FILED

Jun 14, 2021

Disciplinary Board

Docket # 029

DISCIPLINARY BOARD WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

In re

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JAMES EGAN,

Lawyer (Bar No. 28257).

Proceeding No. 19#00057

ODC File No. 18-01449

STIPULATION TO SUSPENSION AND PROBATION

Under Rule 9.1 of the Washington Supreme Court's Rules for Enforcement of Lawyer Conduct (ELC), the following Stipulation to Suspension and Probation is entered into by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) of the Washington State Bar Association (Association) through Disciplinary Counsel Scott G. Busby and Henry Cruz, Respondent James Egan, and Respondent's counsel, Kurt M. Bulmer.

Respondent understands that Respondent is entitled under the ELC to a hearing, to present exhibits and witnesses, and to have a hearing officer determine the facts, misconduct and sanction in this case. Respondent further understands that Respondent is entitled under the ELC to appeal the outcome of a hearing to the Disciplinary Board and, in certain cases, the Supreme Court. Respondent further understands that a hearing and appeal could result in an outcome more or less

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favorable to Respondent. Respondent chooses to resolve this proceeding now by entering into 2 the following stipulation to facts, misconduct, sanction and probation to avoid the risk, time. 3 expense and publicity attendant to further proceedings. 4 I. ADMISSION TO PRACTICE 5 1. Respondent was admitted to practice law in the State of Washington on November 2, 1998. 6 7 II. STIPULATED FACTS 8 2. In November 2016, Patricia Bell filed a petition for the dissolution of Bell's marriage 9 to Carlo DiLorenzo in Bell v. DiLorenzo, Pierce County Superior Court No. 16-3-04479-3. 10 Distribution of the couple's property was determined by a court in the State of New York. The 11 Pierce County proceeding addressed child support and the couple's parenting plan. In the Pierce 12 County proceeding, Bell was represented by lawyer Jeffrey A. Robinson. DiLorenzo was 13 represented by lawyer Stacey Swenhaugen. The case was assigned to Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck. 14 15 3. By the parties' agreement, Kate Lee began acting as a visitation supervisor in March 2017. Lee supervised DiLorenzo's visits with the couple's minor children. 16 17 4. Bell hired a private investigator to investigate Lee and DiLorenzo. On or about October 20, 2017, Lee informed the parties' counsel that Lee was 18 5. 19 withdrawing as visitation supervisor. Lee informed the parties' counsel that Bell's private investigator had telephoned Lee on October 19, 2017 and questioned Lee about Lee's personal 20 21 history, that Lee believed the purpose of the call was to scare, harass or intimidate Lee, and that 22 Lee could no longer be objective. 23

- 6. By October 28, 2017, Kevin Liger had succeeded Lee as visitation supervisor.
- 7. On November 3, 2017, DiLorenzo filed a Motion for Temporary Restraining Order against Bell. In it, DiLorenzo expressed concerns about being followed by the private investigator hired by Bell. DiLorenzo also mentioned that Bell's private investigator had contacted Lee.
- 8. On November 13, 2017, Bell filed a Responsive Declaration to which Bell attached documents concerning Lee's personal life and criminal history.
- 9. Lee prepared a Declaration of Kate Lee, which Swenhaugen filed for Lee on November 14, 2017. In it, Lee described concerns that Lee and Lee's family were being watched and followed by Bell's private investigator. Lee did not admit or deny having been convicted of a felony and said she had passed a background check.
- 10. At a hearing on November 16, 2017, a court commissioner entered an Order re Modification of Parenting Plan and Restraining Order containing standard language restraining each party from interfering with the peace of the other party.
- 11. DiLorenzo moved for revision of the commissioner's November 16, 2017 order. At a hearing on December 1, 2017, Judge van Doorninck entered an Order on Motion for Revision and a Temporary Restraining Order. The Temporary Restraining Order restrained Bell from following or keeping under surveillance DiLorenzo or the children during DiLorenzo's residential time, either directly or through a third party. At the hearing, Judge van Doorninck criticized Bell for placing derogatory personal information about Lee in the court file.
- 12. Robinson withdrew as counsel of record for Bell, and lawyer Mary Stearns became Bell's counsel of record.
 - 13. In late December 2017, Respondent, as self-designated "personal counsel" and

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advisory counsel'	' for Bell, began	advising and	assisting Bell	with respect to	the Pierce County
roceeding.					

- 14. On December 14, 2017, almost two months after Lee withdrew as visitation supervisor, Bell signed and filed a document entitled "Petitioner's Affidavit Motion to Reconsider Court Rulings re: Family Court Supervisor."
 - 15. Respondent advised and assisted Bell in preparing that document.
- 16. The document contains a narrative about Bell's investigation of Lee, Bell's demands for more information about Lee, Bell's critique of the court's vetting process, Bell's criticism of DiLorenzo's parenting, and Bell's dissatisfaction with Bell's counsel of record, Mary Stearns. Following this narrative were 36 pages of documents relating to Lee, including court records and social media postings.
 - 17. On December 18, 2017, Judge van Doorninck denied the Motion to Reconsider.
- 18. On January 9, 2018, almost three months after Lee withdrew as visitation supervisor, Bell signed and filed a document entitled "New Evidence that G.A.L. Kate Lee Is an Unqualified Felon" and "Motion for Judge Van Doorninck to Recuse Self for Retaliation against Party Raising this Actual Fact."
 - 19. Respondent advised and assisted Bell in preparing that document.
- 20. In that document, Bell accused Judge van Doorninck of, among other things, putting the judge's "head in the sand," having a "personal interest" in the matter, engaging in "retaliation" against Bell, and having "tied her career" to Lee. Bell asked that Judge van Doorninck recuse, and that the case be assigned to a different Pierce County Superior Court judge.
 - 21. A week later, on January 16, 2018, Stearns withdrew as counsel of record for Bell.

- 22. As of January 1, 2018, Judge Karena Kirkendoll took over cases assigned to Family Court 2, including *Bell v. DiLorenzo*.
- 23. On January 17, 2018, Presiding Judge Elizabeth Martin advised Pierce County Superior Court judges and commissioners that Lee should not be approved as a visitation supervisor due to her criminal history.
- 24. On January 23, 2018, Bell signed and filed a document entitled "Petitioner's Affidavit and Notice of Request for Continuance and Change of Venue to King County."
 - 25. Respondent advised and assisted Bell in preparing that document.
- 26. In that document, Bell made many grievances against Lee, Judge van Doorninck, and Judge Martin. Bell asked to have the case transferred to King County, where Respondent's practice is located. Bell claimed that Bell could not get a fair trial in Pierce County because no judge there could be objective. The motion was noted for hearing on February 2, 2018.
- 27. Bell, with Respondent's advice and assistance, filed additional papers before the hearing.
- 28. On February 2, 2018, the date of the hearing, Respondent filed a document entitled "Limited Notice of Appearance for Hearing re: 12/1/7 [sic] Orders and Change of Venue Motion." In that document, Respondent stated that Respondent's appearance was "limited to this one day," and that the case should be "transferred to King County" because "Ms. Bell cannot get a fair trial from any judge in Pierce County Family Court."
- 29. On February 2, 2018, Respondent represented Bell at the motion hearing. Judge Kirkendoll denied the motion, finding no basis to disqualify all 22 Pierce County Superior Court Judges, and especially Judge Kirkendoll, who was just assigned to the case.

- 30. On February 5, 2018, lawyer John Stratford Mills appeared as counsel of record for Bell.
- 31. On February 5, 2018, Respondent filed another "Notice of Appearance," this time "for the limited purpose of representation on issues relating to change of venue."
- 32. On February 5, 2018, Respondent also filed a document entitled "Motion for Reconsideration on Denial of Motion for Change of Venue [and] Notice of Intended Colloquy with Judge(s) Pregarding [sic] Appearance of Impropriety." In that document, Respondent made many grievances against Lee, Judge van Doorninck, Judge Martin, Judge Kirkendoll, DiLorenzo, DiLorenzo's counsel, and the Tacoma News Tribune. Respondent demanded that Judge Kirkendoll "strike" various orders and "revisit" the change of venue motion. Alternatively, Respondent demanded that any judge assigned to the case be required to answer questions that Respondent deemed necessary "to determine if we are actually getting a fair tribunal."
- 33. On February 5, 2018, Respondent also filed a "Request for Discovery" to the court by "The Defense" [sic] for "any and all communications by the Pierce County judges" related to Judge Martin's directive concerning Lee. Respondent asked the court to "certify" that it had complied with the "Request for Discovery."
 - 34. On February 14, 2018, Judge Kirkendoll denied the Motion for Reconsideration.
- 35. On May 30, 2018, *Bell v. DiLorenzo* went to trial before Judge Kirkendoll to determine child support and other issues. Mills represented Bell at trial, and Swenhaugen represented DiLorenzo.
- 36. On June 14, 2018, Judge Kirkendoll issued an oral decision. Judge Kirkendoll ordered DiLorenzo to pay child support in an amount less than what Bell had requested. Judge

Kirkendoll also awarded attorney fees against Bell based on a finding of "intransigence."

- 37. On June 19, 2018, Respondent filed a document entitled "Motion for Reconsideration Based on Overall Appearance of Impropriety [and] Notice of Respondent Counsel's Apparent RPC Violations." In that document, Respondent disparaged Judge Kirkendoll's oral decision. Respondent complained that the decision "was inconsistent and contained tangents from actual testimony," and that it "appeared to be written by someone who did not observe the trial." Respondent asked the court again to "reconsider [the] Motion for Change of Venue," even though that motion had been denied on February 2, 2018 and had already been the subject of an earlier motion for reconsideration that was denied on February 14, 2018.
- 38. On June 19, 2018, Respondent also filed a letter to Judge Kirkendoll. In it, Respondent disparaged Swenhaugen, Judge Kirkendoll, and Lee, who had not been involved in the matter since October 2017 and had not been a witness at trial.
- 39. On August 10, 2018, Respondent filed a document entitled "Advisory Counsel Request for Court Inquiry regarding Findings." In that document, Respondent claimed that judges other than Judge Kirkendoll were "involved in" Judge Kirkendoll's decision. Respondent demanded that Judge Kirkendoll state whether the decision "truly was free from influence" and that Judge Kirkendoll "explain some of the findings" if Judge Kirkendoll claimed "there was no such influence from other judges."
- 40. On August 10, 2018, the court held a hearing for the presentation of final orders. Mills represented Bell at the hearing. Respondent tried to question the court about the "Advisory Counsel Request for Court Inquiry regarding Findings" that Respondent just filed that day.
 - 41. The court held another hearing on August 17, 2018 for the presentation of final

On August 22, 2018, after the final orders were entered, the case was reassigned to

- d. that Judge Martin and Judge Van Doorninck were "defunding Ms. Bell so she would have little capacity to appeal."
- 57. On September 12, 2018, Swenhaugen filed a "Motion for Clarification to Define Attorney Roles, Case Filings, Service Requirements and Request for Attorney Fees." In that document, Swenhaugen pointed out, among other things, that Respondent had failed to serve Swenhaugen with copies of the many motions, requests, notices, remarks, and other papers Respondent had filed in *Bell v. DiLorenzo*, many of which contained personal attacks on Swenhaugen.
- 58. On September 19, 2018, Respondent filed a "Response to Motion by Respondent Attorney." In that document, Respondent did not dispute having failed to serve Swenhaugen with copies of the many papers Respondent had filed in *Bell v. DiLorenzo*. Respondent asserted "a clear First Amendment right" to put documents in the court file without serving Swenhaugen because Respondent had "never before asked [Swenhaugen] to review" those documents. Respondent also used his "Response" to disparage Swenhaugen, Judge Kirkendoll, Judge Martin, and Judge Van Doorninck yet again.
- 59. Respondent states that he is not a family law attorney and became involved in an area of the law he was not familiar with in a county superior court where he rarely practiced. He met Patricia Bell at a divorce support group in December, 2016. He became involved in her case in December, 2017, when she asked for his help because her lawyer had quit and she had been detained by police pursuant to a restraining order. He took on the representation without expectation of being paid and has not been paid. Initially he sought to help her without appearing directly in the case but eventually he appeared on her behalf. He developed the personal belief

that the restraining order issued against Bell prior to his involvement had been unfairly entered
because it was based on what he believed to be intentionally misleading and/or false information
being provided to the court. He also came to believe there were strong biases against his client by
several Pierce County Superior Court judges due to his perception that the judges were not happy
that his client had unnecessarily pointed out that a much liked and retained Pierce County
visitation supervisor had a history of felonies. This belief about bias came about in significant
part due to a newspaper article that appeared in the Tacoma News Tribune on January 17, 2018,
which reported that Lee had made statements which could lead someone to believe that the
assertion she had been convicted of felonies was mistaken since she had been the victim of
identity theft. In the article the Chief Judge was quoted as saying the Lee matter was "a really sad
situation;" Respondent saw this as defending Lee's conduct and demonstrated unwarranted
sympathy for Lee. The article also quoted Judge van Doorninck in a manner which Respondent
believed showed that the judge would not take responsibility for having entered and was
continuing to enter a restraining order based on an affidavit which Respondent believed had now
been shown to have been intentionally dishonest. Respondent understands that others could
interpret the article differently. He believed that his perceived biases created significant conflicts
of interest. He believed these conflicts and biases were resulting in unfair treatment of his client
in regard to child support, custody, continuing the restraining orders and the non-award of
attorney fees for her other legal counsel after they took the case to trial to get child support
ordered. As a result of these beliefs, he became overinvested in his client's case and he lost the
objective and distanced analysis required of a lawyer in the exercise of his representation of a
client. He accepts that he was overzealous in representing his client which led to the violations he

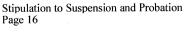
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1	66. ABA Standards std. 6.2 applies to violations of RPC 3.1 and RPC 4.4(a).				
2	67. In violating RPC 3.1and RPC 4.4(a), Respondent acted knowingly and caused injury				
3	to a client or a party and interference with a legal proceeding.				
4	68. The presumptive sanction for these violations is suspension under ABA <i>Standards</i> std.				
5	6.22.				
6	69. ABA Standards std. 6.1 applies to violations of RPC 8.2(a).				
7	70. In violating RPC 8.2(a), Respondent acted knowingly and caused an adverse effect on				
8	a legal proceeding.				
9	71. The presumptive sanction for these violations is suspension under ABA <i>Standards</i> std.				
10	6.12.				
11	72. The following aggravating factors apply under ABA Standard 9.22:				
12	(d) multiple offenses;				
13	(i) substantial experience in the practice of law (admitted 1998).				
14	73. The following mitigating factors apply under ABA <u>Standard</u> 9.32:				
15	(a) absence of a prior disciplinary record;				
16	(b) absence of a dishonest or selfish motive.				
17	74. It is an additional mitigating factor that Respondent has agreed to resolve this matter				
18	at an early stage of the proceedings.				
19	75. On balance, the aggravating and mitigating factors do not require a departure from the				
20	presumptive sanction of suspension.				
21	VI. STIPULATED DISCIPLINE				
22	76. The parties stipulate that Respondent shall receive a three-month suspension.				
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24	Stipulation to Suspension and Probation Page 15 OF THE WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION 1325 4th Avenue, Suite 600 Seattle, WA 98101-2539				

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VII. CONDITIONS OF REINSTATEMENT

- 77. Reinstatement from suspension is conditioned on payment of costs and expenses, as provided below.
- 78. As an additional condition of reinstatement, Respondent shall, at least 30 days before a request for reinstatement, undergo an independent examination by a licensed mental health professional approved by ODC to evaluate Respondent's fitness to practice law.
 - 79. Respondent shall pay all expenses associated with the examination.
- 80. Respondent shall execute all necessary releases and authorizations to permit the evaluator to obtain full access to all pertinent health care and treatment records for the applicable time period, and to permit the evaluator to release information regarding the evaluation to disciplinary counsel, including a written report of the evaluator's findings, diagnosis, and recommended treatment plan, if any. Respondent shall provide disciplinary counsel with a copy of the releases and authorizations.
- 81. If the evaluator concludes there is reasonable cause to believe that Respondent does not have the mental or physical capacity to practice law, then disciplinary counsel may report to a review committee as provided in ELC 8.2.
- 82. If the evaluator recommends treatment, then Respondent shall undergo treatment with a treatment provider and be subject to probation for a period of 24 months beginning on the date Respondent is reinstated to the practice of law. The conditions of probation are set forth below.
- 83. If the evaluator does not recommend treatment, then Respondent will not be required to undergo treatment and will not be subject to probation requiring mental health treatment.



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84. The conditions of probation set forth below apply if the evaluator recommends treatment, as provided above. Respondent's compliance with these conditions shall be monitored by the Probation Administrator of the Office of Disciplinary Counsel ("Probation Administrator"). Failure to comply with a condition of probation listed herein may be grounds for

VIII. CONDITIONS OF PROBATION

further disciplinary action under ELC 13.8(b).

85. Respondent shall subject to probation for a period of 24 months beginning on the date Respondent is reinstated to the practice of law. The conditions of probation are as follows:

- a) Within 60 days after probation begins, Respondent shall begin treatment with the evaluator referenced above or with another treatment provider approved by the Probation Administrator.
- b) Respondent shall comply with all requirements and recommendations of the treatment provider, including but not limited to the completion of any period of in- or out-patient treatment and aftercare and the taking of all prescribed medications.
- c) Respondent shall execute an authorization allowing and directing the treatment provider to take the following actions:
 - i) on a quarterly basis, send written reports to the Probation Administrator that include the dates of treatment, whether Respondent has been cooperative with treatment, and whether continued treatment is recommended;
 - ii) report immediately to the Probation Administrator if Respondent fails to appear for treatment or stops treatment without the provider's agreement and

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X. VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT

87. Respondent states (a) that prior to entering into this Stipulation Respondent consulted independent legal counsel regarding this Stipulation, (b) that Respondent is entering into this Stipulation voluntarily, and (c) that no promises or threats have been made by ODC, the Association, or any representative thereof to induce Respondent to enter into this Stipulation except as provided herein.

88. Once fully executed, this stipulation is a contract governed by the legal principles applicable to contracts, and may not be unilaterally revoked or modified by either party.

XI. LIMITATIONS

89. This Stipulation is a compromise agreement intended to resolve this matter in accordance with the purposes of lawyer discipline while avoiding further proceedings and the expenditure of additional resources by Respondent and ODC. Both Respondent and ODC acknowledge that the result after further proceedings in this matter might differ from the result agreed to herein.

90. This Stipulation is not binding on ODC or Respondent as a statement of all existing facts relating to the professional conduct of Respondent, and any additional existing facts may be proven in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

91. This Stipulation results from the consideration of various factors by both parties, including the benefits to both by promptly resolving this matter without the time and expense of hearings, Disciplinary Board appeals, and Supreme Court appeals or petitions for review. Approval of this Stipulation will not constitute precedent in determining the appropriate sanction to be imposed in other cases; but, if approved, this Stipulation will be admissible in subsequent

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Henry Cruz, Bar No. 38799 Disciplinary Counsel

Dated:

2/4/2021

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