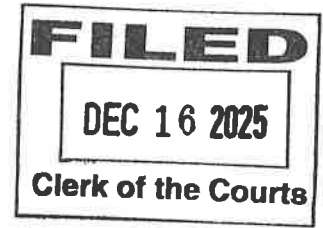


**BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
PANEL A**

IN RE: Hugh Brock Showalter, Respondent Attorney
Arkansas Bar No. 2001061
Case No. CPC-2025-024



FINDINGS AND ORDER

The formal charges of misconduct upon which this Findings and Order is based arose from information provided to the Committee by Aaron Widzinski (Widzinski) on July 8, 2024. The information related to the prospective representation of Widzinski by Respondent in late 2023.

On September 11, 2025, Respondent was served with a formal complaint, supported by affidavit from Widzinski.

1. Hugh Brock Showalter (Showalter) is licensed by the Supreme Court of Arkansas and has been assigned Arkansas Bar No. 2001061.

2. On or about October 25, 2023, Widzinski became aware that his ex-wife filed a *pro se* Petition for Change of Custody of their then 16½-year-old son. (Exhibit 2)

3. A week or so later, in November, 2023, Widzinski consulted with and subsequently retained Lauren Ruff, who was employed as an attorney with the Showalter Law Group.

4. On or about November 6, 2023, Widzinski made an initial retainer payment of \$1,000.00.

5. Shortly after the consultation, Ms. Ruff discovered Widzinski had not been properly served, so she advised Widzinski should wait until there was proper service before proceeding with the representation.

6. Widzinski continued to make payments as follows:

(a) 12/26/23 - \$312.50;

(b) 01/22/24 - \$312.50;

(c) 02/21/24 - \$312.50; and

(d) 04/01/24 - \$312.50.

7. In total, Widzinski paid \$2,250.00.

8. By April, 2024, after paying the fees in full, Widzinski still had not been served, and requested the fees be refunded.

9. When Widzinski contacted Ms. Ruff, she advised she had been gone from the Showalter Law Group since the end of November, 2023.

10. Widzinski continued to contact Brock Showalter via emails, phone calls, and messages through his law firm portal with little to no response.

11. After four (4) months of waiting for a response or a refund, Widzinski submitted a grievance to the Office of Professional Conduct on or about July 8, 2024.

12. Widzinski's son reached the age of majority and any representation that could have been provided was no longer necessary.

13. Showalter failed or refused to refund the attorney fees Widzinski paid.

14. On June 5, 2025, the Office of Professional Conduct (OPC) sent an email to Showalter, which requested a response by June 20, 2025.

15. On June 25, 2025, Showalter requested an extension to respond, which was granted, and the response was due July 7, 2025.

16. On July 9, 2025, Showalter apologized for the delay and advised he would submit a response by end of business (EOB) that same day.

17. On July 10, 2025, Showalter submitted a response that appeared to be evasive and untruthful, based upon the results of OPC's investigation.

18. Showalter's subsequent emails were discombobulated and appeared to be attempts to delay or avoid resolution.

19. Showalter's email advised that he was unable to provide a refund; however, Showalter never provided any representation, so the funds paid should have been held in his Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account (IOLTA) until said funds were earned.

20. On July 29, 2025, Showalter sent a final email that advised he would call OPC after a court appearance that morning.

21. Showalter never called or emailed OPC, nor did he return the attorney fees paid by Widzinski.

Upon consideration of the formal complaint and attached exhibit materials, the response to it, and other matters before it, and the Arkansas Rules of Professional Conduct, Panel A of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct finds:

A. Showalter's conduct, as set forth in the formal complaint and exhibits, violated **Rule 1.15(b)(2)** when Showalter failed to keep unearned fees in his trust account. Arkansas Rule 1.15(b)(2) requires that a lawyer shall deposit into a client trust account legal fees and expenses that have been paid in advance, to be withdrawn by the lawyer only as fees are earned or expenses incurred.

B. Showalter's conduct, as set forth in the formal complaint and exhibits, violated **Rule 8.4(c)**, when he retained and converted the funds that belonged to Widzinski. Rule 8.4(c) provides that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation.

WHEREFORE, it is the decision and order of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct, acting through its authorized Panel A, that Hugh Brock Showalter, Arkansas Bar Number 2001061, be, and hereby is, **REPRIMANDED** for his conduct in this matter.

The Panel further assesses a fine of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$1,000.00), costs of ONE HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$150.00), and orders the Respondent to pay restitution to Aaron Widzinski in the amount of TWO THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$2,250.00)].

The FINE, COSTS, and RESTITUTION assessed herein totaling **THREE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$3,400.00)** shall be payable by cashier's check or money order payable to the "Clerk, Arkansas Supreme Court" delivered to the Office of Professional Conduct within thirty (30) days of the date this Findings and Order is filed of record with the Clerk of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT
COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT



Don R. Etherly, Panel A Chair



Date