

People v. Christopher L. Griffin. 18PDJ010. December 19, 2018.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' conditional admission of misconduct and suspended Christopher L. Griffin (attorney registration number 26074) for six months, with two months to be served and four months to be stayed upon successful completion of a three-year period of probation. The suspension takes effect January 23, 2019. The probationary requirements include attending ethics and trust account schools, abiding by psychiatric and alcohol monitoring conditions, and submitting to practice monitoring.

Griffin engaged in misconduct in three client matters. In all three representations he failed to keep required financial records. In the first matter, Griffin neglected to provide any fee agreement to the client. He also failed to adequately communicate with his client about the case and to respond to requests for information. In addition, he mistakenly treated \$500.00 belonging to his client as earned and deposited that money into his operating account.

The second representation involved two separate matters. Griffin again failed to provide a written statement explaining his fee. Two months later, Griffin had only entered his appearance in one of the cases, so the client fired him and demanded a refund. Griffin did not respond to subsequent inquiries about the refund.

In the third representation, Griffin again did not provide a written fee agreement. Over a period of months, Griffin disregarded the client's multiple requests for an update. Griffin provided no benefit or legal service to the client, who had to pay for a new lawyer.

In addition to his client-centered misconduct, Griffin was arrested in connection with driving under the influence of alcohol in March 2018. In December 2018 he pleaded guilty to misdemeanor DUI.

Through this conduct, Griffin violated Colo. RPC 1.3 (a lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness when representing a client); Colo. RPC 1.4(a) (a lawyer shall reasonably communicate with the client); Colo. RPC 1.5(b) (a lawyer shall inform a client in writing about the lawyer's fees and expenses within a reasonable time after being retained, if the lawyer has not regularly represented the client); Colo. RPC 1.5(f) (a lawyer does not earn fees until a benefit is conferred on the client or the lawyer performs a legal service); Colo. RPC 1.15A(a) (a lawyer shall hold client property separate from the lawyer's own property); Colo. RPC 1.15D (a lawyer shall maintain trust account records); and Colo. RPC 1.16(d) (a lawyer shall protect a client's interests upon termination of the representation, including by returning unearned fees and any papers and property to which the client is entitled). The case file is public per C.R.C.P. 251.31.