

Georgia Attorney Bill Snipes Stole Client Settlements



Summary: A Columbus, Georgia attorney has finally been arrested after evading the police for over six weeks for stealing millions of dollars from client settlements.

A Columbus, Georgia attorney is accused of stealing millions of dollars in insurance claim settlements from clients. George William “Bill” Snipes finally turned himself into the Muscogee County Jail to face the charges after eluding the police for over six weeks, according to the Columbus Ledger Enquirer.

Snipes is facing several theft by taking charges. His hearing is set for Wednesday morning and bond has been set at \$1.2 million. His attorney, Jerry Froelich of Atlanta, calls the bond amount “ridiculous.” There were 18 outstanding warrants issued in mid-April out on the 64-year-old. He has been able to avoid arrest since then. The investigation is ongoing so additional charges may be added against Snipes.

A number of clients filed complaints against Snipes claiming he settled their automobile accidents without informing them, forging their signatures, and/or keeping the settlement money. Investigators believe his 74-year-old brother James Malcolm Snipes was involved in the scheme. He is facing five theft by taking charges. Judge Julius Hunter has bound the cases to the Superior Court. James Snipes’ bond was set at \$125,000 on May 18 and he has not been able to make bond yet, according to his attorney Bobby Jones.

The state Supreme Court suspended indefinitely Snipes’ license earlier this year and the State Bar of Georgia has moved to have him disbarred after five former clients filed complaints with the state bar. He had been a solo practitioner since January 2012 after a partnership with his brothers, David and Robert, dissolved at that time. The complaints against Snipes were from the time he was on his own.

The first complaint involves a man who was in a car accident in 2015 and not at fault. He hired Snipes on a contingency fee basis. Snipes was able to settle the case with State Farm for \$300,000 but the client was unaware of this. State Farm sent the man two checks. Snipes told the man he needed to pay his attorney fees and medical bills with the settlement so he endorsed the checks to Snipes. Snipes wrote the man a \$170,000 check from his firm’s trust account. He told the man he would pay the medical bills for him but he never did and instead misappropriated the funds.

The second complaint involves a man who was in a car accident not his fault in 2013. He also hired Snipes on a contingency fee basis. Snipes settled with the insurance company of the driver at fault, The Hartford. Snipes requested the \$100,000 policy limit from Hartford, which was granted. Hartford sent a check to Snipes soon after. He then forged the client’s signature and cashed the check. The client learned the case had been settled when he received a letter from Hartford confirming it. The man hired another attorney to sue Snipes for malpractice. That case settled for \$98,000.

The third complaint involved an Alabama couple involved in an accident in 2016. Once again, Snipes was hired on a contingency fee basis. The insurance company for this case offered \$28,000 for the wife and \$20,000 for the husband even though they both suffered injuries. The couple did not authorize the settlements. The checks were sent to Snipes who forged their signatures so he could cash the checks. The couple ended up hiring another attorney who was able to determine what Snipes had done.

The fourth complaint was from a woman in a car accident that was not her fault in 2016. She hired Snipes on a contingency fee basis. Roughly 18 months after her accident, Snipes promised her case would be settled soon for a large amount, even writing her a \$2,000 check from his own account. However, he had already settled the case two months before for the policy limit of \$25,000. He had already forged her name and cashed the check that USAA had sent him. She sought other legal advice to uncover what he had done.

The fifth complaint came from a woman in an accident that was not her fault in 2016. The other driver was uninsured. A couple of months after the accident, she hired Snipes on a contingency fee basis. She ended up with \$100,000 in medical bills but Snipes claimed her insurance would settle for the policy limit of \$325,000. She never heard from Snipes again. Eventually, she contacted her insurance company who informed her they had sent checks totaling \$325,000 to Snipes the month before. He forged her name on the checks.

Do you think the evidence against Snipes is pretty solid? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about other attorneys who stole their clients’ settlement checks, read these articles:

- [Disbarred Michigan Attorney James Jonca Arrested for Keeping Clients’ Settlement Checks](#)
- [Attorney Grant King Sentenced to 10 Years for Stealing Settlement Money](#)
- [Former Schaumburg Attorney Stole from Clients, Including Own Uncle](#)

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