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NOTICE OF REPRIMAND AND RESTITUTION WITH CONDITION
(By Consent)

Case No. 19-104-GA

Notice Issued: January 20, 2020

Matthew Abel, P 38876, Detroit, Michigan, by the Attorney Discipline Board Tri-County Hearing Panel #11.

Reprimand, Effective January 9, 2020

Respondent and the Grievance Administrator filed a Stipulation for Consent Order of Discipline, in accordance with MCR 9.115(F)(5), which was approved by the Attorney Grievance Commission and accepted by the hearing panel. The stipulation contained respondent's admissions to the factual statements and allegations of professional misconduct contained in the formal complaint. Specifically, that respondent committed professional misconduct when he agreed, at the request of a long time former client, to act as an escrow agent for a Bitcoin and cash transaction between a buyer and a seller who owed respondent's former client money. Respondent negligently relied upon information from his former client that the seller had transferred the Bitcoins to the buyer when he had not actually done so and, based on that reliance, respondent released the escrow funds from his IOLTA account.

Based upon respondent's admissions and the stipulation of the parties, the panel found that respondent failed to hold client funds in connection with a representation in an IOLTA or non-IOLTA trust account, and failed to appropriately safeguard such funds, in violation of MRPC 1.15(d). Respondent was also found to have violated MCR 9.104(2) and (4).

In accordance with the stipulation of the parties, the hearing panel ordered that respondent be reprimanded with a condition relevant to the established misconduct and that he pay restitution totaling \$94,050. Costs were assessed in the amount of \$773.25.

Mark A. Armitage
Executive Director