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<b>State Bar Court of California</b> <b>Hearing Department</b> <b>San Francisco</b> <b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>		
<b>Counsel For The State Bar</b>  Jonathan R. Ceseña Deputy Trial Counsel 180 Howard Street San Francisco, CA 94105 (415) 538-2346  Bar # 289721	<b>Case Number(s):</b> 13-H-12499	For Court use only  <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">PUBLIC MATTER</div>  <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">FILED</div> <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">NOV 25 2013</div>  STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE SAN FRANCISCO
<b>In Pro Per Respondent</b>  Bruce Hall Atwater III 709 Geary St., Apt. #301 San Francisco, CA 94109  Bar # 199011	<b>Submitted to: Settlement Judge</b>  STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING  <b>ACTUAL SUSPENSION</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
<b>In the Matter of:</b> BRUCE HALL ATWATER III  Bar # 199011  A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)	(This area is shared with the previous row and contains the same text as above.)	

**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 10, 1998.
- (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 15 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 5.130, Rules of Procedure.
  - Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: Costs to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following three billing cycles following the effective date of the Supreme Court order. (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 08-O-12957 [See Attachment, page 12]
  - (b)  Date prior discipline effective August 8, 2011
  - (c)  Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations: Business and Professions Code section 6068(l) [Failing to keep an Agreement in Lieu of Discipline], and Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 3-700(D)(2). [Failing to return unearned fees]
  - (d)  Degree of prior discipline Public Reprimand
  - (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.

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- (5)  **Indifference:** Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct. See Attachment, page 12.
- (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 12.
- (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.

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- (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:**

Pretrial Stipulation, see page 12.

**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 two 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 60 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 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.

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- (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 took the Ethics School course in December 2010, as a condition of his Agreement in Lieu of Discipline and provided satisfactory proof of attendance to the Office of Probation.
- (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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Office Management Conditions |
| <input checked="" 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:

- (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:**

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### Medical Conditions

- a.  Unless Respondent has been terminated from the Lawyer Assistance Program ("LAP") prior to respondent's successful completion of the LAP, respondent must comply with all provisions and conditions of respondent's Participation Agreement with the LAP and must provide an appropriate waiver authorizing the LAP to provide the Office of Probation and this court with information regarding the terms and conditions of respondent's participation in the LAP and respondent's compliance or non-compliance with LAP requirements. Revocation of the written waiver for release of LAP information is a violation of this condition. However, if respondent has successfully completed the LAP, respondent need not comply with this condition.
- b.  Respondent must obtain psychiatric or psychological help/treatment from a duly licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker at respondent's own expense a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ times per month and must furnish evidence to the Office of Probation that respondent is so complying with each quarterly report. Help/treatment should commence immediately, and in any event, no later than thirty (30) days after the effective date of the discipline in this matter. Treatment must continue for \_\_\_\_\_ days or \_\_\_\_\_ months or \_\_\_\_\_ years or, the period of probation or until a motion to modify this condition is granted and that ruling becomes final.

If the treating psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker determines that there has been a substantial change in respondent's condition, respondent or Office of the Chief Trial Counsel may file a motion for modification of this condition with the Hearing Department of the State Bar Court, pursuant to rule 5.300 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. The motion must be supported by a written statement from the psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker, by affidavit or under penalty of perjury, in support of the proposed modification.

- c.  Upon the request of the Office of Probation, respondent must provide the Office of Probation with medical waivers and access to all of respondent's medical records. Revocation of any medical waiver is a violation of this condition. Any medical records obtained by the Office of Probation are confidential and no information concerning them or their contents will be given to anyone except members of the Office of Probation, Office of the Chief Trial Counsel, and the State Bar Court, who are directly involved with maintaining, enforcing or adjudicating this condition.

Other:

Respondent must obtain psychiatric or psychological help/treatment from a duly licensed psychiatrist, clinical social worker, or marriage and family therapist at respondent's own expense a minimum of 2 times per month and must furnish evidence to the Office of Probation that respondent is so complying with each quarterly report. Help/treatment should commence immediately, and in any event, no later than thirty (30) days after the effective date of the discipline in this matter. Treatment must continue for the period of probation or until a motion to modify this condition is granted and that ruling becomes final.

If the treating psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical social worker, or marriage and family therapist determines that there has been a substantial change in respondent's condition, respondent or the Office of Probation may file a motion for modification of this condition with the Hearing Department of the State Bar Court, pursuant to rule 5.300 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar. The motion must be supported by a

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written statement from the psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical social worker, or marriage and family therapist, by affidavit or under penalty of perjury, in support of the proposed modification.

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### Substance Abuse Conditions

- a.  Respondent must abstain from use of any alcoholic beverages, and shall not use or possess any narcotics, dangerous or restricted drugs, controlled substances, marijuana, or associated paraphernalia, except with a valid prescription.
- b.  Respondent must attend at least two meetings per month of:
- Alcoholics Anonymous
  - Narcotics Anonymous
  - The Other Bar
  - Other program approved in advance by the Office of Probation, or one of the above listed programs.

As a separate reporting requirement, Respondent must provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance during each month, on or before the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the following month, during the condition or probation period.

- c.  Respondent must select a license medical laboratory approved by the Office of Probation. Respondent must furnish to the laboratory blood and/or urine samples as may be required to show that Respondent has abstained from alcohol and/or drugs. The samples must be furnished to the laboratory in such a manner as may be specified by the laboratory to ensure specimen integrity. Respondent must cause the laboratory to provide to the Office of Probation, at the Respondent's expense, a screening report on or before the tenth day of each month of the condition or probation period, containing an analysis of Respondent's blood and/or urine obtained not more than ten (10) days previously.
- d.  Respondent must maintain with the Office of Probation a current address and a current telephone number at which Respondent can be reached. Respondent must return any call from the Office of Probation concerning testing of Respondent's blood or urine within twelve (12) hours. For good cause, the Office of Probation may require Respondent to deliver Respondent's urine and/or blood sample(s) for additional reports to the laboratory described above no later than six hours after actual notice to Respondent that the Office of Probation requires an additional screening report.
- e.  Upon the request of the Office of Probation, Respondent must provide the Office of Probation with medical waivers and access to all of Respondent's medical records. Revocation of any medical waiver is a violation of this condition. Any medical records obtained by the Office of Probation are confidential and no information concerning them or their contents will be given to anyone except members of the Office of Probation, Office of the Chief Trial Counsel, and the State Bar Court who are directly involved with maintaining, enforcing or adjudicating this condition.

Other:



thereof to the State Bar Office of Probation for the months of December 2011, January 2012, March 2012, April 2012, May 2012, and June 2012.

6. Respondent failed to furnish laboratory blood and/or urine reports to the State Bar Office of Probation that were due no later than September 10, 2011, October 10, 2011, November 10, 2011, December 10, 2011, January 10, 2012, April 10, 2012, and July 10, 2012. Respondent also did not timely furnish laboratory blood and/or urine reports to the State Bar Office of Probation that were due no later than March 10, 2012, May 10, 2012, and June 10, 2012.

7. Respondent failed to timely furnish evidence of psychiatric treatment for the month of August 2011. Respondent did not obtain psychiatric treatment four (4) times per month and timely furnish evidence of attendance to the State Bar Office of Probation for the months of September 2011, December 2011, February 2012, March 2012, April 2012, May 2012, and June 2012.

8. Respondent failed to provide proof of passage of the MPRE to the State Bar Office of Probation by August 8, 2012.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.**

9. By failing to timely submit multiple quarterly reports, by failing to submit multiple quarterly reports and the final report, by failing to attend four meetings per month in a substance abuse program and provide proof to the State Bar Office of Probation, by failing to timely provide proof of attendance of at least four substance abuse program meetings, by failing to furnish laboratory blood and/or urine reports to the State Bar Office of Probation, by failing to timely provide laboratory blood and/or urine reports to the State Bar Office of Probation, by failing to obtain psychiatric treatment four times per month and furnish proof to the State Bar Office of Probation, by failing to timely furnish proof of psychiatric treatment four times per month to the State Bar Office of Probation, and by failing to provide proof of timely passage of the MPRE, Respondent failed to comply with conditions attached to a reproof in willful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 1-110.

### **AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

**Prior Record of Discipline (Std. 1.2(b)(i)):** Respondent has been a member of the State Bar since December 10, 1998, and has been disciplined on one prior occasion. In 2011, Respondent received a public reproof for failure to abide by the terms of an Agreement in Lieu of Discipline ("ALD") and for failure to return unearned fees in a single client matter.

**Indifference (Std. 1.2(b)(v)):** To date, Respondent has not come in to compliance with the conditions of the reproof, demonstrating an indifference toward rectification.

**Multiple Acts of Misconduct (Std. 1.2(b)(ii)):** Respondent's present misconduct involves numerous failings to comply with the conditions of a reproof and represents multiple acts of misconduct. See *In the Matter of Tiernan* (Review Dept. 1996) 3 Cal State Bar Ct. Rptr. 523, 529 [holding that a failure to cooperate with the probation monitor and failures to timely file probation reports constituted multiple acts of misconduct]

**Lack of Cooperation (Std. 1.2(b)(vi)):** Respondent failed to cooperate with the State Bar during the pending proceedings. Respondent failed to respond to discovery, failed to appear at the

October 21, 2013, Settlement Conference, failed to appear at the October 28, 2013, pretrial conference, and failed to submit a pretrial statement.

## **MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Pretrial Stipulation:** Respondent is entitled to mitigation for entering into a full stipulation with the Office of Chief Trial Counsel prior to trial, thereby saving State Bar Court time and resources. (*In the Matter of Downey* (Review Dept. 2009) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 151, 156; *In the Matter of Van Sickle* (Review Dept. 2006) 4 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 980, 993-994.) Any mitigative credit is tempered by the fact that, Respondent agreed to enter into a stipulation on the day of trial.

## **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 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.) 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 sanction applicable to Respondent’s misconduct is found in Standard 2.9, which provides that, “[c]ulpability of a member of a willful violation of rule 1-110, Rules of Professional Conduct, shall result in suspension.”

Here, Respondent failed to comply with almost all of the conditions attached to the reproof: Respondent failed to appear for required laboratory drug testing and group counseling meetings; failed to timely submit quarterly reports, evidence of psychiatric treatment, and attendance of substance abuse meetings; and Respondent failed to take and pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam. In accordance with Standard 2.9, suspension is appropriate.

In aggravation, Respondent, has a prior record of discipline, committed multiple acts of misconduct and demonstrated indifference toward rectification by failing to come in to compliance with the conditions of his reproof, even after the Notice of Disciplinary Charges was filed. Respondent’s misconduct is further aggravated by his failure to cooperate during the disciplinary proceedings.

Respondent is entitled to mitigation for entering into a pretrial stipulation. Respondent agreed to enter into a stipulation on the day of trial. In this case, although Respondent is entitled to credit for entering into the pretrial stipulation, it is afforded little weight based on the timing of the stipulation.

Standard 1.7(a) provides that “[i]f 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. Respondent received a public reproof in 2011 for failing to abide by the terms of an ALD and failing to return unearned fees in a single client matter. The misconduct is neither remote in time nor was it so minimal in severity that imposing greater discipline would be manifestly unjust. Moreover, Respondent’s prior misconduct is similar to his current misconduct. Respondent’s prior discipline mandates progressive discipline in the present matter.

Based upon the repetitive nature of Respondent’s misconduct, the factors in aggravation, and limited mitigation, a 60-day actual suspension accompanied by a two year probationary period serves the purposes of State Bar discipline.

The stipulated level of discipline is also in line with case law involving similar misconduct. In *Conroy v. State Bar* (1990) 51 Cal.3d 799, the attorney violated the terms of a reproof and then defaulted in the disciplinary proceeding. The Court imposed a one year stayed suspension with 60-day actual suspension, finding that the attorney’s non-compliance with the reproof conditions and failure to participate in the disciplinary proceedings evidenced a contemptuous attitude toward the disciplinary proceedings and failure to acknowledge the wrongfulness of his acts. (*Id.* at pp. 805-806). In this matter, Respondent did not comply with the reproof conditions, and demonstrated a contemptuous attitude toward the disciplinary proceedings when he did not appear at the Settlement Conference or the Pretrial Conference, and Respondent was not in communication with the State Bar prior to trial. A parallel can be drawn between *Conroy* and the present case such that imposing a similar level of discipline is appropriate.

Balancing all of the appropriate factors, imposing discipline consisting of a two-year stayed suspension, two years’ probation, with conditions including a 60 day actual suspension is appropriate under the standards and case law and accomplishes the purposes of attorney discipline.

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

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed respondent that as of November 6, 2013, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$2,291.00. 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.

#### **EXCLUSION FROM MCLE CREDIT**

Pursuant to rule 3201, Respondent may not receive MCLE credit for completion of State Bar Ethics School, State Bar Client Trust Accounting 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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**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.

11/12/2013  
Date

  
Respondent's Signature

Bruce Hall Atwater III  
Print Name

11/12/2013  
Date

  
Respondent's Counsel Signature

Jonathan R. Ceseña  
Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature

Jonathan R. Ceseña  
Print Name

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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.

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.)**

Date

11-22-13

  
GEORGE E. SCOTT, 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 San Francisco, on November 25, 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 San Francisco, California, addressed as follows:

BRUCE H. ATWATER III  
709 GEARY ST APT 301  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109

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

JONATHAN R. CESENA, Enforcement, San Francisco

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in San Francisco, California, on November 25, 2013.



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Mazie Yip  
Case Administrator  
State Bar Court