

The Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana

IN RE: RONALD SIDNEY HALEY, JR.

No. 2025-B-00478

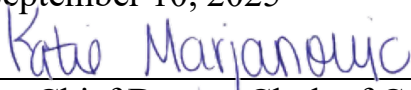
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IN RE: Disciplinary Counsel - Applicant Other; Findings and Recommendations  
(Formal Charges);  
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September 10, 2025

Suspension imposed. See per curiam.

JLW  
WJC  
PDG  
JMG

Hughes, J., dissents and would reject the proposed discipline as too harsh.  
McCallum, J., dissents and would reject the proposed discipline as too lenient.  
Cole, J., dissents and would reject the proposed discipline as too lenient.

Supreme Court of Louisiana  
September 10, 2025  
  
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Chief Deputy Clerk of Court  
For the Court

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2025-B-0478

IN RE: RONALD SIDNEY HALEY, JR.

ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING

PER CURIAM

This disciplinary matter arises from formal charges filed by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”) against respondent, Ronald S. Haley, Jr., an attorney licensed to practice law in Louisiana but is currently on interim suspension for threat of harm to the public. *In re: Haley*, 25-0337 (La. 4/2/25), 404 So. 3d 634.

**PRIOR DISCIPLINARY HISTORY**

Before we address the instant matter, we find it helpful to review respondent’s prior disciplinary history. Respondent was admitted to the practice of law in Louisiana in 2007.

In 2016, this court accepted a joint petition for consent discipline and suspended respondent from the practice of law for one year and one day, fully deferred, subject to his compliance with a five-year recovery agreement with the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program. *In re: Haley*, 15-2285 (La. 2/19/16), 184 So. 3d 684 (“*Haley I*”). The misconduct at issue in *Haley I* involved respondent’s 2008 and 2011 arrests for driving while intoxicated.

In 2021, the court accepted a joint petition for consent discipline and suspended respondent from the practice of law for one year and one day, with all but six months deferred, subject to his successful completion of Louisiana State Bar

Association's Ethics School. *In re: Haley*, 21-1466 (La. 12/7/21), 328 So. 3d 418 (*"Haley II"*). The misconduct at issue in *Haley II* involved respondent's neglect of a legal matter, failure to communicate with a client, inappropriate attempt to settle a malpractice claim with a client, and failure to return a client's file upon request.

Against this backdrop, we now turn to consideration of the misconduct at issue in the instant proceeding.

## **FORMAL CHARGES**

### *The Beasley matter*

Respondent represented Timothy Terrell Beasley in connection with drug offenses after 51 pounds of cocaine were found in Mr. Beasley's car.<sup>1</sup> Respondent filed a motion to suppress but was unsuccessful. Following the hearing, Mr. Beasley confronted respondent about his failure to submit a dash cam video which Mr. Beasley believed would show no probable cause for the initial traffic stop. Respondent advised Mr. Beasley that he would be filing a writ with the appellate court where the video would be reviewed.

Mr. Beasley called the district and appellate courts and learned no writ had been filed. Mr. Beasley again confronted respondent, who advised him that he had filed a motion for extension. Mr. Beasley terminated the respondent's representation and hired new counsel.

The ODC alleges that respondent's conduct violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rule 1.3 (failure to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client), 1.4 (failure to communicate with

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<sup>1</sup> Initially, Mr. Beasley's parents hired respondent to file a bond reduction for \$2,500.00. That motion was successful, and Mr. Beasley was able to afford to bail out of jail. Respondent told Mr. Beasley he would charge him \$15,000.00 to represent him in the matter, less the \$2,500.00 paid for the bond reduction. To date, Mr. Beasley has paid respondent only \$10,000.00 for the representation.

a client), 8.4(a) (violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct), and 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation).

### *The Scott matter*

Tevin Scott was incarcerated and was charged with battery of a corrections officer.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Scott hired respondent to represent him as to any potential future civil matter related to the alleged beating as well as to defend him against all pending criminal charges.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Scott's mother met with respondent and paid a \$6,000.00 flat fee for respondent's representation.

Respondent advised Mr. Scott that if he accepted a plea agreement, he would be immediately released from jail and begin probation.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter, Mr. Scott pleaded to the pending charges and was released from jail.

Mr. Scott later learned that all the charges were not removed from his criminal record as promised by respondent. Respondent again assured Mr. Scott that all the charges should have been removed from his criminal record.

In December 2022, prior to resolving Mr. Scott's matters, respondent was suspended from the practice of law in *Haley II*. Respondent arranged for two other attorneys to handle the matters. These attorneys filed a motion for reconsideration of sentence, which was granted. Mr. Scott was resentenced and again placed on probation with conditions. It was after this resentencing that Mr. Scott learned he

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<sup>2</sup> According to Mr. Scott, the corrections officer actually beat him.

<sup>3</sup> At the time, Mr. Scott had several pending charges: battery of a corrections officer, illegal use of a weapon, stalking, terrorizing, entering into or remaining after forbidden, and two charges of battery of a dating partner.

<sup>4</sup> In the case of certain offenses, the court may suspend the sentence subject to a probationary period which length is discretionary. If the court finds at the conclusion of the probationary period that the probation of the defendant has been satisfactory, the court may set aside the conviction and dismiss the prosecution. The dismissal has the same effect as acquittal, except the conviction may be considered as a prior offense in a later criminal prosecution. *See* La. Code Cr. P. art. 893 and 894.

would have to file expungement paperwork to have the charges cleared from his record.

At his resentencing, the trial court advised Mr. Scott that if he fulfilled his probation conditions early, he could have his attorneys request an earlier court date. Mr. Scott completed his probation conditions early and attempted to contact respondent and his other two attorneys, to no avail. Consequently, Mr. Scott had to hire new counsel to complete the matters for \$4,500.00.

The ODC alleges that respondent's conduct violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rules 1.3, 1.4(a)(3), 8.1(a) (a lawyer shall not knowingly make a false statement of material fact in connection with a disciplinary investigation), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice).

#### *The Edwards matter*

Mieyoshi Edwards retained respondent to represent him in criminal proceedings in Baton Rouge. Because of Mr. Edwards' incarceration, his father, Mieyoshi Poole, was the primary point of contact for the representation. Mr. Poole met with respondent on three separate occasions (December 28, 2021; February 8, 2022; and March 14, 2022) to discuss legal strategy for Mr. Edwards' case. At the February meeting, respondent agreed to represent Mr. Edwards on additional pending criminal charges in St. Tammany Parish for the payment of \$10,000.00. During this time, respondent was suspended from the practice of law between December 7, 2021 through June 7, 2022. Respondent did not inform Mr. Edwards or Mr. Poole that he was suspended at the time of the meetings.

The ODC alleges Rules 3.4(c) (knowing disobedience of an obligation under the rules of the tribunal), 5.5(a) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law), 8.1(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d).

### *The Clayton Matter*

In August 2022, the ODC learned that respondent, during a period in which he was suspended from the practice of law, represented Marcus Clayton in the 19th Judicial District Court. Respondent did not inform Mr. Clayton of his suspension. Text messages produced to the court through Mr. Clayton's subsequent counsel in a motion to withdraw his guilty plea and set aside sentence, reveal respondent advised Mr. Clayton on his legal matter during his period of suspension. The text messages further reveal that in February 2022, during respondent's suspension, Mr. Clayton agreed to pay for new tires and rims on respondent's vehicle in exchange for a partial payment of respondent's legal fees. The total price for the tires and rims to be installed was \$3,168.00, which respondent accepted from Mr. Clayton during his period of suspension.

The ODC alleges Rules 3.4(c), 5.5(a), 8.1(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d).

### *Hearing Committee Report<sup>5</sup>*

After a hearing, the hearing committee found respondent violated the Rules of Professional Conduct as charged in the Beasley and Scott matters. The committee stated:

In both instances, the Respondent's clients are persons charged with crimes who are not sophisticated in criminal legal matters and who are dependent on him for sound legal representation. Whether a client is sophisticated or not sophisticated they should always be able to depend on his or her attorney for sound legal advice - - that is why they hire an attorney. The clients' position is a common position. They have been charged with crimes and want to eliminate or minimize the criminal charges.

On the other hand, the Respondent was well prepared to accept a fee for representation, gave assurances to his clients that he would protect them and take care of them, but in reality, gave them short shrift. The Respondent was not believable in his testimony. His interest was in the fee

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<sup>5</sup> The Beasley and Scott matters were heard by a separate hearing committee from the Edwards and Clayton matters. We will address the findings of the committees together.

for the lawyer, which once collected, appeared to end any serious and committed representation of his clients.

The committee determined respondent violated duties owed to his clients, the public, and the legal profession. Respondent acted negligently, intentionally, and knowingly. It was the committee's opinion that "[r]espondent's activities have resulted in harm to the public and the legal profession." The baseline sanction is suspension. It found the aggravating factor of prior discipline and determined there were no mitigating factors. The committee recommended that respondent be suspended from the practice of law for one year and one day in the Beasley and Scott matters.

In the Edwards and Clayton matters, the hearing committee found the ODC carried its burden of proving one instance of practicing law while suspended in violation of Rules 5.5(a) and 8.4(a). The committee failed to find clear and convincing evidence of the other alleged rule violations.

The committee determined that the aggravating factor of a prior disciplinary record is present. In mitigation, it found absence of a dishonest or selfish motive and cooperative attitude toward the proceedings. After further considering the court's prior jurisprudence addressing similar misconduct, the committee recommended that respondent be suspended from the practice of law for six months for this conduct in the Edwards and Clayton matters.

#### *Disciplinary Board Recommendation<sup>6</sup>*

The board accepted most of the committee's findings. However, in the Beasley and Scott matters, the board found no clear and convincing evidence that respondent violated Rules 8.1(a), and 8.4(c) pertaining to making false statements to his clients. In particular, the board reasoned "[w]hile there may have been

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<sup>6</sup> Before being considered by the disciplinary board, all charges against respondent were consolidated.

insufficient communication and some misunderstandings between Respondent and his clients in both matters in connection with their discussion regarding pleas offers and agreements, the evidence does not support that Respondent intentionally engaged in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentations during these discussions.”

The board found respondent’s conduct was negligent at times and, in some instances, may have been knowing. His actions caused both actual and potential harm to his clients. The board determined that the following aggravating factors are present: a prior disciplinary record, pattern of misconduct, and substantial experience in the practice of law. It found that no mitigating factors are present. As an appropriate sanction, the board concluded that a one year and one day suspension is reasonable for respondent’s misconduct for all consolidated matters.

Neither respondent nor the ODC filed a timely objection in this court to the disciplinary board’s recommendation. However, after the expiration of the time for filing objections under Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(G)(1), respondent sought to file a “late” objection. On May 13, 2025, we issued an order rejecting respondent’s objection as untimely and, therefore, procedurally improper but permitting the filing of briefs, without oral argument. Respondent and the ODC both filed briefs in response to the court’s order.

## **DISCUSSION**

The hearing committee made a finding of fact that respondent made assurances to his clients and failed to perform any work on their behalf. This finding is supported by the record. Notably, respondent’s actions in this regard are similar to the conduct at issue in *Haley II*, in which this court suspended him for one year and one day with all but six months deferred.



In addition to the charges of neglect of client matters, respondent also engaged in unauthorized practice of law during the period he was suspended in *Haley II*. However, as the board pointed out, respondent was not actively involved in the performance of legal services (such as drafting pleadings, filing pleadings or appearing in court) during this time. While the unauthorized practice of law can be very serious misconduct which might warrant permanent disbarment, the court typically imposes lesser sanctions when the respondent's activities do not directly constitute the practice of law. *See, e.g., In re: Dowell*, 09-1419 (La. 12/18/09), 24 So.3d 203 (lawyer suspended from the practice of law for one year when he failed to send notices to clients after disbarment, acted as a notary, and failed to cooperate with the ODC).

Aggravating factors include a prior disciplinary record, pattern of misconduct, and substantial experience in the practice of law (admitted 2007). The record supports the disciplinary board's finding that no mitigating factors are present.

Considering the record as a whole, we conclude a suspension of one year and one day, which will necessitate a formal application for reinstatement, is appropriate under the facts.

### **DECREE**

Upon review of the findings and recommendations of the hearing committee and the disciplinary board, and considering the record, it is ordered that Ronald Sidney Haley, Jr., Louisiana Bar Roll number 30900, be and he hereby is suspended from the practice of law for one year and one day. Costs and expenses in the matter are assessed against respondent in accordance with Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 10.1, with legal interest to commence thirty days from the date of finality of this court's judgment until paid.