNIAN
Print Name

11/5/2013
Date


Respondent's Counsel Signature

PAUL J. VIRGO
Print Name

11/6/2013
Date


Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature

ADRIANA M. BURGER
Print Name

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of: TANYA CORA ZEROUNIAN	Case Number(s): 13-N-13292
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ACTUAL SUSPENSION 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.

PAGE 9 - INSERT AT THE END OF 2ND FULL PARAGRAPH -

*" IN THE MATTER OF ROSE (REVIEW DEPT. 1994) 3 CAL STATE BAR
CD RPT. 192; DUBBIN V. STATE BAR (1979) 23 CAL. 3D 461,
152 CAL. RPT. 749 "*

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 5.58(E) & (F), 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.)**

12-4-2013
Date


RICHARD A. PLATEL
Judge of the State Bar Court

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

[Rules Proc. of State Bar; Rule 5.27(B); 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 December 4, 2013, 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:

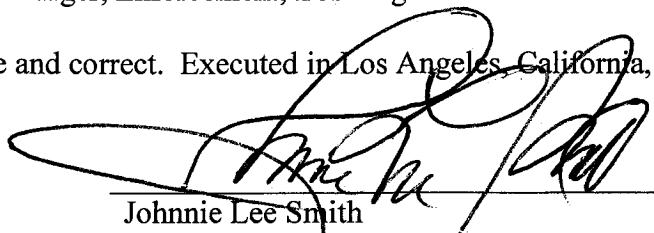
- ☒ by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

PAUL JEAN VIRGO
9909 TOPANGA BLVD # 282
CHATSWORTH, CA 91311

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

Adriana Margaret Burger, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on December 4, 2013.



Johnnie Lee Smith
Case Administrator
State Bar Court