

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SECOND DISTRICT, SECTION II COMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
RODOLFO CEJAS, II

VSb Docket No. 25-022-136026

DISTRICT COMMITTEE DETERMINATION  
(PUBLIC ADMONITION WITH TERMS)

On October 14, 2026, a meeting was held in this matter before a duly convened Second District, Section II Committee consisting of Gregory W. Klein, Esq., Chair Presiding; Ann B. Brogan, Esq., Tammy M. McClenney, Esq., and Shannon M. Twohig, Esq., Members; and Lloyd A. Peterson, Lay Member. During the meeting, the Second District, Section II Committee voted to approve an agreed disposition for a Public Admonition with Terms pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-7.A.9 of the Rules of Supreme Court of Virginia. The agreed disposition was entered into by the Virginia State Bar, by Seth T. Shelley, Assistant Bar Counsel, Rodolfo Cejas, II (“Respondent”), and Blair G. Brown, counsel for Respondent.

WHEREFORE, the Second District, Section II Committee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon Respondent the following Public Admonition with Terms:

**I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Respondent was admitted to the Virginia State Bar (“VSB”) in 1987. At all relevant times, Respondent was a member of the VSB.
2. In 2016, Evan C. Morrell (“Complainant”) was convicted in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk & Newport News Division, (“the Court”) on drug charges and sentenced to 188 months in prison.
3. The United States Sentencing Commission amended the sentencing guidelines effective November 1, 2023. The amendment (“Amendment 821”) permitted offenders to request sentence reductions, subject to judicial review.

4. In November 2023, the Court entered a Standing Order appointing the Norfolk Federal Public Defender to represent defendants who may qualify for a sentence reduction pursuant to Amendment 821. The public defender assigned Respondent, an Assistant Federal Public Defender at the Norfolk Federal Public Defender's office, to Complainant's case.
5. On January 23, 2024, Complainant filed a *pro se* Motion to Reduce Sentence. Complainant requested a sentence reduction of 20 months to 168 months, noting the guideline range of 168-210 months.
6. On March 26, 2024, Respondent sent a letter to Complainant. Respondent noted the recent amendment to the sentencing guidelines and Complainant's possible eligibility. Respondent requested that Complainant "let me know as soon as possible if you would like this office to assist you and pursue a reduction of your sentence."
7. Complainant said he received the letter and then emailed Respondent using Corrlinks, a prison email system. Complainant said he informed Respondent that he had filed a *pro se* motion and requested that Respondent obtain a filing that he thought was the judge's ruling. Complainant said he did not request that Respondent do anything else.
8. Respondent acknowledged that he received emails from Complainant.<sup>1</sup> Respondent disputed Complainant's claim that he only wanted Respondent to obtain the filing. In his written response to the bar complaint, Respondent said he received "the go ahead from [Complainant] to pursue a sentence reduction" and contacted the prosecutor.
9. On June 13, 2024, Respondent emailed Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Hudson ("Hudson"), regarding a possible sentence reduction for Complainant.
10. On June 17, 2024, Hudson responded to Respondent's email and wrote that he would agree to a 10-month reduction.
11. On June 25, 2024, Respondent emailed Hudson and stated, "We'll take it!" Respondent said he would draft a consent motion. Later that evening, Respondent emailed the proposed consent motion to Hudson.
12. On June 26, 2024, Respondent filed a Consent Motion for a Reduced Sentence Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2). Respondent wrote that "Evan C. Morrell, through undersigned counsel, moves this court for a reduced sentence of 178 Months." Respondent indicated that the "parties have conferred and agree that a reduced sentence of 178 months on Count 1 is warranted." Respondent wrote "Mr. Morrell asks the Court to grant the motion agreed upon by the parties and reduce his sentence on Count 1 to 178 months."
13. On June 26, 2024, Respondent mailed a letter to Complainant. Respondent included a copy of the Consent Motion and wrote that he "thought it best to get some kind of

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<sup>1</sup> Both Complainant and Respondent indicated that they no longer had access to copies of emails between them.

agreement with the government on the sentence recommendation.” Respondent asked Complainant to contact him if he had any questions. When interviewed by the Bar investigator, Complainant said he did not receive the letter.

14. On July 1, 2024, the Court entered an order reducing Complainant’s sentence by 10 months to 178 months.
15. In June 2025, Complainant filed a bar complaint and wrote that he did not agree to a reduction of 10 months and that Respondent did not discuss the proposed 10-month reduction or the Consent Motion with him prior to filing it.
16. Respondent acknowledged in his written response to the bar complaint that he “did not confer with [Complainant] prior to reaching the agreement with the government and filing the consent motion to reduce his sentence.” Respondent wrote that he “acted in what I believed was his best interest to secure some measure of relief that, in my estimation, he would not have otherwise obtained.” Respondent said he “did not believe the court would grant [Complainant] relief without an agreement with the government.” Respondent wrote that he “did not secure [Complainant]’s agreement to this reduction prior to filing the motion” and “regret[s] not conferring with [Complainant] prior to entering into the agreement with the government.” When interviewed and asked about the assertions in the Consent Motion, Respondent said he believed he “had the authority as his lawyer to negotiate for him” to get the best possible outcome.

## **II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT**

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

*By failing to communicate to his client the 10-month proposed resolution by the prosecutor and failing to discuss with his client the Consent Motion prior to filing it, Respondent violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct:*

### **RULE 1.4      Communication**

(c) A lawyer shall inform the client of facts pertinent to the matter and of communications from another party that may significantly affect settlement or resolution of the matter.

## **III. PUBLIC ADMONITION WITH TERMS**

Accordingly, having approved the agreed disposition, it is the decision of the District Committee to impose a Public Admonition with Terms. The terms are:

1. On or before December 15, 2026, Respondent will complete six (6) hours of continuing legal education credits by attending courses approved by the Virginia State Bar in the subject matter of ethics. Respondent's Continuing Legal Education attendance obligation set forth in this paragraph will not be applied toward his Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirement in Virginia or any other jurisdictions in which Respondent may be licensed to practice law. Respondent will certify his compliance with the terms set forth in this paragraph by delivering a fully and properly executed Virginia MCLE Board Certification of Attendance form (Form 2) to Bar Counsel, promptly following his attendance of each such CLE program(s).

If any of the terms are not met by the time specified, pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-16.BB. and CC. of the Rules of Supreme Court of Virginia, the District Committee shall hold a hearing and Respondent shall be required to show cause why a Certification for Sanction Determination should not be imposed. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter, and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed.

Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-9.E. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

Entered 10/19/20.

SECOND DISTRICT, SECTION II COMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

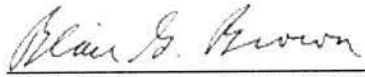
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gregory W. Klein  
Acting Chair

Seen and agreed:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Seth T. Shelley, VSB #75413  
Virginia State Bar  
1111 E. Main Street, Suite 700  
Richmond, VA 23219  
sshelley@vsb.org

Seen and agreed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Blair G. Brown".

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Blair G. Brown, VSB #29706  
Zuckerman Spaeder LLP  
2100 L St NW  
Ste 400  
Washington, DC 20037-1525  
bbrown@zuckerman.com

**RECEIVED**  
**Oct 1, 2026**

**VIRGINIA STATE BAR**  
**CLERK'S OFFICE**

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SECOND DISTRICT, SECTION II COMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
RODOLFO CEJAS, II

VSB Docket Nos. 25-022-136026

AGREED DISPOSITION  
PUBLIC ADMONITION WITH TERMS

Pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-7.A.9, the Virginia State Bar, by Seth T. Shelley, Assistant Bar Counsel, and Rodolfo Cejas, II, Esq. ("Respondent"), and Blair G. Brown, Respondent's counsel, hereby enter into the following Agreed Disposition arising out of the referenced matter.

I. STIPULATIONS OF FACT

1. Respondent was admitted to the Virginia State Bar ("VSB") in 1987. At all relevant times, Respondent was a member of the VSB.
2. In 2016, Evan C. Morrell ("Complainant") was convicted in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk & Newport News Division, ("the Court") on drug charges and sentenced to 188 months in prison.
3. The United States Sentencing Commission amended the sentencing guidelines effective November 1, 2023. The amendment ("Amendment 821") permitted offenders to request sentence reductions, subject to judicial review.
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8. Respondent acknowledged that he received emails from Complainant.<sup>1</sup> Respondent disputed Complainant's claim that he only wanted Respondent to obtain the filing. In his written response to the bar complaint, Respondent said he received "the go ahead from [Complainant] to pursue a sentence reduction" and contacted the prosecutor.
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the court would grant [Complainant] relief without an agreement with the government.” Respondent wrote that he “did not secure [Complainant]’s agreement to this reduction prior to filing the motion” and “regret[s] not conferring with [Complainant] prior to entering into the agreement with the government.” When interviewed and asked about the assertions in the Consent Motion, Respondent said he believed he “had the authority as his lawyer to negotiate for him” to get the best possible outcome.

## II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:<sup>2</sup>

*By failing to communicate to his client the 10-month proposed resolution by the prosecutor and failing to discuss with his client the Consent Motion prior to filing it, Respondent violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct:*

### **RULE 1.4    Communication**

(c) A lawyer shall inform the client of facts pertinent to the matter and of communications from another party that may significantly affect settlement or resolution of the matter.

## III. PROPOSED DISPOSITION

Accordingly, Assistant Bar Counsel, Respondent, and Respondent’s counsel tender to the Second District, Section II Committee for its approval the Agreed Disposition of a Public Admonition with Terms as representing an appropriate sanction if this matter was to be heard through an evidentiary hearing by the Second District, Section II Committee. The terms with which Respondent must comply are as follows:

1. On or before December 15, 2026, Respondent will complete six (6) hours of continuing legal education credits by attending courses approved by the Virginia State Bar in the subject matter of ethics. Respondent’s Continuing Legal Education attendance obligation set forth in this paragraph will not be applied toward his Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirement in Virginia or any other jurisdictions in which Respondent may be licensed to practice law. Respondent will certify his compliance with the terms set forth in this paragraph by delivering a fully and properly executed Virginia MCLE Board Certification of Attendance form (Form 2) to Bar Counsel, promptly following his attendance of each such CLE program(s).

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<sup>2</sup> Italicized language is for explanatory purposes only.

If the term is not met by the time specified, pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-16.CC of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Second District, Section II Committee shall impose a Certification for Sanction Determination pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-16.BB and CC of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter, and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed.

If the Agreed Disposition is approved, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

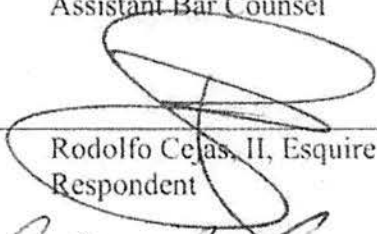
Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-30.B of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Respondent's prior disciplinary record shall be furnished to the Committee considering this Agreed Disposition.

THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR



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Seth T. Shelley  
Assistant Bar Counsel



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Rodolfo Celas II, Esquire  
Respondent



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Blair G. Brown, Esquire  
Respondent's counsel