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78 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
9 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 SAN JOSE DIVISION

11
12 THOMAS CIRRITO; and ATOCHA LAND, LLC, No. C-08-03477 RMW

13 Plaintiffs,

14 v.

15 RNC HOLDINGS, LLC; RONALD BUCHHOLZ; CHARICE FISCHER; and
16 DOES 1 through 100,

17 Defendants.

18
19 ORDER GRANTING MOTION TO
20 WITHDRAW AS COUNSEL

21 [Re Docket No. 23]

22 The complaint in this action alleges that defendants created a real estate scheme to defraud
23 plaintiff investors of \$1.5 million of invested securities.24 Plaintiffs' attorneys from Ropers, Majeski, Kohn, and Bentley ("Ropers Majeski") now move
25 to withdraw as counsel. Defendants have filed a statement of non-opposition. Plaintiffs have filed
26 nothing in response. For the following reasons, the court grants the motion to withdraw.27 **I. BACKGROUND**28 The relationship between Ropers Majeski and plaintiffs is governed by a retainer agreement
executed by both parties ("the Agreement"). Declaration of Jesshill E. Love ¶ 2 (hereinafter "Love
Decl."). The agreement, however, has not been provided in the record. According to Mr. Love's
declaration, communication between plaintiffs and Ropers Majeski has broken down over the pastORDER GRANTING MOTION TO WITHDRAW AS COUNSEL—No. C-08-03477 RMW
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1 month, with plaintiffs failing to respond to correspondence and to indicate that future payments will
2 be timely made. Love Decl. ¶¶ 3-4.

3 **II. ANALYSIS**

4 Under the district's local rules, counsel may not withdraw without a court order. Civil L.R.
5 11-5(a). The court applies California's Rules of Professional Conduct to determine whether
6 withdrawal is proper. *E.g.*, *Cal. Native Plant Soc'y v. U.S. E.P.A.*, 2008 WL 4911162, *1 (N.D. Cal.
7 Nov. 14, 2008); *Elan Transdermal Ltd. v. Cygnus Therapeutic Sys.*, 809 F. Supp. 1383, 1387 (N.D.
8 Cal. 1992). Pursuant to such rules, an attorney may seek to withdraw if the client "breaches an
9 agreement or obligation to the member as to expenses or fees." Cal. Rule of Prof. Conduct
10 3-700(C)(1)(f). An attorney may also seek withdraw if the client's conduct renders it unreasonably
11 difficult for the attorney to represent the client effectively. *Id.* at (1)(d).

12 Mr. Love provides two justifications for Ropers Majeski's motion to withdraw. First, Mr.
13 Love states that plaintiffs have not offered any indication that payments of future fees will be timely
14 made. Love Decl. ¶ 4. This, however, is not evidence of a breach of an agreement or obligation as
15 to expenses or fees. Rather, it is simply a concern about a possible future breach. Second, Mr.
16 Love states that communication with plaintiffs has broken down, with plaintiffs failing to respond to
17 correspondence. Love Decl. ¶ 3. A client's lack of communication makes it unreasonably difficult
18 for the attorney to represent the client effectively. Ropers Majeski has notified plaintiffs and its
19 corporate counsel of its intent to withdraw as counsel. Thus, good cause exists for Ropers Majeski's
20 motion to withdraw, and the court grants the motion.

21 Plaintiff Cirrito, as an individual, may appear pro se, but plaintiff Atocha Land LLC, as an
22 incorporated entity, may not appear *pro se*. Civil L.R. 3-9(b). Atocha Land, LLC should promptly
23 retain counsel.

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III. ORDER

2 For the foregoing reasons, the motion to withdraw is granted. Atocha Land, LLC shall have
3 until August 14, 2009 to retain new counsel and have its new counsel file a notice of appearance.

4 Until new counsel is retained, any papers shall be served on plaintiffs at the following addresses:

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6 Thomas Cirrito	9163 Old Dominion Drive
7	McLean, VA 22102
8 Atocha Land, LLC	Thomas Cirrito
9	9163 Old Dominion Drive
10	McLean, VA 22102

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DATED: 07/31/09


RONALD M. WHYTE
United States District Judge

1 **Notice of this document has been electronically sent to:**

2 **Counsel for Plaintiffs:**

3 Jesshill E. Love jlove@ropers.com

4 Todd Andrew Roberts troberts@ropers.com

5 **Counsel for Defendants:**

6 Andrew A. August aaugust@pinnaclelawgroup.com

7 William W. Schofield wschofield@pinnaclelawgroup.com

8
9 Counsel are responsible for distributing copies of this document to co-counsel that have not
10 registered for e-filing under the court's CM/ECF program.

11
12 **Dated:** 07/31/09

13 JAS
Chambers of Judge Whyte