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NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
04G1396

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IN THE MATTER OF	)	
	)	
Ronald G. Blanchard,	)	CENSURE
ATTORNEY AT LAW	)	
	)	

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On January 19, 2006, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by the North Carolina State Bar.

Pursuant to section .0113(a) of the Discipline and Disability Rules of the North Carolina State Bar, the Grievance Committee conducted a preliminary hearing. After considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Committee found probable cause. Probable cause is defined in the rules as "reasonable cause to believe that a member of the North Carolina State Bar is guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary action."

The rules provide that after a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee may determine that the filing of a complaint and a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission are not required and the Grievance Committee may issue various levels of discipline depending upon the misconduct, the actual or potential injury caused, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. The Grievance Committee may issue an admonition, a reprimand, or a censure.

A censure is a written form of discipline more serious than a reprimand, issued in cases in which an attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused significant harm or potential significant harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require suspension of the attorney's license.

The Grievance Committee believes that a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission is not required in this case and issues this censure to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this censure.

In 2003, you were appointed to represent I. P., who was charged with being an accessory after the fact to murder. You sent some discovery requests to the state, but most of the work in the case was done by your law partner. Neither you nor your partner obtained consent of the court and I. P. before effectively substituting your partner as I. P.'s attorney, however. In so doing, you engaged in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice in violation of Rule 8.4(d) and failed to communicate adequately with the client in violation of Rule 1.4. See RPC 58.

In June 2004, about a year after you were appointed to the I. P. case, I. P.'s mother contacted you about helping her son get released on bond. At this time, neither you nor your partner had made any effort to address the bond issue, although the assistant DA assigned to the case indicated that she

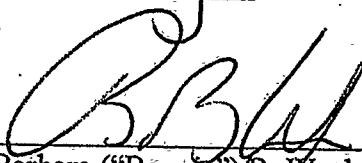
would have consented to a bond motion at any time in 2004. Instead of asking your partner to pursue the bond issue for I. P., you accepted a fee of \$5,500 from I. P.'s mother. By doing so, you collected an excessive fee in violation of Rule 1.5.

Your misconduct is aggravated by the fact that you took advantage of Mrs. P.'s lack of sophistication and by the fact that you have previously been disciplined by the State Bar.

You are hereby censured by the North Carolina State Bar for your violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The Grievance Committee trusts that you will ponder this censure, recognize the error that you have made, and that you will never again allow yourself to depart from adherence to the high ethical standards of the legal profession. This censure should serve as a strong reminder and inducement for you to weigh carefully in the future your responsibility to the public, your clients, your fellow attorneys and the courts, to the end that you demean yourself as a respected member of the legal profession whose conduct may be relied upon without question.

In accordance with the policy adopted October 15, 1981 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of the administrative and investigative costs to any attorney issued a censure by the Grievance Committee, the costs of this action in the amount of \$50.00 are hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2006.

  
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Barbara ("Bonnie") B. Weyher, Chair  
Grievance Committee  
The North Carolina State Bar