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State Bar Court of California
Hearing Department
Los Angeles
REPROVAL

PUBLIC MATTER

<p>Counsel For The State Bar</p> <p>Sue Hong Deputy Trial Counsel Office of the Chief Trial Counsel 845 S. Figueroa Street Los Angeles, CA 90017 (213) 765-1161</p> <p>Bar # 285852</p>	<p>Case Number(s): 14-O-05121</p>	<p>For Court use only</p> <p>FILED</p> <p>MAY 04 2015</p> <p>STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES</p>
<p>In Pro Per Respondent</p> <p>Adrienne Crown, Esq. 3960 W Pt Loma Blvd # 240 San Diego, CA 92110 (858) 255-9641</p> <p>Bar # 284415</p>	<p>Submitted to: Settlement Judge</p> <p>STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING</p> <p>PUBLIC REPROVAL</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED</p>	
<p>In the Matter of: ADRIENNE TYLER CROWN</p> <p>Bar # 284415</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 **October 17, 2012**.
- (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.
- (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):
- Costs are added to membership fee for calendar year following effective date of discipline (public reproof).
 - Case ineligible for costs (private reproof).
 - 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.
- (9) The parties understand that:
- (a) A private reproof imposed on a respondent as a result of a stipulation approved by the Court prior to initiation of a State Bar Court proceeding is part of the respondent's official State Bar membership records, but is not disclosed in response to public inquiries and is not reported on the State Bar's web page. The record of the proceeding in which such a private reproof was imposed is not available to the public except as part of the record of any subsequent proceeding in which it is introduced as evidence of a prior record of discipline under the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar.
 - (b) A private reproof imposed on a respondent after initiation of a State Bar Court proceeding is part of the respondent's official State Bar membership records, is disclosed in response to public inquiries and is reported as a record of public discipline on the State Bar's web page.
 - (c) A public reproof imposed on a respondent is publicly available as part of the respondent's official State Bar membership records, is disclosed in response to public inquiries and is reported as a record of public discipline on the State Bar's web page.

B. Aggravating Circumstances [Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standards 1.2(f) & 1.5]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.

- (1) **Prior record of discipline**
- (a) State Bar Court case # of prior case
 - (b) Date prior discipline effective
 - (c) Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations:
 - (d) Degree of prior discipline
 - (e) If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below or a separate attachment entitled "Prior Discipline."

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- (2) **Dishonesty:** Respondent's misconduct was intentional, 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.
- (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. **See Attachment page 8.**
- (8) **Restitution:** Respondent failed to make restitution.
- (9) **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

Additional aggravating circumstances:

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standards 1.2(g) & 1.6]. 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, the public, or the administration of justice.
- (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 with a good faith belief that was honestly held and reasonable.
- (8) **Emotional/Physical Difficulties:** At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical or mental disabilities which expert testimony would establish was directly responsible for the misconduct. The difficulties or disabilities were not the

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product of any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and the difficulties or disabilities no longer pose a risk that Respondent will commit misconduct.

- (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 extraordinarily 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 subsequent rehabilitation.
- (13) **No mitigating circumstances** are involved.

Additional mitigating circumstances:

Prefiling Stipulation: See Attachment page 7.

D. Discipline:

- (1) **Private reproof (check applicable conditions, if any, below)**
- (a) Approved by the Court prior to initiation of the State Bar Court proceedings (no public disclosure).
- (b) Approved by the Court after initiation of the State Bar Court proceedings (public disclosure).

or

- (2) **Public reproof (Check applicable conditions, if any, below)**

E. Conditions Attached to Reproof:

- (1) Respondent must comply with the conditions attached to the reproof for a period of **one year**.
- (2) During the condition period attached to the reproof, 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 condition period attached to the reproof. 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 the reproof during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent

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must also state in each report 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 (thirty) days, that report must be submitted on the next following 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 condition period and no later than the last day of the condition period.

- (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 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 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 conditions attached to the reproval.
- (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) 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 within one year of the effective date of the reproval.
- No MPRE recommended. Reason: .
- (11) 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:

9. On August 6, 2014, Gresham sent an email to respondent terminating respondent's services and asking for a full refund. Respondent received the email. Respondent did not provide a response to Gresham's email.

10. On September 12, 2014, Gresham filed a complaint against respondent with the State Bar of California.

11. On October 29, 2014, and December 17, 2014, an investigator from the Office of Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar of California ("investigator") sent letters to respondent at her membership records address directing her to submit a written response to the allegations of misconduct being investigated in case number 14-O-05121. Respondent received the letters but did not respond.

12. On December 17, 2014, the investigator sent an email to respondent, at her membership records email address directing her to submit a written response to the allegations of misconduct being investigated in case number 14-O-05121. Respondent received the email but did not respond.

13. On December 17, 2014, and January 12, 2015, the investigator called respondent at her membership records phone number and left messages directing her to submit a written response to the allegations of misconduct being investigated in case number 14-O-05121 and asking for a return call. Respondent received the messages but did not respond.

14. On February 23, 2015, respondent refunded \$1,000 to Gresham.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

15. By failing to file a complaint on behalf of Ms. Gresham in the partition of real property matter or otherwise take any action to pursue Gresham's claim by July 28, 2014, when Gresham terminated respondent's employment, respondent intentionally, recklessly, or repeatedly failed to perform with competence, in willful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A).

16. By failing to respond to the six telephone calls made by Gresham between March 28, 2014, and July 28, 2014, and four emails sent between June 6, 2014, and July 28, 2014, respondent failed to respond promptly to reasonable status inquiries of a client in a matter in which she had agreed to provide legal services, in willful violation of Business and Professions Code section 6068(m).

17. By failing to provide a substantive response to the State Bar's letters of October 29, 2014, and December 17, 2014, email sent December 17, 2014, and telephone messages of December 17, 2014, and January 12, 2015, all of which respondent received, that requested respondent's response to the allegations of misconduct being investigated in case no. 14-O-05121, respondent failed to cooperate and participate in a disciplinary investigation pending against respondent, in willful violation of Business and Professions Code, section 6068(i).

AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Multiple Acts of Misconduct (Std. 1.5(b)): Respondent engaged in three acts of misconduct. Respondent failed to perform services, failed to respond to her client's reasonable status inquiries, and failed to cooperate in a State Bar investigation. (*In the Matter of Valinoti* (Review Dept. 2002) 4 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 498, 555 [Sometimes multiple acts of misconduct are considered serious aggravation]).

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Prefiling Stipulation: Respondent is entitled to mitigation by entering into a stipulation prior to the filing of disciplinary charges, thereby preserving State Bar Court time and resources. (*Silva-Vidor v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079 [where mitigative credit was given for entering into a stipulation as to facts and culpability].) However, the mitigation is tempered by respondent's failure to cooperate in the State Bar investigation.

AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.

The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct "set forth a means for determining the appropriate disciplinary sanction in a particular case and to ensure consistency across cases dealing with similar misconduct and surrounding circumstances." (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.1. All further references to Standards are to this source.) The Standards help fulfill the primary purposes of discipline, which include: protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession; maintenance of the highest professional standards; and preservation of public confidence in the legal profession. (See std. 1.1; *In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal.4th 184, 205.)

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.) If a recommendation is at the high end or low end of a Standard, an explanation must be given as to how the recommendation was reached. (Std. 1.1.) "Any disciplinary recommendation that deviates from the Standards must include clear reasons for the departure." (Std. 1.1; *Blair v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 762, 776, fn. 5.)

In determining whether to impose a sanction greater or less than that specified in a given Standard, in addition to the factors set forth in the specific Standard, consideration is to be given to the primary purposes of discipline; the balancing of all aggravating and mitigating circumstances; the type of misconduct at issue; whether the client, public, legal system or profession was harmed; and the member's willingness and ability to conform to ethical responsibilities in the future. (Stds. 1.7(b) and (c).)

Standard 1.7 (a) states that "If a member commits two or more acts of misconduct and the Standards specify different sanctions for each act, the most severe sanction must be imposed." Here, Standard 2.5(c) applies to respondent's violations of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110[Failure

to Perform], and Business and Professions Code section 6068(m)[Failure to Respond to Client Inquiries]. Standard 2.5(c) provides that a reproof "is appropriate for failing to perform legal services or properly communicate in a single client matter." Standard 2.8(b) applies to respondent's violation of Business and Professions Code section 6068(i)[Failure to Cooperate in State Bar Investigations]. Standard 2.8(b) also provides for a reproof.

Here, respondent has committed multiple acts of misconduct by failing to perform any legal services for which respondent was hired, respond to the reasonable inquiries made by Ms. Gresham, and cooperate with a State Bar disciplinary investigation. During the course of the investigations, two letters were mailed to respondent's membership records address asking for cooperation in the investigation, along with two telephone calls and an email. Respondent failed to reply to any of the letters, phone calls, or email. However, in mitigation, respondent has accepted responsibility for her misconduct and has expressed her desire to resolve this matter by stipulation prior to the filing of disciplinary charges. Further, although seven months after the request was made, and after the commencement of State Bar proceedings, respondent returned the \$1000 in unearned fees to Ms. Gresham.

Considering the nature of respondent's misconduct, and by weighing the aggravation and mitigation, discipline consisting of a public reproof is appropriate.

This level of discipline is also consistent with case law. In *Bach vs. State Bar* (1991) 52 Cal.3d 1201, the Supreme Court held that the attorney's failure to perform legal services for a client in an uncontested marital dissolution proceeding, failure to communicate with client, withdrawal of representation without the client's consent or court approval, failure to refund unearned fees paid in advance, and failure to cooperate in the State Bar's investigation warranted discipline consisting of a one year stayed suspension, one year probation with conditions, including a 30 day actual suspension. Respondent's misconduct is similar to *Bach*, however, it differs because respondent has refunded the entire amount paid by Ms. Gresham. Further, respondent's misconduct is not as egregious as the attorney's misconduct in *Bach* who withdrew from representation without his client's consent or court approval. In the instant matter, Ms. Gresham terminated her representation by respondent within four months of retaining respondent. Therefore, a lower level of discipline than imposed in *Bach* is warranted.

COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed Respondent that as of March 30, 2015, the prosecution costs in this matter are approximately \$2,992. 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.

EXCLUSION FROM MCLE CREDIT

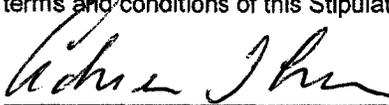
Pursuant to rule 3201, Respondent may not receive MCLE credit for completion of State Bar Ethics School, and/or any other educational course(s) to be ordered as a condition of reproof or suspension. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 3201.)

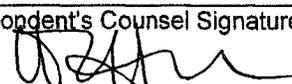
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In the Matter of: ADRIENNE TYLER CROWN	Case number(s): 14-O-05121
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SIGNATURE OF THE PARTIES

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 Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Disposition.

4/21/2015  Adrienne Tyler Crown
Date Respondent's Signature Print Name

4/23/15  Sue Hong
Date Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature Print Name

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In the Matter of: ADRIENNE TYLER CROWN	Case Number(s): 14-O-05121
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REPROVAL ORDER

Finding that the stipulation protects the public and that the interests of Respondent will be served by any conditions attached to the reproof, 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 REPROVAL IMPOSED.
- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the REPROVAL IMPOSED.
- All court dates in the Hearing Department are vacated.

On page 4 of the Stipulation, under "Additional mitigating circumstances," "page 7" is deleted, and in its place is inserted "page 8".

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.) **Otherwise the stipulation shall be effective 15 days after service of this order.**

Failure to comply with any conditions attached to this reproof may constitute cause for a separate proceeding for willful breach of rule 1-110, Rules of Professional Conduct.

May 4, 2015
Date

Rebecca Meyer Rosenberg
REBECCA MEYER ROSENBERG, JUDGE PRO TEM
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 May 4, 2015, 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:

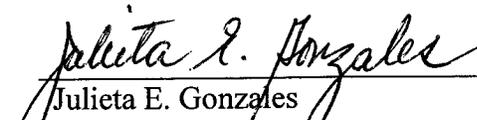
- by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

ADRIENNE T. CROWN
3960 W PT LOMA BLVD # 240
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110

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

Sue K. Hong, Enforcement, Los Angeles
Terrie Goldade, Office of Probation, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on May 4, 2015.



Julieta E. Gonzales
Case Administrator
State Bar Court