In the
Supreme Court of Georgia

No. S26Y0848
In the Matter of Ramon David Sammons, Jr.

Decided: August 11, 2026

PER CURIAM.

This disciplinary matter relating to misconduct by Ramon David Sammons, Jr. (State Bar No. 623560) is now before this Court for the third time. The formal complaint on which these disciplinary proceedings are based alleged that Sammons, who has been a member of the State Bar since 1999, violated Rules 1.2(a),[1] 1.3,[2] and 1.4[3] of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct ("GRPC"), found in Bar Rule 4-102(d), while representing an

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[1] Rule 1.2(a) states, in relevant part, that "a lawyer shall abide by a client's decisions concerning the scope and objectives of representation and, as required by Rule 1.4, shall consult with the client as to the means by which they are to be pursued."

[2] Rule 1.3 states, in relevant part, that "[a] lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client," and further defines "reasonable diligence" as "not without just cause to the detriment of the client in effect willfully abandon[ing] or willfully disregard[ing] a legal matter entrusted to the lawyer."

[3] Rule 1.4(a) states, in relevant part, that a lawyer shall: (1) "promptly inform the client of any decision or circumstances with respect to which the client's informed consent … is required by these rules;" (2) "reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished;" (3) "keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter;" and (4) "promptly comply with reasonable requests for information." Rule 1.4(b) states that "[a] lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation."

elderly dementia patient in a personal injury case.[4] On its first review, this Court vacated the Special Master's entry of default against Sammons because he was not in default when the order issued, and we remanded the case back to the Special Master for proceedings on the merits. See *In the Matter of Sammons*, 316 Ga. 885 (2023). On remand, a new Special Master, LaVonda Rochelle DeWitt, issued a report recommending that the Court accept Sammons's newly filed petition for voluntary discipline, which admitted to the factual allegations and rule violations alleged by the formal complaint and requested a public reprimand. When the matter returned to this Court, the Court rejected the voluntary petition without prejudice and explained that Sammons's claimed mitigation — his "personal and emotional problems," "severe depression and anxiety [since] 18 years of age," and "receiv[ing] therapy and be[ing] on various medications to help" — was not documented by evidence in the disciplinary record. See *In the Matter of Sammons*, Case No. S25Y1137, Order of Aug. 26, 2025, at 1–2. The Court therefore could not discern its mitigating value or whether it supported imposing the requested sanction.

The matter is now here again. On second remand, the Special Master recommended that the Court suspend Sammons for 24 months, with his reinstatement conditioned on showing his competency to practice law, based on violations of Rules 1.2(a), 1.3, and 1.4 as charged in the formal complaint. The maximum sanction for violating Rules 1.2 and 1.3 is disbarment; the maximum sanction for violating Rule 1.4 is a public reprimand. Sammons has not filed any exceptions to the Special Master's report. The time to do so has since run.

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[4] The formal complaint also alleged that Sammons violated Rule 5.5(a) (prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law). But the State Bar dismissed the charge without prejudice after the initial remand.

As discussed below, given the severity of Sammons's admitted misconduct, which included abandoning his vulnerable client's case in a manner that destroyed its viability, and the minimal mitigation offered by Sammons to temper the aggravating factors found in his case, we conclude that a suspension is an appropriate sanction in this case. Thus, we suspend Sammons's license to practice law for 24 months, beginning on the day this decision issues. And, given that the Special Master did not fully discount or disbelieve Sammons's mental health claims, despite his failure to support them with evidence beyond his own testimony, we condition Sammons's reinstatement to the State Bar on his establishing to the State Disciplinary Review Board his competency to practice law, as further described below.

I. *Remand Proceedings Before the Special Master*

A. *Hearing*

On remand, the State Bar moved for summary judgment and asked the Special Master to find the following facts: (1) Sammons's admissions in his petition; and (2) facts previously found by the Special Master's report issued after the matter's first remand. Sammons did not respond. An evidentiary hearing was then held during which Sammons testified to his mental health, personal issues, and treatment, but did not submit any supporting documents. Despite being directed to do so, Sammons also did not supplement the record after the hearing to support his mitigation claims, including his claim of good character and reputation. The Special Master's report and recommendation, which granted summary judgment for the State Bar, followed.

B. *Report and Recommendation*

1. *Factual Findings*

In the report, the Special Master incorporated her summary judgment order, wherein the Special Master stated that she "hereby find[]s as fact, for the purpose of summary judgment, Respondent's unconditional admissions in his Petition."[5] Those findings are as follows.

In November 2017, Sammons was hired on a contingency-fee basis to represent a client and the client's daughter in a lawsuit against a nursing home where the client — who had dementia — allegedly suffered injuries. Sammons informed the daughter that he would need to review the client's medical records, submit a demand for settlement, and, if no settlement was reached, file suit.

Between December 2017 and December 2018, Sammons and the daughter were in frequent communication by email about the case. Around late December 2018, the daughter dropped off at Sammons's office the client's medical records for his review, as he had requested. On February 13, 2019, the daughter emailed Sammons, informing him that she had sent him several emails and tried calling him, but had not heard back, asking him whether he received the medical records she had dropped off, and requesting an update on whether he had submitted the demand letter to the nursing home. Sammons replied to that email, telling the daughter that he had received the medical records, that he needed these records to complete the demand letter, which was now complete and would be sent to the nursing home, and that he would contact

[5] The Special Master also incorporated her prior report's factual findings, which do not substantively differ from Sammons's admissions as outlined here.

the daughter within the next few days to have the demand amount approved.

That was the last the daughter heard from Sammons. Sammons failed to respond to multiple emails between February 2019 and April 2019 requesting a status update. On April 11, 2019, the daughter emailed Sammons again, stating that she "called [him] about five times yesterday and [her] calls were ignored and went straight to voicemail" and asking him what measures she should take to move the case from his law firm. Sammons, again, did not respond. Months later, on August 1, 2019, the daughter emailed Sammons to say that she had discovered that the statute of limitations for the suit would expire in November 2019. She asked whether Sammons was still interested in representing her case. Once again, Sammons did not respond. So, on August 21, 2019, the daughter emailed Sammons the following:

> I have not heard back from you in about six months or more. You will not return calls nor emails. I am assuming you have no interest in this case any longer. I wish you would have notified me prior to near the end of the statue [of] limitation[s] for this case as my mother is currently in hospice care. I[t] would have been nice if you would have at least emailed or called so this would have allowed me time to seek another lawyer.

Again, Sammons did not respond. Later, the statute of limitations ran out on the client's claim.

In addition to Sammons's admissions, the Special Master further found that Sammons testified during the hearing on remand about his mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression, his mental health treatment, and the personal troubles that he faced during the time period of his misconduct. In that hearing, Sammons testified that, despite his efforts, he had no pharmacy records pertaining to the medications he was on during the relevant timeframe because his pharmacy retained records for only two years. Sammons also testified that he had requested his medical records from his physician but had yet to receive them. Still, Sammons agreed to later supplement the disciplinary record with his medical records and with any character and reputation evidence that he wanted considered, given that the Special Master's prior report found such evidence mitigating. The Special Master here, however, found that Sammons did not supplement the record with mitigation evidence before the deadline, despite being directed to do so by the Special Master and despite the State Bar not objecting.

2. *Rule Violations*

The Special Master concluded that, as alleged in the formal complaint, Sammons violated Rule 1.2(a) by not abiding by the daughter's decisions about the representation's scope and objectives, not consulting with the daughter about how those objectives were to be pursued, telling the daughter that he would investigate the case and submit a demand package but failing to do so and then avoiding her communications, disregarding the expressed goals and intentions for the case, and not consulting with the daughter about his decision not to timely file the lawsuit. Sammons also violated Rule 1.3 by not acting with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing the client (including not timely filing the lawsuit), not following through with all matters undertaken for the client, abandoning the case, and not taking reasonable steps to mitigate the consequences of his withdrawal from the case. He further violated Rule 1.4 by not informing the daughter or explaining to her about his decision not to submit a demand letter or file suit before the statute of limitations expired, not reasonably consulting with the daughter about how he planned to proceed with the case, not keeping the daughter reasonably informed about the case's status, not promptly complying with reasonable requests for information, giving false information to the daughter about the case, and stopping all communication with the daughter.

3. *Discipline*

The Special Master considered the American Bar Association Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions in determining the appropriate level of discipline in this case. See *In the Matter of Morse*, 266 Ga. 652, 653 (1996) (explaining that the Court looks to the ABA Standards to determine the appropriate sanction). As guided by ABA Standard 3.0, the Special Master considered "the duty violated," "[Sammons's] mental state," "the potential or actual injury caused by [Sammons's] misconduct," and "the existence of aggravating or mitigating factors."

With respect to the duty violated, the Special Master determined that ABA Standard 4.4 (duty of diligence) applies. The Special Master discussed the levels of misconduct involving a lack of diligence that can support different levels of discipline. Conduct that can result in disbarment may include a lawyer abandoning his practice, knowingly failing to perform services, or engaging in a pattern of misconduct that shows the attorney's inability or unwillingness to conform to the required ethical standards. See ABA Standard 4.41 (disbarment appropriate when a lawyer: (a) abandons the practice and causes serious or potentially serious injury; (b) knowingly fails to perform services for a client and causes serious or potentially serious injury; or (c) engages in a pattern of neglect with respect to client matters and causes serious or potentially serious injury). On the other hand, conduct that can result in a mere suspension can include a lawyer knowingly failing to perform services or engaging in a pattern of neglect that results in injury or potential injury to the client, which often involves conduct like failing to communicate with clients, not responding to reasonable requests for information, or not returning files and unearned fees. See ABA Standard 4.42 (suspension is appropriate when a lawyer: (a) knowingly fails to perform services for a client and causes injury or potential injury; or (b) engages in a pattern of neglect and causes injury or potential injury).

In light of this framework under ABA Standard 4.4, the Special Master then addressed Sammons's mental state. The Special Master explained that she had initially credited the State Bar's concessions during the first remand that Sammons's claimed personal and emotional issues were mitigating and likely impacted his ability to handle his law practice, and, from that, concluded that Sammons's misconduct appeared negligent. The Special Master further explained that, as to all mitigation included in her initial report:

> Ultimately, the State Bar conceded that these mitigating factors provide a new basis and context to review the former special master's prior recommendation of disbarment. Respondent's personal and emotional problems provide an explanation for his conduct and obviate a finding of dishonest or selfish motive. Moreover, Respondent's has demonstrated remorse and an acceptance of responsibility. Indeed, Respondent's lack of prior discipline carries more significance in this context.

But the Special Master went on to explain that, because Sammons had failed to support his mitigation claims as ordered, the State Bar's prior concessions and her prior conclusion have now been undermined.

With respect to Sammons's mental state, the Special Master explained that Sammons knew that he had certain duties to the client and her daughter that he was abandoning, including abiding by their decisions, diligence, and communication; knew that he had a long history of mental and personal issues; knew that those issues were causing problems with his managing the client's matter; knew what steps he needed to take to address his personal issues before they harmed his client's case; and failed to do anything to rectify the situation other than abandoning his law office. The Special Master further noted that Sammons also did not correct his address with the State Bar for years, which partly caused the service issues that first brought the matter to the Court as a default case. From these circumstances, the Special Master inferred that Sammons did not want to be contacted while going through his issues and that, as part of his general avoidance, he abandoned the client and her daughter to their detriment and without concern for what harm may result. The Special Master thus concluded that, while Sammons's initial disregard of his client and her daughter may have been negligent, his mental state for the more serious aspects of his misconduct was "knowing." See Rule 1.0(o) ("knowingly," "known," or "knows" means actual knowledge and may be inferred from the circumstances).

With respect to the injury caused by Sammons's misconduct, the Special Master explained that Sammons caused significant injury by telling the daughter that he would pursue her mother's personal-injury claim as "an actual case" but then abandoning it in a way that deprived the client and her daughter of the opportunity to have another attorney evaluate the case or have their day in court. The Special Master noted that this harm generally warrants disbarment in the absence of mitigation. See *In the Matter of Bell*, 313 Ga. 615 (2022) (disbarring attorney whose conduct, including failing to act diligently on a client's case that resulted in the case's dismissal, violated Rules 1.2(a), 1.3, 1.4, and 3.2); *In the Matter of Starling*, 297 Ga. 359 (2015) (disbarring attorney whose conduct in two matters, including failing to file a complaint before the statute of limitations expired, violated, inter alia, Rules 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4).

Finally, the Special Master concluded that the following aggravating factors apply: Sammons's dishonest or selfish motive, given that he disregarded and abandoned the client to conceal (or avoid admitting) that he did not timely file the lawsuit; a two-year pattern of misconduct; multiple GRPC rule violations; Sammons's bad-faith obstruction of these proceedings by failing to comply with orders, failing to respond to the grievance and the State Bar's notice of investigation (partly due to the failure to update his address with the State Bar as required by Bar Rule 4-203.1(a)), initially and without explanation denying even allegations simply recounting his own emails, and failing to address with specificity the allegations in the complaint in his answer; the vulnerability of the victims; Sammons's substantial experience in the practice of law; and his failure to make restitution or rectify the consequences of his misconduct. See ABA Standard 9.22(b), (c), (d), (e), (h), (i), and (j).

As for mitigating factors, the Special Master explained that she needed to reevaluate the weight of Sammons's claims in light of his failure to support them beyond his own statements. The Special Master posited that either Sammons had no supporting evidence, the evidence was harmful rather than helpful, or Sammons simply treated the grace extended to him during these proceedings with the same disregard with which he treated the client's case. The Special Master was clear that she "[did] not discount or disbelieve" that Sammons had suffered personal and emotional problems, but she said that his failure to support his mitigation claims with evidence "significantly undermines any weight [she] would have otherwise given" to those claims. Still, the Special Master concluded that Sammons's participation in the disciplinary proceedings and acceptance of some responsibility, as shown by his filing a petition for voluntary discipline, deserves some credit.

Ultimately, after weighing the aggravating and mitigating factors, the Special Master recommended a 24-month suspension. The Special Master was clear that Sammons's failure to support his mitigation affected her recommendation. She explained that if Sammons had provided evidentiary support as directed, she likely would have recommended a public reprimand. But because he did not, she concluded that the matter now leaned more toward suspension or disbarment. The Special Master recommended the following conditions for reinstatement: "(1) providing a detailed, written evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist certifying that [Sammons is] mentally competent to practice law; and (2) arranging for an evaluation by the State Bar's Law Practice Management Program …, and, within six months of reinstatement, implementing its recommendations." *In the Matter of Moore*, 305 Ga. 419, 420 (2019).

II. *Analysis*

After considering the record and the GRPC rules that were violated, we agree with the Special Master that a suspension, rather than disbarment, is appropriate. With respect to Sammons's proffer of mitigation evidence, we note again that Sammons did not support his claims of personal and emotional issues with evidence beyond his own testimony, and we agree with the Special Master that that failure may have increased his level of discipline. But Sammons also has not had his personal credibility undermined by any prior disciplinary history involving dishonest conduct. So while we do not give significant weight to Sammons's mitigation claims, we will credit them to an extent, as the Special Master did. Given all that, we will follow the Special Master's recommendation and impose a suspension of 24 months, which serves as "a penalty to the offender, a deterrent to others, and an indication to laymen that the courts will maintain the ethics of the profession." *In the Matter of Dowdy*, 247 Ga. 488, 493 (1981). This sanction is within the range of suspensions imposed in cases involving similar GRPC rule violations and misconduct. See e.g., *In the Matter of Whiteside*, 316 Ga. 468 (2023) (imposing a three-month suspension for an attorney who violated Rules 1.3 and 1.4, among others, by failing to timely file his client's medical malpractice lawsuit before the statute of limitations period ran); *In the Matter of Golub*, 313 Ga. 686 (2022) (imposing a 12-month suspension for an attorney who violated Rules 1.2(a), 1.3, and 1.4, among others, by filing two lawsuits for his client and then failing to do any further work on either case before dismissing the cases and causing significant harm to the client and her cases); *In the Matter of Jaconetti*, 291 Ga. 772 (2012) (imposing a 36-month suspension with conditions for lawyer with demonstrated mental health issues who violated Rules 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4, among others, by abandoning or neglecting eight clients); *In the Matter of Bagwell*, 286 Ga. 511 (2010) (imposing a 24-month suspension with conditions for lawyer with demonstrated mental health issues who violated three GRPC rules, including Rules 1.3 and 1.4, related to five former clients, three of which had adverse rulings entered against them due to his failure to timely and properly pursue legal matters).

Thus, we hereby direct that Ramon David Sammons, Jr., be suspended from the practice of law in the State of Georgia for 24 months, effective as of the date of this opinion. At the conclusion of the suspension imposed, Sammons may seek reinstatement by submitting a petition for reinstatement to the Review Board that must include a detailed, written evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist certifying that he is mentally competent to practice law. The Review Board will then issue a report and recommendation to this Court. Sammons may not undertake the practice of law unless and until this Court issues an opinion granting his petition for reinstatement. See *In the Matter of Corley*, 303 Ga. 290, 293 (2018). Should the Court grant his petition for reinstatement, Sammons must arrange for an evaluation by the State Bar's Law Practice Management Program, and, within six months of his reinstatement, implement its recommendations. Sammons must submit proof of his timely compliance with those recommendations to the State Bar's General Counsel. Sammons is reminded of his duties under Rule 4–219(b).

Twenty-four-month suspension imposed with conditions. All the Justices concur.