

**Not For Publication**

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE** ) **S. Ct. Civ. No. 2015-0054**  
**DISBARMENT OF:** )  
 )  
**HENRI E. NORRIS, ESQ.** )  
 )  
**AS A MEMBER OF THE VIRGIN** )  
**ISLANDS BAR.** )

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On Certified Copy of Order Imposing Public Discipline  
Considered and Filed: August 21, 2015

**BEFORE:** **RHYS S. HODGE**, Chief Justice; **MARIA M. CABRET**, Associate Justice; and  
**IVE ARLINGTON SWAN**, Associate Justice.

**APPEARANCES:**

**Henri E. Norris, Esq.**  
Santa Barbara, California  
*Pro Se,*

**Delphine L. Farr-Janey, Esq.**  
Chief Disciplinary Counsel  
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.  
*Attorney for the Office of Disciplinary Counsel,*

**Simone R. D. Francis, Esq.**  
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.  
*Attorney for the Board of Professional Responsibility.*

**OPINION OF THE COURT**

**PER CURIAM.**

This matter comes before the Court pursuant to a June 12, 2015 filing from the Office of Disciplinary Counsel containing a certified copy of an order issued by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals indicating that Henri E. Norris—a member of the Virgin Islands Bar—was disbarred by that court for pleading guilty to a serious crime in a proceeding before the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. The information filed in the criminal

case alleged that Norris, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 286, had aided and assisted in preparing approximately 200 federal income tax returns containing fraudulent interest income and tax withholdings, resulting in the United States Internal Revenue Service issuing refund checks of approximately \$228 million that the recipients were not entitled to receive. The record of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals further reflects that she consented to disbarment in that court as a sanction after pleading guilty in the criminal proceeding. *In re Norris*, 115 A.3d 570, 570 (D.C. 2015) (Norris filed an affidavit in which “she consents to disbarment”).

On June 15, 2015, this Court issued an order directing Norris to show cause, within 30 days, as to why this Court should not impose reciprocal discipline in the Virgin Islands for the misconduct found by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Norris failed to lodge any response to this Court’s show cause order by that deadline. Furthermore, on July 16, 2015, the Board of Professional Responsibility notified this Court that it had independently served Disciplinary Counsel’s petition at Norris’s last known address, and that she had accepted delivery of the document on June 18, 2015. To date, Norris has still not filed any documents with this Court.

This Court has exclusive jurisdiction to regulate the legal profession in the Virgin Islands, including the attorney discipline system. V.I. CODE ANN. tit. 4, § 32(e); *In re Application of Payton*, S. Ct. BA. No. 2007-0146, 2009 V.I. Supreme LEXIS 17, at \*6 (V.I. Mar. 20, 2009) (unpublished). Pursuant to the newly-amended Virgin Islands Rules for Attorney Disciplinary Enforcement, which went into effect on January 1, 2015, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel possesses an obligation to notify this Court of any order issued in another jurisdiction that disciplines a Virgin Islands attorney. V.I.S.CT.R. 207.18(a). After filing such notice, the attorney must respond within 30 days to explain why imposition of identical discipline in the Virgin Islands would be unwarranted. V.I.S.CT.R. 207.18(b). For imposition of identical discipline to be unwarranted, the

lawyer must demonstrate—or this Court must find it “clear upon the face of the record”—that

- (1) the procedure was so lacking in notice or opportunity to be heard as to constitute a deprivation of due process;
- (2) there was such infirmity of proof establishing the misconduct as to give rise to the clear conviction that the Court could not, consistent with its duty, accept as final the conclusion on that subject;
- (3) the imposition of the same discipline by the Court would result in grave injustice; or
- (4) the misconduct established warrants substantially different discipline or no discipline in this Territory . . . .

V.I.S.CT.R. 207.18(d). Otherwise, “a final adjudication in another jurisdiction that a lawyer has been guilty of misconduct shall establish conclusively the misconduct for purposes of a disciplinary proceeding in this Territory.” V.I.S.CT.R. 207.18(e).

We agree that identical discipline of disbarment is warranted in this case. In addition to Norris failing to respond to this Court’s show cause order, the record reflects that Norris entered a guilty plea in the criminal proceedings, and that the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel provided an opportunity to contest the disciplinary charges against her, in response to which Norris instead chose to consent to disbarment. *Norris*, 115 A.3d at 570. Under these circumstances—the order imposing discipline-by-consent in another jurisdiction combined with a failure to respond to this Court’s show cause order—we must presume that the other jurisdiction’s sanction was appropriate. *In re Suspension of Iverson*, 60 V.I. 572, 576 (V.I. 2014). Accordingly, we disbar Norris from the practice of law in the Virgin Islands, effective immediately.

**Dated this 21st day of August, 2015.**

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**ATTEST:**  
**VERONICA J. HANDY, ESQ.**  
**Clerk of the Court**