

SUPREME COURT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

In re Singleton

395 S.C. 521 (2011) · Decided December 19, 2011

SUMMARY

The South Carolina Supreme Court accepted an Agreement for Discipline by Consent and publicly reprimanded the respondent attorney for misconduct across several criminal-defense matters. The misconduct included inadequate client communication, failures to respond to disciplinary inquiries, recordkeeping and solicitation violations, and other violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct, with conditions including ethics training, payment of costs, and law-office-management supervision.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of South Carolina
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam; Toal, C.J.; Pleicones, J.; Beatty, J.; Kittredge, J.; Hearn, J.
JURISDICTION	South Carolina
DECIDED	December 19, 2011
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Office of Disciplinary Counsel and Max B. Singleton entered into an Agreement for Discipline by Consent under Rule 21, RLDE, Rule 413, SCACR. The Supreme Court accepted the agreement and imposed a public reprimand with conditions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the Agreement for Discipline by Consent and determined whether respondent's admitted misconduct warranted the agreed discipline.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published

TOPICS

administrative law

criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

legal ethics

attorney discipline

professional responsibility

criminal defense

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Agreement for Discipline by Consent should be accepted.

2. Whether respondent's admitted violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct and Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement warranted a public reprimand with conditions.

HOLDINGS

1. The court accepted the Agreement for Discipline by Consent.
2. Respondent's misconduct warranted a public reprimand, together with conditions requiring payment of disciplinary costs, completion of specified ethics and practice schools, and law-office-management oversight.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"We find that respondent's misconduct warrants a public reprimand." (526)

"Accordingly, we accept the Agreement for Discipline by Consent and publicly reprimand respondent for his misconduct." (526)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Respondent represented multiple clients on criminal charges but repeatedly failed to communicate adequately, relay or act on client-related matters in a timely manner, protect a client's interests upon termination, and respond promptly to disciplinary inquiries. He also failed to retain required fee and payment records and violated rules governing written solicitation of prospective clients. Respondent admitted the misconduct and attributed some delays to personal and family medical circumstances.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Office of Disciplinary Counsel investigated seven matters involving respondent's representation of criminal-defense clients, client communications, solicitation, fee and recordkeeping practices, and responses to disciplinary inquiries. Respondent admitted the misconduct and agreed to a public reprimand with conditions. The Supreme Court reviewed and accepted the consent agreement.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In the Matter of Treacy, 277 S.C. 514, 290 S.E.2d 240 (1982)