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BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL  
RESPONSIBILITY

*Rew* EXEC. SEC'Y

IN DISCIPLINARY DISTRICT III  
OF THE  
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE

IN RE: JOSEPH H. CRABTREE, JR., BPR NO. 11451  
Respondent, an attorney licensed  
to practice law in Tennessee  
(Monroe County)

FILE NO. 33082-3-PS

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PUBLIC CENSURE

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The above complaint was filed against Joseph H. Crabtree, Jr., an attorney licensed to practice law in Tennessee, alleging certain acts of misconduct. Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, the Board of Professional Responsibility considered these matters at its meeting on December 10, 2010.


The Respondent represented the husband in a divorce case. The Respondent, without his client's permission, signed an agreed order which provided that the client would meet certain financial obligations within five days, and, if he failed to do so, he would be considered in willful contempt of court. Not only did the Respondent not have his client's permission to sign the order, after he signed it, he did not inform his client of the order. Neither did he inform his client that he was required to be present for a hearing to determine the sanctions for failing to abide by the terms of the agreed order.

By signing an agreed order without his client's knowledge or permission, the Respondent violated RPC 1.2 and 1.4. The Respondent continued in his violation of RPC 1.4 by failing to inform his client of the existence of the order or the hearing date, which placed his client in jeopardy of being held in contempt. By allowing the order to be submitted to the court, the

Respondent violated RPC 3.3 because the order had not been agreed to by his client. All of the  
aforementioned conduct by the Respondent was in violation of RPC 8.4(d).

By the aforementioned facts, Joseph H. Crabtree, Jr. has violated Rule of Professional  
Conduct 1.2 (scope of representation), 1.3 (diligence), 1.4 (communication), 3.3 (candor to the  
tribunal), and 8.4(d) (misconduct) and is hereby Publicly Censured for these violations.

FOR THE BOARD OF  
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

  
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Lela M. Hollabaugh, Chair

  
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Date