



The State Bar of California

OFFICE OF CHIEF TRIAL COUNSEL

845 S Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017

Tel: 213-765-1000

Attorney Misconduct Complaint Form

Your Contact Information

First Name: Darryl	Middle Name: Gerard	
Last Name: Cotton		
Address: 6176 Federal Blvd		
City: San Diego	State: CA	Zip: 92114
Email: indagrodarryl@gmail.com		
Home Phone: none	Work: none	Cell: 619.954.4447

Attorney's Information

First Name: Stephen	Middle Name: Gary	
Last Name: Cline		
Address: San Diego County Public Defender, 450 B St, Ste 900		
City: San Diego	State: CA	Zip: 92101
Email: steve.cline@sdcounty.ca.gov	CA Bar License #: 169828	
Home Phone: unknown	Work Phone: (619) 338-4640	
Cell Phone: unknown	Website:	

Have you or a member of your family complained to the State Bar about this attorney previously?

☐ YES ☒ NO

Did you hire this attorney?

☒ YES ☐ NO

Enter the approximate date you hired the attorney and the amount paid (if any) to the attorney.

Date: March 2017

Amount Paid: \$2,500

What is your connection to this attorney? Explain briefly.

Cline was introduced to me by Demian when the City of San Diego charged me criminally with running an unlicensed dispensary. Of note Cline was in private practice with his own firm when he represented me in this matter. He has since closed that practice and works for the Public Defenders Office.

Attorney's Information

Statement of Complaint

Include with your submission, a statement of what the attorney did or did not do that is the basis of your complaint. Please state the facts as you understand them. Do not include opinions or arguments. If you hired the attorney(s), state what you hired the attorney(s) to do. Additional information may be requested.

When I entered into a Plea Agreement dated 04/05/17 with the City of SD, Deputy City Attorney Mark Skeels (209766) to plead guilty to one misdemeanor count of a Health and Safety Code Violation 11366.5(a) my then counsel Robert Bryson (299566) advised me at the arraignment to accept a plea agreement to this one charge. What I came to find out that this pleading was my accepting the forfeiture of my Real Property. I needed an attorney to negotiate with Skeels to release the Lis Pendens that the City of San Diego had filed on my property, (Demian was completely ineffectual during a conference call he had with Skeels and said he was not the right person to negotiate with Skeels...that was obvious!). Skeels, during the conference call with Demian wanted \$100K to make this go away. Demian recommended Cline because in his words, Skeels was afraid of Cline as he had previous success against Skeels and would come to a better number to settle the matter and release the Lis Pendens. Cline knew that this action by the City was unlawful. There were/are other businesses on this property and one full time resident which had it been raised would have made the forfeiture action by the City illegal. Cline did not pursue that but instead worked with Skeels to come up with a figure that represented as much money as I could raise. That turned out to be \$25K which I paid which ceased the forfeiture action and the Lis Pendens was released. I believe that Demian, Cline and Skeels had worked this scenario out in an attempt to appear like legitimate legal agreement when in fact the forfeiture in and of itself was illegal by the City and Cline had to have known this.

Related Court Case Information (If known)

Name of Court: Superior Court

Case Name: People v Cotton et al

Case Number: M2330071

Approx. date case was filed: 03/15/17

Size of law firm complained about: NA

If you are not a party to this case, what is your connection with it? Explain briefly.

I am a party.

Translation Information☒ Not Applicable

The State Bar accepts complaints in over 200 languages. If you need translation services to communicate with the State Bar, please let us know by completing this section of the complaint form. We will communicate with you through a translation service in the language of your choice. Do you need translation services?

☐ YES☒ NO

Please state the language in which you need formal translation:

The State Bar's mission is to protect complainants regardless of their immigration status. Complainants who are unable to complete this form due to disability, language restrictions, or other circumstances may obtain help by calling the complaint line at 800-843-9053.

Attestation

By checking this box I certify that all information on this form is true and correct. I understand that the content of my complaint can be disclosed to the attorney. I understand that I waive the attorney client privilege and any other applicable privilege between myself and the attorney to the extent necessary for the investigation and prosecution of the allegations.

Signature: 

Date: 02/06/2020