

V.I. Attorney Michael Sheesley Publicly Reprimanded After Refusing Court-Appointed Representation of Minor

Michael Sheesley agreed to a public reprimand after admitting six ethics violations stemming from his refusal to represent a minor, failure to appear at a show-cause hearing, contempt findings and conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice.

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Attorney Michael Sheesley.

Attorney Michael Sheesley was publicly reprimanded Friday by the Board on Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands after admitting six violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct arising from his refusal to accept court-appointed representation of

a minor and his subsequent conduct before the court.

The disciplinary matter traces back to December 20, 2016, when Sheesley was appointed to represent a minor. According to the disciplinary notice, he immediately filed a motion seeking to be relieved from the appointment and refused to undertake the representation.

Sheesley was subsequently held in criminal contempt for refusing to participate in the initial hearing. He was also held in civil contempt after failing to appear at the first show-cause hearing scheduled in connection with his failure to represent the minor.

The Supreme Court referred Sheesley's conduct to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and the Board on Professional Responsibility for investigation on May 6, 2019.

Sheesley and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel later entered into an agreement consenting to discipline in the form of a public reprimand. The Board on Professional Responsibility accepted that agreement.

As part of the agreement, Sheesley admitted violating six professional-conduct rules.

Those violations included the requirement that an attorney comply with applicable law requiring a tribunal's permission before terminating representation and the prohibition against knowingly disobeying obligations imposed under tribunal rules.

He also admitted violating rules prohibiting conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal; statements made with reckless disregard concerning the integrity of a judge; conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; and behavior deemed to violate the Rules of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands.

Under Supreme Court rules governing attorney discipline, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel is required to disseminate information about the action to disciplinary enforcement agencies in jurisdictions where Sheesley is admitted to practice.

The notice must also be provided to the chief judicial officers of courts within the Virgin Islands, federal courts in the territory, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court. Information about the disciplinary action will additionally be reported to any national database maintained for attorney discipline and to the news media.

The Board formally imposed the public reprimand on August 7, 2026.