

S20Y0209. IN THE MATTER OF MUHAMMAD ABDUL-WARIT
ABDUR-RAHIM.

PER CURIAM.

Lawyer Muhammad Abdul-Warit Abdur-Rahim (State Bar No. 560822) has filed a petition for voluntary discipline, consenting to a State Disciplinary Review Board reprimand for his disrespectful and disruptive behavior in a criminal proceeding in which he represented himself. Abdur-Rahim concedes that his conduct was a violation of Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 3.5 (d), which forbids lawyers to “engage in conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal.” The maximum penalty for a violation of Rule 3.5 (d) is a public reprimand. The State Bar of Georgia agrees that a Review Board reprimand is appropriate, and for the reasons that follow, we accept the petition for voluntary discipline.

According to his petition, Abdur-Rahim was involved in an altercation with his father in September 2017, and as a result, Abdur-Rahim was charged with family violence battery, third-

degree cruelty to children, and disorderly conduct. At his arraignment in April 2018, Abdur-Rahim was unnecessarily argumentative with prosecutors, used profanity, failed to follow the instructions of the court, and generally engaged in disruptive conduct. In mitigation, Abdur-Rahim says that he was suffering from personal and emotional problems at the time of his arraignment, that he later sought and obtained treatment for these problems, that he apologized to the judge and court staff involved in his arraignment, that he freely and fully disclosed his wrongful conduct to and cooperated with the State Bar and State Disciplinary Board, and that he is remorseful for his misconduct. We note as well that Abdur-Rahim has no prior disciplinary history, and his disrespectful and disruptive conduct on the occasion of his arraignment appears to have been an isolated incident, inasmuch as the State Bar has come forward with no evidence of Abdur-Rahim disrupting court proceedings on other occasions.

In light of these mitigating circumstances, and considering that the most severe discipline for a violation of Rule 3.5 (d) is a

public reprimand, we agree that a Review Board reprimand is appropriate discipline for Abdur-Rahim's conduct at his arraignment.¹ We accept the petition for voluntary discipline and direct that Abdur-Rahim receive a Review Board reprimand in accordance with Bar Rules 4-102 (b) (4) and 4-220 (b).²

Petition for voluntary discipline accepted. Review Board reprimand. Melton, C. J., Nahmias, P. J. and Blackwell, Boggs, Peterson, Warren, Bethel, and Ellington, JJ., concur.

DECIDED APRIL 6, 2020.

Petition for voluntary discipline.

Lawson & Thornton, George O. Lawson, Jr., for Abdur- Rahim. Paula J. Frederick, General Counsel State Bar, William D. NeSmith III, Deputy General Counsel State Bar, Jenny K. Mittelman, James S. Lewis, Assistant General Counsel State Bar, for State Bar of Georgia.

¹ See American Bar Association Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions (2015), Standards 6.23, 6.24, 9.32. See also In the Matter of Morse, 266 Ga. 652, 653 (470 SE2d 232) (1996).

² We note that the petition for voluntary discipline concerns only the misconduct that occurred at the arraignment, not any misconduct that may have occurred in connection with the altercation that led to the criminal charges on which Abdur-Rahim was arraigned. Our disposition of this petition would not preclude discipline for any such other misconduct. See Rule 8.4 (a) (convictions for certain criminal conduct shall constitute a violation of the Rules).