

*People v. Fife*, 04PDJ117. January 19, 2005. Attorney Regulation.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' Conditional Admission of Misconduct and suspended Respondent Charles L. Fife (Registration #17799) from the practice of law for a period of nine months, effective February 19, 2005. Seven months of the suspension is stayed pending successful completion of a two-year period of probation. This proceeding arises out of Respondent's illegal drug use and trust account mismanagement. Specifically, Respondent used methamphetamine, a Schedule II controlled substance, at various times over the past three years. Respondent also failed to keep track of money earned from particular clients, instead making a practice of transferring money from his client trust account to his operating account based upon financial considerations such as the needs of his law firm. Although Respondent's conduct did not harm any client or third party, Respondent violated Colo. RPC 8.4(b) (commission of a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects), 8.4(h) (conduct that adversely reflects on the lawyer's fitness to practice law), 1.15(a) (failure to keep client property separate), and 1.15(g)-(h) (failure to maintain all required trust account records). Conditions of probation include compliance with the recommendations contained in Respondent's psychiatric evaluation, as well as financial monitoring and audits. In addition, Respondent was ordered to pay the costs incurred in this proceeding.