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V.I. Supreme Court Issues Public Reprimand to Attorney Webster for Confidentiality Breach

Webster violated confidentiality rules by submitting documents with sensitive information in a legal matter, leading to professional misconduct determination

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From left to right, Attorney Martial Webster, Stephanie Barnes, and Antonio "Ricky" Messer. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Virgin Islands attorney Martial Webster Sr. has received a public reprimand from the Supreme Court's Board of Professional Responsibility.?

On Thursday, a notice from the board indicated that Mr. Webster had violated the rules of confidentiality by submitting documents as part of a court matter that contained information that

was meant to be kept out of the public domain.

Mr. Webster was reportedly representing a client in a matter, and filed a motion for recusal/disqualification. Attached to the motion was an affidavit from his client that referenced a pending disciplinary complaint involving another attorney, in violation of a court rule that mandates confidentiality when it comes to attorney disciplinary proceedings. It appears that Mr. Webster obeyed his client's instructions to file the affidavit as written, despite its reference to information that should have been kept confidential.

As a result of his actions, Mr. Webster and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel agreed that a public reprimand was in order. The attorney was determined to have failed to exercise independent judgment in the filing of the affidavit, which contained information that he knew to be confidential. He was also found to have filed the affidavit that was intentionally prepared to embarrass and harm some of the individuals named within the document. By these actions, Mr. Webster was determined to have violated the court's rules of professional conduct.?

The public reprimand of Mr. Webster, while not containing any additional sanctions, has now been circulated to the disciplinary enforcement agencies in each jurisdiction to which Mr. Webster has been admitted, as well as the chief judicial officers of the territory's Superior, Supreme and District Courts, as well as the Third Circuit Court of Appeal and the United States Supreme Court.

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