

Anthony W. Blackburn Disbarred for Sexual Relations with Clients



Summary: A Florida attorney was disbarred by the state Supreme Court for having sexual relations with two of his clients in a jail interview room.

A Duval County attorney was found to have engaged in sexual activities with clients inside interview rooms of the jail. The Florida Supreme Court moved to disbar attorney Anthony Wayne Blackburn, 45. Blackburn, a Jacksonville lawyer, was arrested on September 16, 2016, after his visits to two female clients at the county pretrial-detention facility were discovered to be inappropriate, according to News4Jax.

A referee for the case recommended an 18-month suspension for Blackburn but the state Supreme Court went for a more severe punishment in a unanimous decision due to what they viewed as serious misconduct.

Blackburn allegedly solicited sexual favors with one female client by putting money into her bank account. He offered free or discounted legal services to the second client in exchange for sexual favors. When confronted with the evidence, Blackburn pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor battery charge. He is seeking treatment with a lawyers' assistance program. He was sentenced to one day in jail with credit for time served.

The state Supreme Court wrote in their decision: "In summary, evidenced by this (Supreme) Court's case law, under no circumstances should an attorney representing a client expose that client to unwanted sexual relations of any kind. Respondent's conduct, which exploited his clients' circumstances for his own personal benefit, 'breeds contempt and distrust of lawyers,' 'demonstrates severe moral turpitude,' and such actions 'are wholly inconsistent with approved professional standards.'"

Blackburn is a graduate of [Florida Coastal School of Law](#) in 2005. News4Jax previously reported that Blackburn showed the clients pornographic images on September 3 before having sexual contact with them behind closed doors. One of the victims said he pulled up the porn on his tablet and then made sexual advances towards her by touching her and forcing her to do the same.

Corrections officers noticed the lights were out in the room, prompting suspicions. One of the women claimed she took part in the sexual activity because she thought it would help her jail sentence be reduced. Investigators heard a recorded phone call the woman made to from jail to her friend, explaining to the friend what happened with Blackburn. He was arrested just a few days later.

This was Blackburn's second arrest. He was arrested in 2005 for driving under the influence. He was also suspended in 2014 by the Florida Bar for misconduct. He was back in good standing with the Bar when this incident happened.

Do you think that attorneys who engage in sexual relations with clients should be automatically disbarred? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

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