FILED

May 03 2018

Disciplinary Rnard

Docket #	ПЛО
l Vocket#	1178

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

In re

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DOUGLAS ALLEN STRATEMEYER,

Lawyer (WSBA No.21638)

Proceeding No. 17#00021

DISCIPLINARY BOARD ORDER DECLINING SUA SPONTE REVIEW AND ADOPTING HEARING OFFICER'S DECISION

This matter came before the Disciplinary Board for consideration of *sua sponte* review pursuant to ELC 11.3(a). On April 19, 2018, the Clerk distributed the attached decision to the Board.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the Board declines *sua sponte* review and adopts the Hearing Officer's decision¹.

Dated this 3 day of May, 2018.

Marc L. Silverman
CERTIFICATE OF Sibisciplinary Board Chair

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Clerk/Course to the Disciplinary Board

¹ The vote on this matter was 14-0. The following Board members voted: Silverman, Cornelius, Graber, Vovos, Patneaude, Startzel, Byerly, Rawlings, Denton, Value, Allen, Louvier, Wang and Harrington.



DISCIPLINARY BOARD

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

In re

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DOUGLAS ALLEN STRATEMEYER,

Lawyer (Bar No. 21638).

Proceeding No. 17#00021

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The undersigned Hearing Officer held the hearing on March 5 and 7, 2018 under Rule 10.13 of the Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer Conduct (ELC). Respondent Douglas Allen Stratemeyer did not appear at the hearing. Disciplinary Counsel Sachia Stonefeld Powell appeared for the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) of the Washington State Bar Association.

FORMAL COMPLAINT FILED BY DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

The Formal Complaint filed by Disciplinary Counsel charged Mr. Stratemeyer with the following counts of misconduct:

Count I – By failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing Mr. Thornock, Respondent violated RPC 1.3.

FOF COL Recommendation Page 1

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL
OF THE WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
1325 4th Avenue – Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101-2539
(206) 727-8207

1	Count II - By failing to communicate with Mr. Thornock regarding his matter,
2	Respondent violated RPC 1 .4.
3	Count III - By keeping the full \$1300 that Mr. Thornock paid but not completing the
4	work he agreed to do, Respondent violated RPC 1.5(a) and/or RPC 1.16(d).
5	Count IV - By failing to cooperate with ODC's investigation of the grievance filed by
6	Mr. Thornock, failing to appear as commanded in the investigative subpoena, and failing to
7	provide the documents requested by the subpoena, Respondent violated ELC 1.5, ELC 5.3(f)
8	and (g), ELC 5.5(d), and RPC 8.4(/).
9	Count V - By failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing
10	Mr. Bookheimer, Respondent violated RPC 1.3.
11	Count VI - By failing to communicate with Mr. Bookheimer regarding his matter,
12	Respondent violated RPC 1 .4.
13	Count VII - By keeping the full \$1500 that Mr. Bookheimer paid, but not completing the
14	work he agreed to do, Respondent violated RPC 1.5(a) and/or RPC 1.16(d).
15	Count VIII - By failing to cooperate with ODC's investigation of the grievance filed by
16	Mr. Bookheimer, failing to appear as commanded in the investigative subpoena, and failing to
17	provide the documents requested by the subpoena, Respondent violated ELC 1.5, ELC 5.3(f)
18	and (g), ELC 5.5(d), and RPC 8.4(/).
19	Based on the pleadings in the case, the testimony and exhibits at the hearing, the Hearing
20	Officer makes the following:
21	FINDINGS OF FACT
22	1. Respondent Douglas Allen Stratemeyer was admitted to the practice of law in the
23	State of Washington on June 11, 1992.
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Stephen Thornock had a juvenile conviction which required him to register under

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Respondent did not respond.

1	47.	In January 2015, Larry Bookheimer hired Respondent to vacate two criminal
2	convictions	
3	48.	Mr. Bookheimer paid Respondent \$1500 for the representation.
4	49.	Between January and July 2015, Mr. Bookheimer contacted Respondent multiple
5	times via er	nail, text and/or voicemail.
6	50.	Respondent did not respond to Mr. Bookheimer's inquiries.
7	51.	In July 2015, Mr. Bookheimer emailed Respondent to obtain information about his
8	matter beca	use he had not heard anything from him.
9	52.	In response, Respondent provided excuses for not working on Mr. Bookheimer's
10	matter.	
11	53.	In July 2015, Respondent filed a motion to vacate in State v. Bookheimer,
12	Thurston Co	ounty Superior Court Cause Number 03-1-00951-6.
13	54.	He did not note the motion for hearing.
14	55.	Respondent did not tell Mr. Bookheimer that he had filed the motion until October
15	28, 2015.	
16	56.	Between July and October 2015, Mr. Bookheimer and/or his wife contacted
17	Respondent	multiple times each month via email, text and/or voicemail.
18	57.	Respondent did not respond.
19	58.	In late October 2015, Respondent emailed Mr. Bookheimer to say that he would
20	obtain a hear	ring date and send notice to the prosecutor.
21	59.	Respondent did not obtain a hearing date and did not send notice to the prosecutor,
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24	FOR COL Book	

1	60.	Between October and December 2015, Mr. Bookheimer and/or his wife contacted
2	Respondent	multiple times each month via email, text and/or voicemail inquiring about the
3	status of his	matter.
4	61.	Respondent did not respond.
5	62.	In December 2015, when Mr. Bookheimer had not been notified of a date, he
6	contacted the	e prosecutor's office and learned that Respondent had not contacted them.
7	63.	On December 17, 2015, Mr. Bookheimer emailed Respondent about the status of
8	his case.	
9	64.	Respondent did not respond.
10	65.	In late January 2016, Mr. Bookheimer sent Respondent a certified letter in which
11	he requested	a refund.
12	66.	In response, Respondent informed Mr. Bookheimer that he wanted to conclude the
13	matter for his	m.
14	67.	Mr. Bookheimer agreed to allow Respondent to continue the representation.
15	68.	Between January and April 2016, Mr. Bookheimer and/or his wife contacted
16	Respondent	multiple times each month via email, text and/or voicemail inquiring about the
17	status of his	matter.
18	69.	Respondent did not respond.
19	70.	In April 2016, Respondent filed a motion for telephonic appearance and a
20	proposed ord	er.
21	71.	Between April and June 2016, Bookheimer and/or his wife contacted Respondent
22	multiple time	es each month via email, text and/or voicemail inquiring about the status of his
23	matter.	
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1	record, lost the use of the \$1500 he paid Respondent, and had to pay another lawyer \$1500 to
2	complete the work he had hired Respondent to do.
3	96. Mr. Thornock and Mr. Bookheimer were frustrated by Respondent's neglect o
4	their matters and lack of communication, as well as his refusal to return their unearned fees.
5	97. Delay injures the interests of the clients and reflects poorly on the profession.
6	98. Respondent has substantial experience in the practice of law.
7	99. Respondent has refused to acknowledge wrongful nature of conduct.
8	100. Respondent has not received any prior discipline.
9	CONCLUSIONS OF LAW
10	Violations Analysis
11	The Hearing Officer finds that ODC proved the following by a clear preponderance of
12	the evidence:
13	101. By failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing Mr.
14	Thornock, Respondent violated RPC 1.3.
15	102. By failing to communicate with Mr. Thornock regarding his matter, Respondent
16	violated RPC 1.4.
17	103. By keeping the full \$1300 that Mr. Thornock paid but not completing the work he
18	agreed to do, Respondent violated RPC 1.5(a) and RPC 1.16(d).
19	104. By failing to cooperate with ODC's investigation of the grievance filed by Mr.
20	Thornock, failing to appear as commanded in the investigative subpoena, and failing to provide
21	the documents requested by the subpoena, Respondent violated ELC 1.5, ELC 5.3(f) and (g),
22	ELC 5.5(d), and RPC 8.4(/).
23	105. By failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing Mr.
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1	Bookheimer, Respondent violated RPC 1.3.
2	106. By failing to communicate with Mr. Bookheimer regarding his matter, Respondent
3	violated RPC 1 .4.
4	107. By keeping the full \$1500 that Mr. Bookheimer paid, but not completing the work
5	he agreed to do, Respondent violated RPC 1.5(a) and RPC 1.16(d).
6	108. By failing to cooperate with ODC's investigation of the grievance filed by Mr.
7	Bookheimer, failing to appear as commanded in the investigative subpoena, and failing to
8	provide the documents requested by the subpoena, Respondent violated ELC 1.5, ELC 5.3(f)
9	and (g), ELC 5.5(d), and RPC 8.4(/).
10	Sanction Analysis
11	109. A presumptive sanction must be determined for each ethical violation. <u>In re</u>
12	Anschell, 149 Wn.2d 484, 69 P.3d 844, 852 (2003). The following standards of the American
13	Bar Association's Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions ("ABA Standards") (1991 ed. &
14	Feb. 1992 Supp.) are presumptively applicable in this case:
16 15	4.4 Lack of Diligence
16	4.41 Disbarment is generally appropriate when: (a) a lawyer abandons the practice and causes serious or potentially
17	serious injury to a client; or (b) a lawyer knowingly fails to perform services for a client and
18	causes serious or potentially serious injury to a client; or (c) a lawyer engages in a pattern of neglect with respect to client
19	matters and causes serious or potentially serious injury to a client. 4.42 Suspension is generally appropriate when:
20	(a) a lawyer knowingly fails to perform services for a client and causes injury or potential injury to a client, or
21	(b) a lawyer engages in a pattern of neglect and causes injury or potential injury to a client.
22	4.43 Reprimand is generally appropriate when a lawyer is negligent and does not act with reasonable diligence in representing a client, and causes injury or
23	potential injury to a client. 4.44 Admonition is generally appropriate when a lawyer is negligent and does
24	not act with reasonable diligence in representing a client, and causes little or no
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that another practice monitor be selected, the Probation Administrator will select another practice monitor. Respondent need not identify any basis for this initial request.

- b) Subsequent Challenges: If, after selection of a second (or subsequent) practice monitor, Respondent believes there is good cause why that individual should not serve as practice monitor, Respondent may, within 15 days of notice of the selected practice monitor, send a written request to the Probation Administrator asking that another practice monitor be selected. That request must articulate good cause to support the request. If the Probation Administrator agrees, another practice monitor will be selected. If the Probation Administrator disagrees, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel will submit its proposed selection for practice monitor to the Chair of the Disciplinary Board for appointment pursuant to ELC 13.8(a)(2), and will also provide the Chair with the Respondent's written request that another practice monitor be selected.
- 122. In the event the practice monitor is no longer able to perform his or her duties, the Probation Administrator will select a new practice monitor at his or her discretion.
- 123. During the period of probation, Respondent must cooperate with the named practice monitor. Respondent must meet with the practice monitor at least once per month. Respondent must communicate with the practice monitor to schedule all required meetings.
- 124. The Respondent must bring to each meeting a current, complete written list of all pending client legal matters being handled by the Respondent. The list must identify the current status of each client matter and any problematic issues regarding each client matter. The list may identify clients by using the client's initials rather than the client's name.
- 125. At each meeting, the practice monitor will discuss with Respondent practice issues that have arisen or are anticipated. In light of the conduct giving rise to the imposition of probation, ODC recommends that the practice monitor and Respondent discuss whether Respondent is diligently making progress on each client matter, whether Respondent is in communication with each client, whether Respondent needs to consider withdrawing from any client matters and, if so, whether any refund is warranted. Meetings may be in person or by

1	telephone at the practice monitor's discretion. The practice monitor uses discretion in
2	determining the length of each meeting.
3	126. The practice monitor will provide the Probation Administrator with quarterly
4	written reports regarding Respondent's compliance with probation terms and the RPC. Each
5	report must include the date of each meeting with Respondent, a brief synopsis of the discussion
6	topics, and a brief description of any concerns the practice monitor has regarding the
7	Respondent's compliance with the RPC. The report must be signed by the practice monitor.
8	Each report is due within 30 days of the completion of the quarter.
9	127. If the practice monitor believes that Respondent is not complying with any of his
10	ethical duties under the RPC or if Respondent fails to schedule or attend a monthly meeting, the
11	practice monitor will promptly communicate that to the Probation Administrator.
12	128. Respondent must make payments totaling \$1,000 to the Washington State Bar
13	Association to defray the costs and expenses of administering the probation, as follows:
14	a) \$250 due within 30 days of the start of the probation;
15	b) \$250 due within 6 months of the start of the probation period;
16	c) \$250 due within 12 months of the start of the probation period; and
17	d) \$250 due within 18 months of the start of the probation period.
18	All payments should be provided to the Probation Administrator for processing.
19	129. The Hearing Officer further recommends that Respondent pay restitution to Mr.
20	Thornock in the amount of \$1300 plus interest accruing at a rate of 12% per anum beginning
21	December 1, 2015, and that Respondent pay restitution to Mr. Bookheimer in the amount of
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1	\$1500 plus interest accruing at a rate of 12% per anum beginning August 1, 2016. Full payment
2	of restitution should be a condition of reinstatement to the practice of law.
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4	Dated this 7 day of March, 2018.
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6	Evan L. Schwab, Bar No. 2174
7	Hearing Officer
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