

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



Michael P. Bowler
Statewide Bar Counsel

Frances Mickelson-Dera
Christopher L. Slack
First Assistant Bar Counsel

Tel: (860) 568-5157
Fax: (860) 568-4953

STATEWIDE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

www.jud.ct.gov/sgc/
Second Floor - Suite Two
287 Main Street, East Hartford, Connecticut 06118-1885

03/11/2011

OFFICE OF CHIEF DISCIPLINARY C
100 WASHINGTON STREET
HARTFORD CT 06106

JOSEPH CHARLES COCO
PO BOX 3078
DANBURY CT 06813-3078

RE: GRIEVANCE COMPLAINT #09-0858
BRESSLER vs. COCO

Dear Respondent and Disciplinary Counsel:

Enclosed herewith is the decision of the reviewing committee of the Statewide Grievance Committee concerning the above referenced matter. In accordance with the Practice Book Sections 2-35, 2-36 and 2-38(a), the Respondent may, within thirty (30) days of the date of this notice, submit to the Statewide Grievance Committee a request for review of the decision.

A request for review must be sent to the Statewide Grievance Committee at the address listed above.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Bowler

Encl.

cc: Attorney Gail S. Kotowski
MORRISON MAHONEY LLP
Rossanna Bressler

NOTICE REGARDING DECISION
SANCTIONS OR CONDITIONS

GRIEVANCE COMPLAINT # 09-858

THE ATTACHED DECISION IS PRESENTLY STAYED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRACTICE BOOK §§2-35 AND 2-38.

SECTION 2-35 STATES, IN PART, AS FOLLOWS:

(e) ... Enforcement of the final decision ... shall be stayed for thirty days from the date of the issuance to the parties of the final decision. In the event the respondent timely submits to the Statewide Grievance Committee a request for review of the final decision of the reviewing committee, such stay shall remain in full force and effect pursuant to Section 2-38(b).

SECTION 2-38 STATES, IN PART, AS FOLLOWS:

(b) ... Enforcement of a decision by a reviewing committee imposing sanctions or conditions against the respondent ... shall be stayed for thirty days from the issuance to the parties of the final decision of the reviewing committee pursuant to Section 2-35(g). If within that period the respondent files with the Statewide Grievance Committee a request for review of the reviewing committee's decision, the stay shall remain in effect for thirty days from the issuance by the Statewide Grievance Committee of its final decision pursuant to Section 2-36. If the respondent timely commences an appeal [of the sanctions or conditions to the Superior Court] pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, such stay shall remain in full force and effect until the conclusion of all proceedings, including all appeals, relating to the decision imposing sanctions or conditions against the respondent. If at the conclusion of all proceedings, the decision imposing sanctions or conditions against the respondent is rescinded, the complaint shall be deemed dismissed as of the date of the decision imposing sanctions or conditions against the respondent.

DECISION DATE: 3/11/11

STATEWIDE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Telma Alecrim
Complainant

:

vs.

:

Grievance Complaint #09-0857

Joseph C. Coco
Respondent

:

Rossanna Bressler
Complainant

:

vs.

:

Grievance Complaint #09-0858

Joseph C. Coco
Respondent

:

DECISION

Pursuant to Practice Book §2-35, the undersigned, duly-appointed reviewing committee of the Statewide Grievance Committee, conducted a hearing at the Superior Court, 1061 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut on December 1, 2010. The hearing addressed the record of the complaints filed on September 29, 2009 and the probable cause determinations filed by the Danbury Judicial District Grievance Panel on March 4, 2010, finding that there existed probable cause that the Respondent violated Rules 1.15, 5.5(a) and 8.4(1), (3) and (4) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Notice of the hearing was mailed to the Complainants, to the Respondent and to the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel on November 4, 2010. Pursuant to Practice Book §2-35(d), Assistant Disciplinary Counsel Karyl L. Carrasquilla pursued the matters before this reviewing committee. The Complainants appeared at the hearing and testified. The Respondent appeared at the hearing represented by Attorney Robert Cassot and testified. Reviewing committee member Attorney Salvatore C. DePiano was unavailable for a portion of the hearing. Since the Respondent did not waive the participation of Attorney DePiano, Attorney DiPiano reviewed the portion of the transcript of the hearing for which he was unavailable. Six exhibits were admitted into evidence.

This reviewing committee finds the following facts by clear and convincing evidence:

The Complainant Telma Alecrim is a citizen of Brazil. Complainant Alecrim provides housecleaning and laundry services for the Complainant Rossanna Bressler. In or around 2004, Complainant Bressler agreed to sponsor Complainant Alecrim for an immigrant visa. In 2004,

Grievance Complaint #09-0857

Grievance Complaint #09-0858

Decision

Page 2

Complainant Alecrim and her husband met with Mr. Jackson DeSouza, whom the Complainant believed to be an attorney, at his office at Immigrant's Services, LLC (hereinafter, "Immigrant's, Services") 301 Main Street, Danbury, CT. Mr. DeSouza advised that Complainant Alecrim and her husband were eligible for green cards and that he would undertake the necessary work to obtain approval. Mr. DeSouza communicated with Complainant Bressler by telephone and explained the process, including that Complainant Bressler could sponsor Complainant Alecrim for a green card and that he would do all of the work. Both Complainants hired Mr. De Souza to prepare an employment green card application for Complainant Alecrim with Complainant Bressler as sponsor. Mr. DeSouza prepared an application for Alien Employment Certification and an I-140 Petition for Alien Worker for filing with the United States Department of Labor (hereinafter "DOL") and United States Citizen and Immigration Services (hereinafter "CIS"), respectively. In or around November of 2005, Mr. DeSouza referred the Complainants' immigration matter to the Respondent. The Complainants signed the Respondent's representation agreement reflecting the retention of Immigrant's Services for document preparation and collection and the Respondent as legal counsel. Complainant Alecrim paid a total of \$6000 in fees to Immigrant's Services and Mr. De Souza in connection with the immigration matter. In March of 2007, the DOL approved the Complainant Alecrim's application for Alien Labor Certification. The Complainant Alecrim's I-140 application was denied in January of 2009. Thereafter, the Complainant Alecrim was placed in deportation proceedings in June of 2009.

Mr. DeSouza is not an attorney. Mr. DeSouza is an employee of Immigrant's Services. The Respondent is the agent for service for Immigrant's Services. The Respondent and Immigrant's Services shared office space from the fall of 2005 to March of 2010. The Respondent and Immigrant's Services also shared a fax number. The Respondent's name appeared on the office door with Immigrant's Services. The Respondent's name also appeared together with Immigrant's Services in an advertisement in a Danbury newspaper indicating "[w]e are a team to help you."

This reviewing committee also considered the following:

Complainant Alecrim testified that she never spoke with the Respondent regarding her immigration matter. Complainant Alecrim explained that she spoke with Mr. Desouza and his assistant regarding her immigration matters. Complainant Bressler testified that she spoke by telephone with Mr. DeSouza on a number of occasions. Complainant Bressler testified that she was under the impression that Mr. DeSouza was an attorney. Complainant Bressler further testified that she never met the Respondent. The Respondent contended that the Complainants were initially represented by another attorney in connection with their immigration matter. The Respondent testified that he met with Complainant Alecrim in November of 2005. The Respondent further testified that Mr. DeSouza was present at that meeting to translate. The Respondent testified that he explained various options to Complainant Alecrim regarding her immigration matter. The Respondent contended that Complainant Alecrim's I-140 application was denied

Grievance Complaint #09-0857
Grievance Complaint #09-0858
Decision
Page 3

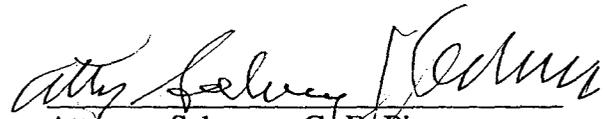
because Complainant Bressler failed to produce certain financial records. The Respondent denied ever holding Mr. DeSouza out to be an attorney in his office. The Respondent maintained that he subcontracted with Immigrant's Services for administrative support. The Respondent testified that he did not receive any compensation from either Complainant during his representation.

This reviewing committee concludes by clear and convincing evidence that the Respondent assisted Mr. DeSouza in the unauthorized practice of law in violation of Rule 5.5(a) of the Rules of Professional Conduct, by sharing office space with Immigrant's Services, maintaining his name on the office door with Immigrant's Services, accepting the referral of the Complainants' immigration matter from Immigrant's Services and thereafter subcontracting work relative to the Complainants' matter back to Immigrant's Services. The record lacks clear and convincing evidence to substantiate a finding that Respondent violated Rules 1.1 or 8.4(1), (3) or (4) of the Rules of Professional Conduct. This reviewing committee concludes that the Respondent's violation of Rule 5.5(a) of the Rules of Professional Conduct warrants a reprimand. Accordingly, the Respondent is reprimanded.

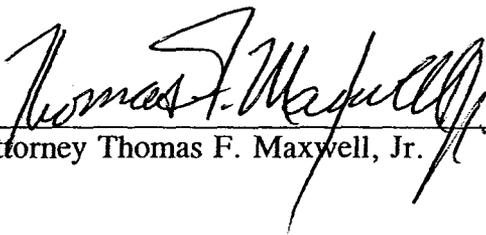
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DECISION DATE: 3/11/11

Grievance Complaint #09-0857
Grievance Complaint #09-0858
Decision
Page 4


Attorney Salvatore C. DePiano

Grievance Complaint #09-0857
Grievance Complaint #09-0858
Decision
Page 5


Attorney Thomas F. Maxwell, Jr.

Grievance Complaint #09-0857

Grievance Complaint #09-0858

Decision

Page 6



Ms. Judith Freedman