

SUPREME COURT OF INDIANA

In the Matter of Ronald J. Moore

756 N.E.2d 506 (Ind. 2001) · No. 89S00-0105-DI-230 · Decided October 17, 2001

SUMMARY

The Indiana Supreme Court approved an agreed disciplinary resolution suspending attorney Ronald J. Moore from practice for at least 18 months. Moore retained \$19,400 in fees belonging to his law firm and concealed the conduct by making misrepresentations to firm attorneys, violating Indiana Professional Conduct Rules 8.4(b) and 8.4(c).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam
JURISDICTION	Indiana
DECIDED	October 17, 2001
DOCKET	89S00-0105-DI-230
DISPOSITION	approved
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Attorney-discipline proceeding in which the Indiana Supreme Court reviewed and approved a Statement of Circumstances and Conditional Agreement for Discipline.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published disciplinary opinion

TOPICS

remedies

commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

legal ethics

attorney discipline

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether Moore violated Indiana Professional Conduct Rules 8.4(b) and 8.4(c) by converting law-firm fees and making misrepresentations to conceal the conversion.
- Whether an eighteen-month suspension from the practice of law was appropriate discipline for the misconduct.

HOLDINGS

1. By stealing funds that belonged to his law firm pursuant to the parties' agreement, Moore committed a criminal act reflecting adversely on his honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer, in violation of Indiana Professional Conduct Rule 8.4(b).
2. By lying to his colleagues about the fees he had retained, Moore engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, in violation of Indiana Professional Conduct Rule 8.4(c).
3. An eighteen-month suspension from the practice of law was appropriate for Moore's planned and repeated conversion of fees and his accompanying deception, notwithstanding mitigating factors such as repayment, counseling, and voluntary reporting.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Given the respondent's carefully planned and executed deception in this case, we conclude that the agreed suspension is appropriate." (at 508)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Moore, an associate attorney, agreed that legal work he performed was conducted as an agent of his law firm and that the resulting fees belonged to the firm. He retained \$11,900 in public-defender fees and additional fees from ten drunk-driving clients, totaling \$19,400, by depositing the money into his personal account and concealing the matters from the firm. He lied to firm members when questioned, later repaid \$20,000, underwent counseling, and voluntarily reported his misconduct.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Ronald J. Moore and the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission submitted a conditional agreement calling for an eighteen-month suspension. Moore voluntarily reported his misconduct after reimbursing the law firm, and the Indiana Supreme Court approved the agreement and imposed the suspension.

DISPOSITION

approved

CASES CITED

- Matter of Mears, 723 N.E.2d 873 (Ind. 2000)
- Matter of Miller, 730 N.E.2d 171 (Ind. 2000)

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