

FILED

Feb 11 2020

Disciplinary
Board

Docket # 001

BEFORE THE
DISCIPLINARY BOARD
OF THE
WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT

In re

**CHRISTOPHER JOHN
WRIGHT,**

Lawyer (Bar No. 22903).

Public Proceeding No. 20#00013

ODC File No. 19-01389

Resignation Form of Christopher John Wright
(ELC 9.3(b))

I, Christopher John Wright, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen years and am competent. I make the statements in this declaration from personal knowledge.

2. I was admitted to practice law in the State of Washington on October 27, 1993.

3. I have voluntarily decided to resign from the Washington State Bar Association (the Association) in Lieu of Discipline under Rule 9.3 of the Washington Supreme Court's Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer Conduct (ELC).

4. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is Disciplinary Counsel's statement of alleged misconduct for purposes of ELC 9.3(b). I am aware of the alleged misconduct stated in Disciplinary Counsel's statement, but rather than defend against the allegations, I wish to

1 permanently resign from membership in the Association.

2 5. I consent to entry of an order under ELC 13.9(e) assessing expenses of \$1,585 in
3 this matter.

4 6. I agree to pay restitution as follows: (a) \$6,235.00 to Fidelity National Financial,
5 Inc.; (b) \$460.00 to Robert Austin; and (c) \$17,012.83 to Jeff and Jill Powell.

6 7. I agree to pay any additional costs or restitution that may be ordered by a Review
7 Committee under ELC 9.3(g), which may include restitution to Conscious Cannabis, LLC and
8 Jason Sleator/Centurion Construction, LLC.

9 8. I understand that my resignation is permanent and that any future application by
10 me for reinstatement as a member of the Association is currently barred. If the Washington
11 Supreme Court changes this rule or an application is otherwise permitted in the future, it will be
12 treated as an application by one who has been disbarred for ethical misconduct. If I file an
13 application, I will not be entitled to a reconsideration or reexamination of the facts, complaints,
14 allegations, or instances of alleged misconduct on which this resignation was based.

15 9. I agree to (a) notify all other states and jurisdictions in which I am admitted, of this
16 resignation in lieu of discipline; (b) seek to resign permanently from the practice of law in any
17 jurisdiction in which I am admitted; and (c) provide Disciplinary Counsel with copies of this
18 notification and any response(s). I acknowledge that this resignation could be treated as a
19 disbarment by all other jurisdictions.

20 10. I agree to (a) notify all other professional licensing agencies in any jurisdiction
21 from which I have a professional license that is predicated on my admission to practice law of
22 this resignation in lieu of discipline; (b) seek to resign permanently from any such license; and
23 (c) provide disciplinary counsel with copies of any of these notifications and any responses.

1 11. I agree that when applying for any employment, I will disclose the resignation in
2 lieu of discipline in response to any question regarding disciplinary action or the status of my
3 license to practice law.

4 12. I understand that my resignation becomes effective on Disciplinary Counsel's
5 endorsement and filing of this document with the Clerk, and that under ELC 9.3(c) Disciplinary
6 Counsel must do so promptly following receipt of this document.

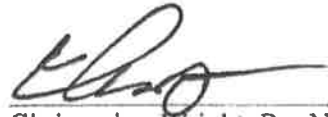
7 13. When my resignation becomes effective, I agree to be subject to all restrictions that
8 apply to a disbarred lawyer.

9 14. Upon filing of my resignation, I agree to comply with the same duties as a
10 disbarred lawyer under ELC 14.1 through ELC 14.4.

11 15. I understand that, after my resignation becomes effective, it is permanent. I will
12 never be eligible to apply and will not be considered for admission or reinstatement to the
13 practice of law nor will I be eligible for admission for any limited practice of law.

14 16. I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that
15 the foregoing is true and correct.

16 3/10/20 Spokane, WA
Date and Place


Christopher Wright, Bar No. 22903


17
18 ENDORSED BY:
19 
Jonathan Burke,
20 Senior Disciplinary Counsel
Bar No. 20910

EXHIBIT A

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BEFORE THE
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In re

**CHRISTOPHER JOHN
WRIGHT,**

Lawyer (Bar No. 22903).

ODC File No 19-01389

STATEMENT OF ALLEGED
MISCONDUCT UNDER ELC 9.3(b)(1)

The following constitutes a Statement of Alleged Misconduct under Rule 9.3(b)(1) of the Washington Supreme Court's Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer Conduct (ELC).

I. ADMISSION TO PRACTICE

1. Respondent Christopher John Wright was admitted to the practice of law in the State of Washington on October 27, 1993.

II. ALLEGED FACTS

2. During the period from 2015 and 2017, Respondent failed to reasonably communicate with a number of clients regarding pending litigation matters, including discovery requests and motions for summary judgment by the opposing parties. Five of these matters are described below.

1 3. During the period from 2015 and 2017, Respondent ceased performing legal
2 services for a number of clients, including failing to respond to discovery requests and motions
3 for summary judgment. Five of these matters are described below.

4 4. Respondent's conduct resulted in the opposing parties being awarded uncontested
5 orders for summary judgment without the knowledge of Respondent's clients.

6 **A. Centurion Litigation**

7 5. Respondent represented plaintiffs Centurion Construction, LLC (Centurion) and
8 Jason Sleator (Sleator) in a lawsuit Centurion Construction, LLC et al v. Richard Griffith et al.
9 Spokane Superior Court Case, No. 15-02-03793-0 (hereafter *Centurion Litigation*).

10 6. Respondent failed to respond to or appear for several dispositive hearings in the
11 *Centurion Litigation*, including the following: (1) Hearing on Motion for Summary Judgment
12 by Homestreet Bank on January 27, 2017, (2) Pretrial Conference on February 17, 2017, and (3)
13 Order to Show Cause Hearing on February 24, 2017.

14 7. As a result of Respondent's failure to respond to or appear for hearings, judgments
15 were entered dismissing Centurion's complaint, and awarding defendants' counterclaims and
16 third party claim against Sleator in the amount of \$386,263.90, and subordinating Centurion's
17 priority lien on certain real property.

18 8. After Sleator learned about the outcome of the *Centurion Litigation*, he hired new
19 lawyers. On May 15, 2017, Centurion's successor lawyers filed a motion to vacate the court's
20 judgments. On August 25, 2017, the court denied Centurion's motion to vacate the judgments.

21 9. On September 19, 2018, Centurion and Sleator filed a lawsuit against Respondent
22 regarding his mishandling of the *Centurion Litigation*.

23 10. On January 18, 2019, a default judgment was entered against Respondent in favor

1 of Centurion and Sleator.

2 11. On February 14, 2019, Respondent filed a Chapter 7 bankruptcy that stayed the
3 proceedings until the bankruptcy was dismissed on July 11, 2019.¹

4 12. On August 13, 2019, the court awarded Centurion and Sleator a judgment against
5 Respondent in the amount of \$2,595,283.40 that Respondent has not paid.

6 **B. Brischle Litigation**

7 13. On October 30, 2014, Respondent was hired to represent defendants Fidelity
8 National Financial, Inc. and Fidelity National Title Insurance Company (collectively referred to
9 as Fidelity) in Brischle v. C&E Land & Cattle Company, L.L.C., Spokane County Superior Court
10 Case No. 14-203949-7 (hereafter referred to as the *Brischle Litigation*).

11 14. Respondent failed to comply with Fidelity's direction to file an amended answer to
12 correct errors in the answer he filed on behalf of Fidelity in the *Brischle Litigation*.

13 15. Respondent failed to comply with Fidelity's request to retain an escrow expert and
14 appraiser to assist in the defense of Fidelity in the *Brischle Litigation*.

15 16. Respondent failed to comply with Fidelity's request to seek, by stipulation or
16 motion, dismissal of Fidelity National Financial, Inc., as an independent parent company of
17 Fidelity National Title Insurance Company in the *Brischle Litigation*.

18 17. Respondent failed to comply with Fidelity's request to propound written discovery
19 on the plaintiffs in the *Brischle Litigation*.

20 18. Respondent failed to respond to a least nine emails and multiple voicemail
21 messages from Fidelity representatives during the period from September 17, 2015 through

22 _____
23 ¹ Respondent's bankruptcy was dismissed because Respondent owned an interest in a cannabis business,
24 which the trustee was unable to administer due to federal law. Respondent may refile the bankruptcy if
and when he resolves the issues regarding his interest in the cannabis business.

1 January 2016.

2 19. Respondent failed to timely inform Fidelity about discovery requests, including a
3 Civil Rule (CR) 30(b)(6) deposition notice, interrogatories, and requests for admission,
4 Respondent received from the plaintiffs in the *Brischle Litigation*.

5 20. Respondent failed to respond to the discovery requests received from the plaintiffs
6 in the *Brischle Litigation*.

7 21. Respondent failed to comply with the request by a Fidelity representative to draft
8 and file a summary judgment motion in the *Brischle Litigation*.

9 22. On February 12, 2016, Fidelity terminated Respondent and hired new counsel to
10 represent Fidelity in the *Brischle Litigation*.

11 23. Fidelity paid Respondent \$6,235 in fees and costs throughout the *Brischle*
12 *Litigation*.

13 24. On October 27, 2017, Fidelity sued Respondent for his misconduct in handling the
14 *Brischle Litigation*.

15 25. On November 2, 2018, the court granted Fidelity's uncontested motion for
16 summary judgment against Respondent.

17 26. On December 10, 2018, the court entered a judgment in favor of Fidelity against
18 Respondent in the amount of \$350,866.05, which has not been paid.

19 **C. Austin Litigation**

20 27. On June 30, 2016, Respondent was hired by Robert Austin and Stephanie Austin
21 (collectively referred to as Austin) to represent them in the pending litigation Quest IRA Inc. v
22 Robert Austin, Spokane Superior Court No. 16-2-02105-5 (hereafter referred to as the *Austin*
23 *Litigation*).

1 28. On February 6, 2017, the plaintiffs filed a motion for summary judgment against
2 Austin.

3 29. Respondent never informed Austin about the motion for summary judgment and
4 never filed a response to the motion.

5 30. On March 10, 2017, the court granted the unopposed motion for summary
6 judgment against Austin.

7 31. On March 15, 2017, the court entered the judgment summary against Austin.

8 32. Respondent never informed Austin about the entry of the order on summary
9 judgment or the judgment.

10 33. Austin discovered the summary judgment order and judgment from reviewing the
11 court file.

12 **D. Powell Litigation**

13 34. In 2016, Respondent was hired by Jeff Powell and Jill Powell (hereafter
14 collectively referred to as Powell) to represent them in pursuing litigation against a number of
15 parties.

16 35. On October 19, 2016, Respondent filed a lawsuit on behalf of Powell: Jeff Powell
17 et al. v. Green Rush Advisory Group (Green Rush), Dennis Love et al., Grant County Superior
18 Court, Case No. 16-2-01259-7 (hereafter referred to as the *Powell Litigation*).

19 36. On December 21, 2016, Green Rush served Respondent with interrogatories,
20 requests for production, and requests for admission.

21 37. Powell's responses to the interrogatories, requests for production, and requests for
22 production were due on January 20, 2017.

23 38. Respondent failed to adequately communicate with Powell regarding Green Rush's

1 discovery requests and failed to respond to the discovery.

2 39. On July 6, 2017, Green Rush filed a motion for summary judgment that was served
3 on Respondent.

4 40. Respondent failed to timely communicate with Powell and failed to respond to the
5 motion for summary judgment.

6 41. On August 3, 2017, the court granted Green Rush's motion for summary judgment
7 against Powell in the *Powell Litigation*.

8 42. On August 25, 2017, Green Rush filed and served on Respondent a motion seeking
9 the award of attorney fees jointly against Powell and Respondent pursuant to CR 11 and RCW
10 4.84.185 for filing a frivolous action.

11 43. Respondent failed to communicate with Powell about Green Rush's motion
12 seeking attorney fees.

13 44. Respondent did not file a response to Green Rush's motion for attorney fees.

14 45. On September 1, 2017, the court entered an order jointly obligating Powell and
15 Respondent to pay \$17,524.66 in attorney fees within 20 days to Green Rush's attorneys for
16 violating CR 11 and RCW 4.84.185.

17 46. On September 5, 2017, Green Rush's lawyer sent a letter to Respondent requesting
18 payment of the \$17,524.66.

19 47. Respondent did not inform Powell about the letter or the court's order, and did not
20 respond to Green Rush's letter.

21 48. On September 14, 2017, Green Rush filed a motion for presentment of judgment
22 on the September 1, 2017 order.

23 49. Respondent did not inform Powell about the motion and did not file a response to

1 the motion for a judgment.

2 50. On September 22, 2107, the court entered a judgment in favor of Green Rush in
3 the amount of \$19,859.14 jointly against Powell and Respondent.

4 51. Respondent paid \$7,500 of the judgment for attorney fees. Powell eventually paid
5 \$14,012.83 of the judgment.

6 52. Powell paid Respondent \$3,000 in attorney fees.

7 **E. Conscious Cannabis Litigation**

8 53. In 2017, Respondent was hired to represent defendants Conscious Cannabis, LLC,
9 William Kannall, Bodhi Ventures, LLC, and SKM, Inc. (collectively referred to as Conscious
10 Cannabis) in pending litigation filed by Open Source Steel, LLC (Open Source): Open Source
11 Steel, LLC (Open Source) v. Conscious Cannabis et al., Spokane Superior Court, Case No. 17-
12 2-01071-0 (hereafter referred to as the *Conscious Cannabis Litigation*).

13 54. On or about June 28, 2017, Open Source served Respondent with interrogatories
14 and requests for production that were due on July 28, 2017.

15 55. Respondent did not inform Conscious Cannabis about the interrogatories and
16 requests for production and did not timely respond to the discovery requests.

17 56. On August 8, 2017, Open Source filed a motion to compel discovery and order
18 attorney fees, which was scheduled to be heard on August 18, 2017.

19 57. Respondent did not file a response to the motion to compel but appeared at the
20 hearing on August 18, 2017.

21 58. On August 18, 2017, the court entered an order requiring Conscious Cannabis to
22 respond to Open Source's discovery requests by August 25, 2017, and ordered Conscious
23 Cannabis to pay \$500 in attorney fees to Open Source's lawyers.

1 59. After the hearing, Respondent informed Conscious Cannabis that he would take
2 care of responding to discovery, but did not do so.

3 60. After that conversation, Conscious Cannabis made a number unsuccessful attempts
4 to contact Respondent and left voice messages, but Respondent did not respond to messages left
5 by Conscious Cannabis.

6 61. On September 6, 2017, Open Source filed and served on Respondent a motion for
7 contempt and sanctions against Conscious Cannabis for failing to comply with court's August
8 25, 2017 order. The motion requested the court to assess against Conscious Cannabis attorney
9 fees and remedial sanctions of \$200 per day for failing to provide discovery. The motion was
10 scheduled to be heard on September 22, 2017.

11 62. Respondent did not inform Conscious Cannabis about Open Source's motion for
12 contempt. Respondent did not file a response to the motion, and did not appear at the hearing.

13 63. On September 22, 2017, the court entered an order granting Open Source's motion
14 for contempt and sanctions. The court awarded \$625 in attorney fees to Open Source against
15 Conscious Cannabis, and sanctioned Conscious Cannabis \$200 per day starting on August 26,
16 2017 until Conscious Cannabis provided complete discovery responses. The court's order also
17 provided that Open Source is granted leave to request a sanction of default against Conscious
18 Cannabis of all of Open Source's claims and of Conscious Cannabis's counterclaims if
19 discovery responses are not provided by September 28, 2017.

20 64. Respondent did not inform Conscious Cannabis about the court's September 22,
21 2017 order.

22 65. On October 3, 2017, Open Source filed a second motion for sanctions requesting
23 that the court strike the answer and counterclaims of Conscious Cannabis and enter a judgment

1 for \$32,285.68 in favor of Open Source.

2 66. On October 3, 2017, the owner of Conscious Cannabis went to the court file and
3 discovered the pending motion and the prior motions and orders entered by the court in the
4 *Conscious Cannabis Litigation*.

5 67. On October 4, 2017, Conscious Cannabis hired a new lawyer to represent them.

6 68. On October 12, 2017, the new lawyer filed a notice of appearance.

7 69. Conscious Cannabis had never seen Open Source's prior discovery requests until
8 their new lawyer was hired.

9 70. On November 9, 2017, Conscious Cannabis filed a motion for relief from
10 sanctions.

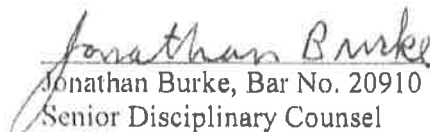
11 71. The parties entered into a global settlement to resolve the lawsuit, and the court
12 entered an order of dismissal on November 28, 2017.

13 **III. ALLEGED MISCONDUCT.**

14 72. By failing to reasonably communicate with litigation clients, including Sleator,
15 Centurion, Fidelity, Austin, Powell, and Conscious Cannabis, Respondent violated RPC 1.4.

16 73. By failing to diligently represent clients, including Sleator, Centurion, Fidelity
17 Austin, Powell, and Conscious Cannabis, Respondent violated RPC 1.3, RPC 3.2, and RPC
18 8.4(d).

19 DATED this 10TH day of February, 2020.

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21 
Jonathan Burke, Bar No. 20910
Senior Disciplinary Counsel