State	Bar Court of Californ Hearing Department Los Angeles REPROVAL	ORIGINAL	
Counsel For The State Bar William Todd Senior Trial Counsel	Case Number(s): 15-0-12439	For Court use only	
845 S. Figueroa Street Los Angeles, California 90017-2515 213-765-1491		FILED DEC 06 2016	
Bar # 259194		STATE BAR COURT	
In Pro Per Respondent		CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES	
Lennie Ann Alzate 2305 Historic Decatur Road Suite 100 San Diego, California 92106 619-800-8804	PUBLIC	MATTER	
	Submitted to: Settlement Judge		
Bar # 275341	STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING		
In the Matter of: LENNIE ANN ALZATE			
Bar # 275341	PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED		
A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)			

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

A. Parties' Acknowledgments:

- (1) Respondent is a member of the State Bar of California, admitted January 28, 2011.
- (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 11 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."



Reproval

(Effective April 1, 2016)

- (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 reproval).

- Case ineligible for costs (private reproval).
 - 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 reproval 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 reproval 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 reproval 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 reproval 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(h) & 1.5]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.

- (1) \square Prior record of discipline
 - (a) X State Bar Court case # of prior case 14-O-03343 (See "Attachment to Stipulation", at page 8.)
 - (b) Date prior discipline effective November 26, 2015
 - (c) Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations: **Business and Professions Code section** 6103
 - (d) Degree of prior discipline private reproval

- (e) If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below or a separate attachment entitled "Prior Discipline.
- (2) Intentional/Bad Faith/Dishonesty: Respondent's misconduct was dishonest, intentional, or surrounded by, or followed by bad faith.
- (3) Misrepresentation: Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by, or followed by misrepresentation.
- (4) Concealment: Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by, or followed by concealment.
- (5) Overreaching: Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by, or followed by overreaching.
- (6) Uncharged Violations: Respondent's conduct involves uncharged violations of the Business and Professions Code or the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (7) 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.
- (8) Harm: Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public, or the administration of justice.
- (9) Indifference: Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.
- (10) Candor/Lack of Cooperation: Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct, or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigations or proceedings.
- (11) Multiple Acts: Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing.
- (12) Dettern: Respondent's current misconduct demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.
- (13) **Restitution:** Respondent failed to make restitution.
- (14) Ulnerable Victim: The victim(s) of Respondent's misconduct was/were highly vulnerable.
- (15) **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

Additional aggravating circumstances:

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standards 1.2(i) & 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 likely to recur.
- (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 or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation and proceedings.

- (4) Remorse: Respondent promptly took objective steps demonstrating spontaneous 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 objectively 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 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. See "Attachment to Stipulation", at page 8.
- (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:

Please see "Prefiling Stipulation" in "Attachment to Stipulation," at page 8.

D. Discipline:

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

<u>or</u>

(2) Z Public reproval (Check applicable conditions, if any, below)

E. Conditions Attached to Reproval:

(1) Respondent must comply with the conditions attached to the reproval for a period of **one year**.

- (2) During the condition period attached to the reproval, 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 reproval. Upon the direction of the Office of Probation, Respondent must meet with the probation deputy either in-person or by telephone. During the reproval conditions period, 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 reproval. 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 reproval during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent 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 reproval with the probation monitor to establish a manner and schedule of compliance. During the reproval conditions period, 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: Respondent completed State Bar Ethics School in February 2016 as a requirement of her prior private reproval in case no. 14-O-03343 effective November 26, 2015.
- (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: **Respondent is already required to pass the MPRE by the terms of her prior private reproval in case no. 14-O-03343 effective November 26, 2015**.

(Do not write above this line.)					
(11) The following conditions are attached hereto and incorporated:					
		Substance Abuse Conditions		Law Office Management Conditions	
		Medical Conditions		Financial Conditions	
F. Other Conditions Negotiated by the Parties:					

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ATTACHMENT TO

STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF: LENNIE ANN ALZATE

CASE NUMBER: 15-O-12439

FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

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

Case No. 15-O-12439 (Complainant: Sophia Ludyjan-Woods)

FACTS:

1. From 2011 through 2012, respondent ran a law firm called Westside Law Group.

2. In mid-2012, Cari Donahue, also an attorney admitted in California, agreed to take over the firm. In September 2012, Donahue took over the Westside Law Group, and respondent left the law firm.

3. By October 2012, Donahue needed to file a Chapter 13 bankruptcy petition on behalf of client Sophia Ludyjan-Woods in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of California ("the U.S. Bankruptcy Court"). Donahue did not yet have electronic court filing ("ECF") privileges in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, but respondent did.

4. In October 2012, Donahue's office staff contacted respondent, and requested that respondent allow Donahue to use respondent's ECF credentials to file a bankruptcy petition in Ludyjan-Woods's matter. Though respondent did not represent Ludyjan-Woods in any way, and though respondent was no longer practicing with the Westside Law Group, respondent allowed Donahue to use respondent's ECF credentials and to list respondent as Ludyjan-Woods's attorney of record. Donahue's staff told respondent that Donahue would substitute into the case as counsel for Ludyjan-Woods in place of respondent as soon as possible.

5. On November 1, 2012, Donahue and her firm filed a Chapter 13 bankruptcy petition on Ludyjan-Woods's behalf in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court under petition number 12-14803-LT13. However, the petition included several deficiencies, including the absence of the appropriate schedules and no evidence that Ludyjan-Woods completed credit counseling.

6. On November 2, 2012, the court issued a notice of deficiencies, deficiencies which required corrections from respondent by November 5, 2012.

7. On November 4, 2012, Donahue and her firm filed an additional document in an attempt to resolve the deficiencies, with respondent still listed as attorney of record.

8. On November 7, 2012, the bankruptcy trustee moved to dismiss the petition.

9. On November 21, 2012, the bankruptcy court dismissed the petition for failure to resolve the deficiencies described in the notice of deficiencies filed November 2, 2012. At no point was respondent substituted out of the case prior to its dismissal.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

10. By appearing on behalf of Sophia Ludyjan-Wooods in the U.S. Bankruptcy court without Ludyjan-Woods's permission to do so, respondent appeared on a client's behalf without authority in willful violation of Business and Professions Code, section 6104.

AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Prior Record of Discipline: In case 14-O-03343, effective November 26, 2015, respondent stipulated to a private reproval for her failure to pay a court ordered sanction in violation of Business and Professions Code section 6103. A Sacramento County Superior Court sanctioned respondent \$2,883.44 on November 7, 2011 for filing a frivolous demurrer and for failing to appear at the hearing on demurrer. Respondent's unintentional failure to update her address of record with the court after a move likely contributed to her failure to appear, and respondent ultimately paid the sanctions on June 1, 2015. The stipulation cited no aggravating factors, though it did cite respondent's severe financial distress as mitigation.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Extraordinary Good Character (Std. 1.6(f)): Respondent provided seven character references. Those references include a lawyer/former boss with whom she practiced for over two years, a client who has known respondent for three years, a client who has known respondent for a year and a half, and respondent's current law partner who has known her for three years. Respondent also provided character references from two law school classmates, now members of the State Bar, who have known respondent since 2007, and another friend and lawyer who respondent has known for five years. Each of these witnesses speaks highly of respondent's character, despite knowledge of the misconduct at issue.

Prefiling Stipulation: By entering into this stipulation, respondent has acknowledged her misconduct and is entitled to mitigation for saving the State Bar significant resources and time. (*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]; *In the Matter of Spaith* (Review Dept. 1996) 3 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 511, 521 [where the attorney's stipulation to facts and culpability was held to be a mitigating circumstance].)

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.)

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Although not binding, the standards are entitled to "great weight" and should be followed "whenever possible" in determining level of discipline. (*In re Silverton* (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 1.8(a) of the Standards for Attorney Discipline calls for a discipline greater than respondent's prior discipline, for which respondent received a private reproval. Though respondent's violation in this matter occurred one year after that in her prior discipline, she was not disciplined in that prior matter until after she committed the instant misconduct. As such, the weight of aggravation afforded to the prior discipline is limited because respondent did not have the opportunity to "heed the import of that discipline" prior to the conduct in this matter. (See *In the Matter of Hagen* (Review Dept. 1992) 2 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 153; see also *In the Matter of Sklar* (Review Dept. 1993) 2 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 602 ["part of the rationale for considering prior discipline as having an aggravating impact is that it is indicative of a recidivist attorney's inability to conform his or her conduct to ethical norms, it is therefore appropriate to consider the fact that the misconduct involved here was contemporaneous with the misconduct in the prior case."].)

Business and Professions Code section 6104 provides that disbarment or suspension is the appropriate discipline for an attorney who appears for a party in a proceeding without the authority of the party. Standard 1.7(c) provides that "[i]f mitigating circumstances are found, they should be considered alone and in balance with any aggravating circumstances, and if the net effect demonstrates that a lesser sanction is needed to fulfill the primary purposes of discipline, it is appropriate to impose or recommend a lesser sanction than what is otherwise specified in a given Standard. On balance, a lesser sanction is appropriate in cases of minor misconduct, where there is little or no injury to a client, the public, the legal system, or the profession and where the record demonstrates that the member is willing and has the ability to conform to ethical responsibilities in the future."

Respondent committed one act of misconduct by acting without authority in a single client matter. Specifically, though respondent allowed Donahue's firm to identify respondent as the attorney of record for Sophia Ludyjan-Woods, respondent did not have an attorney-client relationship with Ludyjan-Woods. Therefore, by filing documents on Ludyjan-Woods's behalf, respondent appeared without authority over a three-week period in November 2012.

In mitigation, respondent is entitled to mitigating credit for entering a dispositive stipulation. Respondent also offers evidence of good character. In aggravation, respondent has a prior private reproval, though for the reasons explained above, this prior record is only mildly aggravating. On balance, the mitigation outweighs the aggravation.

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Taken together, the misconduct, the mitigation that outweighs the aggravation, the absence of harm and the respondent's willingness to conform her future conduct with ethical norms support a downward departure from Business and Professions Code section 6104's requirement of actual suspension. Therefore, the appropriate level of discipline is a public reproval.

Case law supports this level of discipline. In *In the Matter of Regan* (Review Dept. 2005) 4 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 844, the Review Dept. held the attorney culpable for pursuing an appeal contrary to the wishes of his clients in violation of Business and Professions Code section 6104, misleading the appellate court about his clients' wishes, failing to communicate with his clients and failing to return his client's file upon request. Aggravation included multiple acts of misconduct, conduct in bad faith, significant harm to clients and a lack of insight into his misconduct, while mitigation included the attorney's 17 years of practice without prior misconduct. The court ultimately ordered 75 days of actual suspension for the attorney's severe, significantly aggravated misconduct.

This respondent's misconduct is less egregious than the attorney in *Regan*. Therefore, a lower level of discipline is proper.

COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of Chief Trial Counsel has informed respondent that as of October 26, 2016, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$3,139. 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.

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In the Matter of: LENNIE ANN ALZATE	Case number(s): 15-O-12439	

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.

10/27/2016	Imal	Lennie Ann Alzate
Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name
Date	Respondent's Counsel Signature	Print Name
11-8-16	_ //m/	William Todd
Date	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	Print Name

In the Matter of: LENNIE ANN ALZATE Case Number(s): 15-0-12439

REPROVAL ORDER

Finding that the stipulation protects the public and that the interests of Respondent will be served by any conditions attached to the reproval, IT IS ORDERED that the requested dismissal of counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without prejudice, and:



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.

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 reproval may constitute cause for a separate proceeding for willful breach of rule 1-110, Rules of Professional Conduct.

center 5, 2016

E D. ROLAND

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 6, 2016, 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:

LENNIE A. ALZATE ALZATE & VARLEY, ATTORNEYS AT LAW 2305 HISTORIC DECATUR RD STE 100 SAN DIEGO, CA 92106 - 6071

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

William S. Todd, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on December 6, 2016.

erpenter

Angela Carpenter Case Administrator State Bar Court