

1	fees, Respondent violated RPC 1.5(a) and RPC 1.16(d).
2	Count 2 : By failing to provide Mr. Rivera with competent representation, Respondent violated RPC 1.1.
3	Count 2. Dry failing to provide Mr. Divore with diligent and prompt representation
4	Count 3 : By failing to provide Mr. Rivera with diligent and prompt representation, Respondent violated RPC 1.3.
5	Count 4 : By failing to keep Mr. Rivera reasonably informed about the status of his case, by failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, and by failing to
6	explain the matter to the extent reasonably necessary for Mr. Rivera to make informed decisions, Respondent violated RPC 1.4(a) and RPC 1.4(b).
7 8	Count 5 : By making misrepresentations to Mr. Rivera regarding his case, Respondent violated RPC 8.4(c) and RPC 1.4.
9	Count 6: By knowingly making a false statement that he was unable to timely respond
10	to the grievance filed by Mr. Rivera because he had not received a copy of grievance, Respondent violated RPC $8.4(l)$, RPC $8.4(c)$, and RPC $8.1(a)$.
11	Count 7 : By failing to fully and promptly cooperate with the investigation of Mr. Rivera's grievance, Respondent violated RPC $8.1(b)$ and RPC $8.4(l)$ by violating ELC
12	1.5 and ELC 5.3(f).
13	Count 8 : By revealing information relating to Ms. Cruz Martinez's representation to opposing counsel without Ms. Cruz Martinez's informed consent and authorization,
14	Respondent violated RPC 1.6(a).
15	Count 9 : By failing to fully and promptly cooperate with the investigation of Ms. Cruz Martinez's grievance, Respondent violated RPC 8.1(b) and/or RPC 8.4(l) by violating
16	ELC 1.5 and ELC 5.3(f).
17	FINDINGS OF FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW REGARDING RECOMMENDED SANCTION
18	4. Respondent acted knowingly in charging an unreasonable fee to Mr. Rivera and in
19	failing to refund his fee after determining that he was unable to perform the work that Mr.
20	Rivera had hired him to perform. Mr. Rivera was denied access to his funds as a result of
21	Respondent's misconduct and had to pay another immigration lawyer to perform the work for
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23	which he hired Respondent.
	5. Respondent demonstrated a failure to understand relevant legal doctrines or
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procedures by failing to determine that Mr. Rivera was ineligible for I-485 relief when he was hired, by informing Mr. Rivera that his uncle could sponsor his I-485 application, by pursuing an I-485 application that had no chance of success, and by failing to file an I-130 application after the dissolution of Mr. Rivera's marriage. Mr. Rivera's matter was significantly delayed (by two years) as a result of Respondent's failure to understand relevant legal doctrines and procedures, and Mr. Rivera had to pay another immigration lawyer to perform the work for which he hired Respondent.

6. Respondent negligently failed to determine that Mr. Rivera was ineligible to file an
I-485 application when he was hired and negligently failed to file an I-130 petition upon the
dissolution of Mr. Rivera's marriage in May 2015. Mr. Rivera's matter was significantly
delayed (by two years) as a result of Respondent's negligence, and Mr. Rivera had to pay
another immigration lawyer to perform the work for which he hired Respondent.

Respondent knowingly failed to consult with Mr. Rivera about the means by which 7. 13 his objectives were to be accomplished, knowingly failed to keep Mr. Rivera reasonably 14 informed about the status of his I-485 application, knowingly failed to promptly comply with 15 reasonable requests for information, and knowingly failed to explain the matter to the extent 16 reasonably necessary to permit Mr. Rivera to make informed decisions regarding the 17 representation. Mr. Rivera's eligibility to file an I-485 application was significantly delayed (by 18 two years) as a result of Respondent's failure to communicate with him. Additionally, Mr. 19 Rivera suffered anxiety and stress as a result of being left in the dark regarding the status of his 20 21 I-485 application.

8. Respondent knowingly deceived Mr. Rivera about the status of his application.
Respondent knowingly deceived Mr. Rivera by informing him that he would check on the status

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of an application that he never filed and by falsely telling Mr. Rivera that he did not file an I485 application because his uncle would not sponsor him. Mr. Rivera's matter was significantly
delayed (by two years) as a result of Respondent's misconduct, and Mr. Rivera had to pay
another immigration lawyer to perform the work for which he hired Respondent. Respondent's
conduct also reflects poorly on the profession and diminishes public confidence in the legal
system.

9. Respondent knowingly made a false statement to ODC with the intent to benefit
himself. Respondent's actions caused serious or potentially serious injury to the public and the
legal system.

10 10. Respondent knowingly failed to respond to ODC's request for a response to both
 Ms. Cruz Martinez's grievance and Mr. Rivera's grievance. Respondent did not file a written
 response for either grievance until after he was subpoenaed for non-cooperation depositions.
 Respondent's conduct caused actual harm by forcing ODC to expend additional time and
 resources in attempting to obtain Respondent's cooperation. Respondent's failure to cooperate
 also reflects poorly on the profession and diminishes public confidence in the legal system.

11. Respondent knowingly disclosed confidential client information with the intent to
benefit himself. Respondent did not obtain informed consent from his client and the disclosures
were not impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation. Respondent's disclosures
had no purpose other than to benefit himself. Respondent's actions caused injury and potential
injury to Ms. Cruz Martinez by revealing unfavorable information to the government lawyer
prosecuting his client's/former client's immigration matter.

12. The following standards of the American Bar Association's <u>Standards for</u> <u>Imposing Lawyer Sanctions</u> ("ABA <u>Standards</u>") (1991 ed. & Feb. 1992 Supp.) presumptively

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1	apply in this	case:
2	13.	ABA Standard 4.2 is most applicable to Respondent's violation of RPC 1.6(a).
3	4.2 4.21	<i>Failure to Preserve the Client's Confidences</i> Disbarment is generally appropriate when a lawyer, with the intent to benefit the
4		lawyer or another, knowingly reveals information relating to representation of a client not otherwise lawfully permitted to be disclosed, and this disclosure causes
5		injury or potential injury to a client.
6	14.	The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Count 8 is disbarment
7	under ABA S	Standard 4.21.
8	15.	ABA Standard 7.0 is most applicable to Respondent's violations of RPC 1.5(a),
9	RPC 1.16(d)	, RPC 8.1(a), RPC 8.1(b), RPC 8.4(c), RPC 8.4(l), ELC 1.5, and ELC 5.3(f).
10	7.0	Violations of Duties Owed as a Professional
11	7.1	Disbarment is generally appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in conduct that is a violation of a duty owed as a professional with the intent to
12		obtain a benefit for the lawyer or another, and causes serious or potentially serious injury to a client, the public, or the legal system.
13	7.2	Suspension is generally appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in conduct that is a violation of a duty owed as a professional and causes injury or potential injury to a client, the public, or the legal system.
14	16.	The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Count 6 is disbarment
15	under ABA §	Standard 7.1.
16		The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Counts 1, 7, and 9 is
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18	suspension u	inder ABA <u>Standard</u> 7.2.
19	18.	ABA <u>Standard</u> 4.6 is most applicable to Respondent's violation of RPC 8.4(c).
20	4.6 4.62	<i>Lack of Candor</i> Suspension is generally appropriate when a lawyer knowingly deceives a client, and causes injury or potential injury to the client.
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22	19.	The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Count 5 is suspension
23	under ABA	Standard 4.62.
23	20.	ABA Standard 4.4 is most applicable to Respondent's violations of RPC 1.3, RPC
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1	1.4(a), and RPC 1.4(b).	
2	 4.4 Lack of Diligence 4.42 Suspension is generally appropriate when: (a) a lawyer knowingly fails to perform services for a client and causes 	
4	injury or potential injury to a client.4.43 Reprimand is generally appropriate when a lawyer is negligent and does not act	
5	with reasonable diligence in representing a client, and causes injury or potential injury to a client.	
6	21. The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Count 4 is suspension	
7	under ABA <u>Standard</u> 4.42(a).	1
8	22. The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Count 3 is reprimand	
9	under ABA <u>Standard</u> 4.43.	1
10	23. ABA <u>Standard</u> 4.5 is most applicable to Respondent's violation of RPC 1.1.	
11	 4.5 Lack of Competence 4.53 Reprimand is generally appropriate when a lawyer: 	
12	 4.53 Reprimand is generally appropriate when a lawyer: (a) demonstrates failure to understand relevant legal doctrines or procedures and causes injury or potential injury to a client. 	
13	24. The presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct for Count 2 is reprimand	
14	under ABA <u>Standard</u> 4.53(a).	
15	25. Under In re Disciplinary Proceeding Against Petersen, 120 Wn.2d 833, 854, 846	
16	P.2d 1330 (1993), the "ultimate sanction imposed should at least be consistent with the sanction	
17	for the most serious instance of misconduct among a number of violations."	
18	26. The presumptive sanction for the most serious instances of misconduct in this case	
19	is disbarment.	
20	27. The following aggravating factors set forth in Section 9.22 of the ABA Standards	
21	apply in this case:	
22	(d) multiple offenses;	
23	 (g) refusal to acknowledge wrongful nature of conduct; (i) substantial experience in the practice of law (admitted in 1999); and 	
24	WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION	1

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1	(j) indifference to making restitution.	
2	28. It is an additional aggravating factor that Respondent failed to file an answer to the	
3	Formal Complaint as required by ELC 1.5 and ELC 10.5(a). ¹	
4	29. The following mitigating factor set forth in Section 9.32 of the ABA Standards	
5	applies to this case:	
6	(a) absence of a prior disciplinary record.	
7	30. On balance, the aggravating and mitigating factors do not warrant deviation from	
8	the presumptive sanction of disbarment.	ميثوممميتوي
9	RECOMMENDATION	
10	31. Based on the ABA Standards and the applicable aggravating and mitigating	
11	factors, the Hearing Officer recommends that Respondent Credo Enriquez be disbarred and	_
12	ordered to pay restitution under ELC 13.7 of \$2,500 to Roberto Rivera.	
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14	DATED this g day of April, 2019.	
15	1) gattain	
16	William Edward Fitzharris,	
17	Hearing Officer CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE	
18	I certify that I caused a copy of the TELOL 4 HU'S PELOM MENANTON	
19	to be delivered to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and to be mailed to Wap HW WWW Respondent's Counsel to Wap HW WWW Status South W WWW by Certified/Tirst class mails	
20	postage prepaid on the 474 day of April , 1019	
21	Clerk/Counsel to the Disciplinary Board	
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23	¹ ELC 10.5(a) provides: "Failure to file an answer as required may be grounds for discipline and for ar order of default under rule 10.6."	n
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1 Nov 06 2018 2 Disciplinary Board 3 Docket # 004 4 5 6 BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD 7 OF THE WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT 8 9 Proceeding No. 18#00053 In re 10 FORMAL COMPLAINT **CREDO ENRIQUEZ,** 11 Lawyer (Bar No. 28921). 12 13 Under Rule 10.3 of the Washington Supreme Court's Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer 14 Conduct (ELC), the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) of the Washington State Bar 15 Association charges the above-named lawyer with acts of misconduct under the Washington 16 Supreme Court's Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) as set forth below. 17 **ADMISSION TO PRACTICE** 18 1. Respondent Credo Enriquez was admitted to the practice of law in the State of 19 Washington on June 10, 1999. 20 FACTS REGARDING COUNTS 1 THROUGH 7 21 2. Roberto Rivera, a native and citizen of El Salvador, was granted Temporary

2. Roberto Rivera, a native and citizen of El Salvador, was granted Temporary Protected Status, which allowed him to remain and work in the United States, but did not provide him with lawful permanent resident status.

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1	3. On or about September 17, 2014, Mr. Rivera hired Respondent to file an
2	Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (I-485 application).
3	4. Mr. Rivera signed a fee agreement, which stated that Respondent was to "represent
4	[him] in the following matter(s): I-485 (except Supplement A, if necessary)."
5	5. Mr. Rivera paid Respondent a flat fee of \$2,500 for his services.
6	6. Respondent never informed Mr. Rivera that he first needed to determine whether
7	Mr. Rivera was eligible to file an I-485 application.
8	7. Respondent told Mr. Rivera that Mr. Rivera's uncle could sponsor his application.
9	8. Respondent's advice was inaccurate because USCIS does not permit uncles to
10	sponsor nieces or nephews.
11	9. Respondent filled out the I-485 application, which Mr. Rivera signed.
12	10. Respondent told Mr. Rivera that he would file the application, and informed him
13	that once the application was filed, there would be a lengthy waiting process.
14	11. Respondent never filed Mr. Rivera's I-485 application.
15	12. From early 2015 to mid-2017, Mr. Rivera contacted Respondent several times to
16	obtain information regarding the status of his I-485 application.
17	13. When Respondent responded, he informed Mr. Rivera that he needed to check on
18	the status of the application and would call Mr. Rivera back.
19	14. Respondent did not provide the information Mr. Rivera requested regarding the
20	status of his I-485 application.
21	15. In mid-2017, Mr. Rivera called U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
22	(USCIS) to check on his I-485 application. USCIS informed Mr. Rivera that his I-485
23	application had never been filed.
	OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

terminated Respondent's representation. 17. In or around June 2017, Mr. Rivera obtained his client file from Respondent and saw the word "DISQUALIFIED" written on his I-485 application. 18. Respondent knew by September 2015 at the latest that Mr. Rivera was ineligible 19. Mr. Rivera was ineligible to file an I-485 application because he was over 21 years old and married. 20. Respondent never informed Mr. Rivera that he was ineligible for permanent 485 application. 21. When Mr. Rivera terminated the representation, Respondent told Mr. Rivera that not sponsor Mr. Rivera. 22. This statement was false. 23. Respondent never had a conversation with Mr. Rivera's uncle regarding his sponsorship of Mr. Rivera's I-485 application. 24. Respondent continued his representation of Mr. Rivera despite recognizing that he had no viable method of performing the services for which Mr. Rivera hired him. 25. Respondent did not refund any fees to Mr. Rivera. terminated the representation. 27. Mr. Rivera would have been eligible to file an I-485 application after an OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL Formal Complaint Page 3

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16. Upon discovering that Respondent did not file his I-485 application, Mr. Rivera

for permanent resident status and that filing an I-485 application had no chance of success.

resident status or that he had no chance of obtaining permanent resident status by filing an I-

he did not file the I-485 application because Mr. Rivera's uncle told Respondent that he would

26. Respondent did not return the check for the application filing fee until Mr. Rivera

approximate seven-year waiting period from the filing of a valid I-130 petition. 28. Mr. Rivera got divorced in May 2015. 29. After Mr. Rivera's divorce, Mr. Rivera was eligible to file an I-130 petition in May 2015. 4 30. Respondent did not file an I-130 petition on Mr. Rivera's behalf. 31. On January 19, 2018, ODC mailed Respondent a copy of Mr. Rivera's grievance 6 along with a letter requesting a written response to the grievance within thirty (30) days. 7 32. Respondent did not provide a response. 8 33. On February 22, 2018, ODC mailed Respondent a letter informing him that, if he 9 failed to provide a written response to the grievance within ten (10) days, he would be 10 subpoenaed for a deposition, and that his failure to respond might subject him to interim 11 12 suspension. 34. Respondent did not provide a response within 10 days of ODC's February 22, 13 2018 letter. 14 35. On March 14, 2018, Disciplinary Counsel issued a subpoena duces tecum 15 commanding Respondent to appear for a deposition on April 19, 2018, and to produce 16 records. 17 36. On April 8, 2018, Respondent told Disciplinary Counsel that he was unable to 18 submit a timely response to the grievance because he never received a copy of the grievance. 19 37. Respondent made a false statement to ODC with the intent to benefit himself when 20 he informed Disciplinary Counsel that he was unable to timely respond to the grievance 21 because he had not received a copy of the grievance. 22 38. On April 16, 2018, Respondent provided a written response to the grievance and 23 OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL Formal Complaint WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION Page 4 1325 4th Avenue, Suite 600

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produced the requested documents.

39. On April 19, 2018, a non-cooperation deposition was held.

FACTS REGARDING COUNTS 8 AND 9

40. In or around October 2015, Maria Cruz Martinez and her daughter, natives and citizens of El Salvador, were detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials in Texas. They were released from immigration detention and their matter was transferred to Seattle.

41. In or around May 2016, Ms. Cruz Martinez hired Respondent to represent her and her daughter in immigration proceedings and file applications for asylum and withholding of removal.

42. Ms. Cruz Martinez signed a fee agreement, which stated that Respondent was hired to file an I-589 asylum application.

43. Ms. Cruz Martinez does not speak, read, or write in English.

44. Respondent hired a Spanish interpreter to assist him in interviewing Ms. Cruz Martinez and prepared an asylum application and declaration.

45. On or about June 29, 2016, a master calendar hearing was held.

46. At the master calendar hearing, Respondent informed the government lawyer and the immigration court that Ms. Cruz Martinez and her daughter were seeking asylum, withholding of removal, and convention against torture relief.

47. In or around May 2017, Respondent lodged Ms. Cruz Martinez's asylum application with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Nebraska Service Center. Respondent filed the application with the immigration court in June 2017.

48. The application, which was written in English and signed by Ms. Cruz Martinez,

stated that Ms. Cruz Martinez fled from El Salvador because her husband was a gang member, and her husband beat her and threatened to kill her.

49. The application further stated that Ms. Cruz Martinez was "deathly afraid" of returning to El Salvador because she would be "tortured and sexually brutalized" by gang members and her husband, who previously held a gun to her head.

50. With the application, Respondent filed a declaration written in English signed by Ms. Cruz Martinez. The declaration stated that Ms. Cruz Martinez's husband repeatedly assaulted her and that she suffered years of physical abuse.

51. Assistant Chief Counsel Xiao Yan Huang prosecuted Ms. Cruz Martinez's immigration matter on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security.

52. On July 20, 2017, Respondent called Ms. Huang and requested that DHS agree to voluntary departure for Ms. Cruz Martinez and her daughter.

53. During this telephone call, Respondent told Ms. Huang that he was no longer seeking asylum for Ms. Cruz Martinez because her asylum claim was "meritless" and she "could not meet her burden of proof."

54. During this telephone call, Respondent told Ms. Huang that the information in Ms. Cruz Martinez's declaration was false.

55. During this telephone call, Respondent informed Ms. Huang that he asked Ms. Cruz Martinez whether her husband ever physically hurt her and she said no. This was inconsistent with the information in Ms. Cruz Martinez's application and declaration that Respondent filed in May and June 2017.

56. During this conversation, Ms. Huang interrupted Respondent to stop Respondent from revealing information relating to his client's representation, but Respondent continued to

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state that Ms. Cruz Martinez lied in her declaration.

57. A merits hearing was held in Ms. Cruz Martinez's immigration matter on August 1, 2017.

58. On the morning of the merits hearing, Respondent left Ms. Huang a voicemail stating that Ms. Cruz Martinez's declaration was actually true and accurate. This message directly contradicted Respondent's statements to Ms. Huang during their July 20, 2017 telephone conversation.

59. At the merits hearing, Respondent informed the immigration court that Ms. Cruz Martinez was no longer seeking asylum and was instead requesting pre-hearing voluntary departure.

60. At the merits hearing, Ms. Cruz Martinez informed the immigration court that she did not agree to voluntary departure and that she did not want to withdraw her asylum claim and leave the U.S.

61. At the merits hearing, Respondent withdrew from Ms. Cruz Martinez's representation.

62. Shortly after Respondent withdrew from the representation, Respondent left a voicemail for Ms. Huang stating that Ms. Cruz Martinez filed a grievance against him with the bar association, that Ms. Cruz Martinez is a liar and a terrible person, and that he wants her to be deported.

63. Respondent did not obtain authorization and/or informed consent from Ms. Cruz Martinez to disclose information about her representation to Ms. Huang.

64. Respondent's disclosures were not impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation.

65. Respondent's disclosures were not necessary to accomplish any of the following: prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm; prevent his client from committing a crime; prevent, mitigate or rectify substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another; secure legal advice about his compliance with the RPC; establish a claim or defense on his behalf; comply with a court order; detect and resolve conflicts of interest; or address his client's breach of a fiduciary responsibility.

66. On October 25, 2017, ODC mailed Respondent a copy of Ms. Cruz Martinez's grievance along with a letter requesting he provide a written response to the grievance within 30 days. Respondent did not provide a response within 30 days.

67. On November 28, 2017, ODC mailed Respondent a letter informing him that, if he failed to provide a written response to the grievance within 10 days, he would be subpoenaed for a deposition, and that his failure to respond might subject him to interim suspension. Respondent did not provide a response within 10 days.

68. Respondent did not respond to Ms. Cruz Martinez's grievance within 10 days.

69. On December 18, 2017, Disciplinary Counsel issued a subpoena duces tecum commanding Respondent to appear for a deposition on January 18, 2018, and to produce specified records.

70. On December 18, 2017, Respondent was personally served with the subpoena.

71. On December 28, 2017, Respondent provided a written response to the grievance and produced the requested documents.

72. On July 10, 2018, a non-cooperation deposition was held.

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1	COUNT 1
2	73. By charging Mr. Rivera an unreasonable fee and/or by failing to refund unearned
3	fees, Respondent violated RPC 1.5(a) and/or RPC 1.16(d).
4	COUNT 2
5	74. By failing to provide Mr. Rivera with competent representation, Respondent
6	violated RPC 1.1.
7	COUNT 3
8	75. By failing to provide Mr. Rivera with diligent and/or prompt representation,
9	Respondent violated RPC 1.3.
10	COUNT 4
11	76. By failing to keep Mr. Rivera reasonably informed about the status of his case, by
12	failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, and/or by failing to
13	explain the matter to the extent reasonably necessary for Mr. Rivera to make informed
14	decisions, Respondent violated RPC 1.4(a) and/or RPC 1.4(b).
15	COUNT 5
16	77. By making misrepresentations to Mr. Rivera regarding his case, Respondent
17	violated RPC 8.4(c) and/or RPC 1.4.
18	COUNT 6
18	78. By knowingly making a false statement that he was unable to timely respond to the
20	grievance filed by Mr. Rivera because he had not received a copy of the grievance,
20	Respondent violated RPC 8.4(1), and/or RPC 8.4(c), and/or RPC 8.1(a).
	COUNT 7
22 23	79. By failing to fully and promptly cooperate with the investigation of Mr. Rivera's
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grievance, Respondent violated RPC 8.1(b) and/or RPC 8.4(l) by violating ELC 1.5 and/or ELC 5.3(f).

COUNT 8

80. By revealing information relating to Ms. Cruz Martinez's representation to opposing counsel without Ms. Cruz Martinez's informed consent and/or authorization, Respondent violated RPC 1.6(a).

COUNT 9

81. By failing to fully and promptly cooperate with the investigation of Ms. Cruz Martinez's grievance, Respondent violated RPC 8.1(b) and/or RPC 8.4(l) by violating ELC 1.5 and/or ELC 5.3(f).

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THEREFORE, Disciplinary Counsel requests that a hearing be held under the Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer Conduct. Possible dispositions include disciplinary action, probation, restitution, and assessment of the costs and expenses of these proceedings.

Dated this (p^{tu}) day of November, 2018.

Emily Krueger, Bar No. 53186 Disciplinary Counsel

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